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Life Winning Song

Human life differs from other forms of life. Human life is a series of lives in different periods of time. Life is influenced by multifaceted actions and reactions. Thus, human life is complex and goal-oriented. From self-realisation to various objectives of life, all are interlinked. Life becomes meaningful only when this interconnectedness is understood. Life is truly fulfilled when it becomes purposeful, balanced, and goal-oriented. However, whether a person attains success in life depends on several social, psychological, economic, and cultural factors. Hence, to lead life in the right direction, one must sing the “life winning song”.

The state in which a person achieves complete development may be called a successful life. But what constitutes a complete or successful life? This depends on differences in individuals, society, culture, and ideology. A realistic outlook and the ability to understand circumstances help in achieving a meaningful life. In other words, it is an individual's perspective that determines their success in life. Even to lead a complete life, one must look at life from many dimensions-economic, social, intellectual, and cultural.

Education plays a vital role in shaping this process. Childhood and adolescence are crucial stages of life. During this period, physical, mental, emotional, and moral development takes place. At this stage, the roles of teachers, parents, and the surrounding environment are extremely important. Teachers must possess correct understanding, enthusiasm, sensitivity, discipline, patience, and ideals. Likewise, parents must ensure that children grow up in a healthy and supportive environment.

A child grows up influenced by surroundings. Schools are expected to create an atmosphere conducive to mental and moral growth. Children learn values from their daily experiences. Parents and teachers must jointly bear the responsibility of moulding a child's personality. A disciplined

environment is essential for the holistic development of a child. Without discipline, education loses its meaning.

Teachers must understand students' interests, abilities, and talents. Some students excel in mathematics, some in literature, others in sports or music. Every child possesses unique potential. Identifying this potential and nurturing it with care is the prime duty of a teacher. A healthy educational environment encourages creativity, confidence, and self-expression. Education should not be confined only to textbooks; it should prepare students for real life.

Music and song also play a significant role in shaping life. A song's essence lies not merely in words but in rhythm, melody, and emotional depth. Similarly, life winning song is created through harmony between thought, action, and emotion. Just as melody gives life to lyrics, values give meaning to human existence.

In schools, teachers should present lessons in an engaging manner. Education should awaken curiosity and inspire students. A teacher must not be limited to the role of an instructor; rather, they should act as a guide and an ideal human being. True education helps students to understand life, society, and their responsibilities. When education successfully instils values, students become disciplined, compassionate, hardworking, and socially responsible.

The environment at home also significantly affects a child's mindset. If parents provide love, guidance, and moral values, children naturally develop self-confidence and discipline. Education, family, and society together shape a child's future. Students should be made aware that success in life does not come easily-it requires effort, perseverance, and ethical conduct.

Ultimately, the "life winning song" is not about material success of life alone, but a fulfilled or satisfied life. It is about harmony, balance, humanity, and purpose. A meaningful life is built through understanding, compassion, responsibility, and continuous self-improvement. When a person can sing this song in harmony with society and values, life itself becomes a beautiful melody. For this song, lyrics supplied by family-neighbours, teachers are the real composer, where tune is only his or her own. So, this song is a series and goal oriented song.

Dr. Nilamani Phukan

CONTENTS

1. Buddhist Education and Its Relevance in Contemporary Society-A Philosophical Analysis/Dr. Rupshree Devi & Limisha Bora/7
2. Animal Ethics in the Light of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer/Dr. Satyajit Kalita/15
3. The Fine Balance between Hope and Despair : Humanism in Rohinton Mistry's Fiction/Dr. Pranjal Hazarika/26
4. The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and M. N. Roy : A Comparative Study/Dr. Sima Mohanty & Bitupan Mahanta/36
5. Academic Libraries and Copyright Laws in India/Dr. Alakesh Roy/46
6. Perception of the Tourists on Impact of Tourism Development in Kaziranga National Park, Assam/Dr. Alexis Pinheiro/57
7. Environmental Humanities and the Futures of the Human Being/ Dr. Abdul Quium Osmani/73
8. A Study on Shaktism/Dr. Baijayanti Bhattacharyya/79
9. Abortion in Buddhism and Jainism : A Comparative Study/ Prof. Bikash Bhargab Sarma & Sushmita Borah/90
10. Can Creative Writing Be Taught? Process, Pedagogy, and Practice in Higher Education/Dr. Diganta Kumar Nath/105
11. Swami Vivekananda's View on Caste System : A Study/Dr. Debajit Baruah/121
12. Swami Vivekananda's Universal Religion: A Framework for Global Harmony and Ethical Coexistence/Debashree Bordoloi/130
13. Freedom and Responsibility in Buddhism and Sartre's Existentialism: An Ethical Inquiry/Namita Pawegam/142
14. Swami Vivekananda's Contribution to Modern Education/ Dr. Kalyan Das/156
15. Religion : A Philosophical Interpretation of Gandhi/Dr. Sima Mohanty & Sujata Moran/163
16. Vivekananda's Teachings on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment/Dr. Nilima Thakuria/174
17. Livelihood and Sustenance of Retail Vegetable Vendors in Kamrup Metro/Dr. Gulam Ommar Ahmed/179

18. Veganism and the Well-Being of Humanity : A Dual Approach to Health and Animal Protection/Samir Ali & Dr. Tapan Talukder/192
19. Status, Causes and Consequences of Primary Education in the Morigaon District of Assam/Dr. Pranab Jyoti Sarma & Rajib Malo/205
20. Understanding the Concept of Dharma in Modern Indian Thought : A Philosophical Exploration/Dr. Sukanya Chutia/213
21. Portrayal of Women Life in the Songs of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika : A Brief Study/Anamika Sarma/222
22. Forests and Our Future/Dr. Jayanta Borkakoti/228
23. Challenges of Higher Education in India : An Overview/Ruma Begum/238
24. Education and Social Justice : A Study of Public Higher Educational Institutions in Assam/Deepak Kalita & Dr. Parag Jyoti Mahanta/243
25. Revisiting Tiwa History in Rita Choudhury's novel *Deou Langkhui*/Dr. Ajit Konwar/249
26. Ideas of Green Economy in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*/Dr. Chandan Sharma/261
27. Value-Oriented Education through the Teachings of the Bhagavad Gita : A Philosophical Perspective/Dr. Sanjib H. Thakuria/270
28. Revisiting Higher Education in Assam: A Critical Study of Value-Based Education and Contemporary Challenges/Dr. Achyut Kumar Das/282
29. From Intuition to Intelligence: How AI Is Rewriting the Financial Fate of India's Retail Investors/Dr. Pranjeet Das/293
30. জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাৰ কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী নাট : এটি আলোচনা/ড° স্বপ্না হাজৰিকা/304
31. তিৱা সমাজৰ প্ৰচলিত ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা : এটি আলোচনা (বিশেষ উল্লিখনসহ কৰাইণ্ডৰি গাঁও)/ড° অমৰজ্যোতি কোঁৱৰ/317
32. শ্ৰীমন্ত শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ অক্ষীয়া নাটত নন্দনতত্ত্ব আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক দিশ : এক বিশ্লেষণ/ড° ৰুমি কলিতা দাস/326
33. ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ শিশুগীত : এটি আলোচনা/বৰ্ণা শৰ্মা/335

Buddhist Education and Its Relevance in Contemporary Society-A Philosophical Analysis

Dr. Rupshree Devi¹

Limisha Bora²

Abstract :

The Buddhist educational system and its timeless principles are presented in this research article. It places an emphasis on students' moral, intellectual, and physical growth while advising them to follow the Saṅgha's teachings and promoting a disciplined way of life. The main objective of the Buddhist educational system is to encourage a pupil's comprehensive and all-around personality development, which includes mental, physical, moral, and intellectual development. This research article offers a philosophical analysis of the Buddhist educational system, highlighting its tenets, practices, and ongoing applicability today. With the goal of achieving truth and developing compassion and wisdom, the Buddhist educational system is based on the intellectual, spiritual, and moral development of the individual. With its foundations in Gautama Buddha's teachings, it aims to free people from lack of understanding and pain through mindfulness, moral behavior, and appropriate knowledge. The Middle Path, the Four Truths of Buddhism, and the Noble Eightfold Path are among the fundamental tenets of Buddhist education that are examined in this study as a means

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of promoting moral and balanced living. It also looks at how traditional Buddhist universities and monasteries like Nalanda, Vikramasila and Odantapuri etc. are influenced holistic education. The study comes to the conclusion that the Buddhist educational system offers important insights for modern education focused on peace, harmony, and human welfare. It is not just a tool for intellectual growth, but a thorough process of moral and spiritual transformation. The Buddhist educational system provides an enduring guide for achieving both harmonious society and personal enlightenment.

Keywords: Buddhist Education, Sa gha, monasteries, Enlightenment, Buddhism, Moral.

Introduction :

One of the most comprehensive educational systems in the world is the Buddhist system in India. The moral, intellectual, and physical growth of a pupil is the foundation of this education. The Buddhist education system is monastic and inclusive of all castes. The primary objective of the Buddhist education system is to support a child's moral, intellectual, and physical growth as well as their overall, holistic personality. The perspective of teaching in this educational system is broad and optimistic. In the Buddhist Educational System, pupils of all races, faiths, and castes are therefore treated equally. Buddhism views education as a method of spiritual growth and self-awareness rather than just a way to acquire knowledge or skills. Gautama Buddha's teachings, which are the foundation of the Buddhist educational system, placed a strong emphasis on developing morality (sila), wisdom (prajna), and mental concentration (samadhi). Buddhist monasteries, also known as Viharas, served as educational institutions where monks were in charge of instructing and educating students. In contrast to traditional educational systems that prioritize academic development, Buddhist education incorporates moral and spiritual aspects, striving for the full development of the human self. This promotes the development of a disciplined lifestyle. Buddhist education has encouraged critical thinking, cross-cultural interaction, and moral leadership since the founding of historic Monastic institutions like Nalanda, Vikramasila and Odantapuri and the spread of its principles throughout Asia as well as globally. The purpose of this study is to examine the philosophical framework, core principles, and applicability of the Buddhist system of education in society.

Methodology :

The method of this present study is analytical and descriptive in nature. This paper is based on qualitative research using secondary sources. In this paper analysing textual data from various books, journals, research papers related to the concept of Buddhist Education.

Statement of the Problem:

Modern educational system has grown increasingly competitive and career-oriented. While academic accomplishment, skills and technology have developed tremendously, there is a noticeable reduction in moral sensitivity, emotional stability and humanistic ideals among learners.

The major concern of this work is the gap between intellectual growth and ethical development in the current educational framework. This research intends to explore if Buddhist educational ideas may help bridge the division and provide a valuable, humanistic focus to education.

Objectives :

The main objective of this paper is to study about :

1. To analyze about the goal and historical development of Buddhist Education.
2. To understand the role of social harmony and ethical dimension in Buddhist Educational system.
3. To explore the relevance of Buddhist Education to contemporary society and education.

The Goal and Historical Development of Buddhist Education :

The Buddhist system of education is teaching approaches that originate in the fifth century and is based on the philosophy of Buddhism. The moral, mental, and physical growth of people is the main objective of the Buddhist educational system. It seeks to support a learner's holistic, all-around development in all spheres of life. Through education, meditation, and introspection, the Buddhist educational system seeks to unite people and assist them in achieving the highest level of human fulfillment. In the ancient time, when the Buddhist educational system began, pupils of many racial and ethnic backgrounds are gained its worldwide appeal. The Buddhist educational system is a comprehensive and useful educational approach that still gives an impression on contemporary education system.

Buddhist education aims to fulfill human potential and put an end to suffering. Three trainings were used by the Buddha to explain knowledge, concentration, and moral behavior. A life built on ethics is secure and reliable. In order to see clearly, the mind must be steadied through concentration. Buddhist philosophy states that wisdom recognizes that everything is interconnected, that nothing is permanent, and that everything is subject to change.

V. Nithiyanandam, in his book, *Buddhist System of Education* writes that,

“Through the development of *pajna*, one develops insight into the habitual patternings of mind and the skilful means (*upaya*) as to how one cuts through such patterns.”¹

The impulse to do something for the well being of everything, that is the result of this learning process in Buddhist philosophy, and compassion is the fundamental quality of Buddhist education. Buddhist education started with an understanding of the suffering of human beings and has since dedicated itself to reducing everyone’s suffering.²

The reduction of all suffering is the lofty goal of Buddhist education, and Buddhist educators worked extremely hard to establish a course that offered numerous penultimate goals along the way to this ultimate goal. Buddhism is not monomaniacal, even though it is tautological in that all of its teachings are understood in relation to the pursuit of nirvana.³

During the time of the Buddha, oral tradition played a major role in monastic instruction. In fact, *bahussuta*, which means “having heard much,” is the Pali word for “learned.” Naturally, the preservation of the Buddha’s teachings was a top priority for early Buddhists, and the *bhanaka* system played a major role in this. A *bhanaka* is a “reciter” who has committed a section of the *Tipitaka* to memory and teaches an apprentice how to recite the verses from memory.⁴

Buddhist education historically started in small monastic groups shortly after the Buddha’s death. Nuns and monks came together to learn, commit to memory, and debate his teachings. In the early ages, oral transmission was essential because writing was uncommon. Buddhism had expanded throughout India by the reign of Ashoka, the emperor in the third century BCE, and monasteries had developed into educational institutions funded by royal donations. The establishment of substantial monastic universities marked the true blossoming.

Mahavihara is a sort of monastery organization that likely originated during the Gupta era. It is a collection of many monasteries that have been unified into a single entity. The old, conventional monastic culture underwent a reorientation in these Mahaviharas, which led to the loss of its solely monastic focus. The “Buddhist Culture” of India at the time was this liberalized culture. During Buddhism’s fall in India, the Mahaviharas served as both its provider and depositories.⁵

Nalanda, which was founded in the fifth century CE in what is now Bihar, India, was the most well-known institution. At its height, Nalanda was home to a million monks and ordinary academics from Tibet, Central Asia, China, Korea, and India. Although passing challenging oral exams was a prerequisite for admission, all eligible students, regardless of social background, could receive free tuition. Other significant universities were Valabhi, Odantapuri, and Vikramasila etc. These centers integrated rigorous scriptural study with astronomy, medicine, language, logic, and debate. The focus of daily life was meditation and moral behavior. For centuries, Buddhist knowledge was spread throughout Asia by scholars who received training there, influencing the cultural and educational systems in several nations.

The Role of Social Harmony and Ethical Dimension in Buddhist Educational System:

Buddhism places a strong emphasis on social responsibility and ethical awareness. Buddhist education aims to change the individual as well as society, in contrast to educational methods that prioritize academic success or professional effectiveness. Its ethical basis is to foster intelligence, compassion, and self-discipline, all of which promote social harmony. According to Buddhism, education is an ethical and communal procedure that directs people toward harmonious cohabitation and the welfare of society as a whole.

For laypeople, the moral component is outlined in the Five Precepts; for monastic, the regulations are more specific. These rules, which forbid murder, theft, offensive speech, sexual immorality, and intoxication, safeguard both the person and the community. The Noble Eightfold Path uses to promote and build ethics. Pupils were taught that although acts based on love, generosity, and wisdom produce peace, those based on greed, hatred, or illusion cause misery for everyone.

The Sangha was established by the Buddha as a learning society where its members would spend their entire lives learning, applying

what they had learned, teaching others, participating in conversations and arguments to understand ideas, reciting the Buddha's teachings and messages and passing them down orally for preservation, creating commentaries, and attracting an increasing number of members who would likewise pursue a lifelong learning process.⁶

A key aspect of the Buddhist system of education has been the Saṅgha's function as a group of independent and self-generating change agents. Because of its constitution, which is a decentralized social institution of peers, it has been able to adapt to the needs and inventiveness of various peoples in various locations and eras. The motivation stemmed from an ideal that was on the verge of both self-interest and selflessness. For the most part, the Buddhist monk has left the householder's life in order to further his own spiritual development and find salvation.⁷

It is important to highlight certain general characteristics of these Buddhist educational centers. It has been noted time and time again that Buddhist monasteries served as both the nurseries and archives of Buddhist education and knowledge in general, as well as the actual centers of the Buddhist culture in particular. Over the course of centuries, some of these Indian monasteries developed into large educational institutions with certain distinguishing characteristics that support their classification as universities.⁸

The Relevance of Buddhist Education to Contemporary Society and Education :

Buddhist education provides the means to address contemporary issues in the world of today. Its emphasis on mindfulness may decrease stress in light of the growing number of mental health problems. Once exclusive to monasteries, techniques like meditation are now employed in classrooms all around the world to help pupils focus in the face of distractions. The objective of self-discovery is consistent with demands for individualized learning, in which education is customized to foster inner development rather than being generic in nature.

A Buddhist understanding of teaching needs to be viewed as aiding in the defeating of suffering rather than just imparting knowledge, much as a Buddhist understanding of educational pursuits must always be considered in the context of eliminating avijja, the basic egoistic framework of what one experiences. Naturally, for a Buddhist,

this basically entails teaching the Dhamma as well as education in these more “secular” subjects like agriculture and medicine. Buddhism has correctly realized that the Sangha has a duty to teach both “secular” and “religious” education, from classical to current, insofar as unawareness of these issues exacerbates the pain and suffering of the laity.⁹

The applicability of Buddhist education shows how it may humanize modern society by imbuing education with compassion and purpose. Its lessons on harmony and introspection might motivate policies that put mental well-being, fairness, and sustainability first as global crises call for cooperative solutions. The timeless wisdom provides a timeless remedy for superficial learning, even though implementing these antiquated concepts in digital-age classrooms brings difficulties, such as striking a balance between tradition and technology. Buddhist education essentially calls for reconsideration about what is required to be taught in the twenty-first century, encouraging communities to develop not only skillful laborers but also intelligent and compassionate individuals.

Conclusion :

Buddhist education, which has its roots in timeless teachings, provides a profound learning approach that incorporates community, ethics, and the mind. It exhibits a dedication to all-encompassing development through its objectives of emancipation and historical development from modest discourses to opulent institutions. Resilient communities are created through the combination of ethical ideals and harmony, and contemporary applications offer solutions for both individual and global problems. Buddhist education offers an enduring model for individual and community development with its emphasis on liberation by wisdom, ethics, and harmony. Buddhist precepts teach us that the ultimate goal of education is to promote the well-being of every human being and, consequently, the healing of the entire world by including the development of intellect, ethical conduct, and inner tranquility into the educational process. Its tenets, which are derived from writings such as the Dhammapada, Vinaya etc., provide useful solutions to social unrest, mental health issues, and moral conundrums in the modern world. Adopting these concepts could improve education now and produce capable, compassionate people. Therefore, Buddhist

education appears as an essential companion for our modern journey rather than a remnant of the past quietly, persistently, and profoundly asking us to become not just more knowledgeable but also really more human beings.

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Animal Ethics in the Light of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer

Dr. Satyajit Kalita¹

Abstract :

Ethical discourse concerning applied ethics has increasingly gained prominence in academic and philosophical platforms worldwide. Within this context, the philosophies of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer stand as significant contributions in addressing the ethical treatment of nonhuman beings. Both thinkers highlight the intrinsic value of all living beings, thereby questioning conventional human-centered moral frameworks. This emphasis on intrinsic value naturally leads to a debate concerning moral status: how should animals be treated, and whether all animals deserve inclusion in the moral community with corresponding rights and protection. For a meaningful justification of animal rights, a philosophical understanding of the normative basis of moral concern toward animals is essential. Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer each attempt to transcend the anthropocentric worldview. Srimanta Sankaradeva situates all species within the domain of a supreme spiritual reality, while Singer rejects speciesism and supports a biocentric moral approach grounded in utilitarian reasoning. Their views converge on principles such as compassion, nonviolence, and the ethical injunction against killing animals. However, these positions also invite critical reflection. Although both argue for intrinsic value, the application of this abstract principle encounters philosophical tensions, especially in clarifying the basis for

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moral status. Moreover, notable differences exist between the two thinkers, particularly regarding environmental ethics. Srimanta Sankaradeva advances a holistic bio-centric and eco-centric vision, whereas Singer largely limits ethical consideration to sentient animals without extending it to broader ecological concerns. Considering these similarities and divergences, the present study undertakes a comparative analysis of their ethical frameworks, with an emphasis on evaluating the philosophical relevance and depth of their positions.

Keywords : Srimanta Sankaradeva, Peter Singer, Animal Rights, Intrinsic Value, Bio-centrism

Introduction

The study of moral right and wrong, good and evil, and what we should and shouldn't do is known as ethics. Ethics is both normative and substantive. With the development of analytical philosophy, meta-ethics became a distinct field of study within philosophy. The rational and analytical study of ethics is known as meta-ethics. Metaphysics raises logical, metaphysical, and epistemological issues rather than ethical ones. For instance: Can we find out the answers to moral dilemmas? How, if at all? What do ethical phrases mean? Like scientific claims, are ethical statements true or false? If so, how are they confirmed? How should ethical disagreements be resolved? The question of ethical realism versus anti-realism is an example of a meta-ethical dispute.

Normative ethics, meta-ethics, and applied ethics, sometimes known as practical ethics, are the three traditional categories of ethics. However, because it implies a connection to normative theory similar to that of applied to pure mathematics, where theories are independently constructed and then applied to examples, this final phrase might not be very appropriate. In normative ethics, ideas are frequently developed and assessed by considering the ethically significant aspects of examples. Therefore, some philosophers contend that by considering a particular situation such as Judith Thomson's well-known 'trolley problem,' in which a driver must decide whether to let his runaway train kill a certain number of people or divert it to a track where it would kill fewer, we can understand the general moral relevance of a distinction between killing and letting die (Thomson, 1976). When considering this situation, it appears pertinent that the driver would be

murdering people or causing their deaths if he diverted the train; on the other hand, if he allowed the train to continue undiverted, he would merely be permitting fatalities to occur. It is claimed that by seeing this in a particular instance, we can recognise a contrast with broad theoretical significance.

The biggest field of philosophical development is applied ethics. When philosophers and other scholars started addressing urgent moral issues in society in the 1970s, the terms “applied ethics” and its synonym “practical ethics” were coined. The goal of applied ethics is to use normative theories and principles to address real-world moral issues. The study of applied ethics has grown in popularity in recent years as more real-world issues have arisen. These issues are mostly brought on by the quick advancement of science and technology as well as the shifting perspectives of modern people on life. In this regard, bioethical issues are worth discussing. Humanity has made significant strides in the treatment and prevention of sickness thanks to scientific advancements, yet there are still some unanswered concerns regarding the nature of life and death. Abortion, euthanasia, cloning, doctor-patient relationships, surrogacy, and other themes are becoming increasingly contentious among today's populace. Environmental concerns are linked to a number of challenging ethical dilemmas in addition to bioethical ones.

Objectives :

The present study aims to undertake a comparative exploration of the concept of ethics in the philosophies of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer. It further seeks to comparatively examine the status of nonhuman beings, the notion of animal liberation, and the debate on vegetarianism as reflected in the ethical positions of both thinkers.

Methodology :

Methodologically, the present study will adopt an analytical and descriptive approach. The study will primarily be based on primary sources, including the original works of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer, as well as research articles authored by Peter Singer. Secondary sources will consist of scholarly books, research papers, and articles dealing with the ethical views and philosophical contributions of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer.

Discussions :

To a certain degree, the history of ethics is a history of who belongs to and ought to belong to the moral community. Although there is still a long way to go in many regions of most nations, women eventually attained equal standing with men several hundred years after a protracted and difficult social fight. In the distant past, only males of a specific social position were members of the moral community. The notion that animals should be included in the moral community primarily developed in the nineteenth-century utilitarian ethics movement, which was led by Jeremy Bentham, who famously maintained that it is more morally significant for animals to be able to suffer than to be able to reason. Additionally, a growing sense of sympathy for the suffering of animals in general and a new knowledge of sensitivity to animal brutality (such as vivisection) led to the founding of animal rights organisations in the USA and Europe, particularly in Protestant England and Germany. Darwin's evolutionary theory provided scientific backing for this new paradigmatic moral change. The results disproved the old natural rights view that only rational humans belong to the moral society, which made an empirical distinction between humans and animals. I have a great deal of sympathy for those who argue that animals should be treated humanely. However, the question of what legal requirements there should be for animal protection is not the same as the moral question of how humans should treat animals. For example, lying to a friend is generally unethical, but this does not imply any legal rights or protections. In a similar vein, even if it is wrong to nail a cat to a wall, there is no legal requirement to abstain from such heinous behaviour. Since humans developed from animals over a long period of time, evolutionary theory offers compelling scientific evidence that there is a natural affinity between humans and animals.

Ethical discussions, especially those pertaining to applied ethics, are a topic that is vigorously and seriously discussed on a variety of global forums. Both Srimanta Sankaradeva's and Peter Singer's ideas have made some fundamental contributions to that field. In essence, both thinkers stress that both humans and non-human entities have intrinsic worth. This raises questions about moral standing. The crucial topic is, for instance, how we should treat animals ethically. Do all animals have a moral standing and are thus protected morally as

members of the moral community, or do they have no moral status at all? Animal rights can be justified if one has a philosophical understanding of how animals should be treated. Once more, Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer both attempt to transcend the humanistic perspective, anticipate nature, and construct a universalistic outlook. Srimanta Sankaradeva believed that all species were a part of ultimate reality, whereas Singer believed that all species had moral standing, set the boundaries of specialization, and promoted the idea of a bio-centric approach. Once again, there are certain characteristics that both of their beliefs share, such as compassion for animals, non-violence, particularly the refusal to harm animals, and so on.

Even so, it appeared to be pretty readable. But these philosophers' perspectives on animal rights raise some important philosophical issues. They have used intrinsic worth, as was previously indicated, but approximating an abstract ethical ideal such as moral status seems paradoxical and inconsistent. In addition to their commonalities, Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer also diverge significantly. One such significant distinction relates to the differing perspectives on environmental ethics. While Peter Singer focused solely on animal-centric approaches, Srimanta Sankaradeva promoted both bio-centric and eco-centric approaches to the environment.

In light of the aforementioned, the current study will make an effort to examine Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer's beliefs from a comparative perspective. Comparatively evaluating the importance of their ethical concepts will be the main goal here.

Srimanta Sankaradeva and His Ethical Overview :

Srimanta Sankaradeva was a social reformer, poet, and saint who taught morality and religion. Srimanta Sankaradeva was the brightest star in the galaxy of Vaishnavite thinkers because he was Mahapurush and Sarvagunakar. In the Vaishnavite tendency, we encountered a large number of philosophers who propagated religious teachings and developed active conceptions of religion, which are only theoretical endeavours. But it seems different in the case of Srimanta Sankaradeva, he is not only a religious preacher but also a spiritual leader, poet, composer, playwright, actor, director, painter, singer, dancer, linguist, artist, social reformer, integrator of mankind, humanist, animal activist, social scientist, and nation builder in other words, Srimanta Sankaradeva was all in one. Prof. Vasudeva S. Agarwala of Hindu University Banaras wrote :

“There are poets and composers, there are saints and religious teachers, there are musical masters, there are preachers, but Srimanta Sankaradeva was a genius in whom all these qualities were rolled into one” (Chutia, Sonaram, et al., 1998, p. 177).

Dr. W.L. Smith, Professor of Oriental Studies, University of Stockholm, remarked: “Srimanta Sankaradeva remains a very real person and very impressive without the paraphernalia of the miraculous.” Another prominent Indologist, Dr. J.M. de Mora, Professor of Philosophy and Literature, Mexico State Autonomous University, said: “Srimanta Sankaradeva was one of the greatest literary figures in the world.”

The socio-ethical ideas of the Gita and the Bhagavad Purana served as the foundation for Srimanta Sankaradeva's approach. Despite this, he did not attempt to develop a new philosophical system and was not a philosopher in the traditional sense. However, he acknowledged the power of old Indian texts to resolve a number of philosophical issues. He agreed with the moral standards outlined in India's ethico-religious texts. Moral concepts include good-bad, is-ought, and right-wrong. In his many writings, Srimanta Sankaradeva employed these moral words. The many Kirtan-Ghosa verses include :

Nindibaka nahi, bandhibako nahi ñ
Parar dharmaka nihinsiba kadacit
Sakalo pranika dekhiba atma-sama
Satru-mitra-udasina sabato samana
Sabako maniba tumi Vishnu-buddhi kari.”

(Chutia, Sonaram, et al., 1998, p. 177)

Srimanta Sankaradeva, who lived throughout the Middle Ages, gave the people of northeastern India the foundation for a more fulfilling and environmentally concerned moral philosophy. Srimanta Sankaradeva opposes the anthropocentric, theistic perspective that now rules the Western world. Srimanta Sankaradeva's religious philosophy is flexible and dynamic, allowing for the use of contemporary terminology and ideas. His ethical perspective supports contemporary bio-centric and eco-centric thought. There is no distinction between man and nature in his ideas. Man, and nature have a biotic link that is always expanding :

“Charu sarovara nirmala jala
Sugandhi padma sobhe Utpal

Ache rajahansa samuhe Rajani
Lilaye mrnala bhunje ubhanji
Para parijat Malaya bava
Satake teja sulalita rava
Brahmara range gave harigeet

Vaisnavagana suni anandita.” (Chaliha, 1998, p. 39)

“On the clear water of the beautiful lake, fragrant lotus blooms, swans play and eat the lotus. On the bank, a beautiful breeze is blowing. Bumble bees are singing beautiful psalms to Lord Krishna. The hermits and Vaishnavas listen to them with happiness.”

Again, in Pasanda Mardana he writes :

“Garu gopika pasu brksya bana
Nahi janmantar kichu sadhana
Ehi janme matro kari bhakati

Paileka sakale mohora gati.” (Chaliha, 1998, p. 36)

“The cow, cowherds’ wife, other animals, and trees have not done anything for salvation in past, but in this life, they have been showing reverence and achieved salvation in Me.”

Nature and its whole dignity are accommodated by Srimanta Sankaradeva's ethical theory. He investigates using nature as a vehicle to convey religious concepts to the general public. Man's close relationship with nature plays a crucial role in bringing the supernatural right into his heart. The nature-inspired drawings played a crucial role in transforming abstract concepts into tangible experiences.

Srimanta Sankaradeva emphasises the inherent worth of the natural world. He exalted both nature and humanity in their respective roles. Srimanta Sankaradeva spreads the attributes of *nirguna* Krishna through nature. He never forgets that since man is a part of nature, there is no distinction between the two. Throughout his worldview, the eco-centric idea that we should appreciate nature because it has given us all we need to have a wonderful life predominates. All sentient and non-sentient beings are endowed with inherent worth by the general spirit of Srimanta Sankaradeva's ethics, which regards man as the guardian of values due to his rational knowledge and self-consciousness.

Peter Singer and His Ethical Overview :

Peter Singer is a well-known analytical philosopher and applied ethicist. Although he has written and lectured on a variety of topics, his

contributions to the animal liberation cause are what made him most famous. Born in Australia in 1946, Singer's family fled Nazi-occupied Austria to Australia. R.M. Hare, who continues to have a significant impact on Singer's thought, was his thesis advisor while he was a student at Oxford University. After teaching at Monash University for most of his career, Peter Singer was named professor of bioethics at Princeton in 1999, which sparked a wave of complaints. Singer has won several accolades but also faced controversy. Protesters in Germany and Switzerland have driven him off stages and drowned him out. Currently, Singer splits his time between Princeton and Australia, where he teaches at the University of Melbourne as a laureate professor.

In applied ethics, Peter Singer has made significant contributions and continues to do so. He is well-known for his works *Animal Liberation* and *Practical Ethics*, which address a variety of real-world ethical concerns such as euthanasia, abortion, and animal emancipation. Many modern philosophers recognize Singer's significance in practical ethics. According to Jeffrey A. Schaller:

“Why Peter Singer is important? In part because he puts his finger on moral or ethical issues that many of us consider vital, but shy away from confronting and discussing issues such as how best to live, who should live and who should die, the relative importance of humans and animals, including humans of limited abilities” (Schaller, 2009, p. xvii).

Even though Singer is significant in debates of practical ethics, his importance is not demonstrated by the widespread acceptance of his opinions on many topics. Instead, Singer's significance stems from addressing often-ignored topics. He has been called “possibly the world's most controversial philosopher” (Rooney, 2004). In 2004, he was named “Australian Humanist of the Year.” *Newsweek* highlighted Singer's *Animal Liberation* as a cornerstone of the modern animal rights movement (May 23, 1988). According to Dale Jamieson, “this book was given away for many years by people advocating the ethical treatment of animals... now is one of the largest and most effective animal rights organisations in the world” (Jamieson, 1999, p. 1).

Peter Singer is a utilitarian who advocates preference utilitarianism. Utilitarianism holds that an action's moral value is exclusively based on how it contributes to total utility, such as increasing happiness. Because utilitarianism is consequentialist, Singer's ethics are

essentially a form of consequentialism. Consequentialism holds that an action is ethically correct if it results in positive outcomes or consequences. As Beauchamp (2001) explains:

“Utilitarianism maintains that one must choose the action that would produce the best consequences for all persons affected by that action... the concept of duty, obligation, and right are subordinated to and determined by that which maximizes the good” (p. 104).

Singer supports choice utilitarianism, which is predicated on the satisfaction principle. He applies this perspective to practical ethical dilemmas. In his groundbreaking 1975 book, Singer argued that both humans and animals have the capacity to experience pleasure and suffering, and this capacity grounds their interests. He writes:

“The capacity for suffering and enjoyment is a prerequisite for having interests at all... We can attempt to compare the amount of suffering or pleasure between species, but Singer admits that precise comparisons are difficult” (Singer, 1975, p. 17).

Peter Singer emphasizes “equal consideration” rather than “equal treatment” of interests (Singer, 1975). Recognizing the capacity to suffer or enjoy as the fundamental shared attribute between humans and animals leads to this principle. He critiques speciesism, the unjustified privileging of humans over animals arguing:

“... if we consider it wrong to inflict that much pain on a baby for no good reason then we must, unless we are speciesists, consider it equally wrong to inflict the same amount of pain on a horse for no good reason” (Singer, 1975, p. 16).

Singer’s utilitarian animal ethics focus on the equal consideration of interests of sentient beings, combined with the ability to feel pain or suffer. Philosopher Tom Regan presents an alternative view, claiming sentient beings who see themselves as “subjects of life” possess inherent value, which gives them strong moral rights implicating duties for humans (Regan, 1983). Other approaches like virtue ethics and feminist care ethics also contribute insights, emphasizing the moral character of individuals and asymmetric relationships of care toward animals. The current interest in animal treatment goes beyond isolated instances of cruelty and advocates for significant changes in our traditional attitudes toward animals.

Conclusion

Srimanta Sankaradeva and Peter Singer's comparative study of animal ethics highlights both similarities and differences that enhance current debates over moral regard for nonhuman animals. By claiming the inherent worth of animals and highlighting compassion and nonviolence as moral requirements, both philosophers significantly challenge anthropocentrism. Srimanta Sankaradeva's bio-centric and eco-centric worldview emphasises the interconnection of life within a spiritual framework by extending moral concern beyond sentient beings to the entire natural environment. This all-encompassing viewpoint promotes peace between people and the environment by cultivating a profound ecological sense in which people are protectors of nature rather than its exploiters. Peter Singer's utilitarian ethics, on the other hand, prioritise sentient creatures according to their ability to suffer, encouraging equal treatment of interests regardless of species. His forceful critique of speciesism continues to be a cornerstone of contemporary animal liberation groups and has sparked important moral and legal changes all across the world. However, Srimanta Sankaradeva's emphasis on wider environmental and ecological values is not completely addressed by Singer's approach, which mostly focusses on sentient creatures and frequently restricts ethical concern to pain and pleasure. Singer's ethics come from secular, analytical traditions, but Srimanta Sankaradeva's philosophy is firmly rooted in a spiritual and cultural framework. This discrepancy demonstrates the complexity of animal ethics, where spiritual and logical perspectives may provide complementary understandings. While Singer's utilitarian framework offers precise standards for handling animal suffering in real-world situations, Srimanta Sankaradeva's eco-centric perspective encourages modern ethics to embrace a more integrated, sustainable connection with nature. When taken as a whole, their viewpoints add to a deeper, more complex comprehension of animal ethics. A complete moral framework that respects both individual sentient beings and the larger ecological community may be fostered by combining Srimanta Sankaradeva's holistic regard for life with Singer's strict advocacy for animal concerns in future ethical debate. In a world that is becoming more conscious of the rights and welfare of all living things, such synthesis is crucial for tackling the difficult ethical problems of our day.

Yes! Based on general knowledge and normal editions of the literature you specified, I have included approximate publishing years. I've left "n.d." (no date) for a handful when the precise year is unclear or not given. Verify and amend any particular information that is lacking.

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The Fine Balance between Hope and Despair: Humanism in Rohinton Mistry's Fiction

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Abstract:

Rohinton Mistry's fiction captures the fragility of human endurance within the oppressive frameworks of postcolonial India. His novels *Such a Long Journey* (1991) and *A Fine Balance* (1995) trace ordinary lives pressed by political corruption, social inequality, and historical violence. However, Mistry's voice in the narrative maintains trust in moral strength, generosity, and respect. This study emphasizes on his ability to maintain a fine balance between optimism and despair, demonstrating that humanism is a way of life rather than only an emotion. Through small acts of solidarity—sharing food, creating makeshift families, and being honest even when it's hard, characters find meaning in their precarious situations and fight against the slow process of dehumanization. The study emphasizes domestic environments, friendships, and ethical considerations as arenas where endurance transforms into agency. It contends that Mistry's fortitude is intentional, lived, and socially constructed, striking a balance between instances of loss and humiliation and portrayals of compassion. By examining these subtle acts of resistance, the study restores humanism as a way of life that maintains hope even when things are horrible all around.

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Keywords: Resilience, humanism, everyday ethics, postcolonial India

Introduction :

Rohinton Mistry is one of the most humane and morally aware storytellers in postcolonial Indian fiction. Mistry was born in Bombay in 1952 and later moved to Canada. He writes from the point of view of a diasporic observer, someone who looks back at India with both love and pain. His fiction connects the personal and the political by showing how urban life is becoming more immoral and how people who live with dignity despite having little can survive. Peter Morey says that Mistry's fiction "combines political realism with a profound human sympathy, transforming the ordinary into the epic" (Rohinton Mistry: Contemporary World Writers 22). The author illustrates the delicate equilibrium between hope and despair in *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*. Mistry's characters navigate life's uncertainties amid political unrest, exemplified by the Indo-Pakistani conflict in *Such a Long Journey* and the Emergency in *A Fine Balance*. His humanism is in embracing pain with fortitude and compassion rather than in rejecting it.

Mistry's works, which live on the contrast between individual sorrow and communal fortitude, serve as a reminder to readers that even in the midst of institutional injustice, there are poignant and ethically relevant moments. His stories recall the textures of urban strife, and every act of charity becomes an affirmation of dignity. Mistry's gentle words and profound observations bring the hidden to light, giving voice to people silenced by bigotry and poverty. His writing's emotional honesty transcends age and cultural borders, allowing readers to face sorrow front on rather than surrender to it. As a result, his view of humanism broadens and becomes more personal.

Objectives :

- To study how Mistry underscores empathy, dignity, and daily resilience in the context of oppression in *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*.
- To examine how domestic spaces and relationships promote ethical resistance and humanism amid violence, caste discrimination and urban precarity.

Methodology :

This research paper is carried out using analytical and interpretative methodologies. This study employs both primary and secondary sources.

Selected text serves as primary sources, while secondary sources include essays, articles, and books that provide critical interpretation relevant to the study.

Discussion and Analysis :

Humanism and Common Man in Mistry's Fiction :

Gustad Noble, a Parsi bank clerk who resided in Bombay in the early 1970s and his life's journey is the subject of Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*. The story starts with scenes of family life, like washing walls, lighting diyas, and keeping track of children's education. But it quickly turns into a picture of a society that is broken because of politics and rules.

Even though Gustad's life is constrained by petty routines and personal worries, he exemplifies moral integrity in a decaying society. Gustad's allegiance and morality are tested when his friend Jimmy Bilimoria becomes entangled in a covert political scandal involving government theft. Through Gustad, Mistry depicts the common man's dilemma between survival and morality.

Gustad mourns, "No future for minorities, with all these fascist Shiv Sena politics and Marathi language nonsense" (*Such a Long Journey* 105), in one particularly striking passage. This assertion articulates a clear understanding and concern about the threats posed to the ethical underpinnings of society due to collective intolerance. Mistry's realism arises from modest deeds of moral reflection rather than melodrama. Gustad's empathy for others—including his servant, Tehmul, the pavement artist, and even his distant friends allows him to maintain his humanity.

The character of Tehmul, mentally challenged and often marginalized, becomes the moral heart of the novel. His innocent death at the end—accidental but very meaningful—drives home Mistry's main point: in an unfair society, purity and innocence often die, but their memory makes the survivors holy. As critic Nilufer Bharucha notes, "Mistry invests the lives of his simple characters with a moral grandeur that transcends their social insignificance" (*Rohinton Mistry: Ethnic Enclosure... 78*).

In Gustad's world, despair is inevitable, but it coexists with endurance. The last scene, in which Gustad fixes the wall of his compound by painting it again, is a metaphor for moral rebuilding. Mistry sees hope as strong, not triumphant. It is the ability to rebuild

in the middle of ruins. While *Such a Long Journey* depicts the moral fortitude of the middle class, *A Fine Balance* shows how Mistry's idea of humanism can include the poor who are on the outside and are trying to survive under the cruelty of political and social hierarchies. The strength of the narrative comes from how it shows how ordinary people deal with extraordinary pain. Mistry uses the characters Ishvar and Omprakash Darji to show how caste oppression has left a terrible mark on modern India. Ishvar bitterly states early in the novel, "We must be thankful for small mercies—at least we are alive to see another day" (*A Fine Balance* 147). This sentence sums up the fragile hope that keeps Mistry's characters going: a belief in endurance rather than transcendence.

Dina Dalal's home becomes a moral microcosm in which diverse lives intersect and human empathy dissolves societal barriers. In a moving moment, Dina tells Ishvar, "You have no idea how grateful I am for your friendship - it gives me courage to face this world" (*A Fine Balance* 292). In this case, Mistry turns economic dependence into mutual recognition, breaking down class barriers by showing how vulnerable everyone is. According to Rosie Thomas, "Mistry's fiction shows the everyday heroism of the powerless, finding greatness in acts of survival" (118). Instead of romanticizing pain, the novel's humanism gives it respect by demonstrating how love, laughter, and perseverance can endure even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Despair and Dignity in Mistry's Works :

Mistry's portrayal of Gustad Noble in *Such a Long Journey* is a prime example of the complex interplay between dignity and sorrow that underpins his overall humanitarian viewpoint. Gustad's life takes place in Bombay, where the moral and social structures are falling apart. However, his strength shows the quiet heroism of everyday life. He feels alone in his own home, worries about corruption in the government, and is betrayed by friends, yet he nevertheless treats himself with love and respect. Mistry's view that pessimism should not deprive us of moral purpose is summed up in his idea that "life is full of miseries, but we must make room for hope, even in the cracks of the wall" (*Such a Long Journey* 214). The fractured wall that continues appearing is a powerful metaphor of perseverance, both for individuals and communities. It shows that moral renewal is possible even in the middle of destruction. Feroza

Jussawalla wisely says, “Mistry reclaims the middle-class consciousness as a site of ethical resistance, where the smallest gestures acquire revolutionary value” (92). Mistry contends that dignity transcends the privilege of the wealthy, serving instead as a quiet act of defiance against hopelessness, as demonstrated by Gustad’s steadfast integrity and empathy towards others.

While *Such a Long Journey* looks at the moral problems of the middle class, *A Fine Balance* looks at the problems of the poor who were oppressed during India’s Emergency (1975–77). The novel has four main characters: Dina Dalal, a seamstress who is a widow; Ishvar and Omprakash Darji, two low-caste tailors who are running away from persecution in the countryside; and Maneck Kohlah, a student who is haunted by feeling alone. They meet in Bombay, where they form a fragile community based on their shared humanity and need for money. The main paradox – the precarious balance between perseverance and hopelessness – is hinted at in Mistry’s title alone. Dina cautions Maneck early on in the book, “You have to maintain a fine balance between hope and despair. You must have hope but not expect miracles if you want to live (*A Fine Balance* 231). How to live morally in the face of suffering without giving in to cynicism becomes the moral compass of the story.

Mistry’s realism is harsh but also kind. The descriptions of the horrible things that happened during the Emergency, like forced sterilisation campaigns, the demolition of slums, and police brutality are rendered with journalistic precision. But what makes Mistry’s vision stand out is that he won’t take away the dignity of his characters. Ishvar and Om, even though they have been humiliated and lost, are still examples of perseverance. Their friendship with Dina goes beyond social hierarchies and becomes a quiet act of defiance against caste and class oppression. Mistry describes how the tailors “felt their manhood stolen, their humanity reduced to the pain of a single wound” (*A Fine Balance* 413) after being detained during a police roundup and forced to undergo sterilisation. The harsh yet poetic sentence perfectly captures how political tyranny violates both body and spirit. However, the tragedy doesn’t end with nihilism. Mistry always supports the moral freedom of his characters, showing that they can laugh, love, and keep going.

Amit Chaudhuri says Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* “restores moral

complexity to the postcolonial novel by insisting that goodness, even in its futility, remains a form of resistance" (45). Dina Dalal's willingness to share her house with tailors despite societal shame shows togetherness in a divided nation.

The Politics of Hope

Both the works of Mistry situate humanism in the microcosm of ordinary life. For Mistry, politics is an intrusive presence that taints personal relationships rather than being an abstract force. However, his fiction also shows that morality and compassion are ways to resist politics. In *Such a Long Journey*, Gustad's refusal to accept the easy cynicism of his peers shows that moral idealism can last even when it is disappointed. Dina Dalal's little home in *A Fine Balance* symbolizes community—a place where people of all classes and religions may live respectfully. The traditionally feminine and private home transforms into a hub of moral courage.

Mistry's politics of hope are based on the moral choices that ordinary people make in difficult times, rather than huge revolutions. His characters overcome despair by completing small activities that show they care about others, transforming the house into a space of muted resistance. The fragile community that grew in Dina Dalal's flat is proof that people can stay together even when things are falling apart. Critic Ellen Dengel-Janic in his scholarly essay "Ethics and Empathy in Rohinton Mistry's Fiction" says, "Mistry's vision of hope is inseparable from the ethical necessity of human connection; his fiction insists that compassion itself is a political act" (64). Mistry confronts the cynicism that frequently characterizes postcolonial disappointment by placing a higher value on caring, memory, and common sense. His depiction of the helpless as morally strong humans indicates that hope may endure in the face of injustice—not as a fiction, but as a manifestation of humanity's resistance. Mistry writes via Dina's thoughts, "When all the laughter has been squeezed out of life, like the juice from a lime, what remains but to fight for a few drops of kindness?" (*A Fine Balance* 497). This humanistic philosophy influences Mistry's moral viewpoint. Hope is not foolish optimism, but a conscious act of perseverance. This point of view is seen by Peter Morey as "a secular faith in humanity, achieved not through grand ideologies but through empathy and endurance" (*Rohinton Mistry: Contemporary World Writers* 39).

Mistry's characters seldom discover redemption in religion or politics; rather, they attain it through compassion, friendship, and moral perseverance.

Human Suffering and Ethics of Compassion :

Mistry's humanism comes from his deep understanding that suffering is something that all people go through. His stories are similar to the existential idea that despair gives meaning to life. In both *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*, the main characters face humiliation, pain, and moral compromise, yet they never succumb to inhumanity. Mistry encourages his characters to embrace empathy rather than hatred in *Such a Long Journey* by demonstrating how suffering can be both a burden and an awakening. Gustad learns that compassion is a fundamental moral imperative via his encounters with sorrow, which include the death of a loved one, betrayal, and a crisis of faith. Mistry demonstrates the moral development that emerges from adversity when he asserts, "perhaps the only way to survive is to forgive, to hold no grudges in a world so full of them" (*Such a Long Journey* 276). This shift is what gives the work its subtle power: how suffering deepens our understanding and how acknowledging one another's suffering turns into a lifelong act of human solidarity.

Humanism based on empathy rather than idealism is demonstrated by Gustad's empathy for Tehmul and his grudging forgiveness of his friend Jimmy, whom he has been estranged from. Realizing the limitations of judgement is the key to his moral development. "Perhaps forgiveness," he reflects, "was the only thing left in a world without justice" (*Such a Long Journey* 318). Likewise, *A Fine Balance*, when Ishvar and Om lose their livelihood and are forced to beg, the novel does not reduce them to victims. Mistry presents their plight with dignity. "They begged with pride, as though offering a service - reminding the world of its own brutality" (*A Fine Balance* 561). This power inversion, where the beggar symbolizes society's conscience, encapsulates Mistry's ethical perspective. Nilufer Bharucha claims that Mistry's fiction "transforms suffering into a form of knowledge, recognition of humanity's shared vulnerability" (Rohinton Mistry: *Ethnic Enclosure...* 84). His ability to turn pain into moral insight is what makes his story so powerful. Mistry explores suffering as the basis for empathy and an inevitable aspect of human life in *A Fine Balance*. He illustrates

the difficulties faced by Dina, Ishvar, Om, and Maneck, showing how empathy usually arises from suffering rather than from ease. Dina's statement, "The world is full of grief, but it is also full of love that refuses to die" (*A Fine Balance* 458) encapsulates Mistry's moral philosophy. Suffering unites people, forcing characters to show kindness to each other even when the world doesn't give them justice or stability.

Despair as Moral Awakening :

In Mistry's novels, despair is not just a state of mind; it is also a cause. This illustrates the extent to which faith and endurance can influence characters' self-reflection. Mistry portrays despair not as an endpoint but as a pivotal moment that heightens moral awareness. The characters are devoid of illusion; however, through their suffering, they discover the resilience to persevere. They realise that the only way to be forgiven is to accept what happened instead of running away from it. This means being able to find meaning and kindness even when you are feeling spiritually empty. The end of *Such a Long Journey* is Gustad's spiritual renewal in the middle of sadness. His idea of Tehmul's innocence and his decision to repaint the wall show that moral regeneration starts with accepting despair. As critic Neil Ten Kortenaar notes, "Mistry's fiction recognizes despair not as defeat but as the ground from which compassion grows" (*Postcolonial Ethics and Narrative...* 62)

In *A Fine Balance*, Maneck's tragic suicide after years of being alone shows that this balance has failed and hope has died. Even after he died the narrative shows how important human connection is through Dina's ongoing kindness. As demonstrated by Dina's silent tenacity, Mistry suggests that moral awareness usually results via group suffering rather than individual redemption. Her perseverance is evidence of the tenacity of human empathy, even when it is marked by loneliness. Chelva Kanaganayakam says, "Mistry transforms the anguish of existence into a moral consciousness that refuses despair, choosing compassion as its final gesture" (131). Dina's small acts of kindness, which may seem unimportant, are a reflection of a larger truth about people: that dignity and kindness last not because suffering ends, but because the heart insists on enduring it with grace.

So, despair is what strengthens Mistry's humanism. His characters and readers learn the moral need for empathy through their

suffering. His story's context resembles India's societal difficulties, yet it does not succumb to pessimism. The delicate equilibrium between hope and despair constitutes neither an optimal condition nor a static state; rather, it represents an ongoing struggle and a moral imperative.

Conclusion :

Rohinton Mistry's fiction reimagines humanism for a postcolonial era characterised by disillusionment and inequality. In *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*, Mistry explains how ordinary people—bank clerks, tailors, widows, and students—maintain their dignity in the face of institutionalised injustice. Mistry shows that optimism and despair are linked facets of human existence because of their resilience.

His humanism encourages kindness but offers no assurances of salvation. The 'fine balance' in his title refers to maintaining faith in humanity while acknowledging its suffering, which is both existential and moral. His characters' suffering and tenacity serve as a reminder to readers that moral tenacity, despite its frailty, is the most potent kind of hope.

Mistry's fiction ultimately encourages readers to confront suffering not as despair but as a means of moral enlightenment. His characters' quiet strength shows that it is possible to be morally renewed even in harsh situations. Mini Kapoor in her scholarly article "Decency as Defiance: The Moral Vision of Rohinton Mistry" writes, "Mistry's world is one where decency itself becomes an act of rebellion, a way to reclaim humanity from the debris of history" (57). This vision transforms ordinary resilience into profound moral courage. Mistry turns tragedy into testimony by making pain more human and celebrating endurance. He reminds us that hope, even when it is weak, is a necessary way to fight against the world's indifference.

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The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and M. N. Roy : A Comparative Study

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Abstract :

This paper examines the political philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and M. N. Roy. M.K. Gandhi and M. N. Roy were two thinkers who had very different effects on modern India. They both really cared about India's freedom and social change, but they had very different beliefs and ways of doing things, even though they sometimes crossed paths. Gandhi's political beliefs were based on moral values like truth, nonviolence, spiritual humanism, and the idea that villages should be in charge of their own affairs. Roy, on the other hand, believed in reason, science, the physical world, and a kind of democratic humanism that went beyond borders. Here, I look at what they both thought about the big ideas, like the state, power, freedom, the individual and society, democracy, and revolution. To change society, Gandhi relied on moral self-control, hands-on work that was helpful, and peaceful resistance. Roy wanted India to be modern and look to the future. He called for organised politics, democratic institutions, and radical humanism. But they both believed in human rights, social justice, and freeing people who are being suppressed. They were very against any kind of

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imperialism or authoritarianism. This study demonstrates the enduring significance of Gandhi and Roy by situating their philosophies within the context of India's quest for independence and the broader realm of political thought. Their ideas help us deal with the issues of freedom, democracy, violence, and development in the present. By comparing their methods, we can learn more about Indian political thought and get new ideas for how to deal with the political and moral issues we face today.

Keywords : Political philosophy, nonviolence, radical humanism, democracy, freedom, social change

Introduction :

The intellectual tradition of contemporary India is shaped by diverse thinkers whose perspectives on freedom, justice, and the organisation of social and political life are in conflict. Two notable figures in this regard are Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Manabendra Nath Roy, whose contributions have significantly influenced political philosophy and practice. Gandhi's ideas became the symbol of India's fight for freedom and moral renewal. Instead, M.N. Roy became a radical opponent of colonialism and traditional forms of Marxism, advocating for a humanist and scientific perspective on political affairs. Gandhi and Roy both wrote against imperialism and social oppression, but they had different ideas about human nature, violence, nonviolence, how the state should be organised, and how to bring about social change. A comparative analysis of their ideologies elucidates the complexities of anti-colonial movements and politics in post-colonial India.

Objectives :

- To examine the principal political concepts of Mahatma Gandhi and M. N. Roy.
- To compare their political ideologies regarding liberty, governance, democracy, social change etc. and the relevance of both thinkers.

Methodology :

The study employs a qualitative, analytical, and comparative methodology. Primary and secondary sources like reference books are used. Internet is also used here in this research paper.

Discussion :

The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi :

Mahatma Gandhi's political philosophy is regarded as the most original, ethical, and simultaneously the most influential among

contemporary political theorists, all of whom share a strong moralistic perspective. Gandhi, unlike other theorists, was the only one who thought that truth, nonviolence, and self-discipline should be the main tools for making an individual change in society. Gandhi believed that politics and ethics were the same thing. He thought that political activity without a moral basis was not only useless but also very risky. His philosophy emerged as a protest against colonial rule, social and moral injustices, and in favour of creating an equitable and just society marked by peaceful and dignified existence. Gandhi put the idea of truth, Aretz (Satya), at the heart of everything he did. He believed that this power came from God, who is the ultimate reality and the guiding principle of human life. He said, "My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth" (Gandhi, 554). He believed that political activities should be governed by transparency in thought, speech, and action. Ahimsa (non-violence) is closely related to this. Gandhi said it was the highest moral standard and the best weapon for the oppressed. He said that non-violence is not a sign of weakness, but a brave and conscious choice to stand up to injustice without hate or revenge. Gandhi, through Satyagraha, infused his so-called "force of truth" with a novel method of political struggle that relied solely on the moral sensibilities of both the oppressor and the oppressed through patience and self-denial.

Gandhi's political philosophy constituted one of the most significant civil disobedience movements against oppression throughout his life. He thought that political freedom meant being able to govern oneself. He also said that it was the growth of people in moral, spiritual, and personal ways. He thought that true freedom could not be achieved if the people were only polite and corrupt instead of very hard. He also thought that political freedom needed to be accompanied by inner change. Gandhi thought about decentralized power. And he thought that a state of village republics where people from different communities could live together in peace, respect, and simplicity. He was against the idea of advanced technology and a centralized government. Because he thought that they led to oppression, unemployment, and a decline in moral values. Instead, he suggested a development model based on self-sufficiency, handicrafts, and rural areas. He also believed that economies should serve people, not just make money.

Another important part of Gandhi's political ideas was his vision of social justice and equality. He fought against untouchability, caste discrimination, and all other forms of social oppression. He was always busy in helping the poor, women, and minority groups. He even gave them a name: Harijans, which means "children of God." He decided that fighting for independence was pointless without social reform, so he connected the fight for independence to the movements for moral regeneration and social harmony. His idea of trusteeship was a moral alternative to both capitalism and socialism. He said that people who have money should think of themselves as trustees of society and use their money for the good of all, not for their own pleasure. Gandhi's political philosophy was not just for India; it was also for the world stage. He pushed for peace, nonviolence, and respect between countries. He rejected war as a means of political power and suggested that only justice and cooperation could bring about a lasting peace. His ideas sparked the civil rights and nonviolent struggle around the world. Specially, Martin Luther King, Watts and Nelson Mandela carried Gandhian ideas into different historical struggles and made Gandhian philosophy popular all over the world.

M. N. Roy's Political Philosophy :

M. N. Roy is a unique figure in modern Indian political thought. His thoughts combine revolutionary activism, scientific rationalism, and a strong sense of human ethics. Roy didn't rely on religion or old customs like a lot of his friends did. Instead, he used reason, real-world experience, and the lens of modern science. He began as a passionate nationalist and then helped start the Communist movement in India, but he didn't stop there. Roy then came up with his own idea, Radical Humanism, which is a good summary of his mature thought. Roy says, "Radicalism does not think about class or nation; it thinks about people. It sees freedom as the freedom of the individual" (Roy, 37). Roy's beliefs never changed, even when his life took unexpected turns. He always believed that freedom is the most important thing, that people's dignity can't be ignored, and that society needs to keep moving forward. He believed that politics should be based on reason and moral duty, not on empty slogans or strict rules. He saw British colonial rule crush India when he was a child, and that hurt him deeply. At first, he was sure that India could not get its freedom by being nice. He joined the fight against the

empire and looked for allies in other countries. Because, he believed that only a global revolution could break its dominance. This way of thinking led him to Marxism. Roy didn't think of Marxism as just a theory; he thought it was the best way to destroy both capitalism and imperialism. He became a key figure in the international communist movement, always pushing for class struggle and a proletarian revolution. He was very involved in communist groups. He didn't believe everything that the party or the groups told him. He criticized their dogmatic way of thinking, especially how they forced European models on Asian societies without really looking at what was going on in those societies. Roy thought that political theory should come from real social conditions and history. Roy didn't stay true to orthodox Marxism for very long. He began to doubt everything, especially the idea that economics always comes first. Roy thought that taking away people's civil rights in the name of socialism was just wrong. He believed that politics should liberate individuals rather than confine them. From this time he started to change the way he thought. He started to put the person above the class or the state. Roy said that real progress can't happen if people can't think, talk, and get together.

Roy's ideas eventually became Radical Humanism, which is his most complete and thoughtful view on politics. He rejected both the exploitation of capitalism and the authoritarianism of communism, envisioning a world founded on reason, science, and genuine ethical responsibility. Roy believes that the most important thing about politics is to helping people to become free, creative, and morally strong. He didn't think of the state as a boss who could do anything. It should help to lead the society in order, protect people's rights, and get everyone to work together. Roy was not only talking about voting every few years when he talked about democracy. He meant something bigger: a whole way of life that values real participation, spreads out power, and lets people make their own choices. Roy fought hard for a political system that starts with people - real, local communities in charge of their own lives. He didn't trust any system where power is concentrated at the top, whether it's in the hands of party leaders or big businesses. He said that kind of focus always leads to tyranny. Roy believes that real democracy doesn't come from above; it comes from the ground up, with regular people getting involved in all parts of life, including politics,

economics, and culture. He in this regard advocated an organized democracy. He also stressed how important education is. Democracy doesn't work without it. People can't really be free if they don't know what's going on. Political rights are meaningless without education; they become mere spectacles, susceptible to exploitation by demagogues and aspiring tyrants.

One important idea about Roy's political beliefs is that they are very rational and secular. He did not want politics to be run by religion or mystical ideas. He thought that political institutions should be based on reason and science, not old beliefs or traditions. But it doesn't mean that he never thought of ethical values. He thought that truth, justice, tolerance, and working together were very important for keeping society peaceful and stable. Roy thought that only being politically free wasn't enough. Things fall apart quickly when people don't feel morally responsible. But according to Roy, moral values are meaningless without individual freedom and freedom of speech. Roy did not mere fight against colonial rule; he also spoke out against the dangers of narrow nationalism in India. He supported the fight for independence, but he didnot want to trade one type of control for another. Roy spoke out against communalism and said that India needed to build a future on democracy, secularism, and real social progress. For him, true nation-building meant changing society, making the economy more equal, and encouraging cultural growth, not just claiming political freedom. Roy went beyond nationalism and was interested in internationalism. He believed in the wider view of humanism and therefore he supported a cosmopolitan society of cross-cultural exchange, mutual respect among different communities and a society of free men and women.

Comparative Analysis :

Similarities between Mahatma Gandhi and M. N. Roy :

Gandhi and Roy agreed on a lot of important issues about human freedom, social justice, and political change, even though they had different ideas about political matters.

1. **Freedom for people :** They both put freedom for people at the top of their lists. Gandhi believed that political freedom meant real respect for everyone. He talked about Swaraj, which means self-rule, not just for the country but for each person. He thought it began with moral strength and self-control. Roy agreed that freedom was important, but

he had a different view of it. He spoke in rational, non-religious terms, saying that freedom needs intellectual independence, social equality, and economic justice. For both of them, freedom meant more than just kicking the British out. It was about making a world where people could really grow and live with respect.

2. **Against colonialism and imperialism** : They both hated colonialism. Gandhi led huge, peaceful protests and used moral arguments to call out the British. Roy used Marxist analysis to attack imperialism as a system that took advantage of poor countries to make money. Gandhi's reasons were more moral and spiritual, while Roy's were more logical and economic. But they both thought that colonial rule was wrong and very harmful.

3. **Justice for All** : Both Gandhi and Roy thought that social change was very important. Gandhi fought hard against the caste system, untouchability, and the exploitation of workers. He wanted a society where everyone was equal and helped each other. Roy also fought for social justice, but his main goal was to free workers, peasants, and other groups that were not free. They did it in different ways, but both wanted to make the world a better place for everyone.

4. **Mass participation in politics** : Gandhi and Roy both thought that politics should not be left to the elite. They understood that everyone needs to be involved for real change to happen. With Satyagraha, his positive programs, and grassroots village movements, Gandhi got millions of people to support him. Roy, especially when he was a communist, stressed how important it was for the people to be politically aware and willing to fight for change together. Both believed that democracy only works when regular people are involved.

5. **Politics and Morality** : For both, politics without morals was useless. V.P. Verma states, "Gandhi accepted the spiritual orientation to politics, sociology and economics" (Verma, 339). Gandhi put morality first, because, he thought that dirty tricks hurt even the best causes. Later, as a Radical Humanist, Roy stopped believing in strict ideologies and put human values, reason, and moral duty above all else in politics. Both of them stood up strongly against cynicism, authoritarianism, and any kind of abuse.

6. **A New Society** : Both Gandhi and Roy had big dreams. Gandhi saw a society that was peaceful, self-sufficient, and decentralized, based on

spiritual values and working together. Roy envisioned a society governed by reason, science, democracy, and liberty - where economic justice held tangible significance. Both of them refused to accept oppression, and deep down, they both hoped for a world that was truly free and kind.

Differences between Gandhi and M. N. Roy :

Gandhi and Roy may have similar goals for India, but their basic beliefs and plans were very different.

1. **Spiritual Idealism vs. rational materialism** : Gandhi built everything on a spiritual base. Religion, ethics, and even metaphysics shaped his view of politics and morality. He believed in people's sense of right and wrong. Roy didn't believe that. He said that religion and metaphysics had no place in politics and instead relied heavily on reason, science, and the things that are in the real world. Gandhi thought people had good hearts, but Roy thought they had good brains.

2. **Non-Violence vs. Revolutionary Struggle** : Gandhi's goal wasn't just to be nonviolent; it was the whole point. He believed that violence hurt everyone involved, no matter what the reason. He thought that only moral persuasion could bring about real peace. Roy, at least when he was younger, thought differently. He supported revolution and even violence when he thought it was necessary to break down systems that were unfair. Roy never agreed with Gandhi's strict non-violence principles.

3. **Vision of the Village vs. the Factory** : Gandhi put villages on a pedestal. He wanted India to be based on small communities that could take care of themselves and run on local businesses. Roy didn't have time for this nostalgia; he thought that real progress needed science, technology, and industry. Gandhi was afraid that industrialization would destroy traditional values. Roy said it could finally help people get out of poverty and lack of knowledge.

4. **Politics and Religion** : Gandhi thought that spiritual values gave politics a moral compass, so he mixed religion with politics. Roy thought that mixing the two would be a disaster. He said that religion in politics only made people make bad decisions and made things worse. His Radical Humanism put secular ethics and scientific thinking above all else.

5. **On democracy** : Gandhi thought of democracy as a bottom-up system in which village communities had power and people were responsible for their own actions. Roy thought of democracy as a modern, institutional thing that was based on rights, civil liberties, science, and

education. Gandhi was more concerned with moral duties, while Roy was more concerned with individual liberty and rational thought. Roy advocated a democracy where people will get together and will prefer their own choices which he called organized democracy.

6. About Nationalism : Gandhi thought that nationalism was a good thing that could bring people together and set them free. Gandhi advocated a decentralized nationalism. But Roy was still not sure. Roy was more interested in internationalism and a broader view of humanity. He advocated a society of mutual respect to each other, a society of free men and women which he named 'the cosmopolitan society'.

7. Ultimate Goal of Politics : Gandhi's ultimate goal was to find Truth and moral perfection. Roy wanted a world where people could be as free as possible. For Gandhi, the ultimate goal of politics was to create a fair, peaceful, and morally perfect society, which would lead to the spiritual growth of all people. For M. N. Roy, the ultimate objective of politics was the establishment of a rational, democratic, and classless society founded on human liberty and social equity.

Findings :

When Mahatma Gandhi and M. N. Roy's political philosophies are compared, it becomes clear that while both intellectuals were fervently dedicated to the liberation and moral advancement of Indian society, they suggested essentially different ideological routes to accomplish this objective. According to the study, Roy's political philosophy is based on rationalism, scientific humanism, materialism, and democratic collectivism, while Gandhi's is based on ethical idealism, spiritual humanism, non-violence, and decentralized self-rule. Roy prioritized structural and institutional reforms through reason and scientific investigation, whereas Gandhi emphasized the moral transformation of the individual as the basis of political change. The study also reveals that Roy promoted a contemporary, industrial, centrally planned democratic society, while Gandhi's vision of Swaraj emphasizes village autonomy and trusteeship. Though they disagreed on state power, economic structure, and the place of religion in politics, both intellectuals opposed colonial dominance and exploitation. The results show that Roy offers a secular-rational model of political reconstruction, whereas Gandhi offers a moral-spiritual framework for politics. Together, their philosophies enhance the theoretical underpinnings of Indian political thought by

offering complementary insights into the country's freedom movement and post-colonial political development.

Conclusion :

Gandhi and M. N. Roy influenced two distinct trajectories in contemporary Indian thought. Gandhi took a moral and spiritual approach, thinking that nonviolence, self-control, and sticking to moral principles could improve politics. Roy, on the other hand, believed in reason, democracy, and material progress. He wanted to rebuild society from the ground up with a logical, scientific approach. In this context, Samran Roy prioritizing Gandhi states, “Gandhi was a realist, ... And Gandhi was a success, while Roy was not.” (Roy, 16). It can be said that both Gandhi and Roy cared about freedom, justice, and dignity, even though they had different ideas about how to get them. Their ideas were different, and sometimes even clashed, but in the end, both of them made India's freedom movement much stronger. Their legacies still make us think about how to make our society more fair and humane.

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Academic Libraries and Copyright Laws in India

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Abstract

Academic libraries in India function as essential hubs of information dissemination, research support, and knowledge preservation. Their role bridges educational needs and intellectual property rights, yet they operate within the framework of copyright legislation that was historically crafted before the digital information revolution. The Indian Copyright Act, 1957 and its subsequent amendments remain the guiding legal instrument governing the use, reproduction, and distribution of copyrighted works, including those held by academic libraries. This paper examines how copyright laws in India impact academic libraries, focusing on statutory exemptions, fair dealing provisions, digital challenges, librarians' awareness, and the future of copyright reform. By analyzing Indian statutory law and academic scholarship, this paper elucidates the balance between protecting creators' rights and ensuring equitable access to information for research and education.

Keywords : Academic Libraries, Copyright Laws, IPR, India

Introduction :

Academic libraries are foundational to higher education and research in India. They support students, faculty, and researchers by providing access to books, journals, theses, digital databases, archival materials, and other scholarly content. However, the rights of authors

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and publishers to control and profit from their creative works, protected under copyright law, often intersect with the mission of libraries to facilitate knowledge access. Copyright grants creators exclusive rights over their works, but legal exceptions exist that permit limited reproduction and use without authorization. Understanding these exceptions is crucial for academic libraries to operate legitimately while maximizing access to information.

The Indian context presents a unique landscape where traditional library practices collide with contemporary digital challenges. Although the Copyright Act, 1957 predates widespread digital dissemination, it includes provisions that impact libraries' ability to serve their academic communities. This paper explores how Indian copyright law affects academic libraries, focusing on library exceptions and limitations, librarians' awareness of legal provisions, challenges posed by digital technologies, and potential legislative reforms.

Objective of the Study :

The present study aims to explore the relationship between academic libraries and copyright laws in India, with a focus on how legal frameworks influence access to information in educational institutions. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the key provisions of copyright laws in India that are relevant to academic libraries and educational use.
2. To analyze the role of academic libraries in ensuring lawful access to copyrighted materials while supporting teaching, learning, and research.
3. To identify the challenges faced by librarians and institutions in interpreting and applying copyright regulations in day-to-day operations.

Methodology :

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The research is primarily based on secondary data, collected from a wide range of sources including scholarly journals, books, government publications, legal documents, and official reports related to copyright laws and library science. Relevant case laws and policy documents have also been reviewed to understand the legal context.

Overview of Indian Copyright Law :

India's primary legislation governing intellectual property rights in creative works is the Copyright Act, 1957. This Act grants creators

exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, publicly perform, and adapt their works. It covers literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, cinematograph films, and sound recordings. The Act has been amended over time to address technological changes and align with international intellectual property treaties such as the Berne Convention and the TRIPS Agreement.

Section 52 of the Copyright Act outlines specific situations in which the use of copyrighted material does not constitute infringement. These exceptions are often referred to as “fair dealing” provisions because they permit certain uses without the copyright owner’s consent. Such uses include - reproduction for research and private study, reproduction for criticism or review, reporting of current events, libraries and archives making copies for preservation, non-commercial libraries making a limited number of copies of works not available in India, adaptation or reproduction for persons with disabilities. Section 52’s fair dealing exceptions are closed lists, meaning uses not specified here require permission from the copyright owner, unlike the more open-ended “fair use” doctrine in U.S. law.

Copyright Exceptions and Academic Libraries :

The Copyright Act permits certain activities that would otherwise be infringing if done by libraries:

- Making copies for preservation: Libraries may store works in electronic form for preservation if they already possess a non-digital copy.
- Limited reproduction of unavailable works: Non-commercial libraries can make up to three copies of a book not available for sale in India for their own use.
- Reproduction for research and private study: Libraries may reproduce works for the purpose of research or private study.

These library exceptions recognize the social value of facilitating research and preserving cultural heritage. However, strict conditions, such as the book not being available for sale in India or limiting the number of copies, constrain their practical impact. Fair dealing under Section 52 allows reproduction of copyrighted works for research and private study. This permits academic libraries to support educational activities without constantly seeking permission from rights holders. However, unlike fair use in other jurisdictions, Indian fair dealing is

qualitatively restrictive and does not involve a flexible test. It lists permissible categories and interprets them narrowly, often leading to ambiguity for librarians trying to navigate lawful reproduction. Section 52 also includes provisions allowing reproduction and adaptation of works for persons with disabilities, such as conversion into Braille or audio formats. This aligns with India's commitments under international treaties like the Marrakesh Treaty, aimed at expanding accessibility for visually impaired users.

Role of Academic Libraries within Copyright Law :

Academic libraries operate at the intersection of promoting knowledge access and respecting intellectual property rights. Copyright law seeks to incentivize creation by granting authors exclusive rights while ensuring that the public interest is served through limited exceptions. Libraries must balance these competing aims. They are expected to facilitate educational access, comply with copyright law and avoid unauthorized sharing of copyrighted content. Understanding and applying the narrow exceptions under Section 52 can be challenging for librarians, especially when transposing legal provisions designed for physical works to digital contexts.

The digital transformation of libraries heightens copyright concerns. Electronic journals, e-books, databases, and institutional repositories raise questions on rights clearance, licensing terms, and permissible uses. Many digital materials are governed by contractual licenses that go beyond statutory copyright limits. For example, a database subscription may restrict copying or sharing, even if fair dealing exceptions theoretically apply. In such cases, contractual obligations may constrain libraries more than statutory limitations.

Awareness and Copyright Literacy among Librarians :

Despite the importance of copyright law, studies indicate varying levels of awareness among library professionals. Research conducted among librarians in Maharashtra and Goa shows that while many librarians are generally aware of copyright law and exceptions, challenges remain in practical implementation.

Several factors contribute to this gap :

- Limited formal training on intellectual property rights during professional education
- Evolving interpretations of fair dealing

- Confusion between copyright and contractual restrictions
- Rapid digitization outpacing legal updates

Improving copyright literacy among librarians is crucial. Not only does it help ensure lawful operation, but it also enables educators and students to understand their rights and limitations.

Academic Libraries and Copyright Infringement Issues :

Reprographic and Digital Copying :

One common copyright concern for libraries involves reprographic copying. When libraries provide photocopies or digital reproductions of articles and book chapters for research purposes, they must ensure that such copies fall within fair dealing exceptions. The narrow scope of Indian fair dealing means librarians exercise caution to avoid infringement. Academic libraries play a central role in providing access to knowledge for students, teachers, and researchers. However, with the increasing use of reprographic and digital copying, these institutions often face challenges related to copyright infringement. Reprographic copying, such as photocopying and scanning, is commonly used in libraries to reproduce sections of books, journals, and study materials. While limited copying for educational purposes may fall under fair use or fair dealing provisions, excessive or unauthorized duplication can violate copyright laws. For example, copying entire books or large portions without permission may harm the rights of authors and publishers. Digital copying has further complicated the issue. With the availability of computers, the internet, and storage devices, users can easily copy, store, and share digital content such as e-books, articles, and research papers. Unlike physical copies, digital files can be distributed widely and instantly, increasing the risk of large-scale infringement. Academic libraries must therefore take responsibility for ensuring that copying practices remain within legal limits. This includes creating awareness among users, implementing clear policies, and using licensed digital resources. Librarians also play an important role in guiding users about ethical information use.

Licensed Digital Resources :

Most academic libraries subscribe to digital journals and databases. Licensed terms often dictate how materials can be accessed and shared. This creates a dual framework: statutory exceptions and

contractual licenses. Libraries must navigate these carefully to avoid breaching license terms, which often prohibit redistribution or large-scale copying. Contract law, therefore, plays a significant role in daily library operations. Academic libraries today rely heavily on licensed digital resources such as e-journals, e-books, databases, and online learning platforms. These resources are not owned by the libraries but are accessed through agreements with publishers and vendors. While they greatly enhance access to information, they also bring specific copyright and usage challenges. Licensed digital resources are governed by contractual terms that clearly define how the content can be used. These licenses typically allow users to read, download, or print limited portions for personal study, teaching, and research. However, activities such as systematic downloading, sharing login credentials, or distributing content to unauthorized users are strictly prohibited and may lead to copyright infringement. One of the major issues in academic libraries is the lack of awareness among users regarding these restrictions. Students and researchers may unknowingly violate license agreements by sharing articles on social media, uploading them to public websites, or using automated tools to download large volumes of content. Such actions not only breach copyright laws but can also result in suspension of access for the entire institution. Libraries must take proactive steps to prevent such violations. This includes educating users about license terms, displaying usage guidelines, and monitoring access patterns when necessary. Librarians also need to carefully review license agreements before subscribing to ensure that they meet the institution's academic needs while maintaining legal compliance.

Piracy and Unauthorized Sharing :

Digital piracy, including unauthorized sharing of academic materials via unauthorized platforms, poses ethical and legal challenges. Academic libraries, while promoting access to knowledge, also discourage infringement and educate students and faculty on legal alternatives. Unauthorized access undermines the rights of creators and can lead to legal exposure for users and institutions. Academic libraries serve as key centers for learning and research, but they also face serious challenges related to piracy and unauthorized sharing of information resources. With the growth of digital technologies, it has become easier for users to copy and distribute copyrighted materials without proper

permission. Piracy in academic settings often involves the illegal downloading or distribution of e-books, journal articles, and other scholarly content. Unauthorized sharing may occur when users upload library-subscribed materials to public websites, share files through messaging platforms, or distribute them to individuals who are not authorized under the library's access policies. Such practices violate copyright laws and the terms of licensing agreements. These actions can have significant consequences. Publishers may impose penalties, restrict access, or terminate subscriptions if misuse is detected. This affects not only the individual involved but also the entire academic community that depends on these resources for study and research. To address these issues, academic libraries must promote awareness about ethical use of information. Librarians should educate users about copyright rules, encourage the use of legal and open-access resources, and implement clear guidelines for responsible sharing. Monitoring systems and institutional policies can also help reduce misuse.

Policy Recommendations :

To better serve academic libraries and the research community, several policy recommendations emerge. These are -

Clarify Digital Library Exceptions :

Current exceptions are rooted in analog paradigms. Modernizing copyright exceptions to explicitly cater to digital libraries—such as permitting digital preservation, format shifting, and access within secure institutional networks—would align law with practice. In the digital age, academic libraries increasingly rely on electronic resources to support teaching, learning, and research. However, existing copyright laws often lack clear and specific provisions regarding the use of digital materials in libraries. This creates confusion and uncertainty about what is legally permitted, especially in activities such as digital copying, storage, and sharing. One key policy recommendation is to clearly define digital library exceptions within copyright frameworks. These exceptions should specify the extent to which libraries can digitize materials, provide remote access, and share resources for educational and research purposes without infringing copyright. Clear guidelines would help libraries perform their functions more confidently while ensuring respect for the rights of content creators. Additionally, such policies should address modern practices

like e-reserves, interlibrary digital loans, and access for distance learners. By recognizing these needs, the law can better align with current academic environments. It is also important to maintain a balance so that exceptions do not undermine the economic interests of authors and publishers.

Expand Fair Dealing Categories :

Broadening the scope of fair dealing to include educational uses, transformative research activities, and interlibrary digital lending could enhance legal clarity and support academic functions. Fair dealing is an important provision in copyright law that allows limited use of protected works without permission for purposes such as research, private study, criticism, and review. However, in the context of modern education and digital learning, the existing categories are often too narrow to fully support the needs of academic libraries and users. A key policy recommendation is to expand the scope of fair dealing categories to better reflect contemporary academic practices. This could include explicitly covering activities such as digital teaching, online course delivery, text and data mining, and the use of materials in virtual classrooms. By broadening these categories, libraries and educational institutions would be able to provide more effective access to information without fear of legal uncertainty. Expanding fair dealing would also help reduce dependence on costly licenses and enable greater use of knowledge for non-commercial educational purposes. At the same time, safeguards should be maintained to ensure that such uses remain fair and do not harm the legitimate interests of authors and publishers.

Enhance Copyright Education :

Integrating intellectual property rights education into LIS curricula and offering continuing legal education for librarians would improve compliance and empower librarians to advise faculty and students. In the evolving landscape of academic libraries, a lack of awareness about copyright laws remains one of the primary causes of infringement. Students, researchers, and even faculty members may unknowingly misuse information resources due to limited understanding of legal and ethical guidelines. Therefore, enhancing copyright education is a crucial policy recommendation. Academic institutions should integrate basic copyright literacy into their curriculum and orientation programs. This includes educating users about concepts such

as fair dealing, licensed resources, plagiarism, and proper citation practices. Workshops, seminars, and online tutorials can be organized by libraries to promote responsible use of information. Librarians also play a key role as educators. They can guide users in understanding license agreements, avoiding piracy, and using open-access resources effectively. Clear signage, user guidelines, and awareness campaigns within libraries can further reinforce these practices. Improved copyright education not only reduces the risk of infringement but also fosters a culture of academic integrity and respect for intellectual property. It empowers users to make informed decisions while accessing and sharing information.

Harmonize Contract and Statutory Rights :

Ensuring that contractual licenses do not unduly restrict statutory exceptions could balance access and legal protection. Standardized licensing frameworks for educational institutions could help. In the context of academic libraries, there is often a tension between statutory rights provided under copyright law and the contractual terms set out in license agreements for digital resources. While copyright laws grant certain user rights—such as fair dealing for education and research—these rights are sometimes restricted or overridden by contractual clauses imposed by publishers and vendors. A key policy recommendation is to harmonize contract terms with statutory rights so that license agreements do not unfairly limit the legal exceptions available to libraries and users. Contracts should respect and reflect the minimum rights guaranteed under copyright law, ensuring that educational and research activities are not hindered. This harmonization would provide greater clarity and consistency in the use of digital resources. It would also protect academic institutions from entering into agreements that unintentionally restrict lawful uses, such as sharing materials for teaching or research within permitted limits. Policymakers and institutions should work together to establish standard licensing practices that align with national copyright provisions. Libraries should also be encouraged to carefully review and negotiate contracts to safeguard user rights.

Conclusion :

Academic libraries in India are critical to advancing education and research. However, operating within the framework of the Indian

Copyright Act presents challenges. While the Act includes exemptions that benefit libraries, narrow statutory provisions, digital complexities, and limited legal awareness complicate practical implementation. To maximize academic libraries' societal role, legal reforms, educational initiatives, and clearer policies are necessary. By understanding copyright law and advocating for modernized exceptions, academic libraries can continue to serve as engines of knowledge while respecting creators' rights. Academic libraries in India play a vital role in supporting education, research, and the dissemination of knowledge, while also operating within the framework of copyright laws. These laws are designed to protect the rights of authors and publishers, but they also provide certain exceptions and limitations that allow libraries to serve students and researchers effectively. The balance between access to information and protection of intellectual property is crucial. Provisions such as fair dealing enable academic libraries to reproduce limited portions of work for educational and research purposes without violating the law. At the same time, libraries must remain cautious and ensure that copying and distribution practices do not exceed legal boundaries. With the rapid growth of digital resources, the responsibilities of academic libraries have expanded. They must now manage electronic content, licensing agreements, and digital access while maintaining compliance with copyright regulations. This requires awareness, proper policies, and user education. Ultimately, academic libraries in India must strive to uphold both access and legality. By promoting ethical use of information and respecting copyright laws, they can continue to serve as essential centers of learning and knowledge sharing in a responsible and sustainable manner.

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Perception of the Tourists on Impact of Tourism Development in Kaziranga National Park, Assam

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Abstract :

Assam is fast emerging as a major tourist destination in India with its splendid tourist attractions. Kaziranga National Park (KNP) is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Assam, India. The study reveals that tourist inflow in KNP has gradually increased over the years and thereby the revenue generated has also witnessed an overall increase. Tourism in KNP has better prospects for future growth that can be harnessed not only for the tourist's recreation but most importantly to maximize the environmental as well as economic benefits for the Park and contribute to state and the local communities. Therefore, it is significant to understand the perception of the tourists on impact of tourism development in Kaziranga National Park based on economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects. Secondary data on tourist inflow and revenue collection was collected from Assam Tourism Department. Primary data was generated using purposively designed questionnaires to understand the perception of tourists. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. Based on the study, Kaziranga is considered to be an expensive tourist destination. In terms of socio-cultural impact tourists value the experience of meeting locals. The tourists agree that tourism development has brought more conservation awareness. The opinions are divided on whether tourism has resulted in more garbage, pollution and destruction of the park landscape. However, mass-tourism with no strategic plan is bound to

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have negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural impact on the park landscape. Provision has to be made to achieve a sustainable tourism model befitting the park landscape.

Keywords : Economic aspects, environmental aspects, socio-cultural aspects, tourism development, tourist perception.

Introduction :

Tourism has become an important industry in many countries of the world. Assam has immense tourism potentialities as it blessed with wildlife, unique flora and fauna, natural beauty, lush green tea plantations, sparkling rivers, holy shrines and ethnic cultures. Wildlife tourism is potentially one of the most viable and economically rewarding areas for the state. Kaziranga National Park with its rich biodiversity resources attracts tourist from all over the world and is getting the top priority as tourist destination amongst the north eastern states of India. However, this scenario was different for a quarter of a century. It was considered to be an inaccessible tract with some wildlife, swamps, forests and others. There was no road, no path or track inside the forest except the trails laid out by the regular movement of the animals. Very few people knew about Kaziranga and fewer people were interested in the preservation of the rhinoceros and other wildlife. But with the general decline of wildlife due to indiscriminate poaching and habitat destruction, there was a growing awareness amongst some section of wildlife and nature lovers that it was high time to take action to preserve the wildlife. Due to this awareness initiatives were taken and Kaziranga was opened to interested visitors in 1937 and two elephants were posted for taking the visitors inside the sanctuary (Mahanta and Rao, 2012). The popularity of Kaziranga as one of the important tourist destination for wildlife viewing has been growing since then. Today Kaziranga National Park occupies a significant position among the tourist spot of the world. There is a significant increase in tourist inflow in Kaziranga National Park since 1937. The overall growth rate of tourist inflow from 1999-2016 is 22.56%, 23.15% in case of domestic tourists 14.21% in case of foreign tourist (Table 1) With the growing tourist inflow the revenue earned by tourism department has also increased. The trend of revenue generated from tourism sector has witnessed an overall increase of 7.2 % during 1999-2016 (Table 1). Therefore, an attempt has been made to understand the perception of the tourists on tourism

development in KNP so as to ensure the associated positive and negative aspects and further enhance the scope for development.

Materials and methods :

The work followed an exploratory and explanatory approach. Primary data was generated to understand the perception of the tourists towards park environment and tourism scenario using purposively designed schedule cum questionnaire. The total number of tourists visiting Kaziranga National Park in a tourist season is increasing day by day. Tourist data for 2015-16 which is 174216 has been taken as the base year for the present study. But this number represents a high finite population and hence, taking into consideration of time, money and resource constraints as being the sole investigator, tourist survey was conducted based on a convenience sampling technique in the month of January from (10-01-2016 to 17-01-2016). Accordingly, 400 questionnaires were distributed among the tourists, 250 for Domestic tourist and 150 for foreign tourist. A total of 304 usable and complete questionnaires, 97 from foreign tourist and 207 from domestic tourist were collected and analyzed. This sample represents the perception of 700 visitors (0.40% of total tourist in 2015-16) as the participating tourist arrived with their family members and friends. However, when daily visitors are taken into consideration, about 400-500 tourist visit per day from November to mid-May (Government of Assam, n.d.), thereby the sample size of 304 representing 10% of tourists visiting the park in a week.

Results and discussions :

Trend of tourist inflow and revenue generation :

There is a significant increase in tourist inflow in Kaziranga National Park since 2000-2016. From the study, domestic tourist arrival has gone up to 50498 in 2000-2001 from 37696 in 1999-2000 registering an average annual growth rate of 34% during the period. It may however be noted that there has been year-to-year fluctuations in traffic volume. (Table1) From 50498 tourists in 2000-2001, it went down to 44162 tourists in 2001-2002, shot up sharply to 59811 in 2002-2003. A sharp decline of -28.20% was observed from 2005-2006. In 2008-2009 the annual growth rate sharply went up to 86.95%. Since then an upward trend has been registered with slight annual variations. Coming to the international tourist, from 2002-2003 to 2003-2004 a

sharp increase of 83.55% and from 2014-15 to 2015-16 a sharp annual increase of 43% in arrivals has been observed. In the year 2003-2004 to 2007-2008 trend has constantly increased whereas trend has constantly declined from 2010-11 to 2013-14 with slight annual variations. (Table1)

The revenue generated when observed annually, there is a sharp increase from 15% in 2001-2002 to 53.41% in 2002-2003. Another sharp increase has been observed during 2011-12 (9%) to 2012-13 (38%). The enhanced awareness and promotional campaign done by the Assam tourism department time to time has resulted in this regard.

Table 1: Trend of tourist inflow and revenue generation (1999-2016)

Year	Domestic	Variation (%)	Foreign	Variation (%)	Total	Tourists Revenue (in millions)
1999-00	37696		1623		39319	
2000-01	50498	33.96	1838	13.24	52336	3.038258
2001-02	44162	-12.54	2144	16	46306	3.494084
2002-03	59811	35.43	2055	-4.15	61866	5.360425
2003-04	57834	-3.30	3772	83.55	61606	6.211729
2004-05	68412	18.29	5147	36.32	73559	6.675037
2005-06	49116	-28.20	5210	1.32	54326	7.615169
2006-07	67968	38.38	5748	10.17	73716	7.980949
2007-08	53640	-21.08	6106	7.31	59746	8.734185
2008-09	100284	86.95	5767	-6.37	106051	11.220698
2009-10	105264	4.96	7580	31.49	112844	12.167974
2010-11	112392	6.77	7447	-1.75	119839	13.673482
2011-12	117411	4.46	7521	0.99	124932	14.946171
2012-13	93747	-20.15	7418	-1.36	101165	20.576098
2013-14	119289	27.24	6922	-6.68	126211	26.865775
2014-15	123360	3.41	7994	15.48	131354	28.392304
2015-16	162799	31.97	11417	42.81	174216	41.976727

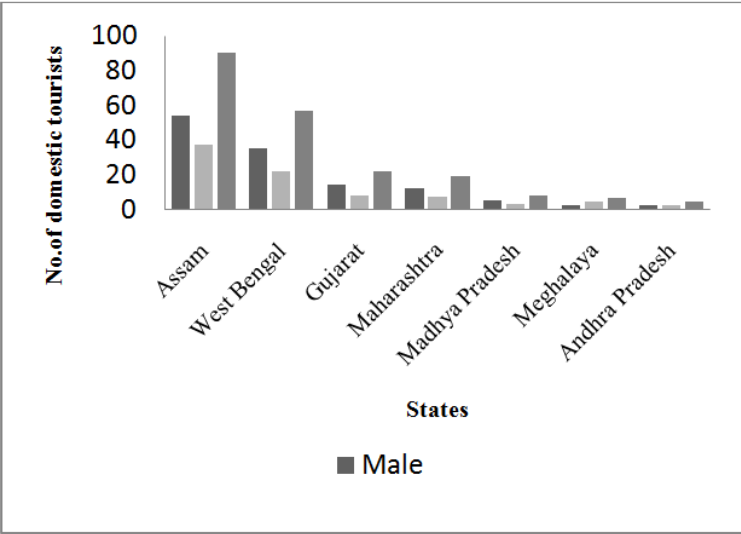
Source: Office of the Deputy Director of Tourism, KNP

State wise and country wise break up of tourists :

Out of 304 total tourists, number of domestic tourists was 207 (68.09%) and 97 (31.90%) from foreign countries. Total male tourist constitute 58% (59.90% domestic and 54.64 foreign) and female tourist constitute 42% (40.10% domestic and 45.36foreign) respectively. Major share of domestic tourists visiting KNP arrived from within the state of Assam (43.96%) followed by West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya and least from Andhra Pradesh (1.93%). With respect to foreign tourists major share of tourists

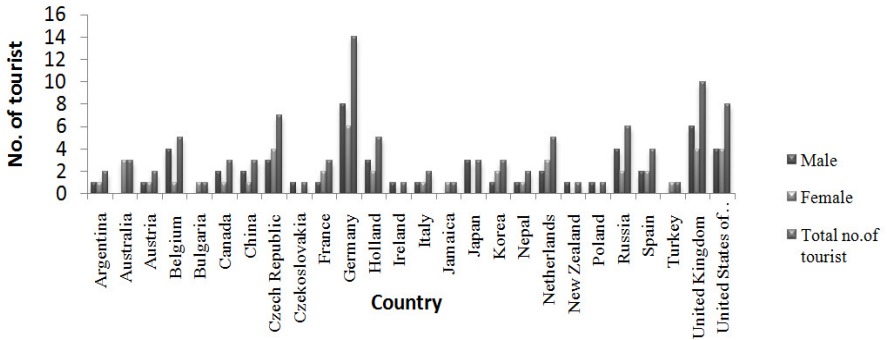
arrived from Germany (14.43%) followed by United Kingdom (10.30%) and tourists from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, Poland arrived for solo trip. (Fig.1 and 2)

Fig.1 : State-wise domestic tourist arrival to KNP



Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Fig 2: Country-wise foreign tourist arrival to KNP



Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Purpose of visit and major attractions :

The primary survey revealed that 88.48% tourist visited KNP for recreational purpose and items that received poor response include business, honeymoon and academic interest. With respect to attractions towards the park, majority of the respondents favoured that the wildlife of KNP had drawn their interest followed by its popularity (Table 2).

Attributes like scenery, academic interest and business/conference received poor response whereas events/festivals received no response. Tourists usually visit KNP during the tourist season (October-March). The remaining months could be open encouraging academic research in terms of KNP's challenges, organizing events/festivals, conferences for creating awareness. Also these months must be devoted towards planning, rejuvenation, promotion and development of the park and its surroundings.

Table 2: Purpose of tourist visiting KNP in percentage

Purpose	Recreation	Business	Academic interest	Honeymoon
Domestic	84.05	2.42	7.25	6.28
Foreign	97.93	-	2.06	-
Total	88.48	1.64	5.59	4.27

Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Table3: Tourists inflow according to attraction towards park (in %)

Attraction	Domestic	Foreign	Total
Wildlife	55.55	92.78	67.43
Scenery	13.52	20.62	15.79
Academic/research interest	7.25	2.06	5.59
Business/conference	2.42	-	1.64
Events/festivals	-	-	-
Popularity	14.01	36.08	21.05
Others (resorts/hotels)	8.70		5.92

Source : Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Source of information :

Both domestic and foreign tourists have favoured to source information from travel agency (Domestic 41.54% and Foreign 38.14%) followed by internet, word of mouth and least from Tourist information Centre by domestic tourist and newspaper/ book/magazine by Foreign tourist (Table3). Therefore, it is important to upgrade tourist information centers' and provide a tourist friendly environment. Also regular updates must be made available in the official websites thereby creating awareness and also by offering exciting schemes or packages .

Table 4: Source of information

Source of information	Domestic tourist		Foreign tourist	
	No. of tourist	%	No. of tourist	%
Internet	44	21.25	21	21.64
Tourist information centre	9	4.34	12	12.37
Travel agency	86	41.54	37	38.14
Newspaper/book/magazine	12	5.79	9	9.27
Word of mouth	56	27.05	18	18.55

Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Tourist inflow according to duration of stay :

Most of the tourists preferred to stay for 2-3 days accounting for 66.44%. With respect to domestic tourists the maximum number of visitors stayed for 2-3 days followed by overnight visit, daytrip (Table 4) and only 2% stayed for more than 3-4 days. In case of international visitors, the scenario is somewhat different and maximum tourists (84.53%) stayed for 2-3 days followed by 3-4 days and no daytrip or overnight visit. The foreign visitors stayed for a longer duration of time as compared to domestic tourist. As we are aware that foreigners usually like to explore and experience more, this could be one of the reasons. But it can be understood that both domestic and foreign visitors combined together did not prefer to stay (on an average) for more than 4-5 days. Therefore, more attractions and interest must be developed to retain the tourist.

Table 5: Tourist inflow according to duration of stay (in %)

Duration	Daytrip	Overnight	2-3 days	3-4days	4-5 days	1 week
Domestic	6.76	31.88	57.97	3.38	-	-
Foreign	-	-	84.53	15.46	-	-
Total	4.60	21.71	66.44	7.23	-	-

Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Place of stay :

Out of the total 304 tourists 290 (95.39%) tourist stayed in accommodation units and 14 (4.60%) tourists came for a day trip. Majority of the tourists preferred to stay in resort followed by lodge, guest house and hotel (Table 5). Only 7.24% tourists stayed in home stay accommodations. Government must encourage and entrust the locals for developing more home stay facilities.

Table 6: No. of tourist inflow according to place of stay (in %)

Place of stay	Hotel	Resort	Lodge	Guest house	Home stay	Friends/ relatives
Domestic	7.73	29.95	28.02	18.84	5.80	2.90
Foreign	8.25	35.05	30.93	15.46	10.31	-
Total	7.89	31.58	28.95	17.76	7.24	

Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Tourist participation in different activities :

Both domestic and foreign tourists participated in more than one activity. Majority of the domestic tourist visited the Orchid park (94.68%) followed by jeep safari and elephant safari. And 91.75% foreign tourist participated in jeep safari followed by elephant safari and visit to Orchid Park. Interestingly foreign tourist's participation in elephant safari is higher than domestic tourists. Foreign tourists like to explore more and also elephant ride is expensive as compared to jeep safari (Table 7).

Activity	Domestic		Foreign	
	No.of tourist	%	No.of tourist	%
Sight seeing	171	82.60	80	82.47
Jeep safari	183	88.41	89	91.75
Elephant safari	93	44.92	85	87.62
Local festival	21	10.14	18	18.55
Evening entertainment	66	21.71	54	55.67
Visit to Orchid park	196	94.68	82	84.53

Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

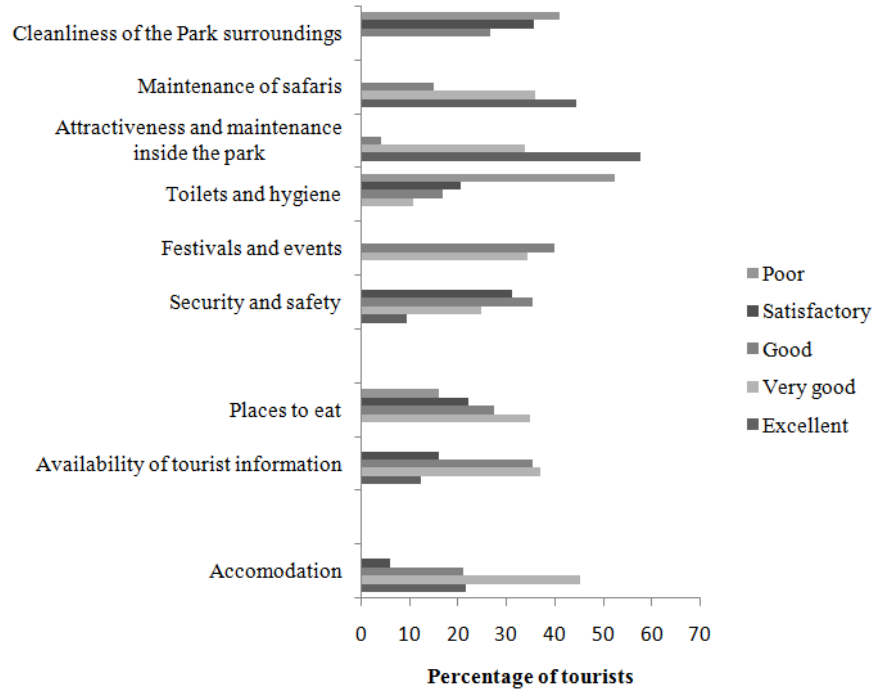
N.b: Tourists participated in more than one activity.

Evaluation of existing facilities :

Facilities and services encompass all the economic activities that are related to the tourism industry and produced primarily for tourists, generally designed with an aim of direct economic return (Jafari 1982). Evaluation of existing facilities portrays an interesting picture where the respondents provided different ratings in terms of different attributes. It has been observed that the most favoured aspect by tourists is 'Attractiveness and maintenance inside the park' and 'Maintenance of safaris' of KNP that received a rating of 'excellent' in terms of 57.56% and 44.40% respectively. However, the areas that received poor ratings include 'Toilets and hygiene' (52.30%) and 'Cleanliness of the Park surroundings'

(40.78%). Here lies the importance on the improving the Park surroundings, creation of more roadside amenities along with improvement of existing accommodation facilities.

Fig. 3 Evaluation of existing facilities



Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Perception of tourists on economic aspects related to tourism :

So far as economic aspect is concerned, the study revealed that KNP is an expensive destination if measured in terms of transportation to KNP, local transportation, accommodation tariff, safaris, food, marketing and shopping facility (Table 11). The study reveals that there was a difference of opinion between Domestic and Foreign tourists in terms of ‘Entry Fee and safari’ where 46.39% foreign tourist rated this parameter as high compared to 33.82% of domestic tourist (Table 7,8). In terms of shopping the local items like souvenirs, handicrafts and others, domestic tourists have rated this parameter as very high (26.57%) and 14.43% foreign tourists rated it as high.

Table 8: Perception of tourists on economic aspects related to tourism

Attributes	Very high		High		Reasonable		Cheap	
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
a) Transportation to Kaziranga National Park	10.63	4.12	34.30	18.56	39.61	64.95	16.76	12.37
b) Local transportation within Kaziranga National Park	8.70	-	43.48	20.62	35.75	69.07	5.31	10.31
c) Entry fees and safaris	6.76	-	33.82	46.39	50.24	53.61	2.90	-
d) Accommodation tariff per day	4.83	-	39.13	27.84	35.27	59.79	14.01	12.37
e) Cost of Food	8.21	-	43.96	18.56	31.40	43.30	9.66	38.14
f) Cost of entertainment	-	-	16.42	-	77.29	68.04		6.18
g) Marketing/shopping of souvenirs, handlooms, others	26.57	-	45.89	14.43	13.04	35.05		

Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Table 9: Charges of safari/items in KNP per day in Indian Rupee (INR)

Charges of safari/item	Indian	Foreign
Entry fee per person/day	100	650
Elephant seat per trip	875	1925
Toll for road per trip/day	300	300
Toll for road river cruise per trip/day	1000	1000
Mobile and smart phone	Free	Free
Still photography	100	200
Still photography (Professional)	1000	3000
Movie/Video camera	1000	1000
Movie/Video camera(Professional)	10000	30000
Feature film	100000	200000
Documentary	15000	75000

Source: DFO, Eastern Assam Wildlife Division, Bokakhat, 2016

Table 10: Charges for jeep safari in KNP (per jeep for 6 pax)

Jeep safari in different range	Charges (INR)
Central	1550
Western	1750
Agoratoli	2050
Burapahar	2550

Source: Deputy Director of Tourism, KNP, 2016

Perception of tourists on socio-cultural aspects related to tourism :

With regards to socio-cultural impact of tourism most of the tourists are happy with the friendly nature of locals and strongly favoured the item 'meeting locals is a valuable experience' (54.59% domestic and 58.76 % foreign). There was a strong agreement from both domestic and foreign tourists that tourism promotes native craft, dance and festivals as well as the local cuisine. However, disagreement was found from tourists in aspects like 'Tourism has resulted in improvement of local public services (police, medical etc.)' (52.17% domestic tourists and 46.39% foreign) (Table 11).

Table 11: Perception of tourists on Socio-cultural aspects related to tourism

Attribute s	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Domes tic	Forei gn	Domes tic	Forei gn	Domes tic	Forei gn	Domes tic	Forei gn	Domes tic	Forei gn
a)meeting locals is a valuable experience	54.59	58.76	45.41	41.24						
b)tourism promotes native craft	29.95	7.22	59.90	64.95	10.14	27.83				
c)tourism promotes native dance and festivals	34.78	32.99	65.22	67.01						
d)tourism promotes native cuisine	24.15	19.59	75.85	50.52		29.90				

e) Tourism has resulted in improvement of local public services (police, medical etc.)		23.71	31.40	29.90	12.08		52.17	46.39	4.35	

Source : Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Perception of tourists on environmental aspects related to tourism :

There was high agreement among both domestic and foreign tourists that tourism has led to conservation of natural resource and wildlife and encourages better management of the park. However, tourists clearly see that tourism has led to more resort construction in delicate natural areas and traffic, noise, and congestion as a downside of tourism. Opinions are divided whether tourism has resulted in more garbage and pollution (Table 12).

Table 12: Perception of domestic tourist on environmental aspects related to tourism

Attributes	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Dome s-tic	Fore i-gn	Dome s-tic	Fore i-gn	Dome s-tic	Fore i-gn	Dome s-tic	Fore ei- gn	Dome s-tic	Fore ei- gn
a)tourism provides an incentive for conservation of natural resources and wildlife	40.10	77.32	59.90	22.68						
b)tourism encourages better management of the Park and its periphery	27.05	28.86	53.14	61.86	14.49		5.31	9.28		
d)tourism encourages more resort construction and other infrastructural development in delicate natural areas	29.95	23.71	70.05	59.79		16.49				
e)tourism encourages more garbage build up and pollution			38.65	22.68	28.50	55.67	32.85	21.65		
f)tourism causes increase in traffic, noise and congestion	31.40		68.60	49.48		35.05		15.46		

Source: Primary field survey, KNP, 2016

Discussion :

Tourist arrivals in Kaziranga, both domestic and foreign, have witnessed a substantial increase in recent years that in turn also has led to an overall increase in revenue generation. The study reveals that domestic tourist arrival to KNP is confined only from few states in India and in case of foreign tourists it is mainly from the European countries. Provisions has to be made to promote tourism by means of advertisement, branding KNP, through social media, regular updates in the official website, organising events and festivals as well as offering attractive and exciting schemes . All these will further attract tourist from all over the world. The only backdrop of all these development in tourism in economic aspects is that the cost of accommodation, food, transportation has increased with increase in tourist inflow. It is because the number of private establishments is significant in KNP as compared to Government based establishments (35 private and 9 Government based establishments as per the records maintained by Tourist Information Centre, KNP, 2016). The concept of home stay could be developed so as to give an ethnic feel to visitors. Also government aids must be provided to locals to promote their native crafts and culture that will reduce their cost of making the items and they can sell their crafts and handlooms at an affordable price. Therefore, emphasis must be given to provide more opportunities and engage locals to promote their festivals, native crafts, handloom and cuisine. This will increase the sale of native crafts and handlooms benefitting the locals. For local transportation, jeeps have to be hired at 500INR per day. So, local transportation must be developed and such facilities must be economic, regular and comfortable.

Also, studies have highlighted the relationship between tourism visitation and degradation of habitats (Geneletti & Dawa, 2009). It has also been seen that over the years tourists are becoming more experienced and sophisticated in their travel habits and prefer quality attractions, facilities and services to have “good value for money” in their travel expenditure. They are also environmentally and socially sensitive and seek better designed, less polluted destinations, bypassing badly managed destinations that have environmental and social problems. (Bhattacharya, 2008). Eco-friendly techniques or strategies must be encouraged in resorts/hotels on utilizing solar energy for power,

on-site filtration site to eliminate the use of single-use plastic bottles, greenery in the surroundings and on introducing recycling and composting areas. Jeep safari inside the park must be regulated by introducing intelligent transport network system to avoid congestion and noise. Movement of jeeps could be tracked having high quality GPS.

Conclusion :

Tourism in Kaziranga National Park is prospering and has more potentialities to expand in future. Therefore, sustainable tourism strategies must be adopted so that the natural habitat of the wildlife remains undisturbed and trend of tourist inflow is sustained. The revenue generated with increase in number of tourist arrival must be channelized in a proper direction to maintain the park surroundings, developing more roadside amenities, creating unique participatory activities. Researchers have highlighted the need of alternative tourism practices to be adopted in KNP. But the question that arises here is how far it is actually implemented. Short term action plans in this aspect could be beneficial. There is a need for more quality government accommodation units to make the stay of tourist economic. Availability, accessibility and affordability of tourist facilities in and around KNP have to be enhanced at all levels. As per the tourist inflow 43.96% of the domestic tourists were from within the state of Assam and the tourists from other five states taken together accounted for 56.03%. The most potential international tourist markets for India as per the study are the European countries followed by USA and Australia. Efforts have to be made to improvise the requisite infrastructure facilities and strengthen its policy on publicity and promotion of sustainable tourism in KNP both at national and international level. Human resource development is another important aspect in tourism sector that needs to be given adequate emphasis to improve the quality of services and to ensure that economic benefits of tourism are shared by the local community. Provisions have to be made in terms of tourism education and skill based training at all levels. It is also important to develop and implement strategies for enhancing the duration of stay of both domestic and foreign tourists. All these require planned and controlled tourism development. To achieve this, efficient, cost effective, environment friendly, socially and culturally acceptable techniques and measures must be adopted. Apart from wildlife tourism, rural and cultural tourism ventures must be

encouraged that will provide an enlightening experience to tourists and will also benefit the local communities.

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Environmental Humanities and the Futures of the Human Being

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Abstract :

The accelerating ecological crisis of the twenty-first century has forced a profound rethinking of what it means to be human. Climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental injustice, and planetary-scale technological transformations challenge the anthropocentric assumptions that have long structured Western thought. The environmental humanities have emerged as a critical interdisciplinary field that brings together philosophy, literature, history, anthropology, cultural studies, ethics, and political theory to interrogate the human - environment relationship. This paper examines the environmental humanities as both a critique of modern humanism and a framework for reimagining the future of the human being. It argues that the environmental humanities contribute to a post-anthropocentric, relational, and ethically expanded understanding of humanity - one that emphasizes interdependence, vulnerability, responsibility, and multispecies coexistence. By tracing the intellectual foundations of the field, analyzing its key themes, and exploring its implications for the future of human identity, politics, and ethics, this paper demonstrates how the environmental humanities offer essential tools for navigating the planetary challenges of the Anthropocene.

Keywords : Environmental Humanities, Anthropocene, Post-humanism, Human-Nature Relationship, Ecological Ethics, Future of Humanity.

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Introduction :

Humanity stands at a historical crossroads. The scale and intensity of environmental degradation-climate change, deforestation, ocean acidification, mass extinction, and pollution-have revealed that human activity has become a geological force capable of reshaping the Earth itself. This recognition has given rise to the concept of the Anthropocene, a proposed geological epoch defined by human dominance over planetary systems. While scientific disciplines have documented the material dimensions of this crisis, the environmental humanities seek to understand its cultural, ethical, philosophical, and existential implications. The Anthropocene idea tends to underemphasize not only those dimensions of nature that remain outside human influence but also the ways that humans themselves are shaped by ecological processes and interspecies relations. The environmental humanities challenge the assumption that environmental problems are merely technical or scientific issues. Instead, they argue that ecological crises are deeply rooted in cultural narratives, economic systems, political structures, and philosophical worldviews that define what it means to be human. At stake is not only the future of ecosystems but the future of the human being itself. This paper explores how the environmental humanities reconceptualize humanity in response to ecological crisis. It examines the historical origins of the field, its critique of anthropocentrism, its engagement with post-humanist and Indigenous perspectives, and its implications for ethics, politics, and identity. Ultimately, the paper argues that the environmental humanities offer a transformative vision of the human being as relational, embedded, and ethically accountable within a more-than-human world. The new environmentalist interest in the human then hits the humanities at a moment when humanist interest has shifted at least partly to the post humans.

Objectives :

1. To critically examine the environmental humanities as a challenge to anthropocentric humanism in the context of the Anthropocene.
2. To explore how the environmental humanities reconceptualize human identity through relational, ethical, and multispecies perspectives.
3. To assess the implications of environmental humanities for future frameworks of ethics, politics, and human - environment relations.

Methodology :

The study adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary methodology grounded in philosophical analysis and critical theory. It is based on a close reading and conceptual examination of key texts in the environmental humanities, including works from philosophy, environmental ethics, cultural studies, and post-humanist thought. Through thematic interpretation, the research analyzes how notions of anthropocentrism, relationality, responsibility, and multispecies coexistence are articulated and challenged within the field. By synthesizing insights across disciplines, the methodology enables a critical understanding of how the environmental humanities reconfigure human identity, ethical responsibility, and political imagination in the context of the Anthropocene.

The Emergence of the Environmental Humanities :

a. Intellectual origins:

The environmental humanities emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries at the intersection of environmental history, ecocriticism, philosophy, science and technology studies (STS), and cultural theory. Early environmental thought often focused on conservation and preservation, but it tended to separate nature from culture. The environmental humanities reject this dualism, emphasizing that nature and culture are co-produced. Thinkers such as Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, and Arne Naess laid early foundations by questioning human exceptionalism and advocating ecological ethics. Later, scholars in the humanities expanded these insights by analyzing how literature, art, religion, and philosophy shape human attitudes toward the environment.

b. Interdisciplinary scope:

The environmental humanities are inherently interdisciplinary. They include: Environmental philosophy, which examines ethics, ontology, and values. Environmental history, which traces human–environment interactions over time. Ecocriticism, which analyzes representations of nature in literature and media. Anthropology and geography, which study human–land relationships across cultures. Political ecology, which connects environmental issues to power and inequality. This interdisciplinary approach allows the field to address environmental problems as complex cultural and moral phenomena rather than isolated scientific challenges.

Critiquing Anthropocentrism :

a. The limits of Human-Centered thinking:

Anthropocentrism - the belief that humans are the central or most significant beings in the world - has dominated Western philosophy since antiquity. From classical humanism to Enlightenment rationalism, the human has been defined as autonomous, rational, and separate from nature. The environmental humanities argue that this worldview has contributed directly to ecological destruction by legitimizing the exploitation of nonhuman life. By treating nature as a passive resource rather than a living system, anthropocentrism has enabled extractive economies and colonial expansion. Environmental humanities scholars contend that overcoming the ecological crisis requires dismantling this worldview.

b. Toward post-anthropocentrism :

The environmental humanities advocate post-anthropocentric perspectives that decenter the human without denying human responsibility. Post-anthropocentrism recognizes the intrinsic value of nonhuman entities - animals, plants, rivers, ecosystems—and emphasizes relationality rather than dominance. This shift does not mean rejecting humanity but redefining it as one participant in a complex web of life. The human being is no longer imagined as master of nature but as an ecological subject shaped by interdependence.

The Anthropocene and the Crisis of Human Identity :

a. The Anthropocene as a cultural concept :

The Anthropocene is not only a scientific term but a cultural and philosophical concept. It forces humans to confront the paradox of their power and vulnerability: humanity has altered the planet on a massive scale, yet this very power threatens human survival. The environmental humanities analyze the Anthropocene as a crisis of meaning. Traditional narratives of progress, mastery, and economic growth appear increasingly untenable. The question is no longer how humans can control nature, but how they can live responsibly within planetary limits.

b. Fragmented humanity :

The Anthropocene also exposes deep inequalities. Environmental harm is unevenly distributed, with marginalized communities often bearing the greatest burdens. The environmental

humanities emphasize that “humanity” is not a unified subject but fractured by race, class, gender, and colonial history. This insight challenges universalizing narratives and highlights the need for justice-centered approaches to environmental futures.

Post humanism and the More -Than-Human World :

a. post-humanist thought :

Post-humanism, closely linked to the environmental humanities, critiques the idea of the human as a bounded, autonomous individual. Thinkers such as Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti argue that humans are hybrid beings shaped by technology, biology, and nonhuman relations. In this view, the future of the human being is inseparable from animals, machines, microbes, and ecosystems. The human becomes a dynamic process rather than a fixed essence.

a. Multispecies Ethics :

Environmental humanities scholars advocate multispecies ethics, which extend moral consideration beyond humans. This does not imply moral equivalence but recognizes that ethical life unfolds within ecological relationships. Multispecies thinking reshapes how humans understand responsibility, care, and coexistence in a shared world.

Indigenous Knowledge and Alternative Human Futures :

Indigenous worldviews play a crucial role in the environmental humanities. Many Indigenous philosophies emphasize relationality, reciprocity, and respect for nonhuman beings. Humans are understood as caretakers rather than owners of the land. These perspectives challenge Western notions of property, sovereignty, and progress. By engaging Indigenous knowledge systems, the environmental humanities offer alternative visions of human futures rooted in sustainability and ethical restraint.

Ethics, Politics, and the Future of the Human Being :

a. Environmental Ethics :

The environmental humanities expand ethics beyond individual moral action to collective and intergenerational responsibility. The future human must account for the rights of future generations and nonhuman life. Ethical frameworks such as ecological justice, care ethics, and planetary responsibility redefine what it means to act morally in an age of environmental crisis.

b. Political implications :

The redefinition of humanity has political consequences. Environmental humanities scholars call for: New legal frameworks recognizing the rights of nature. Democratic models that include ecological considerations. Economic systems that prioritize sustainability over growth. The future of the human being is inseparable from the future of political institutions and global governance.

Conclusion :

The environmental humanities offer a powerful reimagining of the human being in an era of ecological crisis. By challenging anthropocentrism, embracing relation, and integrating ethical, cultural, and political analysis, the field provides critical tools for understanding and shaping the future. Rather than signaling the end of humanity, the environmental humanities point toward a transformation of what it means to be human. The future human is not a detached master of nature but a responsible, vulnerable, and interconnected participant in a more-than-human world. In this sense, the environmental humanities do not diminish humanity; they deepen it.

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A Study on Shaktism

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Abstract :

Shaktism is one of the principal forms of devotional Hinduism that focuses worship upon Shakti or Devi. In this religion Shakti in her different manifestations are worshipped by following different methods. The different ideas of Shakti have served as foundation stones for the well known Shakta sect who grew gradually from Vedas and then spread widely at the time of the epics and the Puranas. The Tantras are said to be the sacred books of the Shaktas, and the rituals prescribed in them are generally followed by the Shaktas. Shakti is generally worshipped with different forms such as Durga, Kali, Bhavani etc. which are believed to have assumed for the destruction of certain demons. The Shaktas are mainly divided into two sects; the Daksinamargis or the right hand worshippers and the Vamamargis or the left hand worshippers. The right hand worshippers do openly what they prefer and constitute the majority of the Shaktas, whereas the left hand worshippers are a secret sect whose mysteries consists of rituals the exact nature of which is not known to anyone except themselves. Shaktism is a movement as complex as any within Hinduism. The three main characteristic of Shaktism are its idea of the deity as destroyer, its conception of God as Mother and its attention to ceremonial. All these three are combined. The aim of this study is to elaborate the history and features of Shaktism

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as a religion and a philosophy. Besides it, this study also intends to highlights the nature and practices of Shaktism.

Key words : Shaktism, Shaktas, worship, Tantra etc.

Introduction :

Like Vaishnavism and Saivism, Shaktism is also one major sect of Hinduism. The term 'Shakti' originates from the root 'Sak' which means energy, 'To do' or 'To act'. It regards Devi as the Supreme Brahman itself and it believes that Shakti is essentially feminine and she is personified as an Almighty women, identical with the Supreme Being. This Supreme Goddess is conceived as omniscient and self illuminative principle.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To examine the historical origin and development of Saktism.
2. To analyze the philosophical foundations and core doctrines of Saktism.
3. To explore the conceptual and practical relationship between Saktism and Tantrism.

Methodology :

The study is based on secondary sources of data, including classical texts, scholarly books, research articles, and peer-reviewed journals related to Saktism, Tantric traditions, and Indian philosophy. Analytical and interpretative methods are employed to critically examine and synthesize existing literature.

History and development of Shaktism :

The roots of Shaktism and its nature are focused from India's prehistory. A large number of inscriptions, clay statues and seals found from the Indus Valley, which stand as the earliest evidences for prove the prevalence of the Mother Goddess worship in ancient times. The images of pre Harappan's goddess mainly related with fertility and the cycle of nature. From Vedas also the written records were found which proved the prevalence of Shakti worship. The Vedic people belonged to the patriarchal system of society, thus they gave more importance to the male deities. The Goddess and its supremacy are slightly mentioned in the Upanishads, i.e., the Hindu philosophical scriptures. The name of Uma, daughter of Himavat is mentioned as Uma Himavati in the Kena Upanisad. The Shakti and its worshipped were also mentioned in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In these epics we find many new

names and aspects of the Mother Goddess. During Medieval period, three important Sakta Puranas were produced and they are the Devi Purana, the Kalika Purana and the Devibhagavat Purana. The conception of the Devi as the Supreme Being is further developed in the Kalika Purana in which she is described as the sacramental Prakrti, and the embodiment of all energy, consciousness and bliss. In the history and development of Shaktism, Tantra has great role and it was the central scriptures. The Tantras advocate about two main paths of Sadhana, i.e., Vamachara (external worship including worship, images etc, by using Pancamakara) and Dakshinachara (internal worship with meditative techniques and disapprove the use of Pancamakara). Shaktism has largest two schools, i.e., Srikula (family of Sri), which is prevalent in South India including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu etc; and Kalikula (family of Kali) which prevails in Northern and Eastern India including West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa etc. The Srikula School focuses worship on Devi in the form of the Goddess Latita Tripurasundari with the help of Sri Chakra Yantra. On the other hand Kalikula focuses worship on the Devi in the form of Durga, Chandi, Kali and the regional Goddess such as Manasa, Sitala as the source of wisdom and liberation.

In the philosophical literature the concept of Shakti has played an important role. First of all one Astika philosophy, the Yoga system has acknowledged the Supreme importance of Shakti in more than one way. In Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra, Shakti is of two kinds, namely, Shakti as pertaining to the object under observation (Dr̥śya) and Shakti as belonging to the beholder (Dr̥ṣṭa). In Sankhya system of Indian philosophy, Shakti is known as an active force that manifests itself by the production of effects. This system supports two realities, i.e., Purusa and Prakriti.

Different manifestation of Shakti :

The main philosophy of Shakti is its plurality. For the welfare of the universe, the Supreme Goddess has acquired innumerable forms (Rupa). The Shakti manifests herself in innumerable forms in accordance with her functions. These forms are benign (saumya) as well as terrific (ghora). The pan Indian Goddess can be divided into roughly two groups. The Goddess that personify the essentially benign aspects of power or energy such as devotion, wisdom, love or compassion

etc and these orthodox Goddess are Radha the lover of Krishna, Gauri the golden one, Sita the devoted and faithful wife of Rama, Sarasavati the Goddess of wisdom and learning; and Lakshmi the Goddess of good fortune and wealth. In contrast, the Goddess that represent the more dynamic powers of protection and the destruction of evil, and these Goddess are two, i.e., Durga and Kali. Mahamaya is the fundamental form who manifest as Yoganidra, the embodiment of the world. The Shakti came from the energies of Brhama, Vishnu, siva and others, was first worshipped by Katyayani; thus this Devi can to be known as Katyayani. This Goddess also known as Mahisasuramardini, because she killed Mahisa with her ten armed form. This form of Goddess has also three forms, i.e., Durga, Bhadrakali, and Ugatara.

Kamakhya, one of the most important manifestations of Shakti of Kamrupa was famous from ancient time. Kamakhya is identical with Kali, who is ever existent, the Supreme Being and the supreme knowledge. The Goddess Kamakhya shrine was situated at Nilacala (a blue mountain) about three miles from present town of Guwahati of Assam. Another famous Hindu Goddess is Kali, which is the first form of ten Mahavidyas. She is the most important Goddess within Shaktism and Tantrism, and regarded as the ultimate personification of cosmic energy. The Goddess of wisdom and learning, i.e., Sarasavati is one of the few currently worshipped Goddesses whose existence can be proved from the Vedic period. During the classical period, she focused as the Goddess of wisdom and learning. In the Hindu Pantheon, the Goddess Parvati was come in the classical period. This Goddess is generally considered the reincarnation of Siva's first wife Sati which is related with the mythology of Sati. As a Siva's Shakti she has ultimate power. The concept and worship of "seven mothers (Sapta Matrika)", and ten Mahavidyas (Dasha Mahavidyas)', are also very common in Shaktism.

Minor Goddesses and local deity :

With the relation of different manifestations of Shakti and the concept of local Goddess is focused in Hinduism. All these Goddess are worshiped at a local embraces ritual, worship and iconography, rather than philosophy and metaphysics. The majority of the local goddess is independent and wild in nature. One of the most popular local Goddess is as the goddess of small pox and she is concerned with diseases. In South India, she is called Mariyamman, and in the north

and especially Bengal, she is called Sitala. The cult of serpents has been prevalent in India in a widespread manner in all ages and the Goddess of serpent and pestilence, Manasa was worshipped by the Shakta follower. Sitala is another Goddess which is worshipped for protection against small-pox and for the general welfare of children.

Shaktism and Tantrism :

Tantra is a branch of esoteric cult which brings the realization of Absolute with the help of Mantra Sadhana. It is a branch of systematic and scientific method, which can help a follower in realizing the Reality and attaining liberation in its broad sense. In relation to Hindu Shaktism, Tantra refers to a class of ritual manuals and an esoteric methodology of Goddess which focuses spiritual practice (Sadhana) involving mantra, yantra, nyasa, mudra and certain elements of traditional Kundalini Yoga. All these are practiced under the guidance of a qualified guru (teacher) after due initiation (diksha) and oral instruction from various written sources. Shakti worship is very ancient and its basis is Tantra.

Philosophy of Shaktism :

The Sakta philosophy reverse the Devine Mother as the Universal creative power, the all pervading source of change within and identical to the changeless reality. The Supreme Being or Brahman has no particular form and sex. But this Supreme Being is explained in Tantras as Devi or Mother as eternal mother. The formless and immeasurable power that is Shakti can be conceptualized only in relation to her activity as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. In Shaktism the Ultimate reality is Shakti, who is the Mother of the Universe. Different works of Shaktism has given a different name to its supreme Goddess. In a manifested and unmanifested forms, this supreme reality divides the Sattva, Rajas and Tamas Gunas for the sake of three fold functions Viz., creation, continuation and destruction of the universe respectively. She is present everywhere thus in every thing in this universe from the highest Brahman to the lowermost blade of grass, all moving and non-moving things. In Shaktism, Shakti is conceived as Supreme Being and it has also two fold, viz., Saguna and Nirguna. Those persons, who are attached to their senses and the objects used to worship Her Saguna aspect where as those, who are not attached to the senses, used to worship attached to the senses, used to worship Her Nirguna aspect. As regards to the creation of this universe,

there are found various theories in Shakta philosophy. In the Kalika Purana, it is said that there is no universe at the beginning of the creation, everything was sleeping; and it was neither visible nor knowable at that stage. Everything was covered by darkness, as there is no earth, water, light, wind etc, only, the subtle, eternal, unmanifested Brahman in the form of knowledge was there, and who is beyond the cognition of the senses. The only cause of the universe was the eternal all pervasive Purusa (spirit) and Prakrti (primal nature) and also the invisible time (kala), the only cause of the universe. The Supreme Being for the creation of the Universe caused agitation in Prakrti and it agitated intellect from which the three fold self sense are emerged. From subtle element of sound the Vishnu created the infinite and formless ether. The Supreme Being created water from the subtle element in taste. But he himself retained the water in Him; because there is no container in retain it. For second time the Supreme Being agitated Prakrti (primal nature) and it discharged the seeds of in that water. After that seed gradually turned into a huge golden egg, which was covered in all sides by water, fire, wind and ether. After one year, the Vishnu assuming the shape of Brahman came out from the egg and broke the egg. From the subtle element of smell in seven oceans the earth emerged and it turned into solid. The subtle element of Rupa and fire were emerged from the Brahma who remained in the midst of that egg of universe. Then the wind, the life of all living being emerged and unlimited water, fire, wind and ether all these spread into inside and outside of that egg. In Samkhya philosophy of Indian philosophy also two realities, i.e., Purusa and Prakrti are supported for world evolution. But there is marked differences between the creation theory given in the Samkhya philosophy and that given in the Tantras and Puranas. In Tantras Siva is considered as the Supreme soul, but Purusa is not Supreme soul in Samkhya philosophy. Between two realities of Samkhya philosophy, Prakrti is the most active and all in all, where Purusa is inactive. But according to Tantras, the union of Purusa and Prakrti i.e., Siva and Shakti are necessary. From another side the Shakti of Shakta philosophy is not same with Prakrti of Samkhya philosophy. The Shakti is said as Para-Prakrti, the personified Divine energy in the Tantras and it is itself Brahman. But in the Samkhya philosophy Prakrti is Mula Prakrti, where matter is eternal and Purusa is co-existent with it. In the Tantras

Prakriti is conscious energy. But Prakriti of Samkhya philosophy is acit. From reality the Samkhya philosophy is dualistic, which affirms the two realities i.e., Purusa and Prakriti. But Shakti in Tantras is absolute Monism, where Purusa and Prakriti are nothing but different forms of the manifestation of the Supreme Being, i.e., the Brahman.

According to Shakta philosophy Shakti has created the universe both movable and immovable with the help of Maya. In Kalika Purana Brahman (male being) is the ultimate reality. But Shakti is also described as one having all power and attributes of the Supreme Being, as she is Vishṇu Maya. For the creation of the universe Brahma expresses Himself as Prakriti, as Maya, Hara, Brahma and other created beings. The ultimate goal of Shakta Sadhana is to attain the liberation. Liberation in Shaktism is the highest state of consciousness and it is the attainment of the highest, unchanging, eternal, absolute union of Siva and Shakti within himself. The man who has realized this and transplanted himself into it is in his lifetime called Jivanmukta (liberated through living). In Shakta philosophy various ways have been recognized as means for the attainment of the liberation. There are three ways, viz, karma (path of action), jnana (Path of knowledge) and bhakti (path of devotion), which are described in Devi Bhagavat Purana. The final liberation is impossible without jnana. This Jnana comes only when the Sadhaka comes in contact with a good teacher. In Bhakti is three kinds, i.e., sattika, rajasika and tamasika. When a devotee worships the Goddess in order to pain others and is filled with anger and jealousy etc, then this bhakti is known as tamasika. If a devotee worships the Goddess for his own welfare and does not intend to harm others, then this bhakti is known as rajasika. And that bhakti is known as sattvika, which the devotee does in order to purify his karmas and also follow the Vedas.

Shakti Worship :

The Goddess represents the energy and power that is commonly referred to as Shakti who appears in the manifest world in various forms for the many devotees who regularly worship her. The worship is most often performed before an image of a deity at home or on festival days or in the larger temples, when the priests perform rituals at specific times. Worship is of two types, i.e., external and internal. In external Shakti worship, first need prana-pratistha. In this process the sadhakas touch the image or symbols with the hands with the recitation of appropriate

mantras. Before starting the actual worship, there need sixteen Upacaras to the Goddess. In Kalika Purana, first Upacara is described as Asana (seat for the image), which may be made of flowers, wood, clothes, skin, silk etc. The second Upacara is Svagata, means welcome to Deity, whom is to be worship. In this rite, the Sadhaka should utter different names of Istadevata and requesting him or her to come and to take his or her abode in the object of worship. The Padya, i.e., offering of water for washing the feet of the deity is the third Upacara. This water can be offered by a metallic vessel, conch shell etc. After it, the Arghya of Kusa, flowers rice and sandal paste should be given. Then Acamaniya of water scented with camphor, sandal should be offered twice. In Shakti Sadhana, Madhu-Parka is another Upacara, which is prepared from five things, viz, curd, clarified butter, water, honey and sugar. But this Madhuparka should be put in a vessel made of copper, gold or silver. There is need Vastra (clothes), Gandha (perfumes), Puspa (flowers), Dhupa (Scented wood), Dipa (light), and Naivedya (food). At last, Namaskriya should be done by the Sadhaka. But different manifestations of goddesses has favoured by different Namaskriya, which are described in Purana in detail.

In case of local Goddess, the ritual and devotion differs depending on the gender of the deity. The temple worship was a visible expression of theistic Hinduism and the Puranas provided instruction on temple construction and ritual performance. The temple is a home or Palace for the Gods and Goddess and it provides an opportunity for Hindus to come and focus of their devotion, the devotee can communicate with them. In most cases their devotion is mediated by the temple priest who acts as intermediaries between the worshippers and the Goddess. Tantric worship is another practice of Shakti worship which is also known as Sadhana (spiritual discipline). Within Tantric practice, the central process is the Bhuta-Suddhi and the use of seed Mantras (sacred syllables), Mudras (hand gestures), Yantras (mystical diagrams), Nyasa etc. The Nitya puja is the purest type of worship which is performed every day. The second i.e., Naimittika puja is performed five times of a month and the final worship is Kamya puja which is performed to fulfill a wish. These types of worship should be performed without any mistake. Thus to practice such worship a Guru (teacher) is of vital importance from whom one can gradually learn

about such worship. The Guru is generally considered as 'Param Brahma', and 'Sada Siva' himself. To get liberation from bondage, the Guru (teacher) gives spiritual knowledge to his disciple in Diksa. In his teaching, the Guru also gives knowledge about sense control with the explanation of the term "Om". It is the combination of three gunas known as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In Tantric practices of Shaktism, Pancamakaras is regarded as essential practice. The Pancamakaras, which are practiced by the Vira-Sadhaka only are Madya (wine), Mamsa (meat), Matsya (fish), Mudra (parched cereal) and Maithuna (union with woman). They are known as Pancamakaras as they begin with the letter "Ma" and they are declared as essential for the worship of Shakti. These practices are the most strenuous and disciplinable one aiming at achieving the spiritual end. The Madya may be wine for Vira Sadhaka, coconut water for Pasu and the intoxicating knowledge of the divine attained by Yoga and by experiencing which the sadhaka becomes senseless of the outer world (for Divya ritual). On the basis of modes of the worship of Shakti's different manifestations are divided into two main classes i.e., the Dakshinacaris (the right hand worshiper) and the Vamacaris (the left hand worshiper). The Dakshinacaris strictly worship the mother Goddess in accordance with the Vedic and Puranic rites and their worship is usually confined to Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Parvati or Uma. The word "Satakarma" is related with Shakti worship and it's included six rites, i.e., Santi (peace), Vasya (domination), Stambhana (making immobile), Dveana (causing hatred), Uccatana (running an adversary) and Marana (killing). This Satakarma is only used in Vamacara method of Shakti worship. To protect diseases and danger as well as to growing prosperity, Shanti (Peace) is performed. The Vashya (domination) rite is practiced to attract and dominate other.

Sacrifice (Bali) :

Animal sacrifice is also one important rite of Shakti worship in her different forms. Regarding sacrifice, in Kalika Purana, it was stated that all birds, tortoises, alligators and nine species of deer-such as, the he-goat, the boar, the buffalo, the big lizard, the Sosa, the yak, the hare, and the lion, fishes are regarded as Bali to the goddess. In this Purana, "the sacrifice of he-goat is known as "Bali", the sacrifices of sarabhas are called mahabali and that of human being is generally termed as ati-bali." The Tantra like Yogini Tantra prescribes different kinds of

animals for different castes including birds. Though this rite is very ancient, still it enjoys very important place in the Tantras. From time to time the Puranas go on saying that this is Tamasi worship and this worship is meant for the kings only and this should not be by everyone. This animal sacrifice was offered generally to the terrific forms of Devi and not to the benign forms of Satviki goddess.

Virgin Worship :

Another character of Shakta philosophy and religion is virgin worship known as kumari puja and is a very important religious function connected with Shakti worship. Without class distinction of Virgin, all Gods are pleased with the kumari puja. In this worship, all virgins are believed to be pure, powerful, and honest and sources of all virtues like Shakti. If one virgin is worshipped, then all Shakti are worshipped. This worship is the main ritual of Navaratri worship of Durga. Everyday one virgin or increased by one, two, or three everyday or nine virgins in all the days respectively are to be worshipped. The manifestations of Shakti, i.e., Durga, Kali, Tara etc were also virgin. Thus Virgin (Kumari) worship played an important role in Durga worship, Kamakhya worship etc.

Conclusion :

The above study focused that Shaktism is the most prominent branches of devotional Hinduism today, where the ultimate reality is Devi or Shakti. As a practical religion, its whole content is full of rules and ritual. The higher realization of the spiritual truth may be achieved by these rituals and the way of personal spiritual attainment is known as Sadhana. In terms of philosophical thought Shaktism is neither wholly dualistic nor wholly monistic. But it is the combination of a monistic dualism and dualistic monism. As a monism, it asserted Shakti is only ultimate reality and it resemble with the supreme reality of metaphysics. But mind and matter as represented by the created universe are Shakti and she is bound up with Siva; and both of them, i.e., female universal power Shakti and the male impulse giver Siva constituted the spiritual background of the universe. Generally the Shakta observances can also classified as mixed like other Hindu sects, and it is inextricably mixed with Vaidika and Tantrika.

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Abortion in Buddhism and Jainism : A Comparative Study

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Abstract :

Abortion remains one of the most contested issues in global bioethics, shaped by medical, legal, cultural, and deeply embedded religious frameworks that influence ethical decision-making across societies. Within the South Asian intellectual landscape, Buddhism and Jainism offer two distinctive yet profoundly influential moral traditions anchored in nonviolence and karmic responsibility. This paper undertakes a comprehensive examination of the ethical, philosophical, and scriptural perspectives of both traditions on abortion, drawing upon foundational sources such as the Vinaya Pitaka, Jataka literature, and authoritative Jain texts including the Tattvartha Sutra and Purusharthasiddhi-Upaya. The study explores how values such as ahimsa, intention (cetana), compassion (karuna), purity of the soul, and the nuanced doctrine of karma contribute to divergent interpretations of the moral status of the foetus.

The analysis shows that Buddhism, while upholding the sanctity of life, adopts a context-sensitive ethical position grounded in intention and compassionate reasoning, allowing space for moral discernment in complex circumstances. In contrast, Jainism maintains an uncompromising ethical absolutism toward nonviolence, condemning

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abortion as a grave form of harm from the moment of conception due to its foundational understanding of the soul's presence in all living beings. Through a comparative approach, this paper illuminates the convergences and divergences between both traditions and situates their insights within contemporary debates on reproductive rights, maternal autonomy, and culturally informed healthcare. The study argues that Buddhist and Jain ethical frameworks provide deeply meaningful contributions to global bioethics, enriching discussions on the intersection of religion, morality, and reproductive decision-making in a pluralistic world.

Introduction

Abortion occupies a uniquely complex position in contemporary moral discourse because it requires societies to negotiate the delicate boundaries between personal autonomy, state regulation, medical judgement, and religious morality. Although modern debates are often framed through legal or biomedical lenses, religion remains an enduring and influential force in shaping how individuals understand the moral implications of terminating a pregnancy. In the South Asian region, which continues to draw ethical nourishment from ancient philosophical traditions, Buddhism and Jainism represent two sophisticated systems of thought that approach life, moral agency, and the nature of harm with extraordinary depth and nuance. Their views on abortion are not merely doctrinal prescriptions but reflections of comprehensive moral cosmologies rooted in the principles of nonviolence, karmic causation, and the interdependence of all forms of life.¹

The Buddhist tradition approaches abortion through a moral lens shaped significantly by intention (*cetana*), compassion (*karuna*), and the cultivation of wisdom, generating an ethical system that evaluates actions not only by their outcomes but by the mental states that give rise to them.² This produces a flexible and context-aware model in which moral judgement emerges from the complex interplay of personal suffering, the well-being of the mother, and the potential life of the foetus. Jainism, however, adheres to an uncompromising ethic of nonviolence, rooted in the belief that all life—from its earliest embryonic form—contains a soul (*jiva*) and therefore possesses intrinsic moral value. Abortion, in this worldview, is unequivocally considered an act of violence that generates severe karmic consequences, regardless of the circumstances or intentions behind the decision.³

Understanding these contrasting religious perspectives is critically important in contemporary bioethics, particularly in healthcare contexts where practitioners routinely engage with patients whose ethical worlds are shaped by these traditions. As Coward observes, religious moral frameworks continue to inform personal and collective attitudes toward medical decisions even within secular societies.⁴ By analysing the philosophical foundations, scriptural interpretations, and modern expressions of Buddhist and Jain perspectives, this study contributes to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how religious ethics intersect with reproductive health. The comparative framework adopted here seeks to illuminate areas of convergence, such as the shared reverence for life, as well as points of divergence, including differing interpretations of harm, intention, and moral responsibility. In doing so, the paper aims to enrich global conversations on abortion by situating them within the rich ethical landscapes of two ancient Indian traditions.

Objectives :

Methodology :

Philosophical Foundations of Buddhism and Jainism :

The ethical perspectives of Buddhism and Jainism on abortion cannot be understood without first examining the deeper philosophical foundations that shape their views on life, moral agency, and the nature of harm. Both traditions emerged within the intellectual milieu of ancient India and share a commitment to nonviolence and karmic responsibility, yet the underlying frameworks through which they interpret these principles differ substantially. Buddhism develops its ethical outlook from the core doctrines of impermanence, dependent origination, and the cultivation of compassion, forming a moral philosophy that evaluates actions primarily through the lens of intention and the mental states that motivate them.⁵ Jainism, by contrast, constructs its ethical system upon a realist metaphysics of the soul, where every living entity is understood to possess an eternal jiva that accumulates or sheds karma based on one's actions. This creates an absolutist moral universe in which any harm to a living being has unavoidable karmic consequences.

In Buddhism, ethical reasoning is grounded in the Four Noble Truths, which collectively diagnose suffering as an inherent feature of existence and propose the Noble Eightfold Path as the means to

overcome it. This framework positions moral action as part of a broader soteriological journey toward liberation, where the purity of intention (*cetana*) plays a central role in determining moral worth.⁶ Intentionality becomes the pivot around which ethical judgement revolves, since actions are evaluated not simply by their external effects but by the mental dispositions that give rise to them. The doctrine of dependent origination further situates all life within an interconnected web of causes and conditions, implying that moral decisions must consider the complex interdependence of all beings involved. As Harvey notes, this creates a dynamic ethical system in which the practitioner must weigh the reduction of suffering, the cultivation of compassion, and the pursuit of wise discernment in every moral dilemma.⁷

Jainism offers a contrasting philosophical foundation built upon the metaphysical reality of countless individual souls, each bound by the material substance of karma. In this worldview, the universe is populated by an infinite variety of living beings classified according to the number of senses they possess, and each being—from a single-sensed organism to a fully developed human—holds intrinsic moral value.⁸ The doctrine of *ahimsa* occupies an uncompromising centrality in Jain ethics, not as a contextual guideline but as an absolute and inviolable rule. All harm, whether intentional or unintentional, binds the soul with karma and obstructs its progress toward liberation. This absolutist understanding stems from the belief that life begins at conception, at which point a soul enters the developing embryo.

The contrast between the two traditions becomes clearer when examining how each understands moral responsibility. Buddhism situates ethical action within the flux of impermanence and relationality, emphasising the psychological dimensions of moral behaviour. Jainism, rooted in a metaphysical dualism of soul and matter, interprets morality in terms of the purity or bondage of the *jiva*, resulting in a strict and literal application of nonviolence. While both traditions hold life to be sacred, the Buddhist position emerges from a flexible and context-sensitive ethical architecture, whereas the Jain view arises from an uncompromising metaphysical commitment to the sanctity of all living beings at every stage of existence.

These philosophical foundations form the backdrop against which both traditions formulate their teachings on abortion. Buddhism

approaches the issue through deliberation involving intention, compassion, and the minimisation of harm, while Jainism treats abortion as an unequivocal act of violence that obstructs the soul's liberation. Understanding these fundamental differences is essential for interpreting the scriptural, ethical, and contemporary perspectives of both traditions, which the subsequent sections of this paper will explore in detail.

Scriptural Teachings Related to Abortion :

The ethical positions of Buddhism and Jainism on abortion are deeply rooted in their respective scriptural traditions, which provide authoritative frameworks for understanding the moral status of life, the nature of harm, and the karmic implications of terminating a pregnancy. Although both traditions emphasise nonviolence, their scriptural interpretations reveal contrasting approaches that reflect their broader philosophical commitments. In Buddhism, scriptural references to abortion appear primarily in the Vinaya Pitaka, the monastic disciplinary code, and in various commentarial and narrative texts. These sources consistently emphasise the sanctity of life and consider intentional foetal destruction a serious offense. However, the Buddhist canon also exhibits a nuanced moral sensitivity that reflects the broader Buddhist orientation toward intention and the alleviation of suffering. Jain scriptures, by contrast, present an unyielding commitment to the absolute sanctity of all life, including embryonic life, and articulate a comprehensive ontological and ethical system in which abortion is unequivocally condemned as an act of violence.

Within the Buddhist Vinaya, abortion is classified as a grave violation. The Vinaya Pitaka prescribes expulsion (*parajika*) for monks or nuns who intentionally cause the death of a human being, including a developing embryo. The texts explicitly define the beginning of human life as the moment of conception, understood as the point at which consciousness (*vijnana*) enters the embryo. This doctrinal position is rooted in the Buddhist concept of dependent origination, where the arising of consciousness is contingent upon the union of sperm, egg, and karmic consciousness. The intentional termination of pregnancy is therefore considered to interrupt this process and generate significant negative karma. While these scriptural injunctions clearly prohibit abortion within monastic contexts, the texts do not directly address

every possible situation that laypeople might confront. As a result, Buddhist ethical discussions often evolve through commentarial traditions that attempt to apply the principles of cetana and karuna to complex moral dilemmas faced by householders.

The Jataka tales, though largely narrative in form, provide additional insight into Buddhist attitudes toward life and moral responsibility. In many stories, the Bodhisatta refrains from harming even when faced with personal danger, illustrating an ethical ideal grounded in compassion and the preservation of life. These narratives reinforce the general Buddhist principle that life possesses intrinsic value and that ending a life, even at the embryonic stage, carries moral consequences. Yet, because Buddhist ethics remains fundamentally intention-based, these scriptural materials do not create a rigid moral absolutism. Instead, they establish a moral baseline that serves as the foundation for later ethical reasoning that may take into account the suffering of the mother, medical complications, or socio-cultural realities. Jain scriptures, particularly the Tattvartha Sutra, the Purusharthasiddhi-Upaya, and various commentarial texts, provide a far more uncompromising account of abortion, rooted in the metaphysical belief that all forms of life - including the embryo - possess a soul (jiva) from the moment of conception. In Jain ontology, the embryo is recognised as a living being endowed with a soul that has the capacity for spiritual liberation. The destruction of such life is therefore classified as a form of pranatipata, or intentional killing, which is considered among the most severe moral transgressions. The Tattvartha Sutra outlines in meticulous detail the various forms of life and their vulnerabilities, emphasising the need for vigilant nonviolence in thought, word, and action. Because Jain ethics is grounded not in intention but in the actual harm inflicted, the termination of pregnancy is viewed as a direct act of violence that binds the individual with heavy karma, regardless of motivation or mitigating circumstances.

Jain monastic texts further expand on this theme by prescribing strict rules designed to avoid harm to even the smallest and least developed forms of life. These rules reinforce the belief that all killing, including the destruction of embryonic life, produces karmic bondage. Even lay Jain texts warn householders against actions that may harm microscopic or developing life forms, thereby extending the ethical

framework beyond monastic discipline into the realm of everyday behaviour.⁹ This reflects the broader Jain cosmological worldview in which life pervades every corner of existence, and ethical vigilance is required to protect the innumerable souls that inhabit the world.

When viewed together, the scriptural traditions of Buddhism and Jainism articulate distinct ethical landscapes regarding abortion. Buddhism acknowledges the moral seriousness of abortion but frames its ethical judgement within a broader context of intention, relationality, and compassion. Jainism, with its absolute nonviolence and metaphysical commitment to the sanctity of all life, leaves no room for exceptions or contextual considerations. These scriptural teachings form the cornerstone of each tradition's ethical reasoning and set the stage for the philosophical and practical debates that continue into the modern era.

Ethical Reasoning in Buddhism and Jainism :

The ethical reasoning that underlies Buddhist and Jain perspectives on abortion reflects the deeper philosophical commitments of both traditions, particularly their respective understandings of harm, intention, moral responsibility, and karmic consequence. Although both systems are grounded in nonviolence, the ways in which they conceptualise ethical decision-making differ significantly. Buddhism articulates a moral framework that is fundamentally intention-centred and sensitive to context, framing ethical actions within the psychological and relational conditions that give rise to them. Jainism, however, maintains an absolutist commitment to nonviolence that evaluates moral action according to the objective harm inflicted, independent of circumstance or motive. These contrasting ethical orientations produce markedly different approaches to abortion, where Buddhist ethics emphasises compassionate discernment and Jain ethics upholds uncompromising adherence to the sanctity of all life.

In Buddhism, intention (*cetana*) operates as the cornerstone of ethical evaluation. The Buddha's teaching in the *Abhidhamma* and commentarial texts interprets moral action as inseparable from the mental states that motivate it. As Keown argues, Buddhist ethics cannot be understood as a set of rigid rules but instead as an expression of virtue-based moral reasoning in which compassion (*karuna*) and wisdom (*prajna*) guide ethical choice. Within this framework, abortion is considered a morally serious act because it involves taking life, yet the

gravity of the action depends on the mental factors that accompany it. The decision of a mother confronting medical danger, extreme suffering, or moral conflict is therefore assessed not solely by the termination of the foetus but by the intention behind the decision and the degree of compassion involved. The Buddhist ethical hallmark of skilful means (upaya) further allows for contextual decision-making in complex circumstances, acknowledging that moral actions unfold within imperfect and often painful human situations.

Buddhist texts and commentaries consistently uphold the sanctity of life, yet they also recognize that ethical decisions cannot be divorced from psychological suffering and relational interdependence. This results in a spectrum of interpretations across Buddhist traditions. Theravada scholarship generally maintains a more conservative position, holding abortion to be morally wrong but acknowledging that karmic consequences vary based on intention. Mahayana traditions, with their expansive emphasis on compassion, sometimes permit a more flexible interpretation in exceptional circumstances, particularly when the well-being of the mother is endangered. Even in stricter readings, however, the moral tone remains analytic rather than condemnatory, guided by the Buddhist commitment to reduce suffering and cultivate wisdom in all actions.

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In contrast to the contextual sensitivity of Buddhist ethics, Jain ethical reasoning is shaped by a metaphysical certainty regarding the nature of life and the operation of karma. In Jainism, the presence of a

soul in every living organism generates an absolute moral duty toward nonviolence. Because life is believed to begin at conception with the embodiment of the soul, abortion is classified as a form of intentional killing, or *pranatipata*, which produces severe karmic bondage. Unlike Buddhism, where intention can mitigate karmic consequences, Jain ethical evaluation centres on the act itself and the actual harm inflicted upon the living being. Even compassion cannot justify the destruction of embryonic life, because Jain ethics regards any form of bodily harm as inherently violent and spiritually detrimental. As a result, moral exceptions or contextual allowances hold no place within Jain ethical discourse.

The Jain doctrine of karma also shapes its ethical rigidity. Karma, understood as a material substance that attaches to the soul through harmful actions, increases in density and duration with the intentional destruction of higher-sensed beings, including humans and human embryos. This produces an ethical system in which abortion not only harms the foetus but also obstructs the spiritual progress of the individual responsible for the act. Even laypersons are expected to uphold a disciplined form of nonviolence, and while they are permitted more flexibility than monastics, the destruction of embryonic life remains a severe violation. This strict orientation does not emerge from moral insensitivity but rather from the Jain conviction that all forms of life possess equal potential for liberation and therefore deserve uncompromised protection.

The difference between the two traditions becomes particularly evident in their respective evaluations of moral dilemmas. Buddhism allows for the moral complexity of lived experience, recognising that ethical decisions such as abortion often occur under conditions of suffering, fear, or danger. Jainism, however, interprets ethical dilemmas through the lens of karmic purity, asserting that spiritual harm caused by violence cannot be lessened or justified by situational factors. As a result, while both traditions uphold a profound respect for life, their ethical reasoning leads to divergent conclusions: Buddhism treats abortion as a morally serious act that may, under specific conditions, be approached with compassionate understanding, whereas Jainism treats abortion as unequivocally harmful, with no ethical circumstances sufficient to mitigate its karmic weight.

These contrasting ethical frameworks reflect the core values of each tradition and illuminate the broader philosophical differences that shape their attitudes toward reproductive ethics. Buddhism foregrounds intention, compassion, and the minimisation of suffering, offering a relational and context-sensitive approach to abortion. Jainism prioritises absolute nonviolence, the intrinsic moral worth of all life forms, and the spiritual consequences of harm, resulting in a categorical opposition to abortion. Together, these ethical systems reveal the diversity and richness of South Asian moral thought and provide valuable insights into how religious traditions interpret complex bioethical issues.

Comparative Analysis :

A comparative study of Buddhist and Jain perspectives on abortion reveals both profound convergences and striking divergences rooted in the broader philosophical and ethical structures of each tradition. While both systems originated within the same intellectual milieu of ancient India and share a foundational commitment to nonviolence, their interpretations of life, harm, and moral responsibility unfold along markedly different trajectories. These differences arise primarily from their distinct understandings of intention, karmic causality, and the metaphysical nature of the self. An analysis of these traditions therefore demonstrates how two religious worldviews, grounded in similar cultural soil, can develop ethical frameworks that both intersect and diverge in meaningful ways.

One of the most significant points of convergence between Buddhism and Jainism lies in their shared reverence for life. Both traditions affirm that the destruction of life generates negative karmic consequences and is therefore ethically problematic. This shared commitment emerges from a deep recognition of interdependence and the intrinsic value of living beings. However, the extent and nature of this reverence differ. Buddhism upholds the sanctity of life but evaluates moral actions through the lens of intention (*cetana*) and the capacity to reduce suffering. Jainism, in contrast, interprets the preservation of life through the absolute prohibition of harming any living being, a principle grounded in its metaphysical assertion that all entities, including embryos, are embodied souls with equal moral worth (Jaini, 1979).¹⁰

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The role of intention marks one of the clearest divergences between the two traditions. In Buddhism, the moral quality of an act depends fundamentally on the mental states that motivate it. Therefore, the karmic burden associated with abortion varies according to the degree of compassion, fear, ignorance, or necessity involved in the decision. This creates a capacity for moral nuance and contextual judgement that allows Buddhist ethics to recognise the complexity of real-life reproductive dilemmas. By contrast, Jain ethics holds that intention cannot negate or diminish the karmic consequences of harm. Even an act carried out without malicious intent attracts karmic matter to the soul, although the severity may differ. Abortion, being an intentional act of killing, occupies the highest gradient of moral transgression regardless of motive. This absolute stance reflects the Jain belief that the preservation of life is non-negotiable and that moral purity must be upheld under all circumstances.

The two traditions also diverge in their treatment of ethical dilemmas. Buddhism acknowledges the tragic nature of many moral conflicts and allows for the possibility that harmful actions may sometimes be undertaken with compassionate intention and moral regret. The Buddhist concept of skilful means (*upaya*) permits practitioners to navigate complex situations by considering the broader reduction of suffering and the cultivation of wisdom. This does not imply moral approval of abortion but recognises that ethical decisions emerge within imperfect conditions that require discernment rather than rigid adherence to rules. Jainism, however, approaches moral dilemmas through a lens of spiritual discipline, asserting that harmful actions can

never be justified because they impede the soul's liberation. This produces an ethical inflexibility that is consistent with its doctrine of karma as a material and unavoidable consequence of violence.

Another important contrast concerns the moral status of the embryo. In Buddhism, while life is understood to begin at conception with the arising of consciousness, the ethical emphasis is not placed on the intrinsic status of the foetus but on the relational web of suffering, intention, and karmic consequence associated with abortion. Jainism, by contrast, unequivocally asserts that the embryo is a full living being with a soul from the moment of conception, rendering abortion a form of homicide in ethical terms. This ontological difference explains why Jainism defines abortion as categorically unethical, whereas Buddhism allows for moral complexity even while affirming the seriousness of the act.

Contemporary expressions of these traditions further highlight these distinctions. Modern Buddhist communities often engage in nuanced discussions about maternal health, psychological suffering, foetal abnormalities, and socio-economic pressures, reflecting the tradition's broader emphasis on compassion and intention. Jain communities, while acknowledging the practical complexities of modern reproductive healthcare, consistently uphold doctrinal rigidity and focus on prevention, responsible planning, and moral restraint rather than contextual justification. In practice, therefore, Buddhist ethics tends to move toward a middle position that recognises both the moral gravity of abortion and the ethical necessity of compassionate decision-making, whereas Jain ethics maintains an uncompromising opposition grounded in absolute nonviolence.

Despite these divergences, both traditions contribute important insights to contemporary bioethical discourse. Buddhism offers a model of ethical flexibility that foregrounds suffering, intention, and relational responsibility, making it particularly relevant for modern healthcare contexts requiring case-by-case evaluation. Jainism, through its rigorous ethic of nonviolence and reverence for life, challenges contemporary societies to reconsider the moral consequences of harm and the intrinsic value of life at all stages. Together, these perspectives highlight the richness of South Asian ethical thought and demonstrate how religious traditions can offer philosophically robust and morally sensitive frameworks for navigating one of the most contested issues in modern ethics.

Conclusion :

The ethical reflections of Buddhism and Jainism on abortion illuminate two profoundly rich moral landscapes that continue to shape contemporary thought on reproductive ethics. Although both traditions emerged from the same cultural and intellectual environment of ancient India, they developed ethical systems that differ in crucial ways, particularly regarding the nature of life, moral agency, and the conditions under which harm may be understood or justified. These divergences become especially pronounced in their views on abortion, where Buddhist and Jain perspectives reveal contrasting interpretations of nonviolence, intention, and karmic responsibility. By examining these traditions in comparative depth, this study highlights the enduring relevance of classical religious frameworks to modern debates on bioethics, medical ethics, and reproductive decision-making.

Buddhist ethics situates abortion within a moral framework that is both principled and contextually sensitive. Rooted in the centrality of intention (*cetana*), compassion (*karuna*), and the overarching goal of reducing suffering, Buddhist moral evaluation acknowledges the complexity inherent in reproductive dilemmas. While Buddhist scriptures and commentaries clearly identify abortion as the taking of life, the tradition's emphasis on the mental states that generate actions allows ethical judgement to be shaped by considerations of psychological distress, medical necessity, and relational interdependence. This creates an ethical model capable of balancing doctrinal teachings with the realities of human suffering, offering a compassionate and flexible approach that resonates strongly with contemporary bioethical discourse. Buddhism's recognition of moral ambiguity does not diminish the seriousness of abortion; rather, it affirms that ethical decisions must be made with mindfulness, empathy, and awareness of the karmic implications involved.

Jain ethics offers a markedly different conclusion, grounded in the tradition's uncompromising commitment to nonviolence and its ontological assertion that all life - from its earliest embryonic form - contains an eternal soul (*jiva*) endowed with intrinsic moral worth. For Jainism, abortion represents a direct and intentional act of violence that binds the individual with severe karmic consequences, regardless of motive or circumstance. This absolutist position is not born of moral

indifference to suffering but emerges from a metaphysical worldview in which the destruction of any living being obstructs the soul's spiritual progress. Jain ethics therefore prioritises the universal protection of life over context-based moral reasoning, offering a principled and disciplined approach that challenges contemporary tendencies to relativise moral decisions according to personal or situational factors. Its insistence on the sanctity of life invites modern societies to reflect more deeply on the ethical limits of reproductive autonomy, the moral status of the foetus, and the spiritual consequences of harm.

The comparative analysis presented in this study underscores that both traditions, despite their differences, contribute significantly to global conversations on bioethics. Buddhism enriches contemporary ethical discourse by offering a relational and compassion-centred model of decision-making that acknowledges the human complexities embedded in reproductive choices. Jainism provides a counterpoint grounded in ethical absolutism, reminding societies of the need for moral vigilance and the importance of recognising the inherent value of life in all forms. Together, these perspectives challenge the dominance of purely secular frameworks in bioethics by demonstrating that religious traditions continue to provide morally robust, philosophically sophisticated, and spiritually meaningful insights into the most challenging dilemmas of modern medical practice.

Moreover, the engagement of contemporary Buddhist and Jain communities with modern healthcare issues reveals that these traditions are not static relics of antiquity but evolving ethical systems responsive to new technological, medical, and social realities. Buddhist responses to reproductive issues increasingly emphasise psychological well-being, compassionate counselling, and the cultivation of ethical awareness, while Jain communities focus on prevention, responsible family planning, and moral discipline. These adaptive strategies illustrate the intellectual vitality of both traditions and their continuing relevance to practitioners, policymakers, healthcare professionals, and ethical scholars.

Ultimately, the ethical reflections of Buddhism and Jainism on abortion offer far more than doctrinal positions; they provide alternative moral lenses through which to view the complex terrain of reproductive decision-making. Buddhism invites careful consideration of intention, compassion, and the reduction of suffering, supporting a nuanced and

humane approach to moral dilemmas. Jainism calls for unyielding respect for life and rigorous moral responsibility, challenging contemporary ethical frameworks to recognise the spiritual dimensions of harm. Together, these traditions deepen our understanding of abortion not simply as a medical procedure or legal issue but as a profound moral event situated within a larger web of philosophical, spiritual, and existential significance. Their perspectives enrich the global bioethical conversation by bringing into focus the interdependence of life, the weight of moral responsibility, and the enduring quest for ethical clarity in a complex world.

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Can Creative Writing Be Taught? Process, Pedagogy, and Practice in Higher Education

Dr. Diganta Kumar Nath¹

Abstract

The question of whether creative writing can be taught continues to provoke debate within literary and educational circles. This paper addresses this question by examining creative writing as a process-based, pedagogically structured academic practice rather than as an expression of innate talent alone. Through theoretical discussion and classroom-oriented reflection, the paper analyses how creativity operates in writing through stages of observation, selection, narrative decision-making, and revision. It argues that creative writing pedagogy does not guarantee the production of professional writers but enables students to develop narrative competence, creative awareness, and reflective control over language. The paper further outlines the academic benefits of studying creative writing in higher education, including its role in strengthening close reading, critical thinking, and interpretative engagement. By reframing creative writing as a teachable process with identifiable methods and outcomes, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions about its place, purpose, and legitimacy within the modern university curriculum.

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Keywords: Creative Writing Pedagogy; Teachability of Creativity; Process-Based Writing; Narrative Competence; Higher Education; Practice-Based Learning; Literary Studies

1. Introduction :

The Emergence of Creative Writing in Academia :

Over the past few decades, creative writing has moved from the margins of literary activity into the university classroom. Once viewed primarily as a private or intuitive pursuit, it is now widely offered through degree programmes, diplomas, and elective papers in poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction across universities worldwide, including India. This institutional expansion signals a growing recognition of creative writing not merely as artistic production but as a mode of learning, inquiry, and intellectual engagement with language.

Despite this growth, creative writing continues to encounter scepticism within academic circles. The tension arises from the perceived opposition between creativity and academic rigour: creativity is often associated with spontaneity and individual talent, whereas academia privileges method, structure, and evaluation. Consequently, creative writing is sometimes regarded as subjective, unteachable, or resistant to systematic study. Questions such as whether creativity can be taught, whether instruction inhibits originality, and what constitutes knowledge in creative writing remain central to debates about its academic legitimacy.

This paper addresses these concerns by re-examining creative writing as a structured, process-based field rather than an unregulated form of self-expression. It argues that creativity in writing is shaped through conscious choice, constraint, and reflective practice. By analysing how creative writing generates meaning, develops narrative competence, and fosters critical awareness, the study positions it as a pedagogically sound and intellectually rigorous discipline. The discussion is guided by the following questions: What is creative writing in academic contexts? Why is it termed “creative”? How does the writing process function? What academic benefits does it offer? And to what extent can pedagogy cultivate creative capability?

The paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 examines definitional issues; Section 3 explores the nature of creativity in writing; Section 4 analyses the creative process; subsequent sections address pedagogy,

the question of teachability, and the academic value of creative writing. The conclusion reflects on the implications of recognising creative writing as a legitimate component of higher education. Through this inquiry, the paper contributes to ongoing debates about the place of creative writing in the contemporary academy.

2. What Is Creative Writing? Definitional Challenges

The growing presence of creative writing in academic contexts makes it necessary to clarify what the term itself signifies. While “creative writing” is frequently used as an umbrella label for imaginative genres such as fiction, poetry, and drama, its meaning within the university differs significantly from popular or purely artistic understandings. To recognise creative writing as an academic field, it must be distinguished from other forms of writing, examined in relation to creativity as a mode of engagement, and understood as a practice that involves both process and product.

2.1 Creative Writing and Other Forms of Writing :

Creative writing is often defined in contrast to academic, technical, and expository writing. Academic writing prioritises argument, evidence, and clarity of reasoning; technical writing focuses on precision, instruction, and functional communication; expository writing aims to explain or inform in a direct and structured manner. In all these forms, language functions primarily as a transparent medium for conveying information or analysis.

Creative writing, by contrast, treats language not merely as a vehicle for meaning but as a site of meaning-making itself. Rather than explaining experience, it seeks to enact it. Narrative voice, imagery, rhythm, metaphor, and structural design become central to how meaning is produced. While academic and expository writing aim for stability and clarity, creative writing often embraces ambiguity, suggestion, and emotional resonance. This distinction does not imply a hierarchy of value but indicates a difference in purpose: creative writing is concerned with how experience is shaped, felt, and reimagined through language.

2.2 Creativity as Imaginative Engagement with Language and Experience :

The term “creative” in creative writing does not simply refer to originality or invention. Instead, it denotes an imaginative engagement with both language and lived experience. Creativity in writing involves

perceiving familiar situations in unfamiliar ways, selecting details with intention, and organising experience into meaningful forms. It is not the opposite of discipline but is sustained through constraint, attention, and reflective choice.

This understanding challenges the common assumption that creativity is purely spontaneous or talent-based. Creative writing operates through acts of selection, exclusion, and transformation. Writers draw upon memory, observation, cultural forms, and linguistic resources, reshaping them through imagination and craft. In this sense, creativity becomes a cognitive and experiential process rather than a mysterious gift, making it open to pedagogic intervention and academic study.

2.3 Defining Creative Writing: Critical Perspectives :

Scholars of creative writing pedagogy have repeatedly emphasised the process-oriented nature of the field. Wendy Bishop describes creative writing as a mode of learning that releases students “into language,” allowing them to discover meaning through writing rather than merely about writing (Bishop, 1990, p. 28). For Bishop, creative writing is inseparable from exploration and reflection, making it both expressive and analytical.

Peter Elbow similarly argues that writing develops through practice, experimentation, and revision rather than through prescriptive rules alone (Elbow, 1973, p. 15). His emphasis on freewriting and exploratory drafting highlights creativity as an emergent process, where meaning evolves through engagement rather than prior certainty.

Graeme Harper further situates creative writing within academic discourse by defining it as a practice that treats writing itself as a form of research. According to Harper, creative writing generates knowledge through the act of composition, enabling writers to think through language rather than merely report conclusions (Harper, 2010, p. 41). This view positions creative writing as intellectually rigorous, capable of producing insight through artistic practice.

Taken together, these definitions reveal a shared emphasis on creativity as process, learning as experiential, and writing as a form of inquiry. Creative writing, in this framework, is neither opposed to criticism nor isolated from theory; instead, it operates alongside them, offering a complementary mode of understanding literature and language.

2.4 Creative Writing as Product and Process :

While creative writing ultimately results in a product—a poem, a story, or a play—its academic significance lies equally in the process that produces that outcome. Drafting, revising, reflecting, and reimagining are central components of creative practice. The finished text represents not a spontaneous act but the culmination of sustained decision-making and problem-solving.

Understanding creative writing as both product and process has important pedagogic implications. It allows teachers to evaluate not only what students write but how they arrive there. More importantly, it shifts the focus from talent to development, from innate ability to learnable craft. In academic contexts, this dual emphasis enables creative writing to function as a legitimate field of study, grounded in practice, reflection, and critical awareness.

3. Why Creative? The Nature of Creativity in Writing :

The term creative in creative writing often invites scepticism within academic contexts. Creativity is frequently associated with spontaneity, inspiration, or innate talent—qualities that appear difficult to teach, evaluate, or systematise. Such assumptions have contributed to the marginalisation of creative writing in formal curricula. However, when examined closely, creativity in writing reveals itself not as an unstructured impulse but as a complex, disciplined process involving choice, shaping, and transformation. Understanding why writing is described as “creative” is therefore essential to recognising its legitimacy as an academic field of study.

3.1 Creativity as Selection, Shaping, and Transformation :

At its core, creativity in writing lies not in inventing material from nothing but in selecting, shaping, and transforming experience through language. Writers constantly make decisions about what to include and exclude, which perspective to adopt, how events should be ordered, and what tone or style best serves the intended effect. Even the simplest narrative is the result of numerous conscious and unconscious choices.

Creativity thus operates through form rather than excess. A writer may draw from ordinary situations, familiar emotions, or shared cultural experiences, but creative significance emerges through the way these elements are structured. The transformation of raw experience into narrative form—through compression, emphasis, omission, and patterning—is what distinguishes creative writing from mere transcription

or reportage. In this sense, creativity is not opposed to discipline; it is realised through it.

3.2 The Myth of Inspiration and the Reality of Craft :

Popular representations of writers often reinforce the myth of sudden inspiration: the idea that stories and poems emerge fully formed in moments of emotional intensity. While inspiration may initiate the desire to write, it rarely determines the final shape of a literary work. In academic discussions of creative writing, this myth is increasingly replaced by an emphasis on craft.

Craft refers to the learned skills and techniques that enable writers to develop, refine, and control their material. Point of view, narrative voice, imagery, pacing, and structural design are not accidental features but tools that writers acquire through practice and reflection. As Elbow argues, writing develops through sustained engagement with the act of writing itself, where meaning evolves gradually through drafting and revision rather than instant clarity (Elbow, 1973, p. 15).

Recognising creativity as craft has significant pedagogic implications. It shifts the focus from innate ability to learnable technique, making creative writing accessible to students who may not initially see themselves as “creative.” It also aligns creative writing with other academic disciplines where skill, method, and practice are central.

3.3 Imagination, Memory, and Perception in Creative Writing :

Imagination plays a crucial role in creative writing, but it does not function in isolation. Rather than inventing entirely new worlds, writers often rework memory, perception, and observation. Personal experience, remembered scenes, overheard conversations, and sensory impressions become the raw material for creative transformation.

Memory in creative writing is not a factual record but a selective and interpretative process. Writers reshape memory to serve narrative purpose, compressing time, intensifying moments, and reordering events. Similarly, perception in creative writing involves attentive noticing—the ability to observe details, nuances, and contradictions that might otherwise go unnoticed. Imagination connects these elements, allowing writers to see beyond the literal and to explore possibilities, relationships, and meanings embedded in experience.

This interaction between imagination, memory, and perception reinforces the idea that creativity is grounded in lived reality, even when the resulting text appears fictional. Creative writing thus becomes a

mode of knowing, enabling writers to explore human experience through imaginative reconstruction.

3.4 Creativity as Disciplined Freedom :

Perhaps the most productive way to understand creativity in writing is to view it as disciplined freedom rather than unrestrained spontaneity. Writers work within constraints-of genre, form, point of view, or language-and it is within these limits that creativity flourishes. Constraint sharpens awareness and encourages innovation by forcing writers to find solutions within defined boundaries.

In classroom contexts, this understanding is particularly valuable. When students are given structured tasks, minimal outlines, or specific narrative problems to solve, creativity becomes focused rather than overwhelming. Freedom is exercised not in limitless choice but in meaningful decision-making. As Harper suggests, creative writing thrives when writers engage consciously with practice, treating writing as a way of thinking through language (Harper, 2010, p. 41).

By reconceptualising creativity as disciplined engagement, creative writing can be firmly situated within academic study. It becomes a field where imagination and rigour coexist, and where creativity is understood not as an elusive gift but as a cultivated intellectual practice.

4. How Creative Writing Creates: Process over Product :

Creative writing does not emerge as a finished artefact but unfolds through a series of interconnected stages. Emphasising process over product allows creative writing to be understood not merely as the production of literary texts but as a mode of thinking, exploration, and discovery through language. This perspective is especially important in academic contexts, where learning is measured not only by outcomes but by the development of cognitive and reflective skills.

Viewing creative writing as a process foregrounds how meaning is gradually constructed through observation, decision-making, constraint, and revision. Each stage contributes to the shaping of the final text, while also enabling the writer to discover possibilities that were not apparent at the outset.

4.1 Observation and Stimulus :

The creative process often begins with observation rather than invention. A fleeting moment, a remembered experience, a line of dialogue overheard, or a visual or sensory impression can serve as the

initial stimulus for writing. These stimuli need not be dramatic; in fact, ordinary situations frequently provide richer creative material because they allow writers to explore subtle human interactions and emotions.

Observation in creative writing involves attentive noticing. Writers learn to register details of setting, gesture, tone, and atmosphere, recognising their potential narrative significance. This attentiveness transforms everyday experience into creative material. In academic settings, encouraging students to observe closely helps them understand that creativity is grounded in engagement with the world rather than in abstract imagination alone.

4.2 Narrative Choice and the Shaping of Meaning :

Once a stimulus is identified, the creative process advances through narrative choice. Writers decide how a situation will be presented—who will speak, from what perspective, and in what sequence events will unfold. These choices are fundamental to how meaning is created.

Narrative choice involves selecting a point of view, determining the scope of knowledge available to the narrator, and deciding which details will be foregrounded or withheld. Such decisions are rarely neutral; they shape reader response and guide interpretation. In this sense, creative writing is an act of deliberate construction rather than spontaneous expression. Meaning emerges not from what is written alone, but from how it is arranged and revealed.

4.3 Constraint and Limitation as Creative Forces :

Contrary to the assumption that creativity requires complete freedom, limitation often functions as a powerful creative force. Constraints—such as restricted point of view, limited setting, minimal plot, or prescribed form—encourage writers to focus their attention and sharpen their choices.

In creative writing pedagogy, working within constraints helps students overcome the anxiety of unlimited possibility. When writers are asked to operate within specific boundaries, they are compelled to explore language, structure, and implication more carefully. Limitation thus becomes productive, enabling creativity to emerge through problem-solving rather than abundance.

This understanding reinforces the idea that creative writing is shaped by conscious control. Constraints do not suppress imagination; they channel it.

4.4 Revision, Modelling, and Writing as Discovery :

Revision is central to the creative process, since writing rarely achieves clarity or effectiveness in its first draft. Through revisiting their work, writers reassess earlier decisions, refine language, adjust structure, and deepen meaning. This recursive movement from drafting to redrafting enables writers to develop critical distance from their own texts and fosters the analytical awareness that academic creative writing seeks to cultivate.

Alongside revision, imitation and modelling function as important pedagogic tools. By working within the structural logic of existing texts, students internalise narrative strategies through practice rather than abstract description. Such re-enactment does not involve reproducing content but engaging with technique, allowing learners to experience how literary effects are constructed. In this way, creative writing pedagogy bridges creative practice and literary criticism, demonstrating that craft knowledge emerges most effectively through guided experimentation.

A process-oriented approach therefore challenges the view that creative writing merely expresses pre-formed ideas or emotions. Instead, writing becomes a mode of discovery through which meanings, connections, and insights gradually emerge in the act of composition and revision. For students, this perspective reduces the pressure to begin with fully articulated ideas and instead encourages exploratory engagement with language. Creative writing thus functions not only as artistic production but as a disciplined method of inquiry grounded in practice, reflection, and refinement.

5. Creative Writing as Pedagogy :

When creative writing is approached as an academic discipline, pedagogy becomes central to its legitimacy. Rather than functioning as an optional or talent-based activity, creative writing can be taught systematically through structured processes that emphasise practice, reflection, and dialogue. A pedagogic approach grounded in process-based learning and workshop-oriented methods enables students to develop both creative competence and critical awareness.

5.1 Process-Based and Workshop-Oriented Teaching Models :

Process-based pedagogy views writing as an evolving activity rather than a finished product. In creative writing classrooms, this

approach is often realised through workshop-oriented teaching models, where drafting, sharing, feedback, and revision form the core of learning. Students are encouraged to see writing as provisional and revisable, reducing anxiety associated with perfection and evaluation.

Workshops foster a collaborative learning environment in which students learn from each other's experiments, mistakes, and successes. Exposure to multiple approaches to the same creative task highlights the range of possible narrative solutions and reinforces the idea that creative writing involves choice rather than fixed rules. This collective engagement demystifies the creative process and helps students understand writing as a craft that develops through sustained practice.

5.2 Learning by Doing: Writing Before Theorising :

A central principle of creative writing pedagogy is learning by doing. Instead of beginning with abstract theories of narrative or literary form, students are first invited to write—often in response to prompts, constraints, or guided situations. Theoretical concepts such as point of view, tone, imagery, and irony are introduced only after students have encountered these elements experientially.

This reversal of the conventional academic sequence—practice before theory—enhances comprehension and retention. When students later encounter critical terminology, they are able to relate it to their own writing experiences. Theory thus becomes a tool for articulation and reflection rather than an external framework imposed on the text. Such an approach encourages deeper engagement and reduces the distance between creative practice and literary analysis.

5.3 Classroom Practices: Guided Prompts, Peer Discussion, and Revision :

Effective creative writing pedagogy relies on carefully designed classroom practices. Guided prompts provide structure while leaving room for imaginative exploration. By focusing each task on a specific narrative problem—such as limited perception, dialogue-driven action, or delayed revelation—teachers help students understand how individual techniques function within a text.

Peer discussion plays a crucial role in this process. Sharing drafts and responding to others' work encourages students to read as writers, paying attention to technique, effect, and clarity. These discussions cultivate interpretative sensitivity and promote respectful critical

exchange. Importantly, peer feedback shifts the classroom dynamic from teacher-centred evaluation to collaborative learning.

Revision, informed by feedback and self-reflection, completes the pedagogic cycle. Through revision, students learn that writing improves through rethinking and reworking rather than through spontaneous inspiration. This practice reinforces resilience, patience, and critical self-awareness-skills that are valuable both within and beyond literary study.

5.4 The Teacher's Role: Facilitator Rather Than Evaluator :

In creative writing pedagogy, the teacher's role differs significantly from that of a traditional evaluator. Rather than judging texts solely in terms of correctness or interpretation, the teacher functions as a facilitator who guides process, frames questions, and supports exploration. The emphasis is placed on helping students understand the implications of their choices rather than prescribing "right" or "wrong" ways to write.

This facilitative role encourages a classroom atmosphere of trust and experimentation. Students are more willing to take creative risks when assessment prioritises engagement, effort, and reflection over polished outcomes. The teacher's interventions-through prompts, modelling, and focused feedback-help students refine their craft while preserving individual voice and agency.

By positioning creative writing as pedagogy, the classroom becomes a space where creativity and critical thinking reinforce each other. Writing is no longer peripheral to academic study but integral to it, functioning as both a method of learning and an object of inquiry.

6. Can Creative Writing Be Taught? A Critical Response :

The question of whether creative writing can be taught has long generated debate within academic and literary circles. Skepticism often arises from the belief that creativity is an innate talent possessed by a few, and that formal instruction risks standardising or even stifling originality. While such concerns cannot be dismissed outright, they tend to rest on a narrow understanding of both creativity and pedagogy. A more nuanced response requires distinguishing between creative genius and creative competence, and between inspiration and craft.

6.1 Talent versus Training: Addressing Skepticism :

Skeptics of creative writing pedagogy frequently argue that great writers are born, not made. From this perspective, teaching creative

writing appears redundant or even misleading, as it cannot guarantee literary brilliance. However, this argument conflates exceptional talent with the fundamental skills of writing.

While pedagogy cannot manufacture genius, it can cultivate the conditions under which creativity develops. Many aspects of writing—such as control of language, narrative structure, point of view, rhythm, and revision—are clearly teachable. Training equips students with tools and strategies that enable them to articulate experience more effectively. In this sense, creative writing pedagogy does not promise greatness but offers access to craft.

6.2 What Pedagogy Can and Cannot Do :

A responsible creative writing pedagogy recognises its own limits. It cannot instil imagination where none exists, nor can it predict who will become a professional writer. What it can do is foster awareness, discipline, and confidence. Pedagogy provides frameworks within which students can experiment, reflect, and refine their writing practices.

By making the creative process visible, teaching demystifies writing and reduces reliance on vague notions of inspiration. Students learn that effective writing results from sustained engagement, revision, and critical self-assessment. Pedagogy thus supports learning how to write, not dictating what to write.

6.3 Developing Creative Competence Rather Than Genius :

The goal of creative writing instruction is not to produce literary prodigies but to develop creative competence. Creative competence involves the ability to make informed narrative choices, to recognise the relationship between form and meaning, and to evaluate one's own work critically.

Such competence has value beyond the production of literature. It enhances communication skills, interpretative sensitivity, and imaginative thinking-capacities that are transferable across academic and professional domains. By focusing on competence rather than genius, creative writing pedagogy aligns itself with broader educational goals.

6.4 Ethical and Academic Limits of Instruction :

Creative writing pedagogy must also remain ethically grounded. Teachers should avoid imposing aesthetic preferences, privileging

particular styles, or presenting their own tastes as normative standards. The aim is to guide process, not to mould students into replicas of established writers.

Academically, creative writing must be taught with transparency regarding its evaluative criteria. Assessment should prioritise engagement with process, responsiveness to feedback, and reflective understanding rather than subjective judgments of “talent.” Such an approach maintains academic integrity while respecting creative individuality.

In addressing the question of teachability, it becomes clear that creative writing occupies a distinct pedagogic space. It cannot guarantee artistic success, but it can enable meaningful participation in the creative process. By teaching craft, fostering awareness, and encouraging disciplined experimentation, creative writing education affirms that while talent may vary, learning to write creatively is both possible and valuable.

7. Academic Value and Benefits of Creative Writing :

When situated within an academic framework, creative writing offers benefits that extend beyond the production of imaginative texts. It functions as a mode of inquiry that sharpens critical thinking, refines linguistic awareness, and encourages interdisciplinary engagement. As a pedagogic practice, creative writing complements conventional scholarship by integrating analysis, reflection, and experimentation with language.

7.1 Enhancement of Critical Reading and Literary Analysis :

A major academic benefit of creative writing is its impact on critical reading. Students who practise creative composition develop a sharper awareness of narrative construction. Having grappled with issues such as point of view, information control, and closure, they approach literary texts with increased sensitivity to craft.

Creative writing thus transforms literary analysis from external commentary into informed recognition. Devices such as irony, symbolism, dialogue, and pacing become experiential rather than merely theoretical concepts. This embodied understanding enables students to analyse texts not only for thematic meaning but for the formal strategies through which effects are produced.

7.2 Improved Linguistic Sensitivity and Expressive Clarity :

Creative writing contributes significantly to linguistic development. Sustained attention to diction, rhythm, tone, and structure cultivates sensitivity to language at both micro and macro levels. The practice encourages precision, economy, and attentiveness to nuance—skills transferable to academic and professional communication.

Through revision, students learn to distinguish between vague expression and purposeful articulation. This heightened linguistic awareness strengthens clarity in analytical essays, research writing, and oral presentation, reinforcing creative writing's broader curricular value.

7.3 Interdisciplinary Relevance and Applicability :

The academic usefulness of creative writing extends beyond literary studies. Its emphasis on narrative competence—the ability to structure experience meaningfully—has growing relevance in fields such as education, media and cultural studies, psychology, and communication.

In education, creative writing supports reflective and learner-centred pedagogy; in media and cultural studies, it deepens understanding of narrative construction and audience engagement. More broadly, creative writing offers alternative modes of representing knowledge, particularly in areas where lived experience and interpretation are central.

7.4 Creative Writing as Research, Reflection, and Inquiry :

Within contemporary academia, creative writing is increasingly recognised as a legitimate mode of research. Creative practice can generate insights not always accessible through conventional analytical methods. Writing becomes a means of exploring questions, testing possibilities, and reflecting critically on experience.

Aligned with qualitative and practice-based research paradigms, creative writing foregrounds process, reflexivity, and interpretation. When supported by reflective or critical framing, it contributes meaningfully to knowledge production. By integrating imagination with analysis, creative writing challenges rigid divisions between creative and critical work, demonstrating their fundamental complementarity.

8. Conclusion: Repositioning Creative Writing in Higher Education:

This paper has argued for a rethinking of creative writing as a central rather than marginal component of higher education. By

examining what creative writing is, why it is creative, how it operates as a process, and what academic value it offers, the discussion has shown that creative writing is not merely an intuitive or talent-driven activity. It is a structured, reflective, and learnable practice grounded in deliberate choice, disciplined imagination, and sustained engagement with language.

Central to this argument is the understanding that creative writing functions simultaneously as process and product. Shaped through observation, selection, constraint, revision, and reflection, it mirrors the intellectual labour of critical scholarship. When taught through process-based and experiential models, creative writing enables students to grasp literary form from within the act of making, thereby strengthening analytical competence and interpretative judgement.

The paper has also addressed persistent scepticism about creativity within academic frameworks. While creative writing cannot manufacture literary genius, it can cultivate creative competence: control over language, sensitivity to form, awareness of craft, and confidence in narrative decision-making. These competencies are teachable, assessable, and transferable, aligning closely with higher education's emphasis on critical thinking, communication, and reflective learning. From a curricular perspective, integrating creative practice with critical analysis challenges the traditional separation between reading and writing, theory and practice. Such integration encourages movement from experience to explanation and from imitation to independent thinking, enriching literary study while preparing students for interdisciplinary and professional contexts where narrative and interpretation are essential.

Further empirical and classroom-based research in creative writing pedagogy remains necessary, particularly in relation to learning outcomes, cross-disciplinary applications, and emerging digital practices. As the field continues to evolve, sustained scholarly attention will be crucial to consolidating its academic legitimacy.

Repositioned within a rigorous pedagogic framework, creative writing demonstrates that creativity and intellectual discipline are not opposing forces. Properly taught, it emerges as a powerful mode of learning, inquiry, and scholarly engagement deserving a secure place in higher education.

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Swami Vivekananda's View on Caste System: A Study

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Abstract :

Vivekananda was not only a social reformer and a social activist but was also a saint, a patriot, a poet, a spiritual teacher, a humanist, an educationist, a sociologist and an orator also. As a social reformer he made attempts to uplift the downtrodden masses from poverty, ignorance, bondage, blind belief etc. Vivekananda's social reforms can be discussed under the following heads religion, education, caste, culture, women upliftment, mass upliftment etc. Vivekananda, did not try to abolish caste from the India society. Rather he praised the caste system of India. According to him caste is a very good thing. Caste is the plan we want to follow. He again says that though our caste and our institutions are apparently linked with our religion they are not so. Vivekananda believed that real caste is individuality, a way to express its latent potentiality. It is not a predetermined factor by patriarchy. According to Vivekananda that forgetting the actual role and meaning of caste system we put a narrow sense to it.

Key-words: *Vivekananda, Caste, Religion, culture*

Introduction :

Swami Vivekananda was not a man living in an ivory tower. His feet were firmly planted on the earth. Nothing concerning man would escape his notice. Man was a living God for him. Man was divine but his divinity was hidden by a veil of poverty, ignorance and superstition.

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His chief concern was to remove this veil so that the divinity 'already' in man might come out in the open. While in the west he talked of India's great spiritual heritage, on return to India the refrain of his 'Lectures from Colombo to Almora' was uplift of the masses, eradication of the caste virus, promotion of the study of science Industrialization of the country, removal of poverty the end of the colonial rule, in brief he was preoccupied with his attack on the countries socio-economic ills. It is inspiring that the solutions that this philosopher-monk offered are still the best.

Vivekananda was not only a social reformer and a social activist but was also a saint, a patriot, a poet, a spiritual teacher, a humanist, an educationist, a sociologist and an orator also. As a social reformer he made attempts to uplift the downtrodden masses from poverty, ignorance, bondage, blind belief etc. Vivekananda's social reforms can be discussed under the following heads religion, education, caste, culture, women upliftment, mass upliftment etc. It must be noted here that Vivekananda did not believe in reform. He believed in growth He says "I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth. I do not done to put myself in the position of god and dictate to our society; this way than should move and not that."¹ His ideal is growth, expansion, development on national lines.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To examine Swami Vivekananda's ideas and contributions as a social reformer in Indian society.
2. To analyze Vivekananda's views on the caste system and its philosophical and social implications.
3. To explore his broader vision of social reform with reference to religion, education, and mass upliftment.

Methodology :

The study follows a qualitative and analytical methodology based on secondary sources. It relies on Swami Vivekananda's original writings, speeches, and letters, along with scholarly books, research articles, and journals on Indian social philosophy. Textual analysis and interpretative methods are used to critically examine his views on caste and social reform.

Swami Vivekananda on Caste Problem :

Vivekananda, did not try to abolish caste from the India society. Rather he praised the caste system of India. He says "caste is a very

good thing. Caste is the plan we want to follow.”² He again says “Though our caste and our institutions are apparently linked with our religion they are not so. These institutions have been necessary to protect us as nation and when this necessity for self-preservation will no more exist; they will die a natural death.”³ In religions there is no caste. A man from the lowest may become a monk in India, and the two castes become equal. Vivekananda says that caste is a social custom and it is not religious institution. He criticized all the great preachers of India who have tried to break it down. He says “beginning from Buddha down to Ram Mohan Ray every one made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down religion and caste all together, and failed.”⁴

Social stratification is found in every society. Stratification or gradation means a process by which the people and the groups are classified in a hierarchy from the standpoint of social status. Every society categories its members in many ways. Every society provides some opportunity to its members so that they may effect change in their social status. A society which offers opportunity in that way is called open class system. There are, however societies which does not offer any opportunity and favour any movement from one class to another and this type of society is known as closed class system. Hence, the social system is of two kinds. One is open class system and the other is closed class system. In a closed class system individuals have no scope for movement from one class to another. The modern Indian caste system is an example of this type of social system. In a closed class system, the social status of the individual is predetermined. Again, individual gets the status by birth. Such class is closed caste. Thus we can say that the caste system in modern India is a close class system which does not favour any movement from one class to another class.

We now have a look to the origin of Indian caste system and Varnasharma dharma. The word ‘Vamashrama’ is a combination two words ‘varna’ and ‘asrama’. The word ‘Varna’ means colour or class, and ‘asrama’ means a stage of life. And the word ‘Dharma’ indicates duty or right conduct of an individual. Hence the phrase ‘Varnasramadharma’ means the duties of the different stages of life of the four classes of people. Indian History tells us that originally the people of India had only two colours, fair and dark. The Aryan who had come to India

from somewhere in Central Asia was fair complexioned. While the aborigines of the country were rather dark. There were originally two classes in India. One of them was the Aryans and the other were the natives of the country. But 'Varnasharma' in its earlier use meant the different stages of life of the four classes of people Brahmana, kshatriya, vaisya and sudra. These four together constituted society. However, in its later use, the word meant for four castes having these four names. This four-fold organization of Vedic society later became the caste system of Indian society. Each of four classes was determined by its peculiar social function. One who was pure in heart and intellectually alert could become Brahmana. One who was physically strong enough to take part in the defence as well as administration of the country became a Kshatriya. Those who were expert in trade and commerce became Vaisyas. Those who lived only by serving or only to serve the other classes were called the Shudras. This four-fold organization of the Vedic society had a scientific basis that to organize society on division of labour. There was a stage of the Vedic people when there was no functional division among them. Even the Rig Veda points to this stage. At that time individuals, especially the heads of the families which are said to have been patriarchal in type, did all sorts of work. Production of food, family worship and defence of the homeland etc. were included in their work. But as the time went on, the circumstances in which they lived became complex. It became too difficult for one man to do multifarious works. At this time arose the need to organize society on division of labour. Those who had the aptitude for earning wisdom and worship were grouped into one class. This class was called the Brahmins. Those who were physically fitted for defence of land were entrusted with this work and were called Kshatriyas. A third class of people had their allotted task, that of producing food and wealth and were called the Vaisyas. The fourth class was formed by the Shudras. These Shudras were the aborigines absorbed in the Aryan society. They were just labourers. Their only duty was to serve the other three classes. Then it was efficient socio-economic order, based on division of labour.

This four-fold organization of Vedic society was maintained also in order to avoid unnecessary competitions among the members of the society. New individuals came into three upper classes in virtue of the requisite qualities they possessed. But now the classes petrified. The process of their formation by proper quality stopped since the emphasis

was now laid upon birth. That to say, the class, on individual belonged to, come to be determined by birth, not as before, by quality.

Vivekananda analysed the caste system by handling the source of its origin. He observed that, “No caste in Satya juga, all Brahmans. We read in the Mahabharata that the whole World was in the beginning peopled with Brahmins, and that as they began to degenerate, they became divided into different castes and that when the cycle turns round, they will all go back to that Brahmanical origin. This cycle is turning round now, I draw your attention to this fact.”⁵ Thus in origin all were Brahmins. He observed even after formation of four fold organization of Vedic society, there was an organic relation between the upper classes. One class was incomplete or ineffective without the others. One class was higher than another, but not superior to another. The transition from class to caste could be effected only by shifting the emphasis from quality to birth, that is, making birth, the standard of social rank.

According to Vivekananda caste system has created an efficient organization of society. But this caste system must not create class frictions and factions. It must be based on the efficiency of the individual to adopt a particular business. It must not be rigid which ultimately leads the society to untouchism. Vivekananda explained and analyzed all circumstances from the point of view of Vedanta. Vedanta states that we all are eternal spirit irrespective of our caste, class and sex. At bottom all are one. Caste system is ought to be avoided when it is based on birth. It rises to a setup that one class is superior to other. Superior neglects and hates the inferior. It is said already that Vivekananda is not in favour of total and permanent abolition of the caste system. According to him total breakdown of caste system neither desirable nor practicable. He opines that one of the causes of India's down fall is to give up the actual meaning and role of a caste to formulate a healthy society on the basis of inherent quality. In India it is a great evil, grinding the poor through caste. Vivekananda dearly states untouchism, restriction which is based on negligence and hatred in no way related to actual caste system. Caste system is a social organization for the development of the whole society.

Vivekananda opined that liberty is the condition of growth and according to the quality of the individual each individual must have

liberty to serve for society. He never upholds that caste system is based on heredity. There should not be any privileges depending on heredity. What he accepts is the original four-fold division of labour of Vedic period in accordance with quality of the individual. In his view India fall because it prevailed and abolished caste, from proper functioning. Vivekananda warned us not to mix castism (in its deviate form) with religion to justify its validity. No religious scripture asserts that some portions of human beings are inferior to others. All religions declare that all human being are divine, even divinity of animals or plant kingdom. We all are jivas, reflection of Brahman. Caste is not a religious institution. Considering caste as religious institution is a great mistake. In this regard Jawaharlal Nehru had commented, "Passionately, Vivekananda condemned the meaningless discussion and arguments about ceremonials and especially the touch me-notism of the upper caste. Our religion is in the kitchen. Our God is the cooking pot, and our religion is "don't touch me, I am holy"⁶ Vivekananda declares, "Don't touchism is a form of mental disease."⁷ Therefore it should be kicked away.

Vivekananda believed that real caste is individuality, a way to express its latent potentiality. It is not a predetermined factor by patriarchy. According to Vivekananda that forgetting the actual role and meaning of caste system we put a narrow sense to it. Vivekananda observed that the transition from class to caste in Hindu society was a derivation from the path of reason. Towards the end of the Rig Vedic period the transformation of class into caste was complete, that the status and rank of an individual was determined solely by birth. Families were now fixed up as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra families and individual born into them were respectively called so. These castes, as they were called now, were put in a hierarchy with the Brahman at the top and Sudra at the base, and every caste was considered inferior to one or ones which were above it. In course of social evolution the emphasis was shifted to difference rather than on the organic relation between them, with the result that four-fold order ceases to be dynamic. Now discuss how Vivekananda tried to reform the caste system in India. Among the four castes Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, the Brahmins are recognized as the highest class. The rest three classes are lower than Brahmin. The Brahmins are the highest, then comes the Kshatriya, then the Vishay and the lowest is the Shudra. In India, says

Vivekananda ,if we read the history of it we will find that attempts have always been made to raise the lower classes to the higher and then to the highest class i.e. Brahmin. The plan in India is to make everybody a Brahmin, the Brahmin being the ideal of humanity. Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture and emancipation. According to Vivekananda ideal Brahman hood is that in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. A Brahmin is he who has killed all selfishness and who lives and works to acquire and propagate wisdom and the power of love.

Vivekananda in the traditional style says that the son of a Brahmin is not necessarily always a Brahmin though there is every possibility of his being Brahmin, he may not become so. According to him the Brahmin caste and the Brahmanya qualities are two distinct things. Vivekananda says as there are Satta, Rajas and Tamas-one or other of these gunas more or less in every man, so the qualities which make a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra are inherent in every man; more or less . But at times one or other these qualities Predominates in him in varying degrees and it is manifested accordingly. Naturally it is quite possible for one to be changed from one caste into another. Vivekananda refers here to Vishwamitra, a Kshatriya who became a Brahmin and Parashurama, a Brahmin, who became a Kshatriya.

The solution of the caste problem is not by bringing down the higher to the level of the lower, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher. And in his view it is the duty of the Brahmin to raise the lower classes to their standard. For this they must work hard. He says “our solution of the caste questions is not degrading those who are already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink, is not jumping out of our own limits in order to have more enjoyment, but it comes by everyone of us, fulfilling the dictates of our Vedantic religion, by our attaining spirituality, and by our becoming the ideal Brahman.”⁸ This lines of Vivekananda directly shows us that he wanted to establish a society in India which would be inhabited by the Brahmins. And to become a Brahmins means attaining spirituality or realizing our divine nature. And, if everyone become Brahmin in any society then that society will be perfect. He says that if a country is inhabited by such Brahmin, it is not strange to think that, that country as being above and beyond

all law. Government is not necessary to govern them. Because everyone is good, everyone is noble.

Vivekananda boldly declared that sound and healthy four-fold organization of society has turned and degraded to just a separation. According to Vivekananda it is out of spiritual tyranny of the priesthood and the ever increasing ceremonials. He fought against such separation and to pick up caste system as a mean for social mobility and progress. At last by following Vivekananda we can say, "Such is our ideal of caste as meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realization of that great ideal of the spiritual man who is non-resting, calm, steady, worshipful, pure and meditative. In that ideal there is God."⁹

Conclusion :

Vivekananda's social philosophy propounds a classless society based on individual liberty. His social philosophy seeks to root socialism on democracy. It asserts the supremacy of spirit over matter and accepts man as a free agent and aims at freeing the sleeping forces of man's enslaved spirit by granting him the widest possible liberty. Vivekananda declares liberty as the first condition of growth. The ideal of individual freedom is held supreme above everything else by the social philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. The following points can be drawn from the above discussion

1. Swami Vivekananda did never try to abolish the caste system as has been tried by many social reformers. Rather he tried to establish it with its root.
2. Caste is not a religious issue, it is purely cultural.
3. Caste is changeable. A Shudra can become a Brahman. But the goal is to make everyone Brahman.

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Swami Vivekananda's Universal Religion: A Framework for Global Harmony and Ethical Coexistence

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Abstract :

Swami Vivekananda's model of universal religion offers a comprehensive vision of how to promote global peace and ethical interaction in an age marked by cultural conflicts and ethical decline. Based on Vedantic belief in the divine life force within each human soul (Vivekananda 1:6), his philosophy emphasizes the unity of all existence and the compatibility of diverse religious traditions. Rather than preach a universal faith as such, Vivekananda calls for an ecumenical humanism allowing each tradition to retain its individuality while upholding common ethical precepts of compassion, justice and unselfish service (Vivekananda "Response to Welcome" 5). The summary investigates how Vivekananda's concept of universal religion as informed by reason, spirituality and social obligation offers a grounded impulse for religious discourse and debate. It emphasizes his theory of transformation as a precondition for global or outer peace, holding that True Religion must culminate in the active attempt to alleviate the lot of the poor, excluded and suffering. Critics might argue that Vivekananda's optimism fails to take into account the reality of these entrenched power imbalances, yet his emphasis on interior peace gained

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through yoga and meditation, for instance allow people to get above themselves as far as petty disputes and ego are concerned. This transformation would, on the global level, involve the fashioning of an “interfaith council” and “an interorganizational charity network,” akin to what he electrified global audiences with during his 1893 address in Chicago. By combining personal freedom with collective welfare, Vivekananda locates morality at the core of religious practice and challenges dogmatic beliefs that foment prejudice and enmity. The work also explores the application of his ideas to contemporary global challenges, including religious fanaticism, environmental degradation and cultural division, proposing that his focus on courage, mutual honor, and service can lead diverse societies toward more welcoming and lasting forms of peaceful living.

Keywords: Vedantic, harmonious, religious, humanistic, spirituality, interfaith.

Introduction and Background :

Swami Vivekananda arrived on the scene at the end of 19th century, as one of the greatest interpreters of India’s spiritual wisdom to the Western world. His speeches at the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago 1893 struck a memorable note “Sisters and Brothers of America”, mindful even then, more than a century ago, that all human beings are together as brothers and sisters (Vivekananda, “Address” 5). Central to his teaching was the vision of a ‘universal religion’ which would be able to embrace all forms of thought, honour all genuine religious experience and provide a basis for peace among nations and between certain groups (Vivekananda 3: 362). Vivekananda argued in an era of colonial domination and religious strife that such global religiosity, grounded in the direct experience of spirituality rather than exclusionary rigidity, could offer a practicable path to united humanity.

His guru, Sri Ramakrishna (1836–1886), was a village-born priest who is now widely regarded as one of India’s most important mystics (Nikhilananda 45-47). At the Kali temple of Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, he practiced rigorous devotions and experienced occasional mystical trances. Unsatisfied with learning about God in Hindu culture alone, he began to wonder if other religions could also lead to the same ultimate Truth. With Muslim mentors he dedicated

himself to Islam in all its prayers and austerities until he had a vision of the Prophet and the formless All. Later, guided by a Christian, he meditated on Christ and stated that in the midst of a vision in which Jesus was absorbed into the light from which one did not return (an experience similar to his other visions), there could be encountered no one but Christ (Nikhilananda 156-62). These explorations brought Ramakrishna to believe that “All faiths are different paths to the same God,” as Nikhilananda dictates “as many faiths, so may paths (412).” He urged his followers to remain faithful to their traditions and respect them as divergent paths leading to the same ‘ultimate God’.

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), born Narendranath Datta in 1863 in Calcutta, knew Ramakrishna as a young man of common sense logical and Western-educated looking for someone who had “seen God” (Rolland 42-45 1:). At first sceptical of the senior mystic, he was gradually won by Ramakrishna’s utter integrity, kindness and unassuming mystic power. After seeing him several times, he had some inner experiences which confirmed the authenticity of Ramakrishna and recognized him as his guru. From Ramakrishna, he took in both Advaita Vedanta the belief that all divinity exists in every being and the empirical evidence that God can be reached through different religions (Vivekananda 4: 189). Upon Ramakrishna’s death, Vivekananda took the vows of a monk and set up the order of Ramakrishna in which he finally declared at the 1893 Parliament of Religions that all religions are paths to God (Vivekananda, “Certainly All” 8). By this he transformed his teacher’s teaching of the message to all religions of religious peace and mutual reverence.

At the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Swami Vivekananda presented Hinduism as a rational, ethical, and ecumenical religion and not as a primitive form of idol worshiping (World’s Parliament 12). He explained image-worship as symbolic worship of the divine in the Paramatman and stressed Vedanta’s doctrine that every soul was potentially divine, with the realization of this divinity being the whole purpose of life. He had then disapproved the claim of exclusive correctness by affirming that all true religions are different paths to the same ultimate truth. Citing the model of many rivers opening into an ocean (Vivekananda, “Address” 9), he denounced fanaticism and demanded more than tolerance: an active embracing of other faiths, vehemently championing religious unity.

The integral religion of Vivekananda need be based on Vedantic concordism is necessitated, in a pragmatic approach to inter-national peace and ethical harmonization. This paper then turns to a discussion of its philosophical roots, including religious individuals' rights to protection against this form of violence; as well as its implications for service and learning, in areas such as ethics and ethical leadership; its relevance for contemporary world problems; and ends with an impression of strengths and weaknesses both theoretical and international as a globally-relevant system.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To examine Swami Vivekananda's concept of universal religion and its Vedantic foundations.
2. To analyze the ethical and social dimensions of his idea of universal religion with special reference to peace, interfaith harmony, and human welfare.
3. To explore the relevance of Vivekananda's universal religious vision in addressing contemporary global challenges such as religious conflict, ethical decline, and cultural division.

Methodology :

The study adopts a qualitative and interpretative methodology based on secondary sources. It involves a critical textual analysis of Swami Vivekananda's writings, speeches, and letters, along with scholarly books, journal articles, and contemporary studies on interfaith dialogue and religious humanism. Philosophical analysis and thematic interpretation are employed to assess the applicability of Vivekananda's ideas to present-day global issues.

Philosophical Foundations: Vedanta and Universal Religion :

Vivekananda's concept of a universal religion is synthesized in the teachings of advaita vedanta, which proclaims that single ideal "the Self and Pure Consciousness" manifests everywhere as different manifestations emanating from the same source (Bhagavad Gita 15.7: "The Atma or Paramatman like akasha or space, though an all-pervasive entity transcending time and causation, It becomes immanent in some particular locus through Its eternal power"). According to that standard truth alone dwells within the heart of all beings and what appears to be many different egos or religions is due only to ignorance of this elementary truth. True religion, for Vivekananda, thus lies ultimately not in faith or ritual but in

acknowledging one's own divine nature (Vivekananda 2: 250), an awakening that dissolves the walls of caste and creed and nation.

Vedanta elucidates universal religion in terms of four fundamental ideas. Brahman is the one, infinite and incomparable spiritual reality beyond the names, forms, and gods to which it is commonly addressed. Atman is the true Self which is not this body or ego but pure awareness (knowledge of duality). Advaita (Non-duality), the cardinal doctrine of Hinduism, declares that Atman is verily Brahman, which means that there are no essential differences between man and God prized above the mahavakyas like "Tat tvam asi" (That thou art). Maya is the power of illusion (Bhagavad Gita 7.14) which causes this one truth to take on the appearance of many disconnected individuals and contradictory religions. For Vivekananda, having realised maya and the oneness of Atman-Brahman, each human being and every genuine religion is an expression or manifestation of that ultimate reality.

Vivekananda: Inner vs. Outward "It is the inward facing core, not the outward structure with which religion is really concerned" (Vivekananda 1: 18). At the heart of it all is God-realization directly, realizing there's something divine about yourself and living it in purity, strength and kindness. The tales, myths, rituals, signs and religious groups are but sub instruments that have evolved through various historical periods and can't be of any use apart from helping find their way to realization. When the exteriorism is mistakenly identified as religion it results in superstition, religious pride & conflict; when relegated under inward realization they are diversified acceptable paths on a common spiritual journey.

Advaitic philosophy as per Vivekananda, there is only one ultimate Truth and this truth can be expressed in different ways by different people. This allows him to see religions as distinct paths up the same mountain, shaped by different histories, cultures and psychologies. Religious teachings, divine images and devotional practices may differ, but every tradition can provide guidance to seekers on how to purify the mind, nurture love and insight, and attain a closer proximity to their own innate divinity. So his famous likening of numerous rivers (many as there are) to one ocean and "as many faiths, so many paths": by nature no path is superior (Vivekananda, "Address" 9); a religion's truth consists in its waking the divine element within

view and inspiring followers to upright behavior, compassion for all creatures, and courage.

Vivekananda repeatedly makes it clear that the “universal religion” was not intended to be some new super-religion to eventually replace all the old ones. Instead, it is an understanding of religion that honors the peculiarities of each faith and yet shows how they converge at the level of spiritual realization (Vivekananda 3:531). Human beings differ greatly in temper, culture, intelligence and emotional needs one will need other images of the divine than another; other teachings, rites and experiences. A truly universal religion should therefore “be open to all types of minds and approaches,” being large enough to embrace both the devotional, rational, mystical, even activist seekers. To Vivekananda, universalism is a reader’s platform; from it the great religions of the world look supplementary rather than exclusive. When all they see is the shell of religion, religions collide; when they probe deeper, to shared goals like purifying character, venerating God and serving others, they find common ground. Universal religion, as he depicts it, preserves the wealth of ancestral rituals, stories, and institutions by seeing them as culturally conditioned routes to the same peak experience of God-realization. So a person will be the more truly Christian, or Muslim, or Hindu that he really is while simultaneously treating others as travelling companions. With this method, two important results are generated. For one, it dispels fears that pluralism will dilute or destroy particular identities: nobody is asked to surrender their scripture, prophet or preferred divine ideal. Second, it demonstrates that bigotry and fanaticism are violations of the true spirit of religion because if any path truly leads to the divine it will be one which promotes humility and respect for the divine in all forms. Thus Vivekananda’s universal religion is not a creed, but an outlook that preserves multiplicity and yet shows the unity of all religions.

Ethical Implications: Service, Education, and Character :

Universal religion, Vivekananda believes, is not only a matter of theory and mysticism; it must be put into practice by ethical action. If all is a divine truth common to all beings, then assisting others is the same thing as worshipping God, and injuring others becomes a denial of one’s own spiritual self. On this foundation he constructs a compelling ethic of social service, comprehensive education and character building

that will help to make the world one filled with dignity, justice and mutual concern.

“Shiva jnane jiva seva” means helping every living being with the understanding that the person helped is Shiva, the supreme Truth, in physical form (Vivekananda 4: 362). In this teaching, The external distinctions of religion, caste, sex, wealth or social status are all at the most secondary in this teaching; what really counts is the presence of God within each “jiva” or individual. Service then ceases to be charity from superior to inferior, and becomes worship paid to God. This makes hospitals, schools and relief work into temples that are alive.” Part of Vivekananda’s universal religion, “Shiva jnane jiva seva” offers a tangible way to achieve spiritual oneness: when the mind is trained to see God alike in a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or anyone else, it destroys prejudice and fanaticism. Every act of selfless help becomes a practical confirmation that all beings are expressions of the same ultimate Truth, turning universalism from an abstract theory into daily ethical practice.

Vivekananda’s “man-making education” is not an exercise in fact-gathering and job-preparation. Logan in education – should seek to express the hidden divinity and strength within every individual student (Vivekananda 3:365), character formation and not professional development. Education in science, languages and the arts is important, but it needs to be conjoined with such moral values as honesty, self-discipline and courage so that knowledge does not serve as an instrument of exploitation. He insists that “Spiritual development is not teaching religious doctrines but awakening the courage, self-confidence, and respect for all life which are inherent in every human soul. For in learning to see themselves as potentially divine, they learn to respect the divinity of others breaking down barriers of class, religion and race. Such education, he believes, creates “men with muscles of iron and nerves of steel,” yet filled with compassion (Vivekananda 5: 42), ready to serve the poor and oppressed rather than pursue selfish success. In today’s interconnected world, his man-making education points toward a comprehensive model: schools and universities should develop critical thinking and professional abilities while simultaneously fostering empathy, social responsibility, and a sense of global citizenship, producing graduates who can work effectively and ethically for the harmony and improvement of humanity.

Vivekananda's ethical teachings directly challenge communalism, caste discrimination, and materialism by basing morality on the unity of all beings. When every person is viewed as the expression of the same divine Self, harming or despising any group becomes a form of self-harm, not religious devotion or social hierarchy. Communal hatred between religions is therefore illogical if the one God is worshipped through many names and forms, attacking another's faith are attacking a different entrance to the same Truth. The teaching of spiritual unity also undermines caste discrimination. If the atman in all is equally divine, no one can be naturally "higher" or "lower"; service to the so-called untouchable is service to God. This vision supports efforts to uplift the poor and marginalized instead of justifying social exclusion. Against materialism, Vivekananda teaches that true satisfaction lies not in accumulation but in selfless service, inner strength, and realization of the divine within. By valuing character over comfort and duty over desire, his ethics challenge consumer culture and economic injustice. Together, these teachings offer a coherent framework where social harmony, equality, and simplicity naturally emerge from recognizing one spiritual truth shining through every human face.

The Ramakrishna Mission transforms Vivekananda's ethic of universal service into concrete institutional work across education, healthcare, and disaster relief. In education, it operates schools, colleges, and vocational institutes that combine academic excellence with character formation and interfaith respect, intentionally serving students from diverse religious and socio-economic backgrounds as equal embodiments of the divine. In healthcare, its hospitals, eye care centers, and rural clinics offer low-cost or free treatment, often in remote areas, without any attempt at religious conversion, viewing medical care itself as worship of God in the patient. During floods, cyclones, earthquakes, and pandemics, the Mission's relief teams provide food, clothing, shelter, and long-term rehabilitation, working alongside local communities regardless of caste or creed. These activities express "Shiva jnane jiva seva" institutionally: every child taught, patient treated, or survivor assisted is approached as Shiva, not as a target group. By organizing volunteers and resources in this spirit, the Mission demonstrates how universal religion becomes a lived social ethic, turning spiritual unity into inclusive, practical compassion for all.

Contemporary Relevance: Global Harmony and Coexistence :

Though Vivekananda spoke over a century ago, his vision of universal religion addresses several of the most pressing problems of the twenty-first century, including interreligious violence, cultural polarization, ecological crisis, and the decline of ethical leadership. In an age of unprecedented global interdependence, his emphasis on the spiritual unity of humankind and the moral obligation of mutual service offers a compelling foundation for new forms of global cooperation.

Vivekananda's universalism provides an early philosophical foundation for many contemporary efforts in interfaith dialogue and global ethics. His belief that all religions are valid paths to the same ultimate Truth anticipates the spirit of the Parliament of the World's Religions, which brings communities together not to debate superiority but to witness each other's truths and cooperate on shared moral commitments. His call to "accept all religions as true" reflects the Parliament's emphasis on respect, mutual learning, and joint action for justice, peace, and care for the Earth. Similarly, UN-related discussions on a "global ethic" (Panikkar 112; Smith 245) echo Vivekananda's emphasis that beneath doctrinal differences lies common ethical imperatives: non-violence, honesty, solidarity with the poor, and reverence for human dignity. Modern charters of global ethics seek agreement on such principles without demanding uniform belief, just as Vivekananda distinguished between the essence of religion realization of the divine and compassion and its diverse historical forms. His stress on serving the "God in man" anticipates rights-based and dignity-based language in international declarations. In this way, his universal religion functions as a spiritual predecessor to present movements that build peace and cooperation through dialogue, shared values, and joint service rather than through conversion or dominance.

Vivekananda's Vedantic unity implies that humanity and nature share one interdependent reality; damaging the environment therefore means injuring our own larger Self, a perspective that supports strong ethical responsibility for climate action and ecological restraint (Vivekananda, Karma Yoga 92). His call to "see God in the poor" reframes poverty relief from charity to justice, encouraging structural efforts to remove exploitation and empower the marginalized as spiritual duty. Non-duality also undermines us-versus-them thinking that fuels conflict, since

opponents are recognized as expressions of the same divine consciousness, making dialogue, forgiveness, and cooperative peace building the only logical responses for individuals, communities, and nations.

Some scholars argue that Vivekananda's language of a single "universal religion" can inadvertently obscure the real doctrinal and historical differences that shape people's identities and commitments (Smith 267). If every religion is treated simply as another path to the same summit, important theological distinctions risk being minimized or overlooked, potentially leading to a superficial understanding that fails to respect the depth and uniqueness of each tradition's teachings, practices, and spiritual insights.

Conclusion :

Vivekananda's idea of universal religion logically springs from the primary tenet of Vedanta that Brahman, the sole infinite Entity, presents itself as atman in every human being and is the ground of all genuine religious experiences. On this basis, he considers the world's world-religions to represent diverse historical expressions of the one collective movement into divine discovery and not competitive claims as truths in themselves. Universal religion does not, therefore, abolish the particular traditions; rather it recognizes them as "so many paths," suited to different temperaments, societies and periods of history leading by diverse routes to the same summit. And yet, at the same time, this is not all idealism. For Vivekananda, acceptance of all beings as a divine presence implies at least three serious ethical commitments: the cultivation of character through strength and self-discipline; "man-making" education that fosters inner power and social responsibility; and devoted service to those who are poor, sick, or underprivileged in one's role as worshipper of the divinity within. In this way a universal religion becomes a practical basis for world peace and moral cooperation, and meditative wisdom is harmonized with active kindness (Vivekananda I: 10), advocating the spiritual unity of both individuals and communities in daily life.

The attitude that Vivekananda's works inspire, is to coexist peacefully by finding a commonality in spiritual identity and yet keep our respective religious and cultural cultures intact. It does not command communities to abandon their beliefs or liturgies, but invites them instead to accept one another's paths as genuine pathways to the same

divine Reality. Because it links a universal religion with shared moral obligations of honesty, compassion, serving the suffering and respect for human dignity it offers a viable basis for co-operation among traditions. His vision, then, is a potential means towards global concord where differences remain and may be relegated to secondary status beneath greater commitment to love, justice, and empathic understanding.

Possible Areas for Further Study :

1. Vivekananda and Gandhi on religious harmony :

Examine Vivekananda's universal religion alongside Gandhi's sarva dharma sambhava ("equal respect for all religions"), exploring their shared ground (non violence, service, inner awakening) and their differences in philosophical foundations, political approaches, and perspectives on religious conversion.

2. Dialogue with contemporary pluralist theologians:

Position Vivekananda with scholars like John Hick, Raimon Panikkar, or Wilfred Cantwell Smith, analyzing whether his Vedantic approach aligns with, challenges, or enhances their theories of "many paths to one Real," and how each addresses doctrinal disagreements and truth claims.

3. Post colonial and feminist critiques:

Explore how scholars from post colonial or feminist viewpoints assess Vivekananda's concept of "universal religion": does it challenge Western Christian dominance while potentially creating new power structures, or can his emphasis on service and empowerment be understood as liberating for marginalized groups?

4. Comparative study with other Hindu Universalists:

Compare his stance with figures such as Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, or Radhakrishnan, examining their different understandings of Vedanta, development, culture, and global unity, along with their respective consequences for worldwide ethics.

5. Empirical study of Ramakrishna Mission practice:

Analyze how organizations influenced by Vivekananda actually handle pluralism in practice educational programs, hospital spiritual care, interfaith collaboration in humanitarian work and what this demonstrates about the advantages and limitations of his universalism as a practical philosophy.

6. Applications to twenty first century conflicts:

Investigate how Vivekananda's concepts might be implemented in peace education, interfaith dialogue initiatives, or conflict resolution efforts in areas experiencing severe communal discord, evaluating whether his spiritual unity combined with ethical service produces tangible social benefits.

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Freedom and Responsibility in Buddhism and Sartre's Existentialism: An Ethical Inquiry

Namita Pawegam¹

Abstract :

The apparent paradox of moral agency in Sartrean existentialism and Buddhist philosophy—two schools that focus on fundamental ethical responsibility while rejecting the idea of a permanent, ontologically fixed self—is attempted to examine in this paper. At first glance, the denial of a substantial self appears to undermine moral accountability. Sartrean existentialism proclaims that “existence precedes essence,” situating the individual in a condition of radical freedom and responsibility, where one is “condemned to be free.” Similarly, Buddhism articulates the doctrine of *Anatta* (non-self) and *Pratityasamutpada* (dependent origination), emphasizing the impermanent and relational nature of all phenomena, including personal identity. This study argues that the absence of a fixed self does not negate ethical responsibility; rather, it constitutes the very ground upon which ethical responsiveness becomes possible. In existentialism, responsibility arises from the individual's continual self-projection through conscious choice, while in Buddhism, ethical conduct is rooted in mindful awareness and compassionate understanding of interdependence. By bringing Sartre's concept of the existential “project” into dialogue with Buddhist mindfulness and compassion (*karuna*), the

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paper develops a model of “contingent responsibility,” wherein moral agency is understood as dynamic, relational, and situational rather than essentialist. Such a framework offers a compelling response to contemporary moral nihilism by affirming responsibility without reliance on metaphysical absolutes. The synthesis presented here demonstrates that ethical commitment can be both non-essentialist and deeply humane, providing a philosophically grounded approach to moral life in an increasingly fragmented and uncertain world.

Keywords : Existentialism, *Anatta*, Responsibility, Nihilism, Selfhood, Mindfulness

Introduction :

The search for a viable foundation of ethics in a post-metaphysical intellectual landscape has increasingly drawn philosophical attention toward traditions that challenge the notion of a fixed, essential self. Within this context, a productive yet often underexplored dialogue emerges between twentieth-century Western existentialism—particularly the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre—and the Buddhist philosophical tradition. Though historically and culturally distinct, both systems begin with a radical negation that unsettles classical metaphysical assumptions: Sartre’s rejection of a predetermined human essence and Buddhism’s denial of an eternal, substantial soul (*atman*). This shared negation raises a pressing philosophical concern—how can ethical responsibility be grounded when the very notion of a stable moral agent is called into question? At first glance, the absence of an enduring self might appear to dissolve the basis for moral accountability, threatening to lead toward ethical relativism or nihilism. However, both Sartrean existentialism and Buddhism resist this conclusion. Instead of resulting in moral anarchy, the denial of an essential self intensifies the demand for ethical responsibility. Sartre famously declares that “existence precedes essence,” asserting that human beings are radically free and entirely responsible for the meanings and values they create through their choices. Freedom, in this framework, is not a privilege but an inescapable condition, rendering the individual “condemned to be free” and accountable not only for oneself but, by extension, for humanity as a whole.

Similarly, Buddhist philosophy, through doctrines such as *Anatta* (non-self) and *Pratityasamutpada* (dependent origination), dismantles

the notion of a permanent ego while simultaneously establishing a robust ethical framework. Moral agency in Buddhism does not rely on a metaphysical self but arises from intentional action (*Cetana*) within a web of causal interdependence. Ethical responsibility is thus grounded in awareness, mindfulness, and compassion, emphasizing the transformative potential of conduct and mental cultivation rather than obedience to an external moral law.

This paper undertakes a comparative philosophical inquiry into how Sartrean existentialism and Buddhist thought conceptualize freedom, responsibility, and moral agency in the absence of a fixed “I.” By examining their convergences and divergences, the study aims to demonstrate that ethical responsibility need not be anchored in a substantial self. Instead, both traditions reveal alternative, yet compelling, models of ethical life grounded in freedom, relationality and lived experience. Such a dialogue not only enriches cross-cultural philosophy but also offers valuable insights for rethinking ethics in an age marked by metaphysical uncertainty.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To critically examine the concept of freedom and moral responsibility in Jean-Paul Sartre’s existentialism, particularly through the notions of “existence precedes essence,” radical freedom, and the idea that human beings are “condemned to be free.”
2. To analyze the ethical implications of the Buddhist doctrines of Anatta (non-self) and Pratityasamutpada (dependent origination), with special reference to how moral accountability is sustained within a non-essentialist metaphysical framework.
3. To develop a comparative ethical model of “contingent responsibility” by placing Sartre’s concept of existential self-projection in dialogue with Buddhist mindfulness (*sati*) and compassion (*karuna*), demonstrating how moral agency can be understood as dynamic, relational, and situational rather than grounded in a permanent self.

Methodology :

This study uses a comparative philosophical method. It examines the concept of freedom and responsibility in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and in Buddhist teachings. First, the study analyzes Sartre’s ideas

of radical freedom, responsibility, and self-creation through a close reading of his major works. Second, it examines key Buddhist doctrines such as *Anatta* (non-self) and *Pratityasamutpada* (dependent origination) to understand how moral responsibility is explained without a permanent self. Finally, the study compares both traditions to identify similarities and differences and develops a conceptual understanding of responsibility as dynamic and relational rather than based on a fixed essence.

The Ontological Void: Existence Precedes Essence vs. *Anatta* :

The most profound point of convergence between Sartrean existentialism and Buddhist philosophy lies in their shared recognition of an ontological void at the center of human subjectivity. Both traditions dismantle the metaphysical assumption of a substantial, enduring self and replace it with a dynamic, process-oriented understanding of existence. In *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Jean-Paul Sartre characterizes human consciousness as *être-pour-soi* (being-for-itself), a mode of being fundamentally distinct from inert objects or *être-en-soi* (being-in-itself). Consciousness, for Sartre, is not a thing endowed with fixed properties or an intrinsic essence; rather, it is a radical negativity—a “nothingness” that exists only by transcending what it is and projecting itself toward possibilities not yet realized. Human beings, therefore, are not manufactured entities with predefined purposes but open-ended projects whose identities are continuously shaped through choice and action. This ontological lack is not a defect to be overcome but the very condition that makes freedom possible. A striking parallel can be found in the Buddhist doctrine of *Anatta* (non-self), which similarly denies the existence of a permanent, independent ego underlying human experience. Buddhism analyzes the individual not as a unified substance but as a contingent aggregation of five *Skandhas*: form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. What is conventionally designated as the “self” is merely a conceptual label imposed upon this constantly changing assemblage of physical and mental processes. As emphasized in the *Sanyutta Nikaya* and elucidated by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000), there is no enduring “owner” or controller behind these aggregates; they arise and cease in accordance with conditions, without an underlying essence. The Buddhist critique of selfhood thus exposes the ego as a cognitive and linguistic construction rather than an ontological given.

The concept of *sunyata* (emptiness), often misunderstood as nihilism, further clarifies this position. Emptiness does not signify a void of absolute nothingness but the absence of inherent, independent existence (*svabhava*). All phenomena, including what is taken to be the self, exist only in relational dependence. In this sense, Buddhist emptiness resonates with Sartre's notion of nothingness as the structural feature of consciousness that prevents it from solidifying into a thing. Both philosophies, despite their divergent metaphysical vocabularies, converge on the insight that the self is not a fixed entity but a contingent process constituted through relations, intentions, and temporal becoming. Yet, this shared ontological void does not culminate in skepticism or ethical indifference. On the contrary, the absence of an essential self intensifies the demand for responsibility. For Sartre, the nothingness of consciousness renders individuals wholly accountable for the meanings they create through their choices. For Buddhism, the realization of non-self and emptiness grounds ethical awareness by dissolving ego-centered attachments and revealing the interdependent nature of existence. Thus, both traditions transform the denial of a substantial self into a positive philosophical resource, affirming that freedom, responsibility, and ethical life emerge precisely from the absence of an ontological essence at the core of human existence.

The Nature of Freedom :

Although Sartrean existentialism and Buddhist philosophy converge on the recognition of an ontological void at the heart of subjectivity, they diverge significantly in their respective interpretations of freedom and its existential significance. This divergence concerns not the existence of freedom itself but its experiential “flavor” and ethical orientation. For Jean-Paul Sartre, freedom is an unavoidable ontological condition intrinsic to human existence, one that is experienced less as a gift than as a burden. In contrast, Buddhist philosophy conceives freedom (*vimutti* or *vimoksha*) not as an inescapable starting point but as a transformative goal achieved through disciplined ethical and contemplative practice. This contrast reveals two profoundly different responses to the absence of a fixed self.

In Sartre's philosophy, freedom arises directly from the structure of consciousness as *être-pour-soi*. Because consciousness is a negation of being-in-itself, it is never identical with itself and is perpetually

projected toward possibilities. Sartre famously argues that human beings are “condemned to be free” (Sartre, 1946/2007), meaning that even the refusal to choose is itself a choice for which one is responsible. This radical freedom generates ‘*angoisse*’-existential anguish-an effective response to the realization that no external authority, moral law, or divine command can justify one’s actions. Standing before the open horizon of possibilities without a predetermined moral map produces a vertiginous awareness of absolute responsibility. Freedom, in this sense, is not comforting or liberating but destabilizing, as the individual bears full accountability for both personal identity and the values one implicitly legislates for humanity at large.

Buddhist philosophy, by contrast, does not treat such radical freedom as the primordial condition of existence. Human beings, according to Buddhist analysis, are ordinarily bound by ignorance (*avijja*), craving (*tanha*), and aversion (*dosa*), which condition their actions and perpetuate suffering (*dukkha*). Freedom (*vimutti*) is therefore not an ontological given but an achievement-the cessation of these compulsive forces through ethical conduct (*sila*), mental discipline (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*panna*). Rather than existential anguish, the movement toward freedom is accompanied by clarity, equanimity, and compassion. Liberation is experienced not as the terror of limitless choice but as the release from reactive patterns that distort perception and action. Nevertheless, Buddhism does not deny the presence of agency within the causal web of dependent origination. This is articulated through the doctrine of *cetana* (volition), which plays a central role in Buddhist ethics. As the Buddha explicitly states in the Anguttara Nikaya, “It is volition, monks, that I call karma”. (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 1997) This formulation affirms that while actions are conditioned, they are not mechanically determined. At the point of intention, the mind retains the capacity to redirect itself-to choose a response rather than succumb to habitual reaction. Moral responsibility thus arises not from a metaphysical self but from intentional mental activity embedded within causal processes. The contrast between Sartrean anguish and Buddhist liberation reflects differing evaluations of contingency and responsibility. Sartre emphasizes the isolating weight of freedom in a universe devoid of inherent meaning, where each individual must invent values *ex nihilo*. Buddhism, on the other hand, situates freedom within

an ethical and soteriological framework, where insight into non-self and interdependence gradually loosens the grip of ego-driven desire. While Sartrean freedom exposes the individual to existential solitude, Buddhist freedom dissolves the illusion of separateness altogether. Despite these differences, both traditions converge on a crucial ethical insight: freedom entails responsibility. Sartre's anguish and Buddhism's mindfulness both function as modes of heightened awareness—one confronting the abyss of choice, the other illuminating the conditions of suffering and its cessation. In this sense, the divergence between condemnation and liberation does not negate their shared project. Rather, it reveals two philosophically rigorous ways of responding to the same ontological insight: that without an essential self, ethical life must be consciously, intentionally, and responsibly lived.

The Sartrean Response: The Universal Choice :

Sartre's ethical response to the ontological void created by the absence of God or a fixed human essence is articulated most clearly through his concept of the "universal choice." In *Existentialism Is Humanism* (1946/2007), Sartre contends that if there is no divine lawgiver or pre-established moral order, then values cannot be discovered but must be created through human action. Ethical meaning, therefore, does not precede existence; it emerges from concrete choices made by individuals situated in specific historical and social contexts. This radical claim transforms the act of choosing into a moment of profound moral significance, extending far beyond the personal sphere. For Sartre, every genuine choice implicitly affirms a vision of what it means to be human. When an individual chooses a course of action, they are not merely expressing a private preference but projecting an "image of man as he ought to be" (Sartre, 1946/2007). This is because, in the absence of objective values, one cannot justify an action by appealing to external standards. To choose is simultaneously to legislate, to declare that one's chosen value is worthy of realization. In this sense, Sartrean ethics bears a structural resemblance to Kant's principle of universality, yet without reliance on rational necessity or moral law. The universality of the choice arises not from logical obligation but from existential commitment.

This condition places the individual under what Sartre famously describes as "total responsibility." Since nothing—neither God, human nature, social roles, nor psychological determinism—can ultimately

excuse one's actions, the individual must assume full authorship of their decisions and their consequences. Sartre rejects the idea that circumstances negate freedom; even in situations of extreme constraint, individuals remain free in how they interpret and respond to their conditions. Freedom, therefore, is inseparable from responsibility, and the attempt to deny this unity constitutes a fundamental ethical failure. Sartre terms this failure *mauvaise foi* (bad faith), a form of self-deception in which individuals attempt to evade responsibility by treating themselves as objects governed by fixed identities or external forces. Examples include appealing to one's social role, psychological disposition, or supposed destiny in order to justify actions or inaction. By claiming that one "had no choice," the individual denies the very freedom that defines human existence. Bad faith is thus not a simple moral weakness but an ontological lie—a refusal to acknowledge oneself as a self-creating project (*être-pour-soi*). Importantly, Sartre does not propose a codified moral system or a list of prescribed values. His ethics is formal rather than substantive, demanding authenticity rather than conformity to predetermined norms. Authenticity consists in lucidly recognizing one's freedom and assuming responsibility for one's choices without self-deception. This recognition does not eliminate anxiety or anguish; rather, it embraces them as signs of ethical seriousness. Anguish, for Sartre, is the awareness that one's choices matter universally and that one stands accountable not only for oneself but for humanity as a whole.

Thus, the Sartrean response to the void is neither despair nor nihilism but ethical rigor. By insisting that each choice carries universal significance, Sartre transforms the absence of metaphysical foundations into a demanding moral horizon. The individual, as the author of values, cannot escape responsibility without betraying their own existential condition. In this way, Sartrean existentialism offers a distinctive and uncompromising vision of moral life grounded in freedom, authenticity, and total responsibility.

The Buddhist Response: Dependent Origination

The Buddhist response to the problem of moral responsibility in the absence of a permanent self is articulated through the doctrine of *Pratityasamutpada* (dependent origination), which provides a causal rather than substantial account of agency and ethical continuity. Unlike

metaphysical systems that ground responsibility in an enduring soul or ego, Buddhism locates moral accountability within a dynamic network of conditions and effects. Ethical responsibility, from this perspective, does not presuppose an immutable subject that persists unchanged over time; instead, it arises from the continuity of causal processes that link intention, action, and consequence.

According to the doctrine of *Pratityasamutpada*, all phenomena arise and cease in dependence upon conditions. Nothing exists independently or in isolation, and this applies as much to mental events as to physical ones. Human action is thus understood as a conditioned occurrence shaped by prior causes—ignorance (*avijja*), craving (*tanha*), and volitional formations (*sankhara*)—yet simultaneously capable of generating new conditions through intentional activity. This framework preserves moral responsibility without reifying a metaphysical self. As Kalupahana (1995) emphasizes, Buddhist causality avoids both strict determinism and absolute freedom, offering instead a middle path in which agency operates within, rather than outside of, causal relations.

A frequently employed Buddhist metaphor illustrates this conception of ethical continuity: the transmission of a flame from one candle to another. The later flame is neither identical to nor entirely different from the earlier one. Similarly, the “self” that performs an action and the “self” that experiences its result are not numerically identical entities, yet they belong to the same causal stream. This analogy, found in early Buddhist discussions of rebirth and karma, underscores the idea that moral consequences follow not because a soul endures but because causal continuity persists. Responsibility is thus intelligible without identity; what matters is not sameness of substance but continuity of conditions. This causal understanding is central to the Buddhist conception of kamma (*karma*). As the Buddha declares in the AEGuttara Nikaya, “It is volition (*cetana*), monks, that I call kamma”. (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 1997) Ethical responsibility, therefore, hinges on intention rather than on the presence of a metaphysical agent. Intentional actions shape future experiences by conditioning mental and physical processes, reinforcing or weakening tendencies toward suffering (*dukkha*). Punishment, in this context, is not a matter of retribution against a fixed entity but an intervention within a causal process aimed at transformation and cessation.

From this standpoint, responsibility in Buddhism is fundamentally therapeutic rather than punitive. Ethical practices such as mindfulness (*sati*), moral discipline (*sila*), and wisdom (*panna*) function to interrupt harmful causal chains and cultivate wholesome ones. The goal is not to assign blame to an enduring “doer” but to understand the conditions that give rise to unwholesome actions and to modify those conditions. In this sense, Buddhist ethics aligns moral responsibility with compassion and insight rather than judgment and condemnation. Ultimately, the doctrine of *Pratityasamutpada* reframes responsibility as a matter of guiding a process toward liberation (*vimutti*). Since suffering arises dependently, it can also cease dependently. Ethical responsibility consists in recognizing one’s participation in this causal nexus and deliberately orienting action toward the cessation of suffering. By grounding responsibility in continuity without identity, Buddhism offers a sophisticated alternative to substance-based moral theories, demonstrating that accountability and moral transformation remain coherent even in the absence of a permanent self.

Towards a Compassionate Existentialism :

The ethical vision of Sartrean existentialism, despite its insistence on responsibility and authenticity, has frequently been criticized for its perceived individualism and emotional austerity. By locating value-creation entirely within the solitary freedom of the choosing subject, Sartre’s ethics appears vulnerable to charges of moral isolationism, where responsibility is borne heroically but without an explicit framework for compassion or relational concern. Buddhism, particularly through the ethical ideal of *karuna* (compassion), offers a significant corrective to this limitation, enabling the articulation of what may be described as a compassionate existentialism—one that retains existential freedom while grounding ethical action in interdependence rather than solitude.

In Buddhist philosophy, *karuna* is not merely an affective response to suffering but an ethical insight grounded in the doctrines of *anatta* (non-self) and *Pratityasamudpada* (dependent origination). If the self is not an independently existing substance but a contingent process arising within a web of conditions, then the rigid distinction between “my” suffering and “your” suffering loses its ontological basis. Suffering (*dukkha*) is understood as a shared, relational phenomenon

rather than a private possession. Compassion, therefore, is not an optional moral sentiment but a rational and ethical response to the recognition of interconnected existence. When read through this Buddhist lens, the Sartrean existential “project” of value-creation undergoes a significant transformation. Sartre maintains that individuals create meaning through freely chosen projects, assuming total responsibility for their values and actions (Sartre, 1946/2007). However, if such projects remain exclusively self-referential, they risk collapsing into bad faith under a different guise—one that absolutizes individual freedom while ignoring the relational conditions that make freedom possible. Buddhism challenges this isolation by insisting that freedom divorced from compassion remains incomplete and ethically immature.

Stephen Batchelor (1997) argues that the insight into emptiness (*sunyata*) does not lead to detachment from the world but to a deeper engagement with it, grounded in care and responsibility. From this perspective, the existentialist project finds its most authentic expression not in the assertion of solitary autonomy but in actions that alleviate suffering within the interconnected web of existence. If there are no enduring selves, then ethical responsibility must extend beyond the illusion of personal ownership and encompass the well-being of all sentient beings who participate in the same causal continuum. A compassionate existentialism thus reframes Sartrean freedom as relational rather than isolated. Freedom remains central, but it is exercised with an awareness that one’s choices reverberate through a network of conditions affecting others. Compassion becomes the existential criterion of authenticity: to choose authentically is to choose in a way that acknowledges interdependence and seeks the reduction of suffering. This synthesis does not dilute Sartre’s emphasis on responsibility; rather, it radicalizes it by extending responsibility beyond the self to the broader field of human and non-human existence.

In this synthesis, *karuna* functions as the ethical completion of existential freedom. Where Sartre exposes the burden of value-creation in a godless universe, Buddhism reveals the relational horizon within which such creation must occur. The resulting ethical framework neither retreats into metaphysical comfort nor succumbs to nihilism. Instead, it affirms that in a world without fixed essences, the most meaningful and authentic project is the cultivation of compassion within the shared vulnerability of existence.

Conclusion :

This study has undertaken a comparative philosophical inquiry into Sartrean existentialism and Buddhist ethical philosophy in order to examine how freedom, responsibility, and moral agency can be coherently grounded in the absence of a permanent self. At first glance, Sartre's insistence on radical freedom and Buddhism's doctrine of non-self appear to emerge from distinct intellectual and cultural horizons. Yet, as this analysis has demonstrated, both traditions converge on a shared ontological insight: the self is not an immutable substance but a contingent, dynamic process. Far from undermining ethical life, this recognition intensifies the demand for responsibility and ethical awareness. Sartre's existentialism confronts the modern condition of metaphysical absence with uncompromising clarity. By declaring that "existence precedes essence," Sartre dismantles all appeals to predetermined values and exposes the individual as the sole author of meaning. His concept of total responsibility and the idea of universal choice establish a demanding ethical framework in which every action projects an image of humanity as it ought to be. Anguish and anxiety are not pathologies to be avoided but integral features of ethical seriousness, signaling an awareness of the weight of one's freedom. However, Sartre's ethics, when pursued in isolation, risks overemphasizing individual autonomy while leaving the relational dimensions of moral life under-theorized. Buddhist philosophy offers a complementary yet corrective perspective. Through doctrines such as *anatta* and *Pratityasamudpada*, Buddhism rejects the metaphysical self while preserving ethical continuity through causal relations. Responsibility is grounded not in personal identity but in the persistence of intentional processes shaped by volition (*cetana*). Ethical life is oriented toward the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*), and liberation (*vimutti*) is achieved not by asserting freedom against the world but by understanding and transforming the conditions that give rise to suffering. In this framework, responsibility is inherently therapeutic and compassionate rather than punitive or judgmental.

The synthesis proposed in this paper suggests that Sartrean existentialism and Buddhism need not be viewed as competing ethical systems but as mutually illuminating responses to the same philosophical problem: how to live responsibly in a world without fixed

essences. Sartre contributes a powerful account of freedom, authenticity, and moral seriousness, while Buddhism supplies the relational and compassionate horizon within which such freedom can be ethically exercised. When informed by *karuna*, existential freedom is no longer experienced merely as a burden or condemnation but as an opportunity for ethical responsiveness within an interconnected world. This synthesis culminates in the notion of a compassionate existentialism—an ethical orientation that retains Sartre’s insistence on responsibility while rejecting moral isolationism. If the self is a construction, then the boundaries separating “self” and “other” are porous and ultimately conventional. Ethical authenticity, therefore, cannot be confined to self-chosen projects that ignore the suffering of others. Rather, the most authentic existential project is one that consciously acknowledges interdependence and directs freedom toward the alleviation of suffering. Compassion emerges not as a sentimental addition to ethics but as a rational and existential necessity grounded in the ontology of non-self. In a contemporary world marked by moral uncertainty, ecological crisis, and social fragmentation, the dialogue between existentialism and Buddhism holds significant relevance. Both traditions challenge complacent moral frameworks and demand active ethical engagement without reliance on metaphysical guarantees. Together, they offer a vision of ethical life that is neither dogmatic nor nihilistic—one that affirms freedom while binding it to responsibility, and responsibility while grounding it in compassion.

In conclusion, the absence of an essential self need not lead to ethical despair. On the contrary, as Sartrean existentialism and Buddhist philosophy jointly reveal, it is precisely this absence that makes ethical life possible. Freedom without essence calls for responsibility; responsibility without self calls for compassion. In recognizing this, a compassionate existentialism emerges as a philosophically robust and ethically compelling response to the challenges of a post-metaphysical age.

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Swami Vivekananda's Contribution to Modern Education

Dr. Kalyan Das¹

Introduction :

Indian society in the nineteenth century due to British rule, had created widespread poverty and hunger. The propaganda of their missionaries had to create a sense of insecurity among the people about their traditional customs and beliefs. At this crucial period rose a number of important reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda. They had tried to reform the Indian society, and in doing so, raised a new voice for Indian nationalism. They were thus vanguards of the Freedom Movement. This first voice of protest was not so much against the political exploitation by the British but against their moral exploitation of the Indian society, and this was to guide and provide the unique feature of the Indian Freedom struggle. Vivekananda (1863-1902) argued for equality of men and women. Swami Vivekananda is the first monk to uphold and do work for freedom and equality of women and realized the importance of women for the society as well as the nation. He identified that the ignorance of women was the main hindrance for the progress of India. He insisted that women should be put in the position of power to solve their own problem in their own way and this cannot be possible without education. He engaged throughout his life for the development of women

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education. His objective of education is man making and character building– these principles also applied in field of women education.

Objective of the Study :

The main objectives of the present study are

1. To know the Vivekananda's views on Education and
2. To study about Vivekananda's contribution to modern education.

Methodology :

The present study is based on descriptive method of social science research. All the data have been collected from the secondary sources like books, journal, magazine etc.

Collection of the Data :

Data have been collected from the different secondary sources like books, journals, on line article, newspaper etc.

Analysis of the Data :

Vivekananda's View on Education :

Swami Vivekananda was a scholar, a born patriot, a born teacher, a philosopher, a saint, a revivalist of Indian culture. Vivekananda possessed vast knowledge of eastern and western culture. It is well known to all that Swamiji is not only a monk, teacher, great leader, philosopher but also the incessant worker for India who has represented India as unique culture, rituals, and religious country in the world. He also represented India as a country which is potentially divine. According to Swami Vivekananda "education is the manifestation of perfection already in men" and it was not only collection of information, but something more meaningful; he felt education should be man-making, life giving and character-building. To him education was an assimilation of noble ideas. Swamiji identified and realized the main hindrance for the development of India is neglect towards the women. Development and advancement of any country depend on human resource. So if we neglect women it means we neglect the human resources and also hamper the development of any society as well as country and world. He considered men and women as two wings of a bird, and it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing. So, according to him, there is no chance for welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. Education of women is essential for both all round development of the nation and also for the improvement of women's condition in India.

Indian nationalism and spiritualism were the basic foundations of the whole existence of Swami Vivekananda. Hence the basis of his philosophy of education was also philosophy of Vedanta and Upanishads. He believed that each living being had a soul. To reorganize and identify this soul is true religion. He further emphasised that all knowledge, worldly or spiritual, is embedded in the human mind in the latent position covered with the veil of darkness and ignorance. All the learning is self learning, no one teaches the other. The external teacher is only guides, suggests, points out and helps. All the rest according to Vivekananda is done by the student himself. The teacher only motivates and encourages the students to find out hidden treasure of knowledge.

Swami Vivekananda had called that education of his times as merely negative. He said the people, you regard that man to be educated who obtain some degrees, has passed out some examinations, is able to deliver fluent lectures, but this is not real education. Real education is that which prepares a man for struggle of existence. He condemned that education of his times as wicked, useless and artificial because it promoted only bookish knowledge and rote memory. Hence he had emphasised on an education system that could develop character, mental power, intelligence thereby inculcate self confidence and self reliance in the individual. He believed that education should aim at developing the mind rather than stuff it with book knowledge and that it would be easier for a stimulated mind to acquire knowledge on its own and digest it properly. He wanted education to include all aspects of life, not only the intellectual but also the physical, cultural, social and spiritual and lead to the building of character and the adoption of a fearless and self reliant attitude towards life.

Swami Vivekananda had also advocated women education. Swami Vivekananda felt, the best thermometer to progress of a nation is its treatment of its women and it is impossible to get back India's lost pride and honour unless Indians try to better the condition of women. So, according to him, there is no chance for welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. Education of women is essential for both all round development of the nation and also for the improvement of women's condition in India. Only he wanted women's education to include spirituality and religion in the sense in which he used it so that

they could play an effective role in building the modern India of his conception.

Men and women possess multi dimensional qualities. Education has to channelize them for the growth of strong personality. Once the personality of the men and women become very strong self dependence starts to work. Gradually confidence develops and men and women become very strong. Confident and courageous person can think, plan and act for better life and better society. Education should develop self faith. Once self faith is developed the inherent Brahman is waking up. Once the inherent Brahman wakes up, the best potentialities gets its way to blossom. Thus men and women find their ways to work for a better life. Better life means emancipation of all the ills of life. Thus for the emancipation from all the ills women are to be properly educated to help to realise the real meaning of life. Education is the only means which can help the men and women to lead cultured and civilized life. It also helps to realise dignity of life in a more practical manner.

Therefore in order to understand own capacities and socio-political position in our society, our women should be educated and trained in a proper way. According to Vivekananda it is the strongest means to check all sorts of discrimination. It is education and training which help to develop the rational power of men and women. According to Vivekananda education helps to develop the power of confidence and concentration. These have helped everybody to fight in life in a more courageous way. Education helps to understand the right of living. Where there is lack of education, men and women have to suffer many misfortunate.

Vivekananda realised that a great man's as well as great woman's character is always great. Therefore the aim of education thus is the formation of character which helps man and woman to established permanent greatness. Education should help to form a good habit which is the first nature and whole nature of man and woman. Education helps man and women to realise the value of good thought and deeds in life. Vivekananda had pointed out that due to mental and physical weakness mistakes are committed by man and woman. Again he regarded ignorance as the cause of weakness. To overcome the problem of weakness Vivekananda prescribed education as the means.

Vivekananda's teachings have also influenced the position of women in India. He was totally against the discrimination of women. He drew attention repeatedly to the prominent place occupied by women in the intellectual field in ancient India and blamed the priest craft for relegating them to a backward position by denying their equal position with men in education. He was totally against child marriage and expressed his admiration for the patriotic fervour and fearlessness of the Rani of Jhansi. He was not in favour of reformist men dictating to women even in regard to how they should function after they had attained liberation from their centuries-old subjections. He told the people that women should be given education and then left to decide their future for themselves instead of being told what their place should be by men; however they liberal might be in their outlook towards women. He expressed his confidence that women will work out of their own destinies once they get education and it is not for men to shape the destiny of women. Only he wanted women's education to include spirituality and religion in the sense in which he used it so that they could play an effective role in building the modern India of his conception. Today of course, everyone is in favour of women education and giving them their rightful place, but in actual fact, women's education in rural India is still at a low level, while as regards the inclusion of spirituality in their education, it is still to be accomplished.

Swami Vivekananda's contribution to modern education :

Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy emphasizes the holistic development of individuals, integrating intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical growth. His vision was to shape the modern Indian education system, particularly through the promotion of self realization, character building, and practical learning. The integration of his ideas in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the importance of skill development, employability, and social responsibility. Vivekananda's support for experiential learning, moral education and empowerment remains central to educational reforms that aim to create well-rounded, self-reliant individuals. His emphasis on vocational education, coupled with his teachings on practical knowledge, continues to guide policies aimed at bridging the gap between academic education and real-world applications. His main contributions to modern educational thought are :

1. He emphasised on the education of the masses regardless of caste, creed, religion, position. According to him, education is the birthright of every human being. This had a great influence on the present educational system in which education is open and compulsory for all.
2. He had stressed on women education. He was of the view that education must prepare women to work for the economic, social and educational reform of the country. They should be placed in responsible positions, in order to function effectively in the society. This had a great impact on the present educational system. Today women are given equal educational opportunities to men.
3. He stressed on a National System of Education in which all schools must include study of India's heritage of culture, religion, history and languages

Conclusion :

There can be no doubt though Vivekananda was not in politics he had played great role in shaping of modern India, secularism, socialism, mass uplift and mass power, women's liberation, abolition of untouchability, inclusion of social service as a part of religious worship, Hindu Muslim unity, universal literacy and informal education all these constitute the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the building of modern India. In fact, modern India still continues to be confronted with the problems that Vivekananda tried to deal with so many years ago. Swami Vivekananda emphasised on women education, which was neglected too long. All women should receive proper education and training and prepared to work for economic, social and educational reform of the country. In his views, women should become leaders and be placed in responsible positions, in order to function in society effectively, but at present India has not able to achieved such position in respect of women empowerment and women education.

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Religion : A Philosophical Interpretation of Gandhi

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Abstract :

Mahatma Gandhi's religious and philosophical frameworks were deeply integrated, representing the continuous fusion of belief and philosophy that is characteristic to Indian thought. His life was defined as a purposeful quest for self-realization, or Moksha, driven by a profound desire to "see God face to face." Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy characterizes the relationship between God and religion as a dynamic bond grounded in Truth and Service to poor. He rejected the idea of religion as a collection of rigid doctrines, viewing it instead as a active way of life – an unbreakable tie that connects the human soul to the Supreme Being. For Gandhi, the Divine is not a personified entity but the absolute, ethical principles of the cosmos. Consequently, he shifted the definition from "God is Truth" to "Truth is God," suggesting that the only possible way to practice a religion faithfully through an unwavering, honest dedication to Truth in every thought and action.

Key words : Truth, God, Religion, Mahatma Gandhi, spirituality etc.

Introduction :

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a barrister famously known as a Mahatma Gandhi, was born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, a

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princely city in Gujarat. He was son of Karamchand and Putlibai Gandhi and grew up in a family where spirituality and moral principles were deeply valued the most. From a very young age, he was introduced to the importance of truth through his family atmosphere, especially through the stories of Shravana, Harishchandra and his own personal experiences. Gandhi believed that religion was not a matter of rigid dogma or ceremonial rites but a path toward self realization. As a transformative leader of Indian independence movement, he integrated the spiritual and political realms, asserting that a true religious life is experienced by serving others selflessly. By employing non-violent civil disobedience to secure India's independence, he demonstrated that his religious philosophy was a practical, collective commitment to civil rights and freedom. Ultimately, Gandhi believed that to find God, one must be immersed in the service of the people, dedicating oneself to the principles of Truth (satya) and Non-violence (ahimsa).

Objectives of the Study :

1. To examine Mahatma Gandhi's conception of religion as an active, ethical way of life rather than a system of doctrines.
2. To analyze Gandhi's philosophical understanding of God and Truth, with special reference to his idea that "Truth is God."
3. To explore the interrelation between religion, service, and self-realization (Moksha) in Gandhi's thought.

Methodology :

The study adopts a qualitative and philosophical methodology based on secondary sources. It relies on Mahatma Gandhi's writings, speeches, letters, and autobiographical works, along with scholarly books, research articles, and journals on Gandhian philosophy. Textual analysis and interpretative methods are employed to critically examine his religious and philosophical ideas.

God and Truth :

Gandhi's entire philosophical understanding was rooted in spirituality, and this entailed realizing that God is the base in every domain of life. According to Mahatma Gandhi, God is an **omnipresent, indefinable and mysterious** force that serves as the supreme moral law of the universe. He characterized the Divine as one, eternal, and formless—an indivisible spirit that transcends physical description and rational proof. This mysterious power is not a distant entity but an all-

pervading essence that sustains all life and serves as both the established Law and the Law-giver. Accessing this Divine presence requires **inner realization rather than empirical evidence**. Gandhi believed that God can only be perceived through an “inner feeling” and an unshakable faith in moral principles, specifically Truth and Love.

In autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhi presents his life story as a series of rigorous, real-world investigations intended to decode the fundamental truths of human life. After years of relentless and constant quest for Truth, Gandhi emphasizes his critical shift from saying “God is Truth” to declaring “*Truth is God*,” which represented a more profound philosophical concept. Gandhi wrote, “I have come to the conclusion that for myself, God is Truth. But Two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God” (Gandhi 14). In Sanskrit, “*Satya*” means “Truth,” where “*Sat*” means “*existence*”. This shift was significant; it moved divinity away from a purely theological framework to a universal of existence. By defining Truth as God, he made spirituality inclusive for everyone, including atheist, because while someone might deny or can be rationally questioned or even rejected the concept of God, but to deny Truth is to conflict the basis of rational thought itself. Gandhi felt that God was often a matter of personal belief, but Truth was an indisputable fact that even an atheist must affirm for their own existence to have meaning. According to Gandhi, the closest approach to Truth as God is through love, specifically in the form of Ahimsa or non-violence. In this framework, Truth serves as the ultimate end, while Ahimsa acts as the necessary means to reach it. So, For Gandhi, both the means and the end are interchangeable terms. . Gandhi asserts that Truth is nothing, but the “small voice” within, which he called the “Voice of God”. This inner consciousness is only accessible through strict self-discipline, moral integrity and the pursuit of spiritual heights via foundational vows, including truth, Brahmacharya (purity), non-violence, poverty and non-possession.

Religion :

The word ‘Religion,’ comes from the latin words ‘re’ means ‘again’ and ‘lingare’ means ‘to bind,’ that serves the bridge between the human being with the Divine. The purpose of religion is to serve as a source of strength and consolation during times of crisis, grief or personal distress. Here, Gandhi often used the term ‘Dharma’ as a synonym for

‘Religion’ in the broadest sense. Gandhi famously rejected the creation of a new ‘ism’ or sect. Instead, of founding a religion, he acted as a practical philosopher who transformed ethical truths into active tools for social and political change. He defined it not as a specific religion, but as a belief in ordered moral government of the universe that harmonizes all religions and an individual participates in this government through non-violence (Ahimsa), truth and the service of humanity. He asserts that “The term ‘religion’ I am using in its broadest sense, meaning thereby self-realization or knowledge of self” (Gandhi 42). According to Gandhi, the bridge between the Divine and the religion is based on moral action. He famously argued that any religious doctrine that conflicts with morality or ignores the plight of the common man, cease to be a path to God. Ultimately, the relation between God and religion is realized through self realization.

Gandhi transformed his outlook primarily because the concept of Truth as a foundation for understanding the Divine serves as a foundation pillar across various philosophical and religious traditions. Gandhi felt that although religious expressions vary, they all point toward a same absolute truth. Gandhi prioritized Truth as the supreme ethical benchmark that transcended the boundaries of any caste, creed and religion, serving as a unifying foundation for all humanity.

In this framework, the ultimate goal of human existence is the realization of this absolute Truth, a state of being where one’s soul is in perfect alignment with the supreme moral law that sustains the universe. To reach this goal, Gandhi presented religion as a practical path of morality and self realization. Religion acts as the moral compass and the disciplined road that leads an individual toward the Divine. It is through the constant practice of non-violence, ethical integrity and the selfless service of humanity that a person purifies their heart to perceive the Inner Voice. For Gandhi, religion is merely valid if it translates faith into action. It is the systematic process of shedding the ego and living truthfully, which eventually allows the seekers to achieve the ultimate goal of oneness with God.

For him, religion is defined as the fundamental essence underlying all religions that brings an individual face to face with their Supreme Being. Religion is interpreted not as any particular religion or tradition, but as a universal principle. Gandhi asserts that, “By religion,

I do not mean formal religion or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker” (Gandhi 7). Gandhi maintains that true religion is a pervasive moral framework that guides every human endeavor.

This religion is not limited to Hinduism; in fact, it surpasses the boundaries of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and reconciles them and providing them with their reality. It is a transcendent force that transforms human nature and creates an indissoluble bond with internal truth. Religion is an inseparable part of human existence. Gandhi posits that even those who reject formal faith due to intellectual pride, instinct or tradition, are still bound by a divine moral order of the universe. This outlook likens the denial of religion to a person denying the essential life-force they use to survive.

Religious influences on Gandhi :

Gandhi's childhood home in Gujarat was rooted in a diverse household that blended various spiritual ideologies, where Vaishnava traditions and Jain principles of Truth, non-violence and vegetarianism were practice every day. Surrounding by his parents' diverse circle of Jains, Muslims and Zoroastrians, he learned to see the Supreme through different lenses. That's how his home environment cultivated his early understanding of religious tolerance. This inclusive atmosphere was further enriched by his nurse, Rambha, who taught him to chant “Ramanama” as a spiritual remedy for his childhood fears.

The *Ramayana* of Tulsidas planted a seed in his mind that had profound impact and Bhagavad Gita remaining a spiritual dictionary and moral guide. Later in life, Gandhi studied numerous religious texts from different religions of the world and discovered that all shared one fundamental message, i.e. Truth. He believed that while “religions are different roads converging to the same points,” (Gandhi 27) the ultimate goal of each is the realization of self.

Gandhi on Hinduism and other religions :

Mahatma Gandhi's approach to religion was rooted in the doctrine of Sarva Dharma Sambhava, a principle advocating for the inherent equality and mutual respect of all religious traditions. This approach posits that every faith serves as a valid rather than only tolerating diversity. He believed that different religions have numerous faiths but eventually flow into the same ocean of Truth. Despite his deep roots in Vaishnava

traditions, Gandhi's interpretation of religion was non-dogmatic, prioritizing ethical values over rigid rituals and customs.

Growing up in a traditional Hindu household, Gandhi was initially not fascinated by the external forms of Hindu rituals, especially those involving cruelty toward animals to satisfy certain deities. He found these rituals to be a contradiction of the ahimsa that he believed should be the defining characteristic of any spiritual path. As his spiritual journey matured, however, he moved beyond these early skepticisms and became deeply attracted to the true beauties of Hinduism. He realized that his faith did not require him to prove its superiority over others. Instead, he proudly identified as a Sanatani Hindu because he was personally conscious of its inherent beauty.

The *Ramayana*, one of the most sacred scriptures in Hinduism, profoundly shaped Gandhi's vision of an ideal society. Specifically through the concept of Ram Rajya (the kingdom of Rama), an ideal state rooted in moral authority. He saw Lord Rama as the ultimate embodiment of Truth and Satyagraha, viewing Rama's voluntary exile as a supreme example of sacrificing personal comfort for moral duty (*Dharma*). The principle of Nishkama Karma or action without attachment of *Bhagavad Gita* which is also one of the crucial religious scriptures, served as the spiritual and moral backbone of Gandhi's political vision and his method of *Satyagraha*. Gandhi argued that by performing one's duties without a selfish desire for results, both the leader and the citizen could transform statecraft into a spiritual pursuit, ensuring a true democracy where the welfare of the most marginalization is protected by the collective moral integrity of the nation.

While rooted in Hinduism, he was drawn to specific qualities in other faiths that he believed could refine one's moral character and lead to a more profound understanding of God as truth, and the principle of non-violence. Gandhi integrated the central teaching of non-violence from Jain, compassion from Buddhism, while adopting the Christian ethos of forgiveness to shape his political, social and economic strategies. This interfaith approach led to his concept of trusteeship, which blended Judeo-Christian and Islamic ideas into an economic and social model where wealth is held for the common good. Mahatma Gandhi's approach to spirituality was defined by a universalist perspective that rejected the exclusive divinity of any single text, including the Vedas.

He believed that the *Bible*, the *Koran* were as divinity inspired as Hindu scriptures, yet he refused to be bound by any interpretation that contradict morality. Gandhi found a profound relation between the *New Testament's Sermon on the Mount* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, viewing them as a different expression of the same spiritual truth. Hence, for Gandhi, the ultimate benchmarks of religions are truth and non-violence, which are the ethical framework.

Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual journey was a profound synthesis of diverse religious traditions. He believed that the true essence of religion was not found in external rituals or any custom, but in the relentless pursuit of Truth, which he regarded as God and non-violence was the only fundament tool required to seek Truth. While he identified as a Hindu, he viewed the faith primarily as a moral quest, leading him to prioritize personal ethics and conduct over traditional ceremonies. Although, he de-emphasized rituals for himself, he remained tolerant of other's worship as long as it remained non-violent. Ultimately, Gandhi advocating the purification of mind through prayer or *Bhajans*, with devotion to the Divine and supported a universal, non-sectarian path where the pursuit of moral truth served as the highest form of religion.

For Gandhi, all religions are equally true and imperfect. He wrote, "I came to the conclusion long ago... that all religions were true and also that all had some error in them, and that whilst I hold by my own, I should hold others as dear as Hinduism... So we can only pray, if we are Hindus, not that a Christian should become a Hindu... But our innermost prayer should be that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim and a Christian a better Christian" (Gandhi 565). This profound self assurance allowed him to view the global religious landscape with extraordinary humility. He famously approached other faiths not as a faulty-finding critic seeking to expose their weakness, but as a sincere devotee and seeker of universal Truth. His goal was to discover universal moral truths in religious scriptures of world and to incorporate the virtues he found in them into his own spiritual practice, believing that every religion had something to offer that his own might lack.

Religion and Reason :

In Gandhi's perspective, the relationship between reason and faith is one of hierarchy rather than conflict, where faith serves as a

“Sixth Sense” that transcends the boundaries of human intellect. He posits that while faith should never contradict reason, it must take over in realms where the intellect reaches its natural limits. By describing faith as a tool for navigating the purview of things beyond sensory proof, he suggested that spiritual conviction is not an abandonment of the mind, but a necessary extension of it for addressing the deeper mysterious of existence. Gandhi wrote, “Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the perview of reason. Faith only begins where reason stops” (Gandhi 42). Gandhi believed faith as the bedrock of true religion, describing it as a living consciousness of the Divine that transcends intellectual dogma. To him, the primary object of religion was the realization of Truth, which eventually equated with God, asserting that “Truth is god.” Gandhi maintained that such faith is not an inherited state but a dynamic quality achieved through continuous practice and spiritual discipline, primarily prayer and meditation.

Gandhi's views on Religious Tolerance and Development :

Mahatma Gandhi maintains that all religions are equally valid from their own perspectives, yet they remain inherently imperfect because they are products of imperfect human interpretation. Because, human beings cannot accurately describe the Divine - which Gandhi identifies as the absolute and indescribable Truth, so they must rely on relative truth in their daily lives. Every faith captures only a partial quality of that Ultimate Reality. He believes that all religions are like different branches of the same majestic tree, converging toward the same goal; however, each evolving and subject to error because they are received through human instruments. Gandhi said that “My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God, but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality” (Gandhi 180). Gandhi expresses a profound dissatisfaction with the word ‘Tolerance’, he felt that it often masks a sense of religious superiority. Instead, Gandhi advocates for a respect rooted in *ahimsa* (non-violence), which requires individuals to extend the same reverence to the religions of others as they do to their own.

Ultimately, Gandhi posits that cultivating this high level of tolerance does not lead to indifference toward one's own faith, but rather

to a more intelligent and purer love for it. He believes that true spiritual insight break down the barriers between different creeds and grants, a clearer understanding of one's own religious path. By looking at all religions with an "equal eye," an individual can fulfill the duty of blending the best features of other faiths into their own. For Gandhi, this process does not blur the lines between good and evil, but rather unites the world's religions through their common fundamentals and shared moral goals. Consequently, Gandhi advocates for a profound mutual respect that looks beyond the outward crust of specific dogmas to honor the shared spiritual soul within every faith.

The Significance of Gandhi's living Religion :

Mahatma Gandhi advocated for a living religion that differs from the other world religions. His concept of living religion centers on the behalf that true spirituality is an active, ethical way of life rather than a collection of dogmas or rituals. He argued that religion must be grounded in truth and non-violence, where the pursuit of truth is the ultimate goal and non-violence is the necessary means to achieve it. For Gandhi, religion is not a compartmentalized activity but a moral force that should govern every human interaction and social obligation. To removing the superficial religious or social identities, he maintained for a religion that emphasizes universal love and service to others, especially the poor, transforming religious practice into a continuous effort toward self-purification and social justice.

Central to this philosophy is the conviction that a single universal truth underlies all diverse religions, a concept Gandhi famously distilled into the phrase "Truth is God." He viewed religious expressions as inherently imperfect because they are human made and flawed. Consequently, he argued that no single religion has the right to claim exclusive possession of the absolute truth. In his view, every religion is right within its own perspectives and deserves equal respect. While various religions offer different paths and interpretations, they all aim for the same ultimate reality i.e. Truth, which he fundamentally equated with God. Acknowledging our intellectual limitations allows us to stay open to new insights and prevents the rise of religious arrogance. Gandhi's vision for spiritual growth was rooted in the concept of sincere religious inquiry, which demands a restless, lifelong commitment to questioning and learning. Rather than blind following, he believed that

a seeker must actively engage with their faith to reach a more profound understanding of the Divine through the relentless moral path.

Gandhi's vision for welcoming and inclusive religious was grounded in the principle of Sarva Dharma Sambhava, which suggested that all religions are equal and deserve sincere respect. By welcoming everyone regardless of their specific creed, he envisioned a spiritual community where the shared commitment to ethical living outweighed any differences in religious rituals. Gandhi's philosophy transformed religion from a rigid, exclusionary institution into a universal force for unity, peace and collective moral growth.

Conclusion :

Gandhi's religion was designed to do more than just end colonial rule; it aimed to restructure the very foundations of society. Gandhi rejected the idea that spirituality was reserved for the cave or the temple, insisting instead that the most profound religious expression was found in the struggle for moral dignity. Living as a satyagrahi, Gandhi embodied a religion of active non-violence. He viewed that love and truth were not only personal virtues but potent forces capable of restructuring society around the principles of moral and spiritual integrity, replacing competitions and exploitation with mutual service and sacrifice. Gandhi defined true religion as the pursuit of justice via non-violent means, grounded in a profound reverence for life and the goal of harmony. By characterizing religion as a tool for ethical renewal, Gandhi left a legacy that remains a cornerstone for global peace. His life demonstrated that moral fortitude is a viable alternative to physical force for enacting permanent societal change.

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Vivekananda's Teachings on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Dr. Nilima Thakuria¹

Abstract :

Swami Vivekananda was one of the most influential social thinkers and spiritual leaders of modern India who offered a progressive and holistic vision of women's empowerment. Rooted in the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, Vivekananda rejected gender-based discrimination and emphasized the spiritual, intellectual, and moral equality of men and women. At a time when women in India faced severe social restrictions, denial of education, and systemic oppression, his ideas on women's education, self-reliance, freedom, and leadership were revolutionary. This research paper examines Vivekananda's teachings on gender equality and women's empowerment, analyzing their philosophical foundations, social implications, educational emphasis, and contemporary relevance. The study highlights how Vivekananda viewed women not as passive recipients of reform but as active agents of social transformation and nation-building.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, Education, Advaita Vedanta, Social Reform

Introduction :

Gender equality and women's empowerment have emerged as critical concerns in modern social discourse. In India, these ideas gained intellectual and moral momentum during the nineteenth century

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through the efforts of social reformers. Among them, Swami Vivekananda stands out as a visionary thinker who articulated a powerful philosophy of women's empowerment grounded in spiritual equality and human dignity. Vivekananda firmly believed that the condition of women determines the progress of a nation. He rejected prevailing notions of female inferiority and argued that no society could advance by suppressing half of its population. His teachings on women's empowerment combined spiritual philosophy with practical social reform, making them both timeless and universally relevant.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To examine Swami Vivekananda's philosophical views on gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. To analyze the role of education, self-reliance, and spiritual freedom in Vivekananda's vision of women's development.
3. To assess the contemporary relevance of Vivekananda's ideas in the context of women's rights and social transformation.

Methodology :

The study adopts a qualitative and analytical methodology based on secondary sources. It draws upon Swami Vivekananda's writings, speeches, and letters, along with scholarly books, research articles, and journals on Indian philosophy, gender studies, and social reform. Textual analysis and interpretative methods are employed to critically examine and contextualize his ideas on women's empowerment.

Historical and Social Context :

During Vivekananda's time, Indian society was deeply patriarchal. Women were subjected to social evils such as child marriage, purdah, denial of education, and limited participation in public life. Despite India's ancient tradition of revering women scholars and sages, their status had deteriorated over centuries due to rigid customs and misinterpretations of tradition. Vivekananda recognized that these practices were not intrinsic to Indian culture but were social distortions. He sought to restore women's dignity by reviving the spiritual and ethical ideals of Indian philosophy while simultaneously encouraging modern education and reform.

Philosophical Foundations of Gender Equality :

a. Advaita Vedanta and Spiritual Equality :

The foundation of Vivekananda's views on gender equality lies in Advaita Vedanta, which teaches that the same divine essence

(Atman) exists in all beings. According to this philosophy, distinctions based on gender, caste, or class are superficial and irrelevant at the spiritual level. Vivekananda categorically stated that there is no difference between men and women in terms of spiritual potential. He questioned the logic of gender discrimination by asserting that the soul has no sex. This metaphysical equality provided a strong philosophical justification for social and political equality.

“There is no sex distinction in the soul.”

Women as Pillars of Society :

Vivekananda viewed women as the foundation of society and the shapers of future generations. He famously remarked that the world cannot prosper unless the condition of women improves, comparing society to a bird that cannot fly with one wing. According to him, women possess immense inner strength, moral power, and resilience. He rejected the portrayal of women as weak or dependent and instead described them as capable, courageous, and intellectually competent individuals who deserve equal opportunities.

Education as the Core of Women’s Empowerment :

One of Vivekananda’s most significant contributions to the discourse on women’s empowerment was his emphasis on education. He believed that education is the most effective means of liberating women from ignorance, fear, and dependence. Vivekananda advocated holistic education for women, encompassing intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. He emphasized that women should be educated not to imitate men but to realize their own potential and individuality. His famous statement, “Educate your women first and leave them to themselves,” reflects his belief in women’s autonomy and decision-making capacity. He strongly opposed imposing reforms on women without their participation.

“No nation can rise to the height of glory
unless your women are side by side with you.”

Self-Reliance, Freedom, and Agency :

Vivekananda believed that true empowerment is impossible without freedom and self-reliance. He criticized the tendency of men to dominate women under the guise of protection or reform. According to him, dependence weakens character, while freedom strengthens it. He argued that women must be allowed to determine their own roles in

society-whether in family life, education, public service, or leadership. Empowerment, in his view, meant enabling women to stand on their own feet with confidence and dignity.

Women as Shakti and Nation Builders :

Vivekananda regarded women as the embodiment of **Shakti (divine power)**. He believed that women play a vital role in shaping families, society and the nation. According to him, the true measure of a nation's progress lies in how it treats its women. He observed:

“The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women.”

Leadership and Public Participation :

Unlike many thinkers of his era, Vivekananda strongly supported women's participation in public life and leadership roles. He believed that women possess qualities such as compassion, discipline, patience, and moral clarity, which are essential for effective leadership. He encouraged women to take active roles in education, social reform, administration, and spiritual life. Vivekananda envisioned a society where women contribute equally to intellectual, cultural, and national development.

Criticism of Social Practices Oppressing Women :

Vivekananda openly criticized social customs that oppressed women, including child marriage, denial of education, and rigid patriarchy. He argued that such practices had no spiritual or ethical justification and were contrary to the true spirit of Indian culture. According to him, ancient India respected women as scholars, philosophers, and spiritual seekers. He called for a revival of that tradition by restoring women's rights, dignity, and freedom.

“It is impossible to think about the welfare of
The world unless the condition of women is improved.”

Contemporary Relevance of Vivekananda's Teachings :

Vivekananda's teachings remain highly relevant in the contemporary world. His ideas align closely with modern principles of gender justice, human rights, and constitutional equality. His emphasis on education, self-determination, and leadership resonates with present-day feminist thought and development policies. In an era where gender inequality still persists in various forms, Vivekananda's vision offers a balanced approach that integrates spiritual values with social reform.

His belief that women must be agents of their own empowerment continues to inspire movements for gender equality across the globe.

Conclusion :

Swami Vivekananda was a pioneering advocate of gender equality and women's empowerment whose ideas were far ahead of his time. Rooted in spiritual equality and human dignity, his teachings rejected discrimination and emphasized education, freedom, and self-reliance for women. He firmly believed that empowering women is not merely a social reform but a moral, spiritual, and national necessity. Vivekananda envisioned a society in which women stand as equal partners in nation-building and social transformation. His teachings remain timeless and continue to serve as a guiding force in the pursuit of a just and equitable society.

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Livelihood and Sustenance of Retail Vegetable Vendors in Kamrup Metro

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Abstract:

The retail vegetable vendors of Kamrup Metro play a very significant role in distribution of vegetables from the point of suppliers to the point of customers. In absence of retail vendors, the vegetable industry will fail to endure. The retail vendors of Kamrup Metro trade their products with a very diversified group of customers, as it is one of the highly multiethnic districts of Assam. Customers from high privileged class to underprivileged class purchase vegetables from these vendors. In-order to have a depth study, the researcher has categorised the retail market of Kamrup Metro into three categories, i.e. Traditional Vendors, Weekly Vendors and Mobile Vendors. This research paper give emphasis on various socio-economic factors of Kamrup Metro's vegetable vendors to highlight their livelihood and sustenance.

Keywords: Livelihood, Sustenance, Retail, Vegetable Vendors and Kamrup Metro

Introduction :

Agriculture has been an important part of human civilisation as it fulfils the basic needs of human existence. In context to human civilisation, agricultural practices are not only important for providing nutrients to the body, but also for uplifting the standard of living of the people. Therefore, rapid growth of agriculture is essential for generating and sustaining the motion of a developed economy. Agriculture, from the past, has been a way of tradition which has changed the thought

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process from an individual's food necessity to a nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The rate, standard of living, and direction of economic growth are all influenced by the agricultural sector's expansion since it creates jobs for a major portion of the rural labour force. Indian Agriculture feeds the people, supplies raw materials to industry, and generates foreign exchange through exports. It would not only significantly boost GDP, but will also help India move from a persistent food deficit to self-sufficiency.

The interchange of commodities and services is crucial for preserving the equilibrium between production and consumption in a planned economy. India, a country predominately composed of farmers, must give marketing a subjective high priority while taking into account its physical and financial constraints. The terms "agricultural" and "marketing," which together represent the marketing of agricultural products from the point of production to the point of consumption, are used to describe time, location, form, and possession utility. Marketing and production are the opposite sides of the same coin. In ancient times, all farmers in India planted and produced food for their own consumption and gradually, agricultural practices changed its transition from production to selling. Because it is becoming more and more difficult to thrive in the economy, marketing has taken precedence over selling in today's complex environment.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To examine the role of retail vegetable vendors in the distribution system of Kamrup Metro.
2. To analyze the socio-economic conditions of vegetable vendors across traditional, weekly, and mobile markets.
3. To assess the livelihood patterns and sustainability challenges faced by vegetable vendors in Kamrup Metro.

Methodology :

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data are collected through field surveys, interviews, and structured questionnaires administered to traditional, weekly, and mobile vegetable vendors in Kamrup Metro. Secondary data are drawn from books, government reports, journals, and relevant publications. Simple statistical tools are employed to analyze and interpret the collected data.

1. Status of Indian vegetable sector :

Using the banks of India's rich rivers and their tributaries, Indian farmers use specialized farming practices to grow vegetables. With a total area under cultivation for vegetable cultivation rising from 5593 thousand hectares in 1991–1992 to 9200 thousand hectares in 2012–2013, India is the world's second-largest producer of vegetables. The production of vegetables increased from 58,532 metric tonnes in 1991–1992 to 1,66,608 thousand metric tonnes. India leads the world in terms of few vegetables, including, green peas, ginger, okra, cauliflower, pumpkin, and squash gourds. Onions, cabbage, and eggplant production are all ranked second among the world production, following China.

India is fortunate to have a unique climate with varied seasons that allows for the cultivation of a wide range of vegetables, over hundreds in number. The major vegetable productions per state wise are presented in the following table:

Table: 2.1 Vegetable Production in Major States of India (2020)

States	Area (000 hectares)	Production (000 metric tonnes)
Uttar Pradesh	1479.42	28621.67
West Bengal	1464.58	28131.49
Madhya Pradesh	927.33	18148.06
Gujarat	613.13	12342.13
Maharashtra	682.86	11610.48
Assam	324.13	4060.14

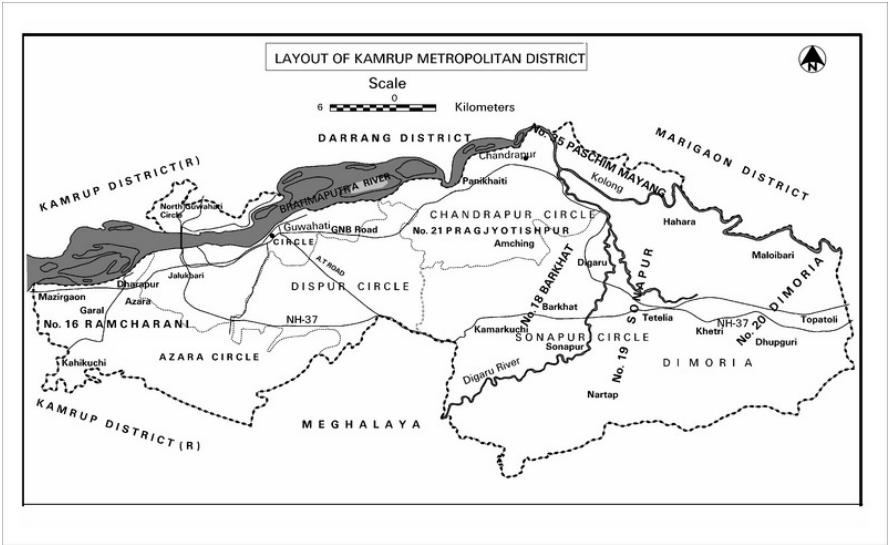
Source: Indian Horticulture Database, NHB (2019)

2. Scenario of Vegetable Market in Kamrup Metro :

The structure of Kamrup (Metro) vegetable market is a complex one as it consists of- urban, semi-urban and rural influence. Vegetables in Kamrup (Metro) district arrive in markets in three seasons- early season, main season and late season. Kamrup (Metro) receives the maximum arrivals of variety of vegetables from various states as well as from various districts. Kharupetia Regulated Market is the major supplier of vegetables to Kamrup (Metro) district and the next is the Barpeta Vegetable Market. The business of vegetable vendors starts at 5 am in Kamrup (Metro). The price gets determined after few hours

on the basis of demand and supply forces prevailing in the wholesale market of Kamrup (Metro). The prominent wholesale markets of vegetable are Fancy Bazar and Gorchuck market. The retail vendors procure various items of vegetables from the wholesalers at the least price. The vegetables usually come from the nearby places, i.e. Kharupetia, Boko, etc. The west and middle part of Kamrup (Metro) vegetable market are usually controlled by vegetables of Boko and Kharupetia, whereas the east part of Kamrup (Metro) is flooded with vegetables coming from Dhing, Morigaon and Nagaon. The scenario of Kamrup (Metro) vegetable market is very competitive as the competition is very high and the market is very fast moving.

Map of District of Kamrup (Metro):



Source: Kamrup (Metro) Official Website (2018)

4. Statement of the Problem :

The word “vegetable” has enormous significance in people’s daily lives. Human meals are not complete without one or two vegetables, which are a good source of nutrients needed to support daily living. However, there is a mystery surrounding veggies, such as how they are grown and delivered to consumers. The goal of the research was to concentrate on issues ranging from those related to the entry of vegetables into Kamrup (M) markets to their sale in those markets. Based on a number of factors, the study will seek to describe the district’s

true market structure, mainly focusing on the Retail Vendors of Kamrup Metro. The research paper will give emphasis on the livelihood creation of vegetable vendors and their contribution towards nation's GDP, through individualistic approach towards social upliftment, financial equity and inclusion.

5. Social Significance of the Research :

Every social arrangement creates a means of survival for its members. One such component of the social structure is the retail vegetable vendor, who offers the general public a large selection of vegetable goods at affordable costs and handy locations. Since the beginning, people have made a living by selling vegetables, and vegetable vendors have played a significant role in Indian history and culture. Without vegetable vendors, it would be difficult for our society to function as they supply us with fresh and green vegetables. Vegetable vendors have excellent business acumen, because vegetables are perishable by nature, and selling them at the appropriate time with profit margin is an art.

6. Objectives of the Study :

- The study has the following objectives: -
- i. To study the livelihood creation of the retail vegetable vendors of Kamrup (Metro).

7. Research Methodology:

The study is analytical and exploratory in nature. The researchers have collected primary information from retail vegetable vendors of Kamrup Metro with a prepared schedule.

Universe of the Study: The Universe of the study comprises of the retail vegetable vendors of Kamrup (Metro).

Mode of Sampling: Since the size of population is not defined, the researchers have applied convenient sampling technique for collecting information from respondents as given below.

Apart from Primary data, secondary data were also collected from various sources such as published books, magazines, reports, journals, internet, etc.

Table No. 7.1 Retail Markets

Retail Markets	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total No. of Respondents
Vegetable Markets within Kamrup (Metro)	30	15	5	50

The weekly vendors are those who sell vegetables only in weekly market, i.e. at a fixed place on a fixed day of a week. The traditional vendors include those vendors who sell items on regular basis at designated prominent market locations. On the other hand, mobile vendors mean vendors who carry out vending activities in an area by moving their cart from one place to another place, within a specific radius.

8. Limitations of the Study :

- The research study has the following limitations:
- i. The study excludes the companies or brand names who does vegetable retailing in the departmental stores and shopping malls.
 - ii. The study excludes the online retailing of vegetables by numerous companies or agencies.

9. Analysis and Interpretation of the Retail Market of Kamrup (Metro) :

Table 9.1 Gender of the Vendors

Gender	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total
Male	22 (73%)	08 (53%)	05 (100%)	35 (70%)
Female	08 (27%)	07 (47%)	00	15 (30%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

It has been found that, there is existence of inequality in gender participation in retail market. The retail vegetable market is basically male dominated market where 70% vendors are male. But, in weekly vendors and in vendors’ category there is existence of women participation. In traditional vendors’ sector 27% vendors are women. The remarkable point to be taken into consideration is at par presence of women vendors (47%) in the weekly market scenario of Kamrup (M). These women vendors come from the nearby areas of Kamrup (M), Boko, Palashbari, Khanapara (Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya), Hajo, Jorabat, Baihata Chariali, Jagiroad and other adjacent areas. This analysis shows that women are active too in vegetable vending business and they are supporting their families with an added income as and when it is required. This is a very encouraging fact for women empowerment. Surprisingly, no women seller was detected in mobile vendors’ segment.

The family sizes of the vegetable vendors of the different categories of the retail market are not highly irregular, as it is evident from the table 9.2. The highest range of family members are 4 to 6 numbers of person in a family with 48% in traditional retailer's category, 56% in weekly vendor's category and 60% in mobile vendor's category. The concept of nuclear family, i.e. 1-3 members, in the world of retail market is still very minor, as traditional retailer's category represents 10%, weekly vendor's 13% and mobile vendor's 20% respectively. The most shocking finding is that some retailer vendors have 7 to 12 number of persons in their families. 42% of traditional vendors' category, 31% of weekly vendors and 20% of mobile vendors are still living in joint family setup with their composite family earnings.

Table 9.2 Family Size of the Vendors

Size of the Family	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total
1-3	03 (10%)	02 (13%)	01 (20%)	06 (12%)
4-6	14 (48%)	08 (56%)	03 (60%)	25 (50%)
7-9	03 (10%)	03 (18%)	01 (20%)	07 (14%)
10-12	10 (32%)	02 (13%)	00	12 (24%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

Another important fact is that, 8% vegetable retail vendors work more than 12 hours. As exhibited in table 9.3, 86% vegetable vendors (i.e. 38%+48%) spend 8 to 12 hours in their business. In mobile vendors category, no vendor works more than 10 hours; whereas, 51% of vendors group and 57% of weekly vendor group spend 10 to 12 hours in their business. In case of weekly vendors, no one is detected in sample with more than 12 hours work. In traditional vendors' segment of retail market, 100% vendors work beyond the prescribed time limit of International Labour Organisation.

Table 9.3 Duration of Work per Day

Duration (Hours)	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total
6-8	00	00	03 (68%)	03 (06%)
8-10	11 (37%)	06 (43%)	02 (32%)	19 (38%)
10-12	15 (51%)	09 (57%)	00	24 (48%)
12-14	04 (12%)	00	00	04 (08%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

In fact, dedication of vendors is affected by their belief on sustainability of business for maintaining their livelihood. In case of retail business, a sizeable portion (i.e. 38%) of vendors do not believe confidently that their business is fully dependable for their livelihood. 62% vendors agree and strongly agree on sustainability of their livelihood from this business. Among all segments of vegetable vendors, the traditional vendors' group has more confidence on their business for livelihood of their family. 74% (i.e. 47%+27%) of them agree or strongly agree for the economic dependability on their business followed by mobile vendors, i.e. 60%. However, majority of Weekly Vendors have a conflicting viewpoint with only 40% for sustainability of their business, which is clear from the table 9.4.

Table 9.4 Showing trust on sustainability of their livelihood from the business of retail trading

Duration (Hours)	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total
Strongly Agree	14 (47%)	03 (20%)	01 (20%)	18 (36%)
Agree	08 (27%)	03 (20%)	02 (40%)	13 (26%)
Not Sure	05 (17%)	04 (27%)	01 (20%)	10 (20%)
Disagree	02 (06%)	03 (20%)	01 (20%)	06 (12%)
Strongly Disagree	01 (03%)	02 (13%)	00	03 (06%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

It has been observed that, the retail vendors start their business with very low amount of capital. The table 9.5 shows that 48% vendors start their business with a range of capital Rs. 0 to Rs. 5,000. As a whole 82% vendors' initial capital is belonging to the range of Rs. 0 to 10,000. The sizeable portion (i.e. 40%) of traditional vendors, however, starts their business with capital range of Rs. 5000-10000. It can also be stated from the table 9.5 that 70% of the traditional vendors started their business with the range of capital Rs. 0 to 10,000. Since, the requirement of capital investment is low, weekly vendors (i.e. 67%) and mobile vendors (i.e. 100%) begin their businesses with an amount below Rs 5000.

Table 9.5 Range of Initial Capital investment by Retail Vendors while commencing Business

Range of Initial Capital (in Rs)	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total (%)
0-5,000	09 (30%)	10 (67%)	05 (100%)	24 (48%)
5,000-10,000	12 (40%)	05 (33%)	00	17 (34%)
10,000-15,000	06 (20%)	00	00	06 (12%)
15,000-20,000	03 (10%)	00	00	03 (06%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

N.B: The valuation of initial amount invested has been revalued as if it would have been on today's date.

It has been observed in table 9.6, that 66% of traditional vendors make day to day investment as working capital for Rs 0 to 10,000. In case of weekly vendors 62% invest money only Rs. 0 to 5,000. On the other hand, all the mobile vendors (i.e. 100% of select mobile vendors) invest money for day-to-day business in the range of Rs. 0 to 5,000. As a whole, on an average 80% vendors invest in working capital in the range Rs. 0 to 10,000

Table 9.6 Daily Investments of the Vendors of the Retail Market of Kamrup (M)

Range of Daily Investment (in Rs)	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total (%)
0-5,000	07 (23%)	09 (62%)	05 (100%)	21 (42%)
5,000-10,000	13 (43%)	06 (38%)	00	19 (38%)
10,000-15,000	06 (20%)	00	00	06 (12%)
15,000-20,000	04 (14%)	00	00	04 (08%)
Total Respondents	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source : Field Survey)

The daily investments are made by the vendors in the retail markets in order to sale. Therefore, their purchase decision ultimately gets reflected in their sales which is been shown in the table 9.7. Majority of the select vendors (i.e. 34%+38%=72%) are successful in selling their stocks within the range of zero to ten thousand rupees on daily basis. This analysis depicts that the vendors are able to sale in a range between Rs 75,000 to 2,25,000 on average basis in a month. However, another group of vendors (i.e. 28%) can sale vegetables value more than Rs 10,000 on an average basis which amounts to sales

turnover of Rs. 3,00,000 to 6,00,000 per month. The remarkable point to be noted here is that these are sales turnover, after deducting all operating expenses from which net profit is determined. But sale is duly affected by the constant price fluctuations, normal loss, transportation hike or perishable characteristics of goods.

Table 9.7 Daily Sales of the Vendors (Average Basis)

Range of Daily Sales (in Rs)	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total (%)
0-5,000	06 (20%)	08 (53%)	03 (60%)	17 (34%)
5,000-10,000	12 (40%)	05 (33%)	02 (40%)	19 (38%)
10,000-15,000	06 (20%)	02 (14%)	00	08 (16%)
15,000-20,000	05 (17%)	00	00	05 (10%)
20,000-25,000	01 (03%)	00	00	01 (02%)
Total Respondents	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

The noteworthy part of retail market vendors is that amidst of so many struggles, majority (i.e. 66%) vendors get financial support from their family members. On questioning, the vendors revealed that with the rising prices and higher cost of living, one person's income is not sufficient to support the whole family. Therefore, along with the vendor either their wives or husbands also engage in some economic activities, which is a necessity for them, rather than luxury.

Table 9.8 Income earned by other Family Members

Earnings	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total (%)
Yes	19 (63%)	11 (73%)	03 (60%)	33 (66%)
No	11 (37%)	04 (27%)	02 (40%)	17 (34%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

Actually, these vendors usually consider vegetable vending as full-time job. The table 9.9 shows that 67% of the traditional vendors and 60% mobile vendors consider their business as a full-time job. But, in case of weekly vendors, majority of them (i.e. 53%) do not consider their business as full-time job; because, a considerable portion of them spend only one day in a week for this business, and other 6 days they engage themselves for other economic activities for earnings.

Table 9.9 Considering Vegetable Retail Vending a Full Time Job

Consideration	Traditional Vendors	Weekly Vendors	Mobile Vendors	Total (%)
Yes	20 (67%)	07 (47%)	03 (60%)	30 (60%)
No	10 (33%)	08 (53%)	02 (40%)	20 (40%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	05 (100%)	50 (100%)

(Source: Field Survey)

10. Findings of The Study :

The research study has the following findings:

- i. The retail market in Kamrup Metro is male dominated. It is evident from the analysis that 70% of the vendors are male. However, women vendors in weekly vendors are encouraging, i.e. at 47%.
- ii. The family structure of majority of the retail vendors are between 4-6 members with 50% respondents. However, 38% respondents have even large family size with 7-12 members within the family, which might cause a great concern if there is a single bread earner in the family.
- iii. The standard 8 hours labour hours in a day is only applicable in case of 68% mobile vendors. Majority of the respondents works more than 8 hours for earning their livelihood.
- iv. It is also evident from the research that majority (i.e. 62%) of the respondents shows trust on sustainability of their livelihood from vegetable vending business. This shows that they positively agree on managing their family life and business with the income from the vegetable vending.
- v. The vegetable vendors of Kamrup metro significantly started their vending occupation within a sum of Rs 5000, i.e. 48%. Remarkably, 34% of the respondents started their businesses with an investing capital of Rs 5000-10000.
- vi. Majority of the respondents (80%) purchase vegetables from the wholesalers within Rs 10000 on daily basis for business purposes. However, rests of the respondents (20%) purchase more than that on a daily basis depending on their customer base and market conditions.
- vii. On selling vegetables in monetary terms, Majority of the select vendors (i.e. 72%) are successful in selling their stocks within the range of zero to ten thousand rupees on daily basis. This depicts that the vendors

- are able to sale in a range between Rs 75,000 to 2,25,000 on average basis in a month, considering daily operating expenses with wastages.
- viii. Though the vendors of the Kamrup Metro agree that they can sustain their livelihood from this profession, however, majority (66%) of their families have financial support from other family members.
 - ix. Lastly, higher number of respondents (60%) considers their vegetable vending as their full-time job. The rest 40% might not consider their vending business as a full-time job and engage themselves in some other economic activities to earn their livelihood.

II. Recommendations:

Based on the above descriptions, this study has the following recommendations:

- i. The administration of Kamrup (M) should adopt policy to make certain markets at definite locations entirely women markets. This will encourage the women gender to be an entrepreneur and independent, boosting women empowerment at the micro level.
- ii. The different organisational bodies, such as, government, semi-government or NGOs, should take initiatives to organise awareness seminars or workshops on financial literacy. This will guide the vegetable vendors to identify the tactics of finance for better use on their businesses.
- iii. In the retail markets, the Gauhati Municipal Corporation or the Kamrup (M) Administration should construct designated storage house or warehouse, or even cold storage, in order to stock the unsold stocks. The vendors find it very difficult to keep it outside as there is possibility of theft, damage by rodents or get rot by moisture.
- iv. The infrastructure of retail markets within the Kamrup (M) should be developed into a state of art architecture. The market areas are still primitive in nature. The concept of retail markets in foreign countries, such as, Malaysia, Bhutan, Singapore, etc. can be adopted as they are much organised and well planned. Definite shops with specific holding number should be constructed under the shed so that the vendors are well settled and they do not have to struggle for a specific space.

9. Conclusion:

The vegetable vendors of Kamrup (M) are toiling hard from the morning till late night to earn their respectable livelihood. Being a vegetable retailer is not an easy task and to cut a portion of profit out of the acute

competition needs remarkable entrepreneurial skills. Amidst all the problems, hardships and struggles in the daily life of the vendors, they are also doing a service to mankind by providing nutritious vegetables to the fast-developing cosmopolitan residents of the Kamrup (M) District. The vegetable vendors at the micro level are contributing immensely towards shaping India as a developed nation by 2050, which is a major objective of Vikshit Bharat 2047.

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Veganism and the Well-Being of Humanity : A Dual Approach to Health and Animal Protection

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Dr. Tapan Talukder²

Abstract :

Veganism has become a serious ethical, health-conscious, and sustainability-focused trend of the modern society. This paper will discuss veganism as an entire moral and practical doctrine that supports the welfare of the humankind and the further development of the rights of animals. Referring to the traditions of Western and Eastern philosophy, the discussion outlines the fact that veganism is based on such ethical doctrines as utilitarianism, rights-based ethics, virtue ethics, and such principles as ahimsa and compassion. Rational arguments against animal exploitation are given by Western philosophers like Peter Singer and Tom Regan on the suffering and inherent value of living beings and Eastern traditions are based on non-violence, interconnectedness and moral restraints over all the living things. The connection between veganism and human health is also discussed in the paper with a focus on scientific findings that substantiate the idea of the well-planned plant-based diets in mitigating the risk of the development of chronic diseases including cardiovascular illness, obesity, diabetes, and some types of cancer. Outside physical well-being,

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veganism is also demonstrated to help psychological well-being through creating ethical consistency and compassion. Besides, the ethical analysis of animal agriculture in industries shows the factual and preventive suffering of the animals to the unnecessary human requirements that supports the moral imperative of veganism.

There are also environmental and social aspects, which involve the contribution of animal agriculture to climate change, deforestation, and depletion of resources. Veganism is a viable solution that helps to maintain ecological equilibrium, food security, and health of the population. Although the paper encounters cultural implication challenges in both the Indian and western societies, it means that ethical development involves critical conversations with established norms both through education and dialogue. Finally, the paper arrives at a conclusion that veganism is a twofold and interrelated method of human health and animal welfare, which provides a humane, sustainable, and ethically responsible view of the future.

Keywords: Veganism, Animal Rights, Human Health, Ethical Philosophy, Sustainable Living, Environmental Ethics

Introduction :

Veganism has become an important movement of ethical, health-sensitive, and social orientation in modern society. Veganism is no longer only about eating, but it is a philosophy that covers human health, animal rights, their environmental sustainability, and even their moral responsibility. Veganism can be an effective solution to a dual problem in an age of lifestyle illnesses, environmental disasters, and the systematized cruelty of animals due to its potential to ensure the health of people, as well as protect animals.

This paper discusses veganism as an ethical system that is holistic and improves the health of humans and animal protection. It uses philosophical arguments, health studies, and the moral idea of ethics to present the argument that veganism is not an individual preference but a way of responding to the complications of the contemporary world.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To examine veganism as an ethical doctrine through the perspectives of Western and Eastern philosophical traditions, including utilitarianism, rights-based ethics, virtue ethics, and the principle of *ahimsa*.

2. To analyze the impact of veganism on human health and psychological well-being, with reference to scientific studies on plant-based diets and their role in preventing chronic diseases.
3. To evaluate the environmental and social implications of veganism, particularly in relation to animal agriculture, sustainability, and global ecological balance.

Methodology :

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical research approach. It is primarily conceptual and philosophical in nature, based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the philosophical writings of thinkers such as Peter Singer and Tom Regan, as well as key ideas from Eastern traditions emphasizing *ahimsa* and compassion. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, and scientific reports on veganism, health, and environmental sustainability.

Understanding Veganism: Concept and Philosophy :

Veganism is usually understood as a lifestyle that aims to avoid, to the best of the ability and possibility, all exploitation and cruelty of animals as sources of food, or clothing or whatever purpose. A formal statement of the idea of veganism was made in 1944 when the founder of The Vegan Society, Donald Watson, made a deliberate differentiation between veganism and vegetarianism. Watson pointed out that veganism is not a food preference, it is an ethical obligation based on non-violence, kindness, and respect towards all sentient beings. Since its beginning, veganism has been interpreted as an ethical position confronting human relationships of domination and exploitation of animals.

Veganism finds philosophical backing in a variety of significant ethical frameworks; the most obvious and common ones are utilitarianism, rights-based ethics and virtue ethics. Under utilitarian moral theory, the main issue is minimization of suffering and maximization of aggregate well being. One of the most notable utilitarian philosophers Peter Singer claims that the ability to suffer is the most important criterion of moral consideration and not intelligence, rationality or membership of species. To Singer, to give human interests a higher priority than other animals interests due to species alone, is unjust discrimination which he calls specie-ism (Singer 6). As the racism and sexism are ethically unjustified biases, the speciesism does not have a rational explanation. In this respect, veganism can appear as

a moral duty, since it aims at reducing avoidable suffering through animal exploitation in food production, clothing, as well as during experimentation. The philosophical basis of veganism is also enhanced by the rights-based ethical theory. Tom Regan believes that there are several animals which are intrinsically valuable since they are subjects of a life i.e. they believe, desire, have perceptions, have memory and a sense of future (Regan 243). These creatures, as Regan argues, possess moral rights that should not be violated such as the right not to be killed or exploited as an instrument to human goals. As opposed to utilitarianism, which is outcome-based, rights-based ethics is outcome blind and places moral limitations on acts, irrespective of their attainment of good. According to this view, veganism is not merely the practice of suffering reduction, but the rejection of instrumental usage of animals.

Virtue ethics can be used as another philosophical rationale of veganism analyzed as moral character oriented but not as rule-oriented or outcome oriented. The strategy focuses on development of virtues like compassion, empathy, justice, and temperance. Adoption of vegan way of life is arguably a moral stance that indicates a sense of kindness and show of respect to vulnerable creatures. Making everyday routines and moral values congruent, veganism helps to develop a person morally and make society kinder.

Therefore, veganism cannot be seen as a binding lifestyle but a rigid moral philosophy. It takes into consideration the animal welfare with human ethical development and social wellbeing, forcing individuals and societies to reconsider the connection with non-human life in a more fair and humane way.

Veganism and Human Health :

The empirical evidence on scientific research is slowly gaining the idea that in case of properly designed vegan diets, they may help achieve the best possible human health and minimize the chances of numerous chronic diseases. Plant-based diets, unlike diets which put most of their focus on animal foods, focus on whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds which are rich sources of fiber, antioxidants, vitamins and essential minerals. These food elements are quite essential in sustaining cardiovascular fitness, metabolic homeostasis and the accurate physique.

The lowered risk of cardiovascular disease is among the greatest health advantages of veganism. High saturated fats and cholesterol diets,

which are common in animal products, are strongly associated with heart disease and hypertension. By avoiding these foods, vegan diets have the ability to reduce the levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and have a beneficial effect on blood pressure. Studies show that persons with plant-based diets tend to have better lipid thereof and record fewer heart-related diseases (Campbell and Campbell 87). Since the cardiovascular disease is one of the major causes of death globally, the fact that vegan diets can be used in prevention is worth mentioning.

The risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes is also found to be lower in veganism. Plant foods that contain high fibers will help a person feel fuller, maintain blood sugar levels, and become more sensitive to insulin. Research indicates that vegans are generally less obese and their body mass index (BMI) is lower as compared to those who eat mixed diets, which lowers their chances of experiencing complications that come with obesity. Better glycemic control enhances even further lowering the risk of diabetes and other associated metabolic diseases, which leads to long-run health and quality of life.

Besides physical health advantages, veganism can also have a positive effect on mental and emotional health. Food makes a significant part in psychological wellbeing, and vegan diets are beneficial to gut wellness, a notion that is gradually understood as related to emotion control and brain activity. In addition, psychological stress can be minimized when the personal values and daily practices are in harmony. A lot of people get a moral righteousness and emotional epiphany when their way of life embodies ethics of compassion and non-violence towards animals. Such ethical consistency can help create empathy, diminish the guilt felt by suffering animals and can make people think of a more peaceful state of mind.

Veganism can therefore help human health holistically taking care of the physical and psychological well-being. With their contribution to the prevention of diseases, metabolic health, and ethical harmony, vegan diets are not only the choice towards healthier and more joyful living but the whole lifestyle.

Animal Agriculture and Ethical Concerns :

Industrial animal farming is one of the most ethically disturbing activities in the modern society. Billions of animals are farmed,

penitentiary and slaughtered every year in massive industrial complexes with the ultimate aim of promoting efficiency and profit. Animals in factory farms are habitually crowded to the highest degree with physical mutilation like debeaking or docking of tails, and denied natural behaviors. The consequences of these conditions are high levels of physical suffering and psychological torture, which is a serious ethical issue regarding the attitude of people to non-humans.

Ethically speaking, the human intervention which entails the systematic cause of suffering to sentient beings to satisfy non-essential human needs is the major issue of concern. According to Peter Singer, a lot of the misery that animals are subjected to in contemporary agriculture is not only unnecessary but unavoidable since human beings can achieve their nutritional requirements without a need to take animal products (Singer 95). The exploitation of animals becomes unethically unacceptable when there are viable alternatives. The daily cruelty meted to animals in the name of food choice as opposed to the survival issues is a challenge to the fundamentals of compassion and fairness.

Moreover, the industrial agriculture of animals transforms them into commodities and is only interested in their economic performance but not in their intrinsic value. This objective perception of the animal life contradicts such ethical systems that give preference to respect to sentient beings. According to rights theorists, subjecting animals to a status of means to human ends would be against their value of being and moral status. Even welfare reforms in the factory farming tend to leave this very problem behind, since they are aimed at alleviating suffering rather than disputing the right to use animals in the first place. Veganism is a direct challenge to the moral principles of industrial animal production since it shuns involvement in the systems of animal exploitation. Through the utilization of the alternatives provided by the plant, people pull out their support to the given practices that inflict suffering on unnecessarily and lead to the cultural paradigm shift towards ethical responsibility in general. Veganism is therefore not just a lifestyle but a moral protest against the cruelty institutionalized and proposes a more humane and fair attitude between human beings and animals.

Veganism and the Protection of Animal Rights: Western and Eastern Perspectives :

Veganism would largely contribute to the protection of the animal rights by completely denying the fact that animals exist to be used by humans. The core idea behind vegan philosophy is the understanding that animals are living beings, which can suffer, enjoy, be terrified, and have feelings. This awareness criticizes anthropocentric worldview and demands a moral system that places moral concern beyond human species. Western and Eastern traditions of philosophy do offer valuable insights that serve as ethical justifications of veganism and its animal protection.

Contemporary animal rights movement in western moral thought is highly informed by both rights-based and utilitarian ethical thought. The right-based approach of Tom Regan holds that animals have some intrinsic value as they are subject-of-a-life, which has beliefs, wants, memory, and emotional lives (Regan 250). Regan is of the view that animals cannot be viewed as an asset or a means to an end no matter how helpful such usage may be. Veganism indicates this ethical stand by not engaging in activities, which commodify animal existence, e.g. factory farming, animal testing, and wearing animals or using them as entertainment. Veganism is also in line with the moral imperative of respecting animals as possessing rights, by refusing to exploit any animal at all.

The Western defense of veganism also incorporates utilitarian philosophers such as Peter Singer who argued that suffering was relevant in morality. Singer suggests that pain is all a moral being needs to be morally considered and that animals with close similar interests but treated with various privileges not accorded to humans is unjust discrimination, also known as speciesism. In this light, veganism appears to be the practical answer to reducing suffering and enhancing moral consistency in daily life.

The Eastern schools of thought support the ethical principles of veganism further with the ideas of non-violence, kindness, and connectedness. The idea of ahimsa (non-harm) holds a dominant place in the Indian moral ethical sense, especially in Jainism, Buddhism, and some branches of Hinduism. Ahimsa requires to avoid any damage to life of any living creature, as the life of an animal is considered morally

important. Veganism is very much related to this value since it aims at eradicating the practice that leads to the suffering and death of animals. Buddhism ethics lays focus to compassion (karuna) and reduction of suffering to all the sentient beings. Awareness that animals are not only deserving of suffering and impermanence triggers ethical discipline and conscious consumption. Likewise, the Jain philosophy spreads moral consideration even to the tiniest beings of life and promotes strict non-violence as a way of attaining spiritual liberation. Those Eastern attitudes consider ethical life as indivisible with everyday life, which is highly comparable to the vegan ethical adherence to the element of consistency. Therefore, veganism is a meeting of moral knowledge of the West and the East. Rights, compassion, and non-violence allow veganism to confirm that animal rights protection is not a cultural exception but a global ethical requirement, the foundation of which is based on a wide variety of philosophical traditions.

Environmental and Social Dimensions :

One cause of environmental degradation in the contemporary world is animal farming. Massive animal production demands enormous quantities of land, water and energy leading to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and too much green house gas emission. The forests are also cleared regularly to form grazing fields or to be used in producing feed crops like soy and maize, which destroy the natural habitats and cause wildlife displacement. These activities greatly increase the rate of climate change and cause an ecological imbalance that can pose a great danger to the non-human and human life.

Animal agriculture is a significant source of greenhouse gaseous emissions especially methane and nitrous oxide which are causing global warming. Climate change, in its turn, raises the rate of extreme weather, food shortage, and disease outbreaks, which have an unequal impact on vulnerable human populations. Animal wastewater leads to water pollution which subsequently pollutes rivers and ground water exposing the population to health hazards and destabilizing aquatic habitats. Therefore, animal agriculture has environmental effects that do not only end with the ecological damage but also directly affect human health and social stability.

Veganism can serve as a legitimate solution to these ecological and social issues because it advances plant-based food systems that

would need fewer natural resources and would generate less emission. Plant based agriculture tends to be more effective of use of land and water and it can nourish a higher number of individuals at a lesser expense to the environment. Veganism promotes sustainable food systems that could sustain the increasing world population by reducing reliance on animal products.

On a social level, veganism has been associated with increased food equity through the challenge of the inefficient food distribution systems that put animal feed directly in competition with direct human consumption. Plant-based diets can enhance food security in the world and decrease the strain on the environment. By doing this, veganism indirectly protects the human survival, population health and environmental justice. It also highlights how human well-being, animal protection, and ecological sustainability are interrelated and provides a comprehensive ethical solution to the modern global crisis.

Challenges and Cultural Resistance: Indian and Western Perspectives:

Although veganism has ethical, health, and environmental advantages, it is still widely treated with opposition in different cultures. This opposition is conditioned by the traditions, social norms, economic frameworks and the general false beliefs. The Indian and Western cultures offer distinct challenges to the acceptance of veganism, despite having philosophical sources which might be utilized to help to promote compassionate lifestyles.

Resistance to veganism in the Indian context is also usually brought about by the cultural and religious practices, which, on the other hand, promote non-violence and the consumption of animal products as a norm. Though such traditions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism suggest the principle of ahimsa (non-harm), most of the common practices also presuppose the consumption of dairy products, and in most areas, the consumption of meat. Both milk and ghee are considered pure culturally and very necessary especially during religious ceremonies. This brings a moral contradiction between moral principles and the practice. A common belief among many people is that veganism is an importation by western countries that endangers the local food culture and rural communities, especially those that rely on dairy production. Also, false information regarding nutrition e.g. that vegan diets are no longer suitable to give strength or health also add to the resistance.

The cultural opposition to veganism in the Western world is conditioned by various historical and social reasons. Consumption of meat has been linked to wealth, manhood and even to culture. Animal consumption is reinforced through industrialized food systems which are propelled by influential agricultural lobbies. Veganism is seen as extreme, upper-crust, or unrealistic, especially in the societies where the meat-based eating is instilled in people. Veganism can be portrayed as socially secluded through social activities including family dinner and celebrations which would turn people out of using plant-based lifestyles.

Despite these difficulties, Indian and Western ethical traditions possess the material that can be used to defend vegan values. Philosophical focus of compassion and non-violence and interrelatedness in India gives a solid moral basis to the extension of ethical concern to the animals. Equally, Western moral philosophy, including Peter Singer, Tom Regan, etc. provide rational arguments against animal exploitation on grounds of suffering and rights. The history of ethical development has tended to seek to challenge old conventions, be it the discrimination of the caste system, slavery, or gender inequality.

It is important that education and discussion can overcome cultural resistance. Creating awareness regarding the health, environmental, and ethical effects of eating animals can help break the myth and make informed decisions. This approach could be used to explain veganism as a culture that has undergone ethical development and is consistent with the fundamental moral principles found in Indian and Western cultures. By engaging in respectful conversations and the transformation process, the societies can be guided towards more responsible and kinder living being ethical in the globalized world.

Veganism and Sustainable Living :

Sustainable living and veganism are tightly related two concepts, as both of them focus on the responsible utilization of resources, a moral attitude to life, and the ecological sustainability in the long term. Sustainable living aims at ensuring delivery of the current needs without prejudice to the future generation in having the ability to fulfill their own needs and veganism plays a considerable role in this by encouraging plant-based lifestyles that minimize environmental degradation and ethical exploitation.

Veganism promotes sustainability in one of the main ways, and this is by addressing the environmental effects of food systems. Animal farming is one of the most resource-intensive forms of human endeavors as it consumes a lot of land, water and energy. Deforestation, loss of biodiversity and climate instability result due to large stretches of forest being cleared to allow grazing or production of feed crops to feed livestock. On the contrary, plant-based food systems are much more sustainable, as they do not consume as many natural resources and provide enough nutrition to the human population. Veganism could contribute to decreasing the emission of greenhouse gases and saving the ecosystems because the dependency on animal products is reduced. Veganism also fosters sustainable consumption trends because it advocates conscious and ethical behavior outside the food industry. The vegan way of life shuns all items of clothing made of animals e.g. leather, wool and silk, that are related to pollution, chemical treatment and suffering of animals. Rather, veganism endorses substitutes manufactured out of plant-based or recycled substances, which reduces wastes and makes the production process more accountable. This wider moral investment is similar to the ideas of sustainable lifestyles which promote less consumption and consideration of the natural boundaries. Socially speaking, veganism can contribute to sustainability by dealing with the food security and global justice problems. Big volumes of food are now being channeled to feed animals instead of human beings leading to inefficient distribution and starvation in most regions across the world. The transition to plant-based diets will be beneficial in terms of enhancing the availability of food and advancing fair access to nutritious options. Additionally, veganism promotes the understanding of the inter-relationship of human activities, the lives of animals, and environmental processes.

Veganism ethically supports sustainable living, as it promotes values of compassion, responsibility and interdependence. Veganism enhances a positive relationship between nature and human beings by refusing to support any form of animal exploitation and environmental degradation. Therefore, veganism is not just another way of life of an individual, but a valuable step towards environmental sustainability, a way to achieve ecological stability, social equity, and moral accountability to the current and future generations.

Conclusion :

The above discussion has shown that veganism is not just a diet choice, but a full-fledged profile of ethics, which cover some of the most pressing issues facing modern mankind. Veganism is dualistic and holistic in well-being since it involves caring about human health, and caring about animal life. The scientific world is becoming highly persuasive that properly designed vegetarian diets could help lower the risk of various chronic diseases, improve physical health, and improve mental health. In this regard, veganism would help directly to the enhancement of the quality of human life and the long-term civic health. Meanwhile, veganism is an ethical reaction to the ethical disaster of industrial animal farming. Both Western and Eastern traditions of thought coincide in their philosophical insights into the moral importance of animal life be it in terms of rights, sentience, compassion or non-violence. When veganism denies the use of animals as a source of food, clothing, and experimentation, it asserts the inherent worth of other living beings and confronts long-established order of domination and atrocities. This ethical approach promotes reconsideration of human attitude to nature, which promotes responsibility and not domination. Moreover, the eco-social aspects of veganism indicate its application beyond the choice of an individual. Since animal farming is already a major cause of climate change, ecological destruction, and social injustice, veganism is a viable solution that can protect the health of the planet and human life as well. Although there is cultural resistance in both the western and the Indian society, moral development has traditionally demanded critical overall reflection on the set norms. Societies may slowly transform into more humane and sustainable lifestyles through education, discussion and through ethical responsibility.

veganism confirms that there are no two sides to human well-being and animal rights, but rather two aspects. Considering compassion, justice, and moral consistency, veganism will provide a paradigm shift of a healthier, more human, and morally responsible world.

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Status, Causes and Consequences of Primary Education in the Morigaon District of Assam

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Rajib Malo²

Abstract :

The status of primary education in the Morigaon district of Assam reflects a mixed scenario of substantial progress in access and infrastructure alongside persistent challenges in retention and learning outcomes. Out of the eight goals of Millennium Development goals (MDG), two are subjected to education. These are as follows:

Goal 2: “Achieve Universal Primary Education”.

Goal 3: “Promote gender equality and empower women”.

However, the scope of this paper is concerned with the goal No.2 as stated above. The target of this goal as defined by the member nations is to “Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”. The Govt. of Indian Union, with 86th amendment of its Constitution has offered its citizen the right to primary education as one more fundamental right. Meanwhile, it also launched a highly ambitious scheme to ensure primary education of seven years duration for all children under the Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) by the year 2010. Assam is known as one of the educationally backward states in the national perspective. The state’s literacy rate (69.37%) is not only lagging behind that of national average (74.04%), the rampant incidence of dropouts

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at the primary level of education (39.58%) is posing a serious threat to the move to ensure universal primary education. And if we compared the literacy rate of Morigaon District is very low as compared to the state's rate. Therefore, in this paper an attempt is made to study about the status of Primary Education and causes of as well as consequences in the Morigaon district of Assam. For the preset study was undertaken in some rural and urban area schools of Morigaon district. Data collected through scheduled questionnaire providing class and sex wise enrolment of the beginning of the year and students completing the class work of the end of the year. Data for two consecutive years thus collected is used to calculate the school wise dropout rates.

Keywords: The Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), primary education, dropouts, literacy rate, Morigaon District,

Introduction :

The World Conference on Education for All, 1990, held in Jomtein set the goal to be achieved by 2000. Since the goal remained unachieved within the targeted time-frame, reaffirming the Jomtein commitment, The World of Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, redefined the goal as “Ensure that by 2015 all children particularly girls’ children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality”. One hundred and eighty-nine countries all over the world putting their heads together in 2000 prioritized eight goals as Millennium Development Goals. Out of the eight goals of Millennium Development goals (MDG), two are subjected to education. These are as follows:

Goal 2: “Achieve Universal Primary Education”.

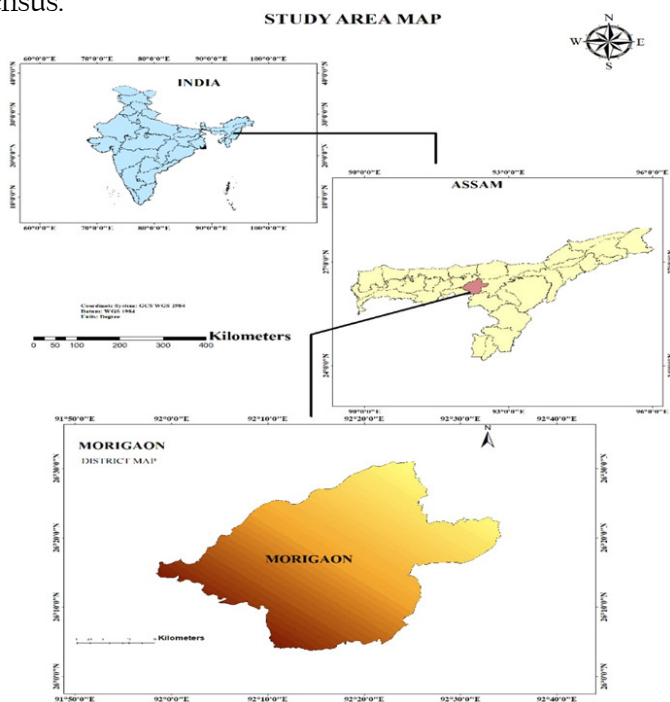
Goal 3: “Promote gender equality and empower women”.

However, the scope of this paper is concerned with the goal No.2 as stated above. The target of this goal as defined by the member nations is to “Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”. The Govt. of Indian Union, with 86th amendment of its Constitution has offered its citizen the right to primary education as one more fundamental right. Meanwhile, it also launched a highly ambitious scheme to ensure primary education of seven years duration for all children under the Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) by the year 2010. Assam is

known as one of the educationally backward states in the national perspective. The state's literacy rate (69.37%) is not only lagging behind that of national average (74.04%), the rampant incidence of dropouts at the primary level of education (39.58%) is posing a serious threat to the move to ensure universal primary education. And if we compared the literacy rate of Morigaon District is very low as compared to the state's rate. Therefore, in this paper an attempt is made to study about the status of Primary Education and causes of as well as consequences in the Morigaon district of Assam.

Study Area :

- The study area is Morigaon District of Assam which is located in the south-central part of the Brahmaputra valley having a population of 9, 57,853 and about 600 inhabited villages in an area of 1704 sq. km.
- The backbone of economy of the district is agricultural. The district had 375465 literates accounting for 69.37% per cent of the total population as against 73.18% percent of Assam and 74.04% percent for the nation as a whole according to 2011 census.



Objectives :

To study the status, causes and consequences of the primary education of the district the main objectives are -

1. To study the socio-economic condition of the parents and its influence in the student's enrolment and dropout in the school.
2. To study the Teachers performance in the class and attendance in the school.

Methodology :

For the preset study was undertaken in some rural and urban area schools of Morigaon district. Data collected through scheduled questionnaire providing class and sex wise enrolment of the beginning of the year and students completing the class work of the end of the year. Data for two consecutive years thus collected is used to calculate the school wise dropout rates. A home visit was paid and information about socio-economic aspects was collected and an observational study was undertaken.

Data Collection :

- a) For this study 15 primary schools were randomly selected from study area in accordance with the objectives.
- b) Collection of primary data through scheduled questionnaire.
- c) Collateral collection of information through observation sampling technique.
- d) Supplementation of primary data with secondary data obtained from District Sarba Siksha Mission, Morigaon and state Sarba Siksha Mission and other relevant sources.

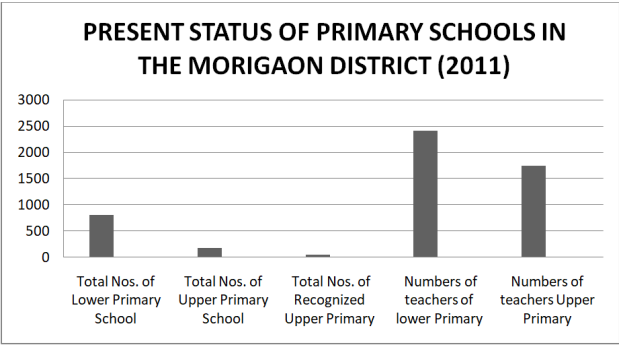
Results and Discussion :

The Govt. of Indian Union, with 86th amendment of its Constitution has offered its citizen the right to primary education as one more fundamental right. Meanwhile, it also launched a highly ambitious scheme to ensure primary education of seven years duration for all children under the Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) by the year 2010. Assam is known as one of the educationally backward states in the national perspective. The state's literacy rate (69.37%) is not only lagging behind that of national average (74.04%), the rampant incidence of dropouts at the primary level of education (39.58%) is posing a serious threat to the move to ensure universal primary education. And if we compared the literacy rate of Morigaon District is very low as compared to the state's rate.

Present status of primary schools in the district:A) Numbers of Elementary Institutions :

- 1. Total Nos. of Lower Primary School 813 Nos.
- 2. Total Nos. of Upper Primary School 181Nos.
- 3. Total Nos. of Recognized Upper Primary School 56 Nos.
- B) Numbers of teachers of lower Primary 2406 Nos.
- C) Numbers of teachers Upper Primary 1748 Nos.

Source: District Elementary Education. (2011)



The study on dropouts of children undertaken in August /12 from 15 primary schools in the study area where 48 school dropouts were identified. The findings suggest that the overall dropout rates were 14% in 2010-11 which showed a reduction by 3% in 2011-12 (11%). Although the trend is seems to be encouraging, concerted efforts is needed to ensure further reduction.

Although there was no significant statistical difference in overall dropout rates for both sexes, it increased sharply at higher classes for girl students. The majority of children drop out due to lack of interest in part of parent for sending their siblings to school, financial problems or unsatisfactory scholastic performance. In case of scholastic performance, maximum difficulty was observed in concept formation 87 (50.5%), followed by numerical ability in 78 (45%). Identification of children with learning difficulties and intervention using special educational methods within the framework of existing network of primary and secondary schools in the rural areas is a major problem.

There is a substantial degree of dropouts in most of the schools in the urban area also and thus is a matter of concern. The data obtained from the schools indicates that the teacher student ratio is higher in

some schools (76:1) while it is much below in others (16:1) indicating need of reallocation of teachers among the schools or adding teachers in some schools.

During home visit to some of the dropout students revealed that contrary to popular sentiment, the non availability of primary schooling facilities nearer to home is not a factor for dropout in urban areas of Morigaon district of Assam. However, a large proportion of children are never enrolled in school simply because they and /or their parent are not interested or ignorant about benefits of schooling or becoming literates.

Moreover, many children, who are enrolled, are forced to dropout from school simply because they are needed at home to participate in the basic tasks of the household economy. Many children who are not in school are working eight hours or more daily. Moreover, these children are not earning any significant income, as they have been relegated to tasks such as caring for their siblings, or tending grazing cattle, rather than being involved in wage earning jobs.

Major Findings :

1. Economic reasons in school dropout are quit common.
2. Many schools do not have adequate infrastructure facilities.
3. There is need of discipline and timelines in holding classes in certain schools.
4. There is need of more number of teachers to handle different classes in certain schools.
5. Building of coordination among village panchayats, parent-teacher association, NGOs and Education is the need of the hour.
6. Adult education for parents will improve the level of education among children.
7. Poverty induced child labour practice; lake of flexible timings for working children is also felt necessary.
8. There is a need to follow up and re enrolment of school dropouts.
9. Learning may be made attractive by adding talent search, organizing artistic competitions, conducting periodic educational excursions etc.
10. There is no any properly maintained records of absents or presents of teachers in the school.
11. Some of the schools in the rural area one teacher have to do more than one classes at the same time due to lake of teachers.

12. In the primary schools there are no Clerk and Chowkidar all the external and official works have to do by the teachers. These things partially affect in the academic activity of the teachers.
13. Sometimes monthly training and meeting create problems in academic purposes of a school as all the teachers have to do it in the same day.
14. In the rural areas due to illiterate, ignorance and poor economic conditions of the parents shows the absent of student in the school as it is 1.26 percent of our school children's in the district.
15. Some students are seen in these areas that they cannot have the ability to pass the examination but they have to promote to the next class due to the bindings of the policy, which affect in providing the quality education.

Suggestion and Conclusion :

1. There should be well balance between teacher and pupil ratio. So requite more teacher is the argent need to the implementation of any fruitful policy.
2. Incentives should be taken under SSA to effective implementation through awareness campaign in rural areas.
3. Concerning authority, local people, NGOs should ensue about the presence of teachers in the schools.
4. To provide quality and compulsory education in rural area community awareness and parent's literacy programme should be needed.
5. Teachers should be actively participated in different teaching learning activities of the school.
6. Teachers should be well trained so that effective teaching learning processes can be possible.

Conclusion :

No scheme of elementary education can be successful without the active coordination and efficient work of the teacher. If elementary education has to be improving qualitatively there must be improvement at the first instant.

Teacher attendance in both primary and upper primary schools shows no change over the 2012 level of 85%. But student attendance shows a slight decline, especially in upper primary schools from 73.1% in 2012 to 71.8% in 2013.

Overall, enrollment numbers remain very high. Over 96% of all children in the age group 6 to 14 years are enrolled in school. This is the fifth consecutive year that enrollment levels have been 96% or more.

- Nationally, the proportion of children (age 6 to 14) who are not enrolled in school has decreased slightly, from 3.5% in 2012 to 3.3% in 2013.
- At the All-India level, the proportion of girls in the age group 11 to 14 who are not enrolled in school dropped from 6% in 2012 to 5.5% in 2013. The greatest progress is visible in Uttar Pradesh, where this percentage dropped from 11.5% in 2012 to 9.4% in 2013. However, in Rajasthan the proportion of out of school girls age 11 to 14 rose for the second year in a row, from 8.9% in 2011 to 11.2% in 2012 to 12.1% in 2013.

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Understanding the Concept of Dharma in Modern Indian Thought : A Philosophical Exploration

Dr. Sukanya Chutia

Abstract :

This research paper offers an extensive philosophical exploration of *dharma* as understood in modern Indian thought. While the term *dharma* has ancient origins in Vedic, Upanishadic, and classical Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, its philosophical meaning has undergone continual reinterpretation across historical periods. In modern India, from the nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century, leading thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, and contemporary scholars have reshaped the concept of *dharma* in response to colonialism, nationalism, social reform, globalization, and ethical modernity. This paper examines how *dharma* functions not merely as religious duty but as ethical responsibility, social justice, human dignity, spiritual harmony, and moral autonomy. Drawing on scriptural interpretations, philosophical writings, and socio-political movements, the study investigates *dharma* as a dynamic concept that continues to influence Indian ethics, public values, and national identity. The research also evaluates *dharma*'s relevance to present-day challenges such as pluralism, human rights, ecological responsibility, and global ethics.

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Keywords: Dharma; Modern Indian Thought; Indian Philosophy; Ethics.

Introduction :

The concept of *dharma* occupies a central place in Indian philosophical thought, serving as a foundational term across Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Its semantic range encompasses duty, righteousness, law, justice, morality, cosmic order, social ethics, and spiritual purpose. In classical Indian literature - such as the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Manusmriti*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, and foundational Buddhist and Jain texts-dharma is the principle that sustains the world (*dharayati iti dharmah*). Yet dharma is not a fixed or static concept. Rather, it is historically dynamic, context-dependent, and ethically versatile.

In modern Indian philosophy (roughly the nineteenth century onward), dharma is reinterpreted amidst the cultural upheavals of colonialism, the freedom struggle, socio-religious reform movements, and the transition to a democratic and pluralistic nation-state. Thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, K. C. Bhattacharya, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and modern scholars reconceived dharma not merely as ritual performance but as ethical action, humanitarian service, spiritual development, and social transformation. These redefinitions emphasize universalism, moral autonomy, equality, and justice.

This paper explores the philosophical dimensions of dharma in modern Indian thought by analyzing its historical development, ethical foundations, socio-political interpretations, and contemporary relevance. It adopts a comparative philosophical approach, drawing on classical texts, modern writings, and critical scholarship. The study aims to demonstrate that dharma in modern India is not only a religious principle but a comprehensive ethical framework capable of addressing modern human challenges.

Objectives :

1. To analyze the evolution of the concept of dharma from ancient sources to modern Indian philosophical thought.
2. To examine how major modern Indian thinkers reinterpret dharma in response to social, political, and cultural challenges.
3. To evaluate dharma as an ethical and philosophical principle in contemporary contexts such as social justice, human rights, ecological ethics, and pluralism.

4. To demonstrate the continuing relevance of dharma as a dynamic and adaptable concept in modern moral and political discourse.

Methodology :

The method of this present study is analytical and descriptive in nature. This paper is based on qualitative research using secondary sources. In this paper analysing textual data from various books, journals, research papers related to the concept of Dharma in Modern Indian Thought.

Discussion :

Historical and Conceptual Background of Dharma :

Dharma is a complex and multifaceted concept in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, encompassing moral order, law, duty, and righteousness. Its historical development spans thousands of years, evolving through Vedic, Upanishadic and classical periods.

Etymology and Early Meanings :

The Sanskrit word *dharma* derives from the root *dhri*, meaning “to hold,” “to sustain,” or “to support.” Thus, dharma signifies the principle that upholds the cosmos, society, and individual life (Radhakrishnan 35). In its earliest Vedic context, dharma was closely associated with *ṛta*, the cosmic order that governs natural and moral laws. The Upanishads refined this concept by linking dharma to truth (*satya*) and spiritual self-realization. In the *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavadgita*, dharma emerges as ethical action in accordance with one’s nature, responsibilities and inner moral law.

Beyond Hinduism, *dhamma* in Buddhism refers to universal truths, ethical precepts and the path towards liberation, In Jainism, dharma combines nonviolence, restraint and the ethical discipline. Thus, across traditions, dharma serves as both a metaphysical principle and an ethical guideline.

Dharma as Ethics and Social Order :

Classical Hindu society also applied dharma through *varnasrama-dharma*, linking one’s duties to caste, stage of life, and social position. Yet texts like the *Mahabharata* emphasize *apad-dharma* (ethics in crisis), *sadharana-dharma* (universal morality), and *svadharma* (personal duty), showing that dharma is flexible and context-sensitive (Hiltebeitel 79).

These concepts underscore the contextual flexibility of dharma, making it a dynamic moral principle rather than a rigid scriptural injunction.

The Transition to Modernity :

With colonialism and the encounter with Western ideas of rationality, justice, equality, and secularism, Indian thinkers reinterpreted dharma as an ethical and spiritual ideal rather than a religious or caste-based duty. This shift marks the beginning of modern Indian interpretations of dharma.

Dharma in the Thought of Modern Indian Thinkers :

Modern Indian Thinkers have interpreted Dharma in diverse ways, reflecting their unique perspectives and experiences. These thinkers have redefined and interpreted Dharma, making it relevant to modern times and emphasizing its significance in personal and social life.

Swami Vivekananda: Dharma as Universal Spiritual Humanism

Swami Vivekananda redefined dharma as the realization of the divinity inherent in every human being. For him, dharma is service (*seva*), selflessness, and social uplift. He rejected caste-based interpretations of dharma, arguing instead that “the highest dharma is the welfare of all beings” (Vivekananda, 112). His universalistic interpretation emphasized: religious harmony, spiritual equality, karma yoga as practical dharma, service to humanity as service to God.

Vivekananda thus elevated dharma to a universal ethic compatible with modern humanitarian ideals. For him, dharma was not ritual but active ethical engagement. His teachings positioned dharma as a universal spiritual ethic aligned with modern humanitarian values.

Mahatma Gandhi: Dharma as Truth and Nonviolence

Mahatma Gandhi's interpretation is among the most influential. Gandhi equated dharma with *satya* (truth) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence). For Gandhi, “dharma is that which is embedded in truth and nonviolence” (Gandhi 57). He rejected ritualistic and institutional religion, instead promoting: moral autonomy, duty to conscience, compassion and non-harm, dharma as ethical action in everyday life, social justice through nonviolent resistance

Gandhi's dharma was both a personal discipline and a political principle that informed the Indian freedom movement. His interpretation transformed dharma into a powerful ethical and political instrument.

Rabindranath Tagore: Dharma as Creative Freedom

Tagore approached dharma from an aesthetic and humanistic perspective. For him, dharma meant harmony with the universe achieved

through creativity, love, and freedom. Tagore emphasized: the unity of humanity, ethical universalism, spiritual freedom, education as the pathway to dharma.

Tagore rejected dogmatic and authoritarian conceptions of dharma, arguing instead for a dharma grounded in human dignity and creativity.

B. R. Ambedkar: Dharma as Social Justice and Liberty

Ambedkar fundamentally transformed the concept by critiquing its association with caste and hierarchy. He argued that traditional Hindu dharma was often misused to justify social inequality (Ambedkar 92). He sought a reinterpretation of dharma compatible with: liberty, equality, fraternity, social democracy.

Ambedkar found such principles in Buddhist *dhamma*, which he viewed as a moral and egalitarian philosophy. His reinterpretation is essential for understanding dharma in modern social and constitutional contexts.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: Dharma as Ethical Idealism

Radhakrishnan synthesized classical Indian spirituality with modern philosophical idealism. He defined dharma as “the inner law of our being,” aligning moral action with spiritual realization (Radhakrishnan 135). His dharma includes: ethical intuition, universal moral values and the unity of religion and ethics.

Radhakrishnan’s interpretation contributed significantly to India’s intellectual identity in the mid-twentieth century. His writings aimed to present Indian dharma as compatible with global philosophy.

Sri Aurobindo: Dharma as Evolution of Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo viewed dharma as a progressive evolution of the human spirit. According to him, dharma changes with the development of consciousness and society (Aurobindo, 210). His concept includes: integral yoga, transformation of human nature, harmony of individual and collective progress

Aurobindo’s dharma is thus dynamic and forward-looking. He emphasized the importance of self-realization and the transformation of human nature. For him, Dharma was a way to unite the individual with the universal and the divine.

Central Philosophical Themes in Modern Interpretations of Dharma : Ethical Universalism :

In many contemporary interpretations, *dharma* is no longer confined to ritual obligations or caste-specific duties prescribed in traditional texts. Instead, modern scholars and reformers frame dharma

as a set of universal moral principles applicable to all human beings. This shift places ethical values—such as compassion, empathy, integrity, nonviolence, and responsibility toward others—at the forefront. Dharma thus becomes a moral compass that guides behavior not because of one's birth or social position but because of one's shared humanity. This Universalist perspective positions dharma as a foundation for global ethics, capable of addressing the challenges of a diverse and interconnected world.

Human Duty over Caste Duty :

Thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and B. R. Ambedkar break decisively from earlier conceptions of dharma that linked personal duty to caste hierarchy. They argue that genuine dharma cannot be rooted in inherited status or social inequality. For Vivekananda, dharma is expressed through service to humanity; for Gandhi, through the pursuit of truth and nonviolence; and for Ambedkar, through the creation of a society grounded in liberty, equality, and fraternity. All three criticize caste-based dharma as morally obsolete and assert that the true measure of dharma lies in the protection of human dignity. Their reinterpretation transforms dharma from a hierarchical system into a universal ethical ideal accessible to all.

Moral Autonomy :

Modern thinkers emphasize that dharma should arise from one's conscience and rational moral judgment rather than unquestioning obedience to scriptural authority. This approach upholds the individual as a moral agent capable of discerning right from wrong based on critical reasoning, empathy, and social awareness. Drawing from classical Indian thought and Enlightenment ideals, this perspective argues that ethical living requires personal responsibility and self-reflection. Dharma, therefore, becomes a dynamic process of moral decision-making rather than a fixed set of rules. This aligns dharma with modern democratic values that prioritize freedom of thought and individual moral autonomy.

Social Reform and Justice :

Contemporary interpretations increasingly view dharma as a powerful instrument for social change. Rather than maintaining the status quo, dharma is invoked to confront and remedy structural injustices. This includes: Caste discrimination: which many thinkers describe as fundamentally adharmic; Gender inequality: addressed

through calls for women's rights, education, and empowerment; Illiteracy and poverty: seen as obstacles to ethical and social development; Colonial oppression: This stimulated national movements that framed liberation as a moral duty.

Reformers argue that dharma obliges individuals and societies to dismantle harmful practices and build institutions that promote fairness, dignity, and collective welfare. In this view, dharma is inseparable from the pursuit of justice.

Pluralism :

Modern interpretations also highlight dharma's capacity to foster pluralism and interreligious understanding. Rather than belonging exclusively to Hindu tradition, dharma is seen as a universal spiritual ethos compatible with diverse faiths. This inclusive approach encourages mutual respect, dialogue, and harmony among India's many religious communities. Reformers emphasize that the strength of Indian civilization lies in its ability to integrate multiple traditions while upholding shared ethical values. Thus, dharma becomes a unifying principle that supports India's multicultural identity and promotes peaceful coexistence.

Ecological and Global Ethics :

Contemporary scholars further extend the concept of dharma to encompass environmental and planetary concerns. In this expanded framework, dharma includes: responsibility toward ecological balance and biodiversity, compassion for animals and other living beings, sustainable use of natural resources, and awareness of humanity's impact on the global ecosystem.

This ecological interpretation resonates strongly with modern movements for climate justice and environmental protection. It presents dharma as an ethical foundation capable of addressing the urgent environmental challenges of the 21st century.

Dharma and the Indian Constitution :

Although the Indian Constitution is formally secular, its core values-justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity-echo many principles associated with modern understandings of dharma. The Constitution seeks to create a moral and equitable social order, a goal shared with reformist interpretations of dharma that emphasize human dignity and social justice.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's intellectual engagement with Buddhist *dharma* significantly shaped the ethical foundations of constitutional morality. His emphasis on rational ethics, compassion, and social equality influenced several constitutional principles, including fundamental rights and affirmative measures for marginalized communities. Thus, even while the Constitution avoids religious language, its spirit reflects a secularized, humanistic version of dharma—an ethical framework that supports democracy, protects individual freedoms, and promotes collective welfare.

Contemporary Relevance of Dharma :

Social Justice Movements :

In contemporary India, numerous social movements invoke dharma as a moral justification for their struggles. Dalit liberation movements challenge caste violence and discrimination by appealing to dharma as a principle of equality and human rights. Feminist movements argue that patriarchy violates the dharmic values of justice and respect. Environmental activists frame ecological protection as a sacred duty toward the Earth and future generations. These movements reflect a modern understanding of dharma as a force that inspires ethical action, resists injustice, and demands social transformation.

National Identity :

Dharma continues to play a significant role in shaping India's vision of nationhood. Rather than being tied to a single religion, patriotic interpretations of dharma emphasize civic responsibility, moral discipline, and commitment to the public good. The concept supports the idea that citizens share a collective duty to uphold democratic values, promote harmony, and work toward social progress. In this sense, dharma becomes a cultural and ethical foundation for nation-building, guiding the moral character of the nation without imposing any specific religious identity.

Global Contributions :

Finally, dharma has influenced global ethical and political movements. The reinterpretation of dharma by Mahatma Gandhi—especially his principles of *ahimsa* (nonviolence) and *satyagraha* (truth-force)—has inspired international leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and others involved in civil rights and anti-colonial struggles. Today, dharma resonates with global discourses on

peacebuilding, human rights, social equality, and sustainability. This demonstrates that modern dharma is not merely an Indian concept but a universal ethical resource relevant to humanity at large.

Conclusion :

The concept of dharma in modern Indian thought represents a profound and dynamic philosophical tradition that bridges ancient wisdom and modern ethical demands. While rooted in classical Indian literature and spirituality, dharma has been continually reinterpreted by modern thinkers in response to social oppression, political struggle, colonialism, global modernity, and the ethical complexities of contemporary life. Thinkers such as Vivekananda, Gandhi, Ambedkar, Tagore, Radhakrishnan, and Aurobindo transformed dharma from a primarily religious and caste-bound duty to a universal ethical principle grounded in justice, freedom, compassion, human dignity, and spiritual evolution.

In modern contexts, dharma is not merely an obligation to tradition but a call to moral responsibility, social transformation, and human solidarity. It offers a framework for addressing the challenges of pluralism, inequality, ecological crisis, and global ethics. Thus, dharma remains a living and evolving concept-one that continues to shape Indian identity and global philosophical thought.

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Portrayal of Women Life in the Songs of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika : A Brief Study

Anamika Sarma¹

Abstract :

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the renowned legendary singer, lyricist, cultural activist and composer of India, emerged as a humanistic voice who expressed the deeper emotions of human life and society through his music. In his many songs, the portrayal of women occupies a vital position. His compositions presents different aspect of womanhood, including suffering, hope, sacrifice, emotional strength and the aspirations for dignity and freedom. While some songs celebrate women's nurturing qualities, others expose the injustice and exploitation faced in society.

Keywords : Bhupen Hazarika, women, womanhood, Songs.

Introduction :

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011) was a renowned revolutionary patriotic singer and a social thinker, cultural activist whose songs gave voice to the marginalized and the oppressed. His artistic vision crossed linguistic and regional boundaries and addressed universal concerns such as justice, equality, love and human dignity. The depiction of women in his songs reflects deep emotional sensitivity and social awareness. He viewed women both as symbols of courage and sacrifice and as victims of social discrimination. Through his music, he expressed

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the unspoken pain of women who longed for identity, respect, and freedom. His compositions often promoted the idea of Nari Shakti (women's power) and encouraged a progressive understanding of gender roles within society. In this regard, he composed several songs in which he depicted his visionary ideal to equalize and promote the status of women in the society.

As a 'person' both are same. Both men and women recognized as persons because of the ability, capability in ways that presupposes the capacity for reason, responsibility and emotional response that both have. But Womanhood represents a complex journey shaped by emotional strength, social responsibility, and continuous struggle for dignity and self-realization. Women's lives have historically been defined by both nurturing roles and systemic constraints imposed by patriarchal structures. Naribaad (feminism) seeks to challenge these inequalities by asserting women's rights to identity, education, freedom and participation in public life. It emphasizes that women are active social agents of change who shape culture, ethics and human values. The life of a woman thus becomes a process of existential struggle where pain transform into awareness and silence into articulation. Dr. Hazarika's musical expression thus becomes a philosophical medium that redefines womanhood as an ethical presence – one that calls society towards equality, empathy and a more human social consciousness.

Objectives :

- To study the portrayal of women in the songs of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika.
- To identify recurring ideas related to women's struggle, freedom and aspirations in his lyrics.
- To analyze the emotional and psychological dimensions of women reflected in his compositions.
- To examine the representation of women in his songs by focusing on their philosophical, psychological, and social significance within the context of Assamese life.

Methodology :

The present study follows a descriptive and analytical approach to understand the depiction of women in Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's songs. Both primarily sources (song lyrics and their translations) and secondary sources (books, articles, and critical studies on his works) have been consulted for this purpose.

Discussion :

The songs of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika present a broad spectrum of feminine experiences, ranging from motherhood and romance to suffering and resistance against injustice. In “Axom Amar Rupahi, Gunoru nai Xeh”, Hazarika imagines Assam as a mother figure, linking womanhood with nature and fertility. In this song, woman symbolizes beauty, endurance and cultural continuity. The feminine image becomes a metaphor for Mother Earth and reflects the grace and strength of Assamese women.

In “Moi Eti Jajabor”, he conveys sympathy for women burdened by inequality and social neglect. The song expresses the silent grief of those who are deprived of justice and recognition. At the same time, it also presents the inner journey of a wandering soul searching for meaning, love and freedom beyond social limitations.

The song “Manuhe Manuhor Babe” emphasizes humanism and equality. Although it does not explicitly focus on women, its message of compassion and justice includes opposition to gender discrimination and social hierarchy. “Bistirno Parore”, inspired by Paul Robeson’s “Ol’ Man River”, portrays the Brahmaputra as a feminine symbol. The river represents patience, nurturing power, and silent endurance, qualities that reflect the lived experiences of many women within patriarchal system. Other songs such as “Pratidhwani” and “Dola He Dola” explore the emotional world of women. “Dola He Dola” highlights tenderness and romantic feeling, while “Pratidhwani” reflects the inner strength of women who survive suffering with resilience. In “Bimurta Mur Nixati Jen”, the pain of innocent women is presented as a sign of humanity’s moral decline.

From a psychological perspective, Hazarika’s portrayal of women reveals deep compassion. His female figures are not merely helpless victims; they are conscious individuals capable of thought, love and resistance. In “Ganga Mur Maa”, he depicted that the river again becomes a maternal symbol that connects womanhood with life, creation and continuity.

There are some another songs where he painted women in different ways like :

Women as Subject of Strong Love and Symbol of Inspiration :

‘Ki j Tumar Sanga Priya
Mitha Tumar Sanga...’

(This song depicts tribute to a beloved's companionship, suggesting a longing for the beloved to realize just how deeply she has touched his spirit. It is widely considered one of the most romantic song in the Assamese language.)

‘Tumar Uxah Kohua-Kumal

Xewali Kumal Hahi...’

(It is a lyrical, poetic song that describes the deep affection and admiration a lover has for their partner; drawing parallels with nature. Here, the song compares the breath of the beloved to the softness and gentle nature of the Kohuwa flower. In short, it is a poetic expression of profound, tender love, focusing on the soft and comforting nature of the beloved.)

‘Gupute Gupute Kiman Khelim

Alinganar Ei Khela.....’

(The lyrics of this song urge a lover to stop hiding their affection, arguing that love is natural and should not be bound by societal rules or secrecy. This song highlights secretly exploring themes of hidden love and defying social conventions through open expression of love.)

‘Akashi Ganga Bisora Nai...’

(This song speaks of a person who is not seeking material wealth ‘Swarna Alangkar’, but rather need of some sincere love in the midst of life’s harsh struggles. Here in this song, the line- ‘Nisthur Jionor Sangramot Bisaru Moromor Maat Ekhar’ represents strong symbol of inspiration.)

Women in Suffering and Pain :

‘Xitore Xemeka Rati

Xemeka Xitore Rati....’

(This song primarily a social commentary on the poverty of farmers, its powerful imagery of cold, dampness and a broken hut serves as a metaphor for various forms of marginalized suffering. In the context of women’s experiences, the lyrics of this song can be interpreted through several lenses of struggle and resilience. Like the burden of domestic poverty, which mirrors the quiet, persistent struggle of a women managing a household under the weight of crushing poverty.)

‘Endhar Katir Nixate

Ekhoni Noir Parote

Tair Punakone Fekure...’

(This song is often associated with themes of injustice and the struggle for survival, showcasing the emotional plea of a hungry child. It depicts a heart-wrenching scene of poverty, shivering in a broken hut during a dark, cold night reflecting social inequality and the burden of helplessness of a mother. Her pain is rooted in her inability to provide basic necessities – medicine, milk, food etc creating a profound sense of maternal agony.)

Women as Mother and Symbol of Nation :

Songs such as “Tumiye Mur Kalpanar Harini Nayana”, “Asami Aair Lalita Palita” , “A’ Mur Dharitri Aai” , “Aji Aai Asami” and “Godavari Nair Parare Para Asami Ailal Jasu Pranam” depict women as representations of the motherland. In these songs, women is shown as caring, brave and hopeful. She becomes a metaphor for national identity and cultural tradition, symbolizing unity and belonging.

Women in Romance and Desire :

Songs like “Shillongare Gadhuli”, “Gupute Gupute Kiman Khelim”, “Snehei Amar Shata Shrabanar, “Ki Je Tomar Sanga Priya”, and “Hu Hu Dhumuha Ahileu” focus on romantic emotions and desire. These compositions are generally narrated from a male perspective, where women appear as silent beloved figures. The male voice dominates the narrative, and women are mostly presented as objects of affection rather than independent speakers.

Women in Ecomusicology (Music, Culture and Nature) :

In songs such as “Kopili Kopili Rangdhali Sowali” women are closely connected with nature and rivers, symbolizing vitality and energy. Hazarika’s portrayal reflects Assamese folk tradition where women represent fertility, beauty and seasonal joy. Similarly, “Jonakore Rati Asomire Mati” celebrates the bond between the moonlit night and the land of Assam, showing his deep attachment to natural beauty and the motherland.

Conclusion :

The portrayal of women in the songs of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika is rich and multidimensional. Women appear as mothers, lovers, symbols of nation and objects of love and inspiration. His music creates a cultural space where nationalism, romance and gender ideas intersect. Through his compositions, he promoted equality, dignity and emotional freedom for women. His songs remain relevant because he expresses universal

values of human as well as women as person with respect and compassion. It is found in his many songs that although feminine element is present in women but there are common essence of person also present which stands for hope, endurance and social change. Thus, the study of women in Hazarika's songs is not only in artistic inquiry but also a reflection of his vision for a greater humane and just progressive society. In his lifelong activities and practices, we certainly acknowledged that Dr. Hazarika has successful to spread his vision and mission to establish human values in the human society.

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Forests and Our Future

Dr. Jayanta Borkakoti¹

Abstract :

Forests are foundational to planetary and human systems, psychological refuge and sustain critical ecosystem services-carbon storage, soil stabilization, water regulation, pollination, and flood mitigation-that underpin climate stability and human livelihoods. They harbor disproportionate terrestrial biodiversity and cultural values. They face accelerating loss from land use change and climate impacts. Fragmentation and degradation reduce these services and increase vulnerability to pests, fires, and extreme weather, creating feedbacks that accelerate loss and undermine resilience.

Keywords : Forest conservation, indigenous stewardship, reforestation, carbon sequestration, community governance.

Objective :

The current review synthesizes cultural, ecological, and policy perspectives to identify scalable, equitable pathways for forest conservation and restoration. It emphasizes integrating indigenous stewardship, secure tenure, sustainable economic incentives, and science based management to reconcile local rights with landscape scale goals.

Methods of Study :

We performed a qualitative synthesis of peer reviewed ecological studies, ethnographic accounts, policy analyses, and practitioner reports. Case studies spanning biomes, community forestry programs and governance models were analyzed for outcomes on carbon, biodiversity, and livelihoods. Triangulation of scientific metrics, community narratives,

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and policy documents identified recurring success mechanisms and barriers.

Introduction :

“The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.”

– John Muir

Forests are not just clusters of trees. They are living, breathing cathedrals of life, repositories of memory, and guardians of our collective future. To walk into a forest is to step into a story older than humanity itself. Each rustle of leaves, each birdcall, each shaft of sunlight filtering through the canopy is a reminder that we are part of something vast, intricate, and fragile. They are not only abstract ecological entities but they occupy deeply human spaces—places that shape our culture, our imagination, and our survival. The future of forests is inseparable from the future of humanity. To understand this, we must listen to the voices of poets, scientists, indigenous elders, and ordinary people who have found meaning beneath the trees.

The Human Bond with Forests :

Forests have always been more than resources. They are sanctuaries, teachers, and companions. Ancient civilizations revered them as sacred. In Hindu mythology, the forest is the setting for exile and transformation; in European folklore, it is the place of mystery and trial. In Japanese tradition, in Shinto belief, forests are sacred spaces where kami (spirits) dwell. Ancient groves often surround shrines, reminding people that divinity resides in nature itself. The practice of *shinrin-yoku* (forest bathing) continues this reverence, seeing forests as places of healing and renewal. In African folklore, forests are thresholds between the human and spirit worlds. They are places where hunters encounter trickster spirits, and where wisdom is tested. The *Yoruba* tradition often depicts forests as sites of initiation, where one must prove courage and humility. In Native American traditions, for many tribes, forests are living relatives. The *Lakota* speak of trees as “standing people,” emphasizing kinship rather than ownership. Forests are places of vision quests, where solitude among the trees opens pathways to spiritual insight. In Chinese philosophy, Daoist thought often associates forests with harmony and balance. The quiet of the woods reflects the Dao itself—natural order, simplicity, and flow. Poets like Wang Wei wrote of forests as places where one could “sit quietly and let the world return to stillness.” In

Nordic mythology, forests are wild and untamed, inhabited by trolls, elves, and spirits. They symbolize both danger and discovery, echoing the harsh landscapes of Scandinavia. To enter the forest was to confront the unknown, a test of resilience. In South American traditions, in the Amazon, indigenous peoples see the rainforest as a living library. Each plant and tree carries knowledge—medicine, food, or story. Shamans enter the forest not to conquer it but to listen, to learn from its voices.

“And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.”

– John Muir

This bond is not accidental. Forests provide us with oxygen, food, medicine, and shelter. Forests are home to over 80% of terrestrial biodiversity, including 80% of amphibians, 75% of birds and 68% of mammals (FAO, 2020). Deforestation of some tropical forests could lead to the loss of as many as 100 species a day. When we take away the forest, it is not just the trees that go. The entire ecosystem begins to fall apart, with dire consequences for all of us. Forests provide habitats for plants and animals, including some of our planet’s most iconic species like the tiger, giant panda, gorilla and orangutan.

But beyond the material, they offer psychological refuge. Studies show that spending time in forests reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and enhances creativity. The Japanese practice of *shinrin-yoku*, or “forest bathing,” is not about exercise but about immersion—letting the forest heal the mind. When we lose forests, we lose more than biodiversity. We lose a part of ourselves.

Forests as Climate Guardians :

It is estimated that forests store approximately 662 billion tonnes of carbon, which is more than the amount currently in the atmosphere (Bonan, 2008). Forest degradation and deforestation, however, release this stored carbon, contributing to global warming. It is impossible to speak of the future without speaking of climate change. Every tree is a quiet warrior, pulling carbon from the atmosphere and storing it safely. Forests are our greatest allies in this struggle. They absorb carbon dioxide, regulate rainfall, and stabilize soil. The Amazon rainforest alone produces 20% of the world’s oxygen. Yet, deforestation continues at alarming rates. According to the World Resources Institute, the planet lost 3.7 million hectares of tropical primary forest in 2023 alone (World Resources Institute, 2024). Each hectare lost is not just trees felled—it

is species extinguished, cultures disrupted, futures compromised. Habitat loss is one of the main causes of biodiversity loss, as land that once was forest is cleared for other uses. Forest-dwelling wildlife populations (which include mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians) have declined on average by 69% since 1970, with tropical forests such as the Amazon the worst hit.

“What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another.” – Mahatma Gandhi

Forests are the largest storehouses of carbon after the oceans, as they absorb this greenhouse gas from the air and lock it away above and below ground. So, it is no surprise that when we cut down or damage our forests, we release huge amounts of carbon emissions that contribute to the climate crisis.

But forests are also important as they can help protect people and nature from the consequences of a warming world. As the impacts of climate change - including floods and storms from rising sea levels and increased precipitation - become more frequent and severe, forests can provide a crucial buffer for our communities.

Extreme events caused by climate change, such as more frequent wildfires, limit the ability of our forests to regenerate. At the same time, deforestation contributes to climate change by increasing the risk of fires. The destruction of forests is not a distant tragedy. It is a direct threat to human survival. Climate change is making forests more vulnerable to fires, pests, and unpredictable weather. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and collapsing ecosystems are already reshaping agriculture, migration, and health. Forests are not optional- they are essential infrastructure for life. Stopping deforestation and restoring forests is a crucial part of climate action.

Guardians of the Green :

Deforestation is not an abstract statistic. It is the story of families displaced by landslides when hillsides are stripped bare. It is the fisherman who finds fewer catches because upstream forests no longer filter the rivers. It is the child who grows up in a hotter, harsher climate because the trees that once cooled the air have vanished. Forests are not barriers to development- they are its foundation. Without them, the very systems that support agriculture, industry, and human health begin to unravel. Indigenous communities see forests not just as resources, but

as sacred spaces tied to identity and tradition. Indigenous communities have long understood what modern societies are only beginning to grasp: forests are living relatives, not commodities. The Kayapo people of Brazil call the forest their “mother.” The Maori of New Zealand speak of trees as ancestors. By treating forests as kin, indigenous cultures have sustained them for millennia.

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.” – Native American proverb

When corporations and governments exploit forests for short-term gain, they ignore this wisdom. But increasingly, indigenous voices are being recognized as vital to conservation. Studies show that forests managed by indigenous communities have lower deforestation rates than those managed by state or private entities.

The future of forests may depend on whether we listen to these voices.

Forests in Literature and Imagination :

Forests are not only ecological but cultural landscapes. They have shaped our imagination. Shakespeare’s enchanted woods, Tolkien’s Fangorn Forest, and the Grimm Brothers’ dark woods all reflect humanity’s ambivalence: forests are places of danger and wonder, fear and renewal.

“The forest is not merely an expression or representation of nature, nor a place to escape from human life. It is itself a community of living beings, with its own rights and dignity.” – Richard Powers, *The Overstory*

Forests remind us of mystery. In an age of satellites and algorithms, they remain spaces where the unknown thrives. This mystery is not something to be conquered but cherished. It keeps us humble, reminding us that we are not masters of the earth but participants in its unfolding story.

The Economics of Forests : Beyond Timber

Too often, forests are reduced to economic assets-timber, paper, land for agriculture. But their true value is incalculable. The services they provide-carbon sequestration, water purification, pollination-are worth trillions annually. Nearly 1.6 billion people depend directly on forests for fuel, food, and income. Forests contribute to rural economies, infrastructure protection, and sustainable territorial development. From timber to medicinal plants, forests support millions of livelihoods.

The economist Herman Daly once said, “*The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment not the reverse.*” Forests are not external to the economy; they are its foundation. Without them, markets collapse, food systems falter, and societies unravel.

The challenge is to shift from extractive economics to regenerative economics. This means valuing forests not for what we can take but for what they give simply by existing.

Forests and Future Generations :

On a humid morning in Assam, a farmer pauses at the edge of his field. Beyond the crops lies a stretch of forest, dense and alive, where the calls of birds mix with the rustle of leaves. He knows the forest is more than scenery—it is the reason his soil holds moisture, the reason floods don’t wash away his livelihood, the reason his children breathe cleaner air. Yet he also knows that each year, the forest shrinks a little more. This paradox defines our age: forests sustain us, but development often consumes them. The bulldozer and the chainsaw arrive in the name of progress, while the quiet work of the forest—absorbing carbon, sheltering species, protecting water—goes unnoticed until it is gone.

The question of forests is ultimately a question of justice. What kind of world are we leaving for our children?

“*A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.*” – Greek proverb

Planting trees is not just an act of ecology; it is an act of faith. It is a declaration that the future matters. Across the world, movements like the Great Green Wall in Africa and massive reforestation projects in China and India are attempts to restore balance.

But planting trees is not enough if we continue to destroy mature forests. Young plantations cannot replace ancient ecosystems. Protecting what remains is as important as creating anew. Every hectare preserved is a buffer against floods, a shield against drought, a promise of cleaner air.

The Spiritual Dimension :

Forests are more than lungs of the planet—they are souls of the planet. Many spiritual traditions see forests as places of revelation. Buddha attained enlightenment beneath a tree. Christian hermits sought God in the wilderness.

“*Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world.*” – John Muir

In a fragmented, digital age, forests remind us of wholeness. They teach patience, resilience, and interconnectedness. A tree does not grow alone—it is part of a network, communicating through roots and fungi. This “wood wide web” is a metaphor for human society: we thrive when we are connected, when we support one another.

A Call to Action :

In the 1980s, Costa Rica had one of the highest deforestation rates in the world. Today, thanks to bold policies and Reforestation Revolution that paid landowners to protect and restore forests, the country has doubled its forest cover. Ecotourism now contributes significantly to its GDP, proving that conservation can fuel economic growth. Kenya’s Green Belt Movement Founded by Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai was a grassroots initiative which mobilized women to plant millions of trees. It not only restored degraded lands but also empowered communities, linking environmental health with social justice. Nepal’s Community Forestry Programs revealed how villages across Nepal managed their own forests under government-supported community forestry. Deforestation rates have dropped, biodiversity has flourished, and local livelihoods have improved. This model shows how giving communities ownership can align conservation with human welfare.

Brazil’s Amazon REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) Projects , Brazil and other forest nations receive financial incentives to keep forests standing (Angelson et al.,2018). These projects cover over a billion hectares globally, making them one of the largest climate mitigation strategies in practice.

Australia’s Great Western Woodlands Covering 16 million hectares, this is the largest intact temperate woodland on Earth. Conservation efforts here balance mining, tourism, and biodiversity protection, showing how even resource-rich regions can prioritize sustainability. Agroforestry refers to the intentional combination of trees and shrubs with crops and/or livestock within farming systems. This practice boosts agricultural productivity, enriches biodiversity, improves soil quality, and strengthens resilience to climate change, while easing the demand on natural forests. Approaches such as alley cropping, silvopasture, and household gardens supply food, fuelwood, and income, in addition to capturing carbon and safeguarding biodiversity (Jose,

2009). In India, agroforestry projects blend crops with tree planting, creating landscapes that feed families and restore biodiversity (Zhang et al., 2021). Renewable energy reduces the need for wood fuel, while agroforestry blends farming with tree planting.

Satellites and drones now monitor illegal logging, while AI helps predict forest fires before they spread.

The future of forests is not predetermined. It depends on choices we make today. The future of forests is being written right now. On one path lies degradation: deforestation for agriculture, logging, and urban expansion. This path leads to biodiversity loss, climate instability, and the disappearance of landscapes that have nurtured humanity for millennia. On the other path lies renewal: reforestation, sustainable management, and respect for indigenous knowledge. Restoration initiatives in Brazil's Atlantic Forest and India's degraded watershed landscapes have demonstrated notable improvements in ecosystem services, increased carbon storage, and strengthened climate resilience (Brancalion et al., 2019). Studies indicate that forest governance bodies with higher female representation tend to apply regulations more consistently and achieve stronger conservation outcomes (Sun et al., 2021). Promoting inclusive approaches that acknowledge the distinct roles and needs of women, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized communities is essential for ensuring both sustainability and fairness in forest management. This path envisions forests as thriving, resilient spaces that continue to sustain life.

Will we continue to see them as expendable, or will we recognize them as indispensable? The answer requires courage. It requires rethinking consumption, challenging corporations, and supporting conservation. It requires listening to indigenous wisdom, investing in sustainable economies, and cultivating reverence.

"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Each of us has a role-choosing products, policies, and practices that honor the forests we depend on. Whether by reducing paper waste, supporting reforestation, or simply spending time in nature, we can contribute. The forest does not ask for perfection-it asks for respect.

Our Shared Future :

The farmer in Assam, the activist in the Amazon, the women of Kenya-they are all telling us the same story: forests are life. To ignore

them is to gamble with our future. To protect them is to choose survival, dignity, and hope. When people plant a tree, they are planting hope. When children learn about forests, they inherit responsibility. When communities protect their local woodland, they are protecting their future. The story of forests is ultimately the story of us: our choices, our values, and our willingness to live in harmony with nature. Conservation isn't just science-it's emotion. It's the pride of a farmer who plants trees knowing his grandchildren will sit in their shade. It's the resilience of communities who rebuild after floods, realizing forests upstream could have softened the blow. It's the joy of a child spotting a bird that still has a home because a forest was spared.

If forests fall, so do we. But if we nurture them, they'll return the favor a thousand times over-with cleaner air, richer soil, and a more stable climate. Sustainable development is simply the recognition that our progress must walk hand in hand with nature. Forests are not just about trees. They are about us. They are about the stories we tell, the air we breathe, the future we imagine. To protect forests is to protect humanity.

The poet Wendell Berry wrote, "*The Earth is what we all have in common.*" Forests embody this truth. They are common ground, common heritage, and common responsibility. As we look to the future, let us remember: the fate of forests is the fate of humanity. If we allow them to vanish, we vanish with them. But if we nurture them, we nurture ourselves.

The forest is waiting. The question is whether we will answer.

Conclusion :

Protecting the world's forests requires a multifaceted strategy that prioritizes the conservation of intact ecosystems, empowers indigenous and local communities, and aligns economic incentives with long term ecological outcomes. Restoration and agroforestry are valuable but cannot replace the ecological services of mature forests. Technological monitoring and transparent financial mechanisms strengthen implementation, while cultural recognition fosters durable stewardship. Immediate policy shifts-legal recognition of community rights, targeted Payments for Ecosystems Services (PES) schemes, and strict protection of primary forests-offer the most direct path to preserving forest functions essential for climate stability and human well being.

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Challenges of Higher Education in India : An Overview

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Abstract :

Education is very necessary for human development. Education can help in national progress. An educated nation is a key sign of a developed nation. There are high literacy rates, widespread access to quality education. Higher education plays a vital role in shaping a nation's socio-economic and cultural progress. In India, the higher education sector has expanded rapidly since independence. India has to develop equality in education and research and innovative development at higher education. Indian's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students after China and United States. The advance development of science and information and communication technology deeply influenced every field of human life and society as a whole. India needs a strong higher education system to support innovation, economic growth and global competitiveness. This review article examines the challenges confronting Indian higher education and provides synthesis of scholarly literature, reports and policy analysis.

Keywords: Higher education, challenges, gross enrolment ration, suggestions.

Introduction :

Higher education is very important for economic and human development of a country. Indian higher education system plays a

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significant role in economic, social and human development of the country. Higher education in India is not just about earning degree -it is a foundation for creating skilled citizens, driving economic growth, strengthening democracy and ensuring sustainable national progress. Higher educational institutions contribute to technological advancements and new solutions for agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare and infrastructure. Graduates often start businesses, creating jobs and boosting GDP. Universities and colleges produce professionals in engineering, medicine, law, business, IT etc. who drive industries and services. Higher education links academics research with industry needs, making India competitive in global markets. Higher education provides practical knowledge and skills to the students for national development.

India's growing youth population can become a significant national asset if their potential is effectively harnessed. Only higher education can develop their potentialities. Before challenging the issues of higher education, we should focus on the primary education. Because primary education is the root of higher education, if the root is not strong enough than the higher education will suffer a lot. Poverty, inequalities and lack of resources are the common problem in education system. Higher education faced the problems like lack of higher education institutional, problem of quality education and geographical problem etc.

As higher education systems grow and diversify, society is coercively concerned about the quality programmes and international rankings of higher education (Younis Ahmad Shiekh, 2017). On account of times, India was perceived all over the world for its universities like Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila and its scholars. At present India has 1338 universities. The higher education system in India includes both public and private universities. Public universities are supported by government and private universities are supported by various bodies. In India universities are recognised by University Grand Commission (UGC).

Key issues and challenges :

India's present higher education system dealing with a number of issues. UGC is continuously working and focusing on quality education in higher education sector. Still facing lot of problems and challenges in higher education sector. The rapid expansion of higher education system in India has brought several pertinent issues. In the present scenario following are the main issues and challenges before Indian higher education.

- **Quality:** The higher education sector in India has expanded rapidly, but the growth has not always been matched by the growth still many colleges and universities lack proper accreditation, adequate infrastructure and qualified faculty, leading to uneven academic standards.
- **Faculty shortage:** A significant number of teaching positions remain vacant in both public and private institutions. Shortage faculty is a major problem in higher education.
- **Problems related to curriculum:** Many universities still follow traditional patterns of curriculum, which does not align with the evolving needs of the job market and does not develop creativity and employability.
- **Research and innovation:** Research in Indian higher education system always suffers due to lack of funding India's investment in research and innovation remain low compared to developed nations.
- **Inequitable access:** Students from rural areas, economically weaker backgrounds and marginalized communities continue to face barriers in accessing quality higher education.
- **Low employability:** Many graduates find it difficult to secure suitable employment because their education does not equip them with the skills required by industries.
- **Enrolment:** The Gross Enrolment Ratio of India in higher education is only 28.4% which is low as compared to other countries. Higher education institution is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.
- **Lack of value education:** India's higher education system facing the problem of decreasing value among the students. The teachers who are working in higher education institutions are with lack of value which bring down the quality of education.
- **Privatization:** Due to public private partnership a number of higher educational institutions are establishing over a period of time. Privatization in Higher education can lead to problems like-exploitation and lack of accountability and a shift in focus from public service to profit-making.
- **Quota system:** Quota system is not good for the quality of higher education. It is seen that quota system does not provide equal opportunities to all. Enrolment in higher education should be based on merit basis.

- **Inadequate infrastructure:** Most higher education institutions are not fully equipped with modern ICT tools, smart classrooms or speed connectivity essential for technology education.
- **Challenges of implementation of NEP 2020:** though NEP 2020 is visionary, its implementation across states and institutions has been uneven. Many colleges and universities lack clarity or proper guidelines to put reforms into action.

Recommendations and Suggestions :

- The government and institutions should invest in reliable internet connectivity, smart classrooms and e-learning facilities.
- Higher educational institution should encourage teachers and students for research and innovation and to use digital resources for research and innovation.
- Workshops and training programs should be organized to enhance digital skills among teachers and students for effective use of technology in higher education.
- Public-private colleges and universities should be free from political affiliations and the pursuit of profit inside the educational system.
- Universities and colleges should organize orientation programs, workshop, refresher course to enhance the professional skills and should points qualified personnel's and merit basis enrolment of the students for quality development in higher education.
- For improved GER government should established new colleges and universities to meet the needs of higher education and should introduce new courses to fulfil the needs of the students.
- The curriculum should be updated and practical. Curriculum must fulfil the present needs of the society.
- A clear implementation roadmap should be developed for all states and universities. Coordination among central and state bodies can ensure uniform progress in applying NEP reforms.
- Academic and administrative audit must be conducted once in three years in colleges by external experts for ensuring quality in all aspects of academic activities.

Conclusion :

Though Indian higher education system has been changed, but it is not sufficient. To make higher education in India more effective in the technological era, it is essential to build strong digital infrastructure. Higher

education in India holds immense potential for national development, but it continues to face several pertinent problems such as, poor quality standards, weak research culture and lack of modern infrastructure. To improve this sector, efforts must be made to update curricula, improve teachers' training, encourage research and innovation and expand digital learning opportunities with effective policies, Indian higher education can become more accessible, relevant and capable of meeting global standards.

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Education and Social Justice : A Study of Public Higher Educational Institutions in Assam

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Abstract:

Education is widely acknowledged as a critical instrument for achieving social justice by ensuring equitable access to opportunities and enabling social mobility. In India, public higher educational institutions are expected to play a transformative role in reducing socio-economic inequalities and upholding constitutional values of equality, inclusion, and fairness. Assam, a socio-culturally diverse and economically uneven state in Northeast India, presents a significant case for examining the intersection of education and social justice. This paper analyzes the role of public higher educational institutions in Assam in promoting social justice, with particular reference to access, equity, affirmative action, gender inclusion, and regional disparities. Using secondary data, policy documents, and institutional practices, the study highlights achievements, challenges, and future directions. The paper argues that strengthening public higher education is essential for advancing social justice in Assam.

Keywords : Education, Social Justice, Higher Education, Public Institutions, Assam, Equity.

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1. Introduction :

Education occupies a central place in discussions on social justice, development, and democratic citizenship. It is not merely a means of acquiring knowledge and skills but a powerful social institution capable of challenging historical inequalities and enabling inclusive growth. In modern welfare states, public education systems are expected to ensure that socio-economic background does not determine educational outcomes.

In India, the idea of social justice is deeply embedded in the constitutional framework. Articles 14, 15, 16, and 46 of the Constitution emphasize equality before law, non-discrimination, and the promotion of educational interests of socially and economically backward classes. Higher education, in particular, plays a decisive role in shaping leadership, professional opportunities, and social mobility.

Assam presents a unique and complex context for examining education and social justice. The state is characterized by ethnic diversity, significant tribal populations, tea garden communities, linguistic minorities, and large rural and flood-prone areas. Public higher educational institutions-state universities, central universities, and government colleges-have historically served as the primary avenues of higher learning for students from marginalized and first-generation learner backgrounds. This paper examines how these institutions contribute to social justice and the challenges they face in fulfilling this mandate.

2. Objectives of the Study :

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the conceptual relationship between education and social justice in the context of higher education.
- To analyze the role of public higher educational institutions in Assam in promoting access, equity, and inclusion.
- To assess Assam-specific socio-educational indicators relevant to social justice in higher education.
- To identify institutional mechanisms such as reservation, scholarships, and support cells that contribute to social justice.
- To highlight the key challenges faced by public higher educational institutions in Assam in realizing social justice.

- To suggest policy-oriented measures for strengthening the social justice role of higher education in the state.

3. Methodology :

The present study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design based on secondary data sources. The research relies on an analytical review of policy documents, government reports, academic literature, and institutional records related to higher education and social justice.

4. Sources of Data :

The study is based on secondary data collected from the following sources:

- Census of India (2011)
- All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)
- Reports of the Ministry of Education, Government of India
- Directorate of Higher Education (DHE), Assam
- Policy documents such as the National Education Policy (2020)
- Scholarly books, journal articles, and research papers on education and social justice

5. Method of Analysis:

The collected data have been analyzed using descriptive and interpretative methods. Socio-educational indicators of Assam are compared with national averages to understand relative disparities. Institutional practices and policy provisions are examined to assess their implications for social justice in higher education.

6. Scope and Limitations of the Study :

The scope of the study is limited to public higher educational institutions in Assam, including state universities, central universities, and government/provincialized colleges. As the study is based on secondary data, it does not include primary field surveys or interviews. However, the analysis provides a comprehensive policy-oriented understanding of education and social justice in the state.

7. Conceptual Framework: Education and Social Justice :

Social justice refers to fairness in the distribution of social, economic, and political resources. In education, social justice implies more than equal access; it encompasses equity, inclusion, recognition of diversity, and the creation of enabling conditions for success. According to Rawls (1971), social institutions should be organized in ways that benefit the least advantaged members of society.

Education contributes to social justice through :

- Equal and equitable access to learning opportunities
- Affirmative action for historically marginalized groups
- Inclusive curricula and pedagogy
- Support systems that address socio-economic disadvantages

Higher education holds special significance as it directly influences employment, income, and social status. When access to higher education is unequal, existing social hierarchies tend to be reproduced rather than transformed.

8. Socio-Educational Profile of Assam :

Assam’s socio-educational development reflects both progress and persistent disparities. While literacy rates have improved over time, higher education participation remains uneven across regions and social groups. Rural dominance, poverty, geographical isolation, and limited industrial development shape educational opportunities in the state. Public higher educational institutions play a crucial role in addressing these disparities by offering affordable education and implementing reservation and scholarship schemes.

Table I: Selected Socio-Educational Indicators of Assam

Indicator	Assam	India	Source
Literacy Rate (2011 Census)	72.19%	74.04%	Census of India, 2011
Female Literacy Rate	66.27	65.46	Census of India, 2011
GER in Higher Education (18–23 years)	~20%	~27%	AISHE 2021–22
Share of SC/ST Population	~35	~25%	Census of India, 2011
Number of State Universities	08	-----	DHE Assam
Number of Govt./Provincialised Colleges	300+	-----	DHE Assam

GER = Gross Enrolment Ratio

9. Public Higher Educational Institutions in Assam :

Public higher education in Assam comprises state universities, central universities, and government/provincialized colleges. Institutions such as Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University, Cotton University, Assam University, and Assam Women’s University play a central role in providing access to higher education. In recent past, the government upgraded many colleges to University like G.C University, Nowgong University etc.

Government colleges located in semi-urban and rural areas are particularly important for first-generation learners and students from economically weaker sections. These institutions act as social equalizers by reducing geographical and financial barriers to higher education.

10. Policy Framework Supporting Social Justice :

10.1 Constitutional and National Policies :

The Indian Constitution provides a strong foundation for social justice through reservation policies and protective discrimination. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 further emphasizes equity, inclusion, and the expansion of higher education access for underrepresented groups.

10.2 State-Level Governance :

The Assam State Higher Education Council and the Directorate of Higher Education are responsible for planning, coordination, and regulation of public higher education. Policy objectives include improving access, ensuring quality, and promoting social equity.

11. Institutional Mechanisms for Promoting Social Justice :

11.1 Reservation and Affirmative Action :

Reservation in admissions and faculty recruitment remains a key mechanism for addressing historical exclusion. Public institutions in Assam follow reservation norms for SC, ST, OBC, and other eligible categories.

11.2 Scholarships and Financial Assistance :

Scholarships, fee waivers, and stipends play a decisive role in enabling students from economically weaker backgrounds to continue higher education. For many students in Assam, such support determines retention and completion.

11.3 Equal Opportunity and Support Cells :

Universities have established Equal Opportunity Cells, grievance redressal mechanisms, and internal committees to address discrimination and provide academic and psychological support.

11.4 Gender Inclusion :

Assam Women's University represents a focused institutional response to gender disparities in higher education. Women's hostels, safety measures, and gender sensitization programs also contribute to inclusion.

12. Challenges to Social Justice in Higher Education :

Despite institutional efforts, several challenges persist:

- Regional disparities and poor connectivity in remote areas
- Shortage of permanent faculty and research infrastructure
- Economic barriers and hidden costs of education
- Language and cultural barriers for first-generation learners

- Gender-related mobility and safety concerns

These challenges disproportionately affect marginalized students, limiting the social justice impact of higher education.

13. Education, Employment, and Social Mobility :

Higher education is often viewed as a pathway to employment and social mobility. However, rising graduate unemployment and limited local opportunities in Assam weaken this link. The gap between educational expansion and employment generation raises concerns about the long-term social justice outcomes of higher education.

14. Discussion :

The analysis indicates that public higher educational institutions in Assam are structurally aligned with social justice objectives but face implementation and capacity constraints. Access alone is insufficient; quality education, academic support, and employability must be integral to the social justice agenda.

15. Conclusion :

Public higher educational institutions in Assam remain central to the pursuit of social justice. While significant progress has been made in expanding access and representation, persistent structural and socio-economic challenges limit transformative outcomes. Strengthening public institutions through adequate funding, quality enhancement, inclusive pedagogy, and effective governance is essential for realizing education as a true instrument of social justice in Assam.

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Revisiting Tiwa History in Rita Choudhury's novel *Deou Langkhui*

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Abstract :

Rita Choudhury's Sahitya Academy award winning Assamese novel *Deou Langkhui* (2005) is a magnum opus of her fictional works that creates a vivid picture of a medieval world. The novel belongs to the genre of historical fiction, where historical facts and flights of imagination meets and blends through the wizardry of words, art of storytelling and the writer's sense of minute observation of human relations and places of present middle Assam. It is a story of sacrifice, human relations, power and love and betrayal and conflicts. Through narration we are brought to the pages of medieval Tiwa history; the historical figures like Jongal Balahu, Arimatta, Gangawati, Chandraprabha and many others re-appear in flesh and blood, Gova king and his courts, *Pachurajas* and *Saturajas* and their courts come alive. This paper examines how Choudhury revisits Tiwa history by blending documented memory, oral-cultural traces, and imaginative reconstruction. It argues that the novel does more than narrate a romanticized past; it restores visibility to an indigenous polity, foregrounds Tiwa customs and social organization, and places women at the center of historical mediation. Drawing on literary analysis and historical-cultural scholarship on the Tiwa community, this study shows that *Deou Langkhui* functions as a counter-historical text: it challenges the marginalization of tribal histories in mainstream Assamese and

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Indian historiography while also demonstrating the interpretive freedom of the historical novel.

Keywords: *Tiwa Tribe, Ethno-history, Oral history, traditions, medieval world.*

1.0 Introduction :

Historical novel often emerges where archival silence and cultural memory interweave. In regions such as Northeast India, where many indigenous communities have been inadequately represented in mainstream national historiography, the literary text frequently becomes an alternative site for recovering the past. Rita Choudhury's *Deou Langkhui* (2005) is one such intervention. *Deou Langkhui* is a significant contribution to contemporary Assamese literature. It was awarded Sahitya Academy in 2008, recognizing its artistic excellence. The novel is considered as a magnum opus in the category of historical novel. It is remarkable for a number of themes maneuvered by the novelist skillfully, making her signature style of novel writing. The novel possesses the quality of a great work of art. *Deou Langkhui* is a novel of romance, sacrifice, warm human relations, power and politics, love and betrayal, of chivalry and valour and about reenactment of certain chapters and events of Tiwa history and historical personages. "The story is full of twists and turns and wheels with in wheels. Fathers do not hesitate to use their daughters to further their own interests, even spy for them. Naturally, this invariably ends in tragedies. There are shreds of Mahabharata, as when Sadhukumar decides-like Bhishma-to never father a child or Mriganka kills his father and Jokanka kills his brother-neither of them knowing the relationships" (Krishna, 2024). The Tiwa tribe, also known as Lalung, is an indigenous group concentrated mainly in Assam and Meghalaya. Recent scholarship describes the community as possessing a rich cultural heritage, a distinct language of the Tibeto-Burman family, and a long oral tradition that carries myths, legends, songs, and historical memory. It is noteworthy for the topographic division between Plains Tiwas and Hill Tiwas and the pressures of assimilation that threaten distinct identity and language. Against this background, *Deou Langkhui* becomes especially important because it converts scattered cultural memory into a sustained narrative about polity, migration, kinship, gender, and resistance. This paper studies how Choudhury revisits Tiwa history in *Deou Langkhui*. The central argument is that the novel does not merely reproduce a heroic past;

rather, it reclaims Tiwa history by linking political events with everyday cultural practices and by re-centering indigenous memory within Assamese literary discourse.

2.0 Objectives of the Study :

This paper studies how the novelist frames the story against the backdrop of medieval history of Tiwa society. Firstly, it attempts to examine how *Deou Langkhui* reconstructs Tiwa history through the form of historical fiction. Secondly, it studies the role of female subjectivity, especially through the figure of Chandraprabha/Konchari, in mediating historical transition. Thirdly, it tries to assess on the art of Rita Choudhury in bringing back the past and the representation of life and culture of the Tiwa royal families and common people of that time. Finally, it evaluates the significance and limitations of the novel as a literary mode of revisiting sub-regional and indigenous history.

3.0 Materials and Method of Study:

This study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The main material is the text of the novel and various secondary sources pertaining to the Tiwa tribe. This paper is a qualitative study exploring the novelist's art of story-telling and of artistic oeuvre dealing with historical resources. The method combines close reading with contextual interpretation. Historical fiction is treated here not as a transparent record of the past but as a narrative form that draws on evidence, memory, and imagination simultaneously. The novel *Deou Langkhui* has been specifically described by critics as a historical novel that presents Tiwa society and culture while creatively reshaping historical characters and events.

4.0 Discussion and Analysis:

The phrase "revisiting history" implies more than returning to an already known past. In *Deou Langkhui*, revisiting means reinterpreting history through indigenous visibility. Choudhury's novel participates in what may be called literary historiographic correction. It does not deny the larger historical narratives of Assam, but it insists that those narratives remain incomplete unless they include communities like the Tiwas. The novel is also significant for the way it imagines regional history as relational rather than isolated. Tiwa community in the text is connected to broader political structures, yet it retains cultural distinctiveness. This relationality prevents both romantic isolation and

homogenizing assimilation. The novelist presents the Tiwas as historically entangled and culturally specific at the same time. A further strength of the novel lies in its resistance to the archival monopoly over the past. For many indigenous communities, history survives in collective memory, ritual performance, and oral storytelling. By converting these into literary narrative, Choudhury legitimizes subaltern memory as a source of historical imagination. At the same time, the novel must be read critically. As with all historical fiction, it is shaped by selection, emphasis, and aesthetic design. It cannot be taken as direct historical evidence in every detail. Yet this limitation does not diminish its value. Rather, it clarifies the novel's role: it opens questions, recovers textures, and humanizes the past.

4.1 *Deou Langkhui* as a Historical Novel:

Deou Langkhui is written in the tradition of historical novel. "A historical novel is a novel that has its setting a period of history and that attempts to convey the spirit, manners and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity to historical fact. The work may deal with actual historical personages or it may contain a mixture of fictional and historical characters. It may focus on a single historical event...More often it attempts to portray a broader view of a past society in which the great events are reflected by their impact on the private lives of fictional individuals" (Britannica). "The historical novel not only takes its setting and some characters and events from history, but makes the historical events and issues crucial for the central characters (who may themselves be historical personages) and for the course of the narrative" (Abrams, p. 256). As a historical novel, it is concerned with the several historical prominent personages of mediaeval world of middle Assam. The blurb of the book reads out in the following way: "*Deou Langkhui* is the latest novel of Rita Choudhury. The novel is an outstanding and successful creation by the mature hands of a skillful artist. Jongal Balahu is the shining star of a glaring chapter of history. Jongal Balahu: the heroic personage of Tiwa community. Life and lore of Jongal Balahu is the foundation of the novel. With the help of historical resources, the author has highlighted life and society through the family lineage of Tiwa community, it presents the various characters like Pratapsingha-Chandraprabha, Arimatta-Gangawati, Ratnasigha-Lakhaitora, Jongal Balahu-Xukumola etc through the artistic blend of

reality and imagination.” The writer has taken several historical personages from the history of Tiwa kingdoms of middle Assam. The historical personages of Tiwa kingdoms like Jongal Balabu, Arimatta, Gangawati are set against certain characters which are creations of the author’s imagination.

Through the art of enchanted story telling and wizardry of words and description, the novelist has been successful in presenting the historical figures of middle ages and makes them reappear before us in flesh and blood and with genuine human emotions. The destiny of the historical personages, their war, aggression, love and hatred, their cordial relations are reenacted before us. The Tiwa kingdoms and their kings, other dignitaries are realistically represented in the novel. The names of Tiwa kingdoms are still common names of areas, places, locations in current middle Assam. Any one visiting middle Assam, the Morigaon, Nagaon district, will find the places still surviving with its historical name. The nominal kings of those kingdoms and their lineage are found in the regions. The novel *Deou Langkhui* is set in those historical places of Gova, Nelie, Khola, Kumoi, Baghara, Raha, Dimorowa etc. The biggest kingdom of Tiwa kings was Gova kingdom. The other kingdoms of the Tiwas were patronized by the Gova kings. The novel has reference to rivers of Kolong, Kopili and Brahmaputra, to different *Thaans* like *Basundari Thaan*, where Jakanka worshipped Kali and attained the divine sword by him.

4.2 Oral Tradition and History in *Deou Lankhui* :

It is noteworthy that the novel relies heavily on oral traditions and folklore of the Tiwa people. The Tiwa people have no comprehensive written history. There are references and short quotes in the canonical history books, which is factually incomplete. Due to absence of such authoritative history texts, the historical figures and personages have been surviving in the oral tradition of knowledge. There are historical and archeological sites of evidences like Jongal Balahu Gar (fort) at Raha, Nagaon, Basundhari Thaan, Mahadeo shal at Bagoriguri, remnants of Gobha kingdom, findings of remnants at Bondora, Nagaon which are signs of Tiwa historical facts. The novelist has admitted the fact that she has relied on oral history for materials in writing the novel. In the Preface to the novel, she stated that she got several versions of legends around Jongal Balahu. She finds it difficult to handle in writing about Jonagal Balahu, who is considered to be a towering historical figure

because of inconsistency and variation of facts. However, due to absence of canonical history of the Tiwa people, the oral tradition and history has given her ample liberty to reconstruct the stories of the legendary heroes. Thus, in *Deou Langkhui*, the characters are historical personages who are framed in to different story backgrounds through the imagination of the artist.

4.3 Representation of Tiwa Customs, Beliefs and Traditions in *Deou Langkhui* :

The novel *Deou Langkhui* has presented an exquisite picture of medieval Tiwa society. There is a realistic picture of various traditions, customs and rituals of the Tiwa community. Through out the novel, the novelist has very carefully and skillfully used Tiwa terms to make the characters appear feasible and convincing. So many Tiwa language terms have been used: *aabi, aayong, panthai, Fa Mahadeo, namaji, kachong, phaskai, phuja, shamadi, deoraja, pangchi, khamri, sarla, nanau, mekod, juu or suu, thenas, tagla, kora* etc The socio-cultural aspects of Tiwa community of that time was given ample space in the story. There are very realistic accounts of social system of the Tiwa community by describing the functions of dormitory system. The various portfolios of the *Shamadi* and their role are narrated beautifully. *Shamadi* in Tiwa community is a very important institution for the youths. The young boys of the village above 10 years of old need to compulsorily spend the night in the dormitory. It is a rich tradition of the community. There are various portfolios like *Changdolo, Changmaji, Huruma, Karaimaji*, who are responsible for the management and administration of the dormitory. It is an institution where the young boys are taught and trained in different fields of knowledge, practical utility. They boys are given ample scope for development of their personality. In fact, the young boys get opportunities for internalization of their cultural traits. They learn from the seniors social behavior, etiquettes, discipline and cultural ethos. They are also given training on practical trades of defence and warfare, team and leadership, training on playing different kinds of musical instruments like *khrum, khrumbar, khrumpanthai, tunding-tagor, panchi, thurang, sharangkat* etc, making handicrafts and artifacts and also making house. In *Deou Langkhui*, the author has beautifully described functions of *Shamadi* and therole of young boys. The entire chapter 12 is dedicated to the description of *Shamadi* and the *panthais* of the institution. Here a

detailed description is given of the institution in connection with Arimatta. How the *panthais* spend the nights at the dormitory, what they do, in describing these, the author highlights various customs, traditions and rituals of the institution. We are here informed that a Tiwa boy attaining 10 years of age is suitable to become member of the dormitory, it is mandatory for every parents must send their ward to attend dormitory functions, how the Dormitory building repairs every six years and coincided by the observance of *Wansuwa* or *Khelsawa* festival, how the new construction of *Shamadi* building happens every twelve years and is coincided by the new formation of executive body of portfolios, the rituals of new construction of the building, category of *panthais*, the lively discussion among the boys of dormitory—all these are described beautifully. Arimatta himself attended the dormitory when he attains the age of 10 and rose to the position of Changdolo, the highest and respected portfolio of the youth dormitory institution. The narrator describes the impact of dormitory on him in the following way: “After attending *Shamadi*, Arimatta has slowly forgotten the pangs of separation from his mother and home. The functions, activity, business, training of the dormitory have transformed the naïve boy in to an independent, well-built, courageous, active and skillful warrior.” (Deou Langkhui, p. 121).

There is a realistic description of *Nobar* and its rites and rituals. In Tiwa community, *Nobar* is the centre of worship of a clan. Every clan in a village has a *Nobar*. A lot of description on the rituals of *Nobar* is found in the novel. Functions of *Nobar* institution and *Harikowori*, the female priest of a clan are presented so realistically that these activities of the characters seem to be the behavior of very real human beings. The reference to and descriptions of various rituals, festivals and dances of the tribe like Jonkong Puja, *Wansuwa*, *Manshaw Puja* and the description of buffalo fight and *Jonbeel Mela* and its barter system in the Gova kingdom, which is a symbol of exchange of materials and hearts between upper and lower Assam, between people of hills and plains in the novel has added and strengthened the historical basis of the novel.

4.4 Artistic Representation of Historical Facts and Personages :

Deou Langkhui is not a history book, it is a work of art. The writer has skillfully used the historical resources and represented them in the novel realistically. Through the poetic style of narration, appropriate

use of words, the imaginative power of an artist, the dead lifeless historical figures reappear before us. In the hands of the novelist, the historical figures get new life and vigour. Characters like Sadhukumar, Chandraprabha, Sonjira, Jakanka, Arimatta become immortal characters of fiction. The character of Chandraprabha who later becomes Konchari is a beautiful creation of the novelist. The portrayal of Konchari is exquisitely striking for the readers. Her life and struggle is a dominant score of the novel. Chandraprabha was the queen of Pratapsingha who banished her because she made merriment with the king of Gova at the Jonbeel Mela. By doing this, king Pratapsingha shows the authoritarian side, while the Gova king Sadhukumar shows his chivalric quality by accepting Chandraprabha as one of the members of his kingdom. The noble quality of Gova king is expressed. In the Gova kingdom, Chandraprabha makes herself acquainted with the customs and traditions of the Tiwa people there. Even she changes her identity. She assumes new identity and becomes Konchari. It reveals her strength that a woman is not weak and can become courageous if the situation demands. It expresses her rebellion against the dominance of males over female. One of the most striking aspects of the novel is that it has broken the common idea that a king always hankers after beautiful women. The Gova king Sadhukumar does a noble deed by giving shelter to Chandraprabha, not on his bed, but in the temple of his mind as a goddess. He is an exceptional portrayal who has boundless respect for women. In contrast to him, king Pratapsingha represents the opposite. Pratapsingha shows the lewd quality of a royal personage. For him, beauty is all. But he is an exploiter, nor a worshipper of beauty. He discarded his wife, while she expresses herself as a bird being free from a cage.

4.5 Reclaiming a Marginalized Regional Past :

One of the most significant achievements of *Deou Langkhui* is its recovery of Tiwa-centered history from the margins. Canonical political histories of Assam have often privileged larger kingdoms, imperial conflicts, and elite chronicles. By contrast, Choudhury turns to the Tiwa world and to connected regional polities, thereby shifting the historical gaze from the center to the periphery. Critics of *Deou Langkhui* agree that the novel is based on the Tiwas of Assam and reflects both historical characters and Tiwa society in a creative framework. This shift is not merely thematic, it is ideological. By narrating history from a Tiwa

cultural perspective, the novel resists the erasure of indigenous political agency. The Tiwas are not shown as passive tribal subjects standing outside history; they emerge as participants in statecraft, kinship alliances, warfare, diplomacy, and cultural continuity. In that sense, the novel revises the common assumption that “tribal” life is static and ahistorical.

4.6 History through Culture, not only through Events:

One of the most important dimensions of the novel’s historical method is its reliance on cultural representation. The Tiwa community has a rich heritage of language, oral literature, festivals, ritual practices, and social organization. Recent scholarship emphasizes that oral literature among the Tiwas functions as a repository of historical memory and cultural norms. The novel epitomizes this logic by embedding history in daily life: clothing, ornaments, names, customs, and gestures become historical signs. The critical study on Tiwa costumes in the novel is revealing here. It notes that Choudhury foregrounds Tiwa attire as an index of identity and specifically connects Chandraprabha’s transformation into Konchari with her adoption of Tiwa dress and culture. This is not a decorative detail. The novel suggests that history is lived through embodiment. To wear Tiwa attire, speak Tiwa-inflected speech, and inhabit Tiwa customs is to enter another historical consciousness. Thus, Choudhury moves beyond event-based historiography. Battles, rulers, and successions are important, but they do not exhaust the past. The past also resides in textile patterns, domestic rituals, oral exchanges, and the social codes that bind a community together. The novel’s contribution lies in making such elements narratively central.

4.7 The Female Figure as Mediator of History:

The character of Chandraprabha, who later becomes Konchari, is central to the novel’s re-reading of history. She has been regarded as the banished queen who enters the Gova kingdom and gradually becomes part of Tiwa society. Through this transformation, Choudhury assigns a woman the role of historical mediator. Rather than treating women as passive adjuncts to dynastic history, the novel places feminine experience at the center of cultural transition. This is particularly important in the context of indigenous and regional historiography, where elite male rulers often dominate narrative attention. Chandraprabha/Konchari becomes the bridge between courtly history

and community history, between exile and belonging, between political dislocation and cultural rebirth. Her journey symbolizes how history is not only inherited but also inhabited, negotiated, and remade. The feminist dimension of this novel deserves attention. Konchari does not merely assimilate; she interprets, survives, and participates in the making of a new social world. Through her, Choudhury suggests that women are keepers of memory, agents of cultural transmission, and witnesses to political violence. The revisiting of Tiwa history is therefore also a revision of gendered historical narrative.

4.8 Oral Memory and the Ethics of Imagination :

The Tiwa community's oral traditions remain crucial to any reconstruction of their past. The Tiwa literature has historically been oral and includes myths, legends, narratives, songs, chants and proverbs. In a context where written documents may be limited, the historical novel must work in the zone between evidence and memory. *Deou Langkhui* appears to inhabit precisely this zone. This raises an important question: does the use of imagination weaken historical value? The answer, in the case of Choudhury's novel, is no. Historical fiction does not replace professional historiography, but it can reveal affective, cultural, and symbolic truths that conventional archives do not preserve. The novelist presents historical characters through an admixture of history and imagination. That mixture is not a flaw but the enabling condition of the genre. By giving shape to oral memory and cultural residue, the novel performs an ethical act of remembrance. It acknowledges that communities such as the Tiwas deserve narrative depth even when complete documentary certainty is unavailable.

4.9 Identity, Assimilation, and Cultural Survival :

Another important argument in the novel is the question of identity under circumstances of assimilation. Contemporary scholarship on the Tiwa tribe is that the community has experienced strong cultural influence from neighboring Assamese, Khasi, and Karbi populations, and that such pressures may threaten Tiwa language and identity. When read against this background, *Deou Langkhui* becomes not only a historical novel but also a cultural preservationist text. Its detailed attention to customs, dress, kinship, and names may be read as an attempt to archive Tiwa identity in literary form. The novel reclaims a past not simply for nostalgia but for continuity. It asks readers to see

Tiwa culture as foundational to the region's history rather than peripheral to it. In doing so, it contributes to a larger Assamese and north-eastern discourse on plural heritage.

5.0 Major Findings :

The study yields five main findings. Firstly, the novel re-centers Tiwa history within Assamese literary consciousness by making an indigenous polity and culture the basis of a major historical novel. Secondly, Rita Choudhury reconstructs history through cultural signs such as costumes, rites and rituals, language, and community oral memory, not merely through political chronology. Thirdly, the transformation of Chandraprabha into Konchari shows that women play roles as powerful mediators of historical transition and cultural belonging. Fourthly, the novel gains deeper significance when read against current scholarly concerns about Tiwa language endangerment, assimilation, and preservation of cultural heritage. Fifthly, the text demonstrates that historical novel can become an alternative archive for communities inadequately represented in canonical historiography.

6.0 Conclusion :

Rita Choudhury's *Deou Langkhui* is an important literary re-engagement with Tiwa history. By blending historical elements with cultural memory and imaginative narration, the novel restores dignity and depth to a community often sidelined in the mainstream historical accounts of Assam. Its representation of Tiwa customs, oral-cultural atmosphere, and female-centered historical transition turns the text into more than a conventional historical romance. It becomes a mode of historical recovery. The novel's larger achievement lies in its insistence that regional and indigenous histories matter. To revisit Tiwa history in *Deou Langkhui* is to challenge historical forgetting, to validate community oral and cultural memory, and to recognize literature as a serious participant in the making of historical consciousness. For readers of Assamese literature, tribal studies, and Northeast Indian history, the novel remains a compelling example of how fictional works can preserve what formal historiography has often left fragmented. Through the lens of an artist, the novelist has been able to bring the Tiwa historical personages and sets them against new characters and new sets of events. The writer has shown dexterity in the portrayal of these characters, their actions, inner conflicts, interests and relations. It also expresses

deeper insights on Tiwa customs, traditions, rituals, some aspects of the then Gova kingdom, Khola kingdom and other petty kingdoms of middle Assam. *Deou Langkhui* is an important work of literature where some aspects of Tiwa history and flights of imagination meets and blends to become an art of excellence.

Glossary of Tiwa Terms :

Shamadi : The Institution of Youth Dormitory

Panthais : Tiwa Youths

Khrum : Drum

Khrumbar : Big Drum

Khrumpanthai : Small Drum

Tumding-tagor : A unique musical instrument

Pangsi : Small Flute

Thurang : Bigger flute

Sharangkat : a stringed musical instrument

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Ideas of Green Economy in Kautilya's *Arthasastra*

Dr. Chandan Sharma¹

Abstract :

Environmental issues are becoming acute across the globe day by day due to reckless economic growth. For improving the living standard of the people utilization of natural resources is must, but at the same time emphasis is necessary to be given on sustainable utilization of those resources. In this line the concept of green economy arises. Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, composed in 3rd century BCE contains strong ideas that align with the modern concept of green economy i.e, economic growth that is environmentally sustainable and socially responsible. Kautilya argued that the strength of a country comes from the state treasury. To sustain a country as prosperous one, efforts must be made to enrich the treasury by rationally utilizing its resources. The *Arthasastra* emphasizes on economic development that balances state power, prosperity, and environmental care. To achieve this objective Kautilya assigned state responsibility and individual duties towards nature with rewards and punishments.

Keywords : Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, Green Economy sustainable development.

1. Introduction :

Environmental degradation is the greatest challenge faced by the planet today. In the race of attaining economic growth countries often compromises with ecological balances. The degradation of environmental quality severely affects livelihood opportunities and

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quality of life of the people who depend directly on nature for their survival. It enhances social inequality. To overcome the persistent environmental degradation and social inequality, the concept of green economy is drawing attention in recent time. Green economy is an economic model which is framed taking into consideration of environmental protection, ecological balance and social inclusion. The model emphasizes on reducing carbon emission, enhancing resource efficiency and ensuring social inclusion. The UNEP, Green Economy Reports defines green economy as '*A green economy is one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcity*'. The green economy approach encourages economic activities to be more sustainable to ensure the continuity of natural resources for future. Green economy is based on mainly in five principles-wellbeing, justice and good governance, poverty eradication, energy-efficiency and low carbon development. To achieve the objectives of green economy, initiatives and policies that promote sustainable agriculture, use of renewable energy, sustainable forestry, eco-tourism, developing environment friendly infrastructure etc. are required to be encouraged.

2. Statement of the Problem :

Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, composed in 3rd century BCE contains strong ideas that align with the modern concept of green economy i.e, economic growth that is environmentally sustainable and socially responsible. Kautilya argued that the strength of a country comes from the state treasury. To sustain a country as prosperous one, efforts must be made to enrich the treasury by rationally utilizing its resources. According to Kautilya, the economy is constituted with three components-agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade (1.4.10). These sectors yield grains, cattle, money, forest produce, raw material to industries etc. which fills the treasury of the state as well as contributes to economic condition of the people. It should be the economic objective of everybody to acquire things not possessed, the preservation of things that possessed, augmenting the things which are preserved and bestowing the augmented things to an eligible worthy person. The earning and augmentation of wealth should be done by following the path of *Dharma* i.e, without involving any unethical activity or damaging the environment. For Kautilya the path of *Dharma* is not granted, people

have always the tendency of overexploiting the nature or involving in deceitful means to acquire the wealth. So, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* deals with strict rules and regulations to be followed, prescribes various penalties to be imposed in case of violation of norms, forest rights to be assigned to forest dwellers, animal rights etc. Therefore, the proper assessment of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* would guide the policy makers towards attaining the goal of green economy.

3. Literature Review :

R. P. Kangle (1972) in his book '*The Kautiliya Arthashastra*' provides essential textual data used in eco-interpretations which are found in Kautilya's book. L. N. Rangarajan (1992) in the work '*Arthashastra Annotated Edition*' highlights administrative mechanisms, including those governing forests and irrigation, without explicit "green" framing, yet offers material for environmental readings. Sharma and Agarwal (2008) in the study '*Environment and Ecology in Arthashastra*' argue that Kautilya's prescriptions on forests, wildlife, and water ecosystems suggest an understanding of ecological balance. Those policies align with modern environmental regulations and sustainability. Chaudhuri (2015) in the book '*Green Economics in Classical India*' places Arthashastra in global environmental history, arguing that Kautilya was not merely exploitative but envisioned regulated economic activities to avoid depletion of natural resources. Mishra (2017) in his study '*Sustainable Development in Ancient Indian Thought*' interprets Arthashastra's focus on long-term state welfare as implicit concern for resource sustainability, equating this with contemporary green economy goals. Banerjee (2012) in the book '*Limits of Environmentality in Arthashastra*' suggests that ecological rules are pragmatic administrative tactics rather than ethical environmentalism. The motive is sustained revenue and power, not intrinsic ecological values. Saxena (2019) in the study '*Critical Approach to Environmental Interpretations*' argues that Kautilya's primary objective was state prosperity and security, with ecological measures instrumental to these ends.

From reviewing the available literature it becomes clear that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* contains ideas of green economy.

4. Objectives :

The objectives of this study are—

- (a) To explore the ideas of green economy in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

- (b) To examine the relevance of those ideas in the context of present economic growth models.

5. Methodology :

The paper is basically an analytical paper. The original text of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is analyzed to derive ideas of green economy.

6. Discussion :

6.1. Sustainable Use of Natural Resources :

Kautilya emphasizes careful and regulated exploitation of nature rather than reckless extraction.

- **Sustainable Use:** The *Arthashastra* advocates that forests, mines, land, and water bodies were to be used without exhausting them. All these are the sources of revenue to state treasury. The king should appoint Director of Forest Produce whose responsibility would be to start factories for forest produce, for ensuring livelihood of the people and protection of the city.
- **Strict Supervision:** Overexploitation was discouraged through state supervision. In the chapter two of *Arthashastra* Kautilya has described about the appointment of 36 heads of departments and their duties and functions. All of them should work with the prime objective of increasing welfare of the people and sustainable development of the country. There is the department of Inspection of the Work of Officers who would strictly supervise each department whether they were functioning in accordance with the said objective or not. Kautilya mentioned about specific punishment for violation of each rule.
- **Think for Future:** The person who lives on selling meat of wild animals must follow the rule of releasing one-sixth part of birds and deer that were captured again in the sanctuary.

6.2. Forest Conservation and Biodiversity Protection :

Kautilya had put forwarded a comprehensive approach which included forest conservation, protection of biodiversity and sustainable use of forest resources to enrich the state treasury. This can be called as green approach to forest management. For management of the forest, Kautilya assigned the major responsibility on Kings and prescribed norms to be followed at individual level. He prescribed a separate government department and appointment of *Kupyadhyaksa* (superintendent of forest) to monitor the forest life and rational utilization of forest produce. In the section 2.2.1 of *Arthashastra*, Kautilya

assigned responsibility on the king to convert the land unsuitable for agriculture into forest and allot a part of such land to pastures for cattle. The *Arthashastra* classifies forests into different categories:

- **Protected Forests for wildlife:** The king should either protect the existing forest or create new forests in conformity of suitability of the land for animals with full protection. Hunting in protected forests was penalized, and certain animals, particularly elephants, were explicitly safeguarded.
- **Economic Forests:** To acquire timber and other forest produce, the king should establish forests, one each for the products indicated as forest produce. To ascertain economic benefit from the forest factories for goods made from forest produce must be attached to the forest.
- **Sacred Forests:** The king should grant non-agricultural land to the extent of one *goruta* (approximately 6 kilometers) to ascetics wilderness for Veda-study and *soma* sacrifices, with safely promised to everything immovable and moveable in them (Chande, 2004, p.118). In such forests access to forest produce are restricted.
- **Amusement Park:** For the king's recreation, an animal park to the extent of one *goruta*, must be developed, with a single entrance, protected by a moat, containing shrubs and bushes bearing sweet fruits, having trees without thorns, with shallow pools of water and stocked with tamed deer and other animals, containing wild animals with their claws and teeth removed and having male and female elephants and cubs useful for hunting (ibid).
- **Penalty for Damaging Biodiversity:** To conserve the biodiversity, the *Arthashastra* (section 3.19) has prescribed severe penalties on the person who harm animals and destroy the forests. For hurting small animals with wooden sticks or other things, the fine shall be one or two *panas*, in case of causing bleeding the fine will be double. If same offence is done to big animals, the fine would be double and also expenses must be born for treatment and cure. There is also prohibition of damaging public parks and forests. There would be fine of six *panas* for cutting shoots, twelve *panas* for cutting small branches, twenty-four *panas* for cutting big branches of trees in city parks that bear flower or fruit or provide shadow. If one uproots the tree he would face middle fine. The same amount of fine would be

imposed in case of bushes and creepers; trees in holy places, penance-groves and cremation places. The double amount of fine would apply if one damage trees in sanctuaries. Nobody should obstruct the animal corridor, violation of that would invite penalty. There would be fine of twelve *panas* for obstructing passages used by small animals, twenty-four *panas* in case of big animals and fifty-four *panas* for obstructing elephant corridor (3.10.5).

6.3. Water Management and Conservation :

Water was considered in *Arthashastra* a strategic and ecological asset. It is strategic as agricultural produce depends on the availability of water. The state treasury fills mainly from agriculture. It is also the means of transportation on which trade depends. Water is the source ecological balance.

- **State Responsibility:** It is the primary duty of the king to undertake construction and maintenance of canals, reservoirs, tanks, and embankments to meet the water requirements of the people for sustenance as well as for fulfilling the need of agriculture. More irrigation work would reduce the dependance on monsoons and ensure sustained revenue to state treasury. The king should establish water-routes and ports (2.1.19). At the same time, the king should give priority of protecting irrigation works that were made in earlier times.
- **Priority to irrigation for agriculture:** The king should cause irrigation works to be undertaken on natural water sources (*Sahodaka setu*) or with water to be brought in from elsewhere artificially (*Aharyodaka Setu*). If people undertake the same work in their own effort, the king should reward them by rendering aid with land, road, trees and implements, and to holy places and parks. If one run away from the responsibility of joint building of irrigation work, his labourers and bullocks should be used forcefully in the work. He should bear the share of expenses but would not receive any share of produce.
- **Rewards and Penalties:** The *Arthashastra* mentions about rewards for construction and conservation of water bodies. There is tax exemption of 5 years to a person who construct of a new tank and 4 years for cleaning or improving old one. There is strict penalties for damaging water infrastructure and polluting water bodies.

6.4. Environmentally Responsible Agriculture :

The *Arthashastra* considers the agriculture as the backbone of the economy, and so recommends the encouragement of agricultural activities. But at the same time it also cautions that the agricultural activities should be done with ecological sensitivity:

- **Encouragement of Agriculture:** For utilization of lands to agriculture, Kautilya suggests that the kings should cause villages to be settled consisting mostly of Sudra agriculturists, with a minimum of one hundred families to a maximum limit of five hundred families. He should allot arable fields for lifetime to taxpayers. Unarable fields should not be taken away from those people who make them arable. But he should take away fields from those who do not till them and those lands should be granted to others like village servants and traders for tilling. He should favour them with grains, cattle and money.
- **Appointment of *Sitadhakhyā*:** The king would appoint *Sitadhakhyā* (director of agriculture) to ensure the sustained agricultural activities. He should possess the knowledge of *Krishi-sastra* (book of agricultural practice), *Sultha* (ground-water science) and *Vrikhayurveda* (science of plant rearing). He should collect and preserve the seeds of all kinds of grains, flowers, fruits, vegetables, roots, stems, flax and cotton to be distributed among farmers in proper time.
- **Crop Rotation and Seasonal Planning:** Kautilya advises the rotation of crops to regain the fertility of the soil. Depending upon the rainfall and availability of water, the farmers should plan which type of farming to be undertaken.
- **State support during Calamities:** During the time of natural calamities like droughts and floods, or in famines, the state should provide seeds, implements and cattle to farmers. In such situation the king should lower the tax on farmers.
- **Protection of farmers from exploitation:** Kautilya suggests the king at any cost must protect the farmers from all kinds of exploitation. In the time of harvesting, the state should procure agricultural produces directly from the fields to protect the income of the farmers. Similarly, nobody should divert the flow of water

meant to agricultural purposes. The state should protect the attack on agriculture by wild animal on priority basis.

6.5: Pollution Control and Urban Environmental Rules :

To keep the environment free from pollution Kautilya prescribed strict penalties for doing foul deeds like dumping waste in public places or in neighbor's house, polluting water bodies, disposal of dead animals on streets etc.:

- **Dumping waste in public places:** The citizens should not pollute public places. Household wastes should not be disposed in public places. If one violates this, he would invite penalty which is prescribed in *Arthashastra*.
- **Throwing Waste in Neighbor's House:** For one throwing into another's house an object causing hurt the fine shall be twelve *panas*, an object dangerous to life the lowest fine for violence (Chande, 2004, p.249).
- **Construction Rules:** Kautilya was in the opinion that no one should construct his house in such a way which would obstruct the free flow of air or light.
- **Polluting Industries:** Certain industries (like smelting) were regulated to limit harm. Such industries should be established outside the crowded area.

6.6: Ethical Economics and Intergenerational Equity :

Kautilya in his book *Arthashastra* stressed that prosperity must not come at the cost of future stability. The utilization of resources should be made by considering the ability of carrying future production capacity intake.

- **Social Welfare:** Wealth creation should support social welfare, i.e, no one should involve in such activities which would reduce social welfare.
- **Conservation of Productive Resources:** Destruction of productive natural assets was condemned. The state should work actively to protect the resources.

7. Findings :

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* has encompasses the following ideas of green economy—

- a. Sustainable use of natural resources must be targeted.
- b. State responsibility to build climate-resilient infrastructure.

- c. Sustainable agriculture and food security should be given priority.
- d. Pollution control, waste management, and clean urban environment rules.
- e. Wealth creation in line with social welfare
- f. State intervention is necessary to achieve sustained economic growth.
- g. Individual responsibility to environment must be built to achieve green economy.

8. Conclusion :

From the above discussion it could be concluded that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* presents a vision of economic development that balances state power, prosperity, and environmental care. The state responsibilities, norms for individuals and principles laid in the book are supporting strongly the modern green-economy ideas such as sustainability, conservation, ethical governance, and resilience. The *Arthashastra* has been representing an organized source of indigenous environmental thought in India. Its relevance is becoming more acute in present time.

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Value-Oriented Education through the Teachings of the Bhagavad Gita : A Philosophical Perspective

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Abstract :

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, narrated in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata. It comprises eighteen discourses of a total of 700 Sanskrit verses. A considerable volume of material has been compress within these verses. On the battlefield of Kurushetra, Sri Krishna, during the course of His most instructive and interesting talk with Arjuna, revealed profound,. Sublime and soul-stirring spiritual truths and expounded the rare secrets of Yoga, Vedanta, Bhakti and Karma.

The current study deals with value oriented education concerning Bhagavad Gita,s teaching. The Bhagavad Gita,s teaching is acting as a catalyst in the development of value oriented education. The developing countries like India have been facing problem of deficient value oriented education. To solve this problem, the Bhagavad Gita,s teaching help a lot in inculcating value education not only amongst students but also to fake a greater role in building capacity for institutional leaders, further appraisal of the leading factors of Bhagavad Gita,s teaching which influence value oriented education is necessary for a whole range of factors as. For example, physical value, mental value, moral value, discipline value, national value, cultural value,

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ethical value, economical value, educational value, cognitive value, religious value and so on. The paper is attempt to study about the Gita,s teaching concerning value. However, the present study suggest that the Bhagavad Gita,s teaching would be beneficial for the both students and teachers for inculcating value sloping education among them for the betterment of the society as a whole.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, teaching, value, value oriented education.

Introduction :

Every human being is born neutral and is like a clean slate and no mindset. A value based educational system is a fundamental part of human rational development. Values add quality to life. Human values are closely integrated with human life. They are entwined with our day to day chores. The home is the first place to learn and be inculcated with values.

Bhagavad-Gita is a part of the Mahabharata, written by Ved Vyasa, consisted of seven hundreds verses in the eighteen chapters dealing with philosophical thought and action, begins with a conversation between Arjuna, the representative of mankind and Lord Krishna, the Supreme Divine. Bhagavad-Gita is not only exchange of ideas between Arjuna and Sri-Krishna but also Value-Oriented Education taught by Lord Krishna to Arjuna. The Teachings of Bhagavad-Gita deal with the depression of Arjuna, Sankhya yoga which proceeds along the path of knowledge, path of action, wisdom, denial of action leads to supreme bliss, discipline of meditation, wisdom with self-realization, the Supreme Imperishable, knowledge with realization, divine beauty, discipline of action and its fruits, spiritual disciplines for God realization, difference between Body and Spirit, Action, Joy, Duty and so on. Bhagavad-Gita is divided into three parts. The first to six chapters including two hundreds eighty (280) verses deal with the path of Action (Karma-yoga), the seven to twelve chapters including two hundreds nine (209) verses explain the path of Devotion (Bhakti-yoga) and the thirteen to eighteen chapters including two hundreds eleven (207) verses point out about the path of Knowledge (Jnyana yoga) which establish the identity of the individual spirit with the Spiritual value of education.

It is perhaps confusing to understand the Bhagavad-Gita with the Bhagavata Purana and Mahabharata. Actually Bhagavata Purana

highlights on God particularly Lord Krishna as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and focuses on Bhakti Path that is devotion, Mahabharata highlights on the fight between Pandavas and Kauravas and focuses on Karma Path (action) and Jnana Path (knowledge) while Bhagavad-Gita includes the three disciplines of knowledge, devotion and action together without creating any conflict among them forming the theory and practice of three disciplines which work in humaneness, tolerance, peace and harmony.

Objectives of the Paper :

- To highlight the concept of value oriented education regarding the bhagavad gita's teaching.
- The paper attempt to focus and examine the present study suggest that the bhagavad gita's teaching would be beneficial for the both students and teachers for inculcating value sloping education among for the battement of the society as a whole.

Methodology :

The paper is descriptive in nature, presented from the philosophical standpoint of view. The paper is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data has been collected from relevant sources such as articles and periodicals published in reputed journals, books.

Rationale of the Study :

National Curriculum for School Education, NCERT (2000) has observed that curriculum has to provide learning experiences which will improve individual's thoughts, feelings and actions. It is indicating value caring education. Very few researches have been developed to study value oriented education in India and its contribution to the field of education, Value-Oriented Education Regarding Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings is less explored. The study is philosophical in its nature because it provides theory and principle on education with respect to aim of education, curriculum, and method of teaching, discipline, students, teachers and schools. This study is sociological in its nature because it fulfills the demands of education related to social needs according to society. This study covers psychological aspect of education because it develops the techniques for instance growth and development of the students, and their learning, motivation, personality development and adjustment, and so on. The article indicates that an analysis of the various problems of value crisis in the psychological perspective, may

be accepted by the researchers and practitioners for carrying out research on what is required is that the individuals as well as society internalize the understanding of the value caring education and bring about a dynamic change in their living patterns. It seems that in our country like India ours value- oriented education programs of identification and nurturing of talent should receive a very high priority. The study is needed and significant from several points of view not only in bringing excellence among individuals but also in revealing the probable interplay among school-going children, college going children and university- going children for their development of Value-Oriented Education Regarding Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings. Some of the scholars felt that after independence the value -oriented education gradually disappear and it will have no impact on Indian educational system. India is a developing country but where development is required in each and every sphere of human life. , Value-Oriented Education Regarding Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings and its implications are increasing day by day. For the appearance of the value education in the development of the educational system, in this connection, Kothari Commission (1966) points out, "In the development that we envisage in the future, we hope that the pursuit of men, material affluence and power would be subordinated to that of higher values and the fulfillment of the individual." In this paper an attempt has been made to recognize, comprehend, find out, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and critically examine the dominant factors responsible for strengthening value caring education and its impact on education of today and tomorrow in Indian society. This study may help the students to understand and to solve the problem of education more efficiently. They may flower into excellent of our nation. Hence the investigator has decided to conduct the present study. On this background the problem may be stated as "Value-Oriented Education Regarding the Teaching Bhagavad Gita's"

Purpose of the Study :

The purpose of the study is to recognize and define the Value-Oriented Education Regarding Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings, to recognize factors responsible for strengthening Value-Oriented Education through Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings, critically examine factors responsible for strengthening Value-Oriented Education through Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings, to apply factors responsible for strengthening Value-Oriented

Education through Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings, to comprehend factors responsible for strengthening Value-Oriented Education through Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings, to analyze factors responsible for strengthening Value-Oriented Education through Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings, to synthesize factors responsible for strengthening Value-Oriented Education through Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings and to evaluate factors responsible for strengthening Value-Oriented Education through Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings and its metaphysical thought and action in the field of education and its impact on modern and progressive educational system.

Concept of Value-Oriented Education :

The word 'Value' is derived from a Latin word 'Valere' which expresses the value or the utility of a thing. Value is the conception of something that is personally or socially preferred. It is the commitment of the individuals to values which is responsible for the development of human society. Values are guiding principles that shape our world outlook, attitude and conduct. Dr. Radhakrishnan has rightly said that a civilization is not built of bricks, steel and machinery, it is built with men, their quality and character. Therefore, value based education is needed to impart social and moral values, integrity, character, spirituality and many more in a person. Main idea behind value education is to cultivate essential Values in the students so that the civilization that teaches us to manage complexities can be sustained and further developed.

Ancient Education System and Value Education :

Ancient India recognized the supreme value of education in human life. The ancient thinkers felt that a healthy society is not possible without educated individuals. They framed very liberal educational scheme to prepare the students for useful life in enjoying its all aspects. In ancient times, India had explicitly recognized the supreme goal of life as self-realization. Therefore, the aims of education were to provide good training to pupils for performing their social, religious and economic duties. In this regard, A.S.Alteker opines, "Infusion of a spirit of piety, righteousness, formation of character, development of personality, Inculcation of civic and social duties, promotion of social efficiency and preservation and spread of national culture may be described as the chief aims and ideals of Ancient Indian Education." At that time, the aim of education was 'Chittavritti Nirodh'

which means the inhibition of those activities of the mind by which it gets connected with the world of matter or object. Thus, the aims and ideals of ancient education in India emphasized social duties and promoted social harmony.

The ancient Indian educational system focused on building a disciplined and value based culture. The convocation address found in 'Taittiriya Upanishad' throws significant light on the qualities required to be developed in the students. Few lines are quoted here- "Speak the truth. Practise righteousness. Make no mistake about study. There should be no deviation from righteous activity. There should be no error about protection of yourself. Do not neglect propitious activities. Do not be careless about learning and teaching. There should be no error in the duties towards gods and manes. Let your mother be a goddess unto you. Respect your father. Respect your teacher. Respect your guest. The works that are not blameworthy are to be resorted to, but not the others. The offering should be with honour; the offering should be in plenty. The offering should be with modesty. The offering should be with sympathy. Then, should you have any doubt with regard to duties or customs, you should behave in those matters just as the wise men do, who may happen to be there and who are able deliberators, who are adepts in those duties and customs, who are not directed by others, who are not crude, and who are desirous of merit. This is the injunction. This is the instruction. This is the secret of the scriptures." Thus, the ultimate objective of education in the past was to equip the child for spiritual and moral life and the whole education system was based on simple living and high thinking.

Objectives of Value-Oriented Education :

It is highly essential to inculcate good values in the youth in order to enable them to adopt right life pattern. Therefore, aims of value-oriented education should be as follows-

- To develop basic values of morality, punctuality, tidiness, equality, fraternity and scientific temper etc. among the youth.
- To train the students to be a responsible and progressive citizen.
- To acquaint pupils the ideals of democracy, socialism, national integration and secularism.
- To develop total personality of the student for realizing right attitude towards self, society, politics, humanity, religion and environment etc.

- To motivate the younger generations for international cooperation and peaceful co-existence.

Review of Literature :

Nehru (1946) wrote “The Bhagavad-Gita is a part of the Mahabharata, an episode in the vast drama. But it stands apart and is complete in itself. It is a small poem of 700 verses-‘the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue’ so William von Humboldt described it. Every school of thought and philosophy looks up to it and interprets it in its own way. In times of crisis, when the mind of man is tortured by doubt and is torn by the conflict of duties, it has turned all the more to the Gita for light and guidance. For, it is a poem of crisis, of political and social crisis and even more so, of crisis in the spirit of man. Even the leaders of thought and action of the present day- Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Gandhi- have written on it, each giving his own interpretation. Arjuna becomes the symbol of the tortured spirit of man, which from age to age, has been torn by conflicting obligations and moralities. From this personal conversation we are taken step by step to higher and more impersonal regions of individual duty and social behavior, of the application of ethics to human life, of the spiritual outlook that should govern all. The Gita deals essentially with the spiritual background of human existence and it is in this context that the practical problems of everyday life appear. It is call to action to meet the obligations and duties of life, but always keeping in view that spiritual background and the larger purpose of the universes.” Sivananda (2000) observes “If all the Upanishads should represent cows, Sri-Krishna is their milker. Arjuna is the calf who first tasted the milk of the wisdom of the self, milked by the divine cowherd for the benefit of all humanity. The milk is the Bhagavad-Gita. It solves not only Arjuna’s problems and doubts, but also the world’s problem and those of every individual. Glory to Krishna, the friend of the cowherd of Gokula, the joy of Devki! He, who drinks the nectar of the Gita through purification of the heart and regular meditation, attains immortality, eternal bliss, everlasting peace and perennial joy. There is nothing more to be attained beyond this.” Sood and Kavita (2016) abstract “value-oriented education is, in a sense, tautologies. In fact, education is a subset of a larger setting of culture, and culture consists of cultivation of faculties and powers pertaining to reason, ethics and

aesthetics in the light of the pursuit of values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness (Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram). Value education refers to planned educational actions aimed at the development of proper attitudes, values, emotions and behavior patterns of the learners. Value education is the education that is concerned with the transformation of an individual's personality. Every nation is awakened to provide significant importance to value oriented educational system, different pedagogies and methodologies are to be applied transmission of accumulated normative values of truth, beauty and goodness to the succeeding generation for creating a noble and healthy nation. The programme of values oriented education can be built adopting different approaches as a separate subject, inviting eminent thinkers, organizing co-curricular activities and essential teaching of great world leaders; mass-media can also play a vital role in this direction. Educational objectives refer to explicit formulations of the ways in which students are expected to be changed by the educative process. That is, the ways in which they will change in their thinking, their feelings and their actions. Objectives whether of value education or of any other curricular area depend on a variety of factors, psychological, sociological and epistemological. It is also essential that government should take initiative for introduction of values oriented education.”

Discussion :

The concept, meaning, theory and principle related to value oriented education have been dealt with clarity and deep insight. Before we discuss the factors responsible for strengthening value-oriented education, it is essential for us to know the meaning of value education. The term ‘value education’ has different meanings to different thinkers in different context. Value –oriented education is the education that is associated with the transformation of an individuals’ personality from one generation to another one. Modern education, however, lays great emphasis on value-oriented education. Perhaps, this is precisely the cause why the learner seeks only to learn and study about the discovering own soul for achieving values of education. With this consideration, the development of value-oriented education is purely and surely to please the modern learner. Further, Bhagavad-Gita’s Teachings helps in the development of the value-oriented education. In this connection, Kothari Commission (1964-66) emphatically stresses

that moral education and inculcation of a sense of social responsibility must be stressed in educational system and schools should reorganize their responsibility in facilitating the transition of youth from the world of schools to the world of work and life. The National Education policy 1986 also reflects the light on value based education. Furthermore, there is a more problem of achieving value-oriented education by the individuals in our India today because each and every school or college or university suffers from such wisdom knowledge and devotion and it is because of this problem that our entire educational system is going aimlessly. That is why it may be said that educationists, teacher educators, teachers, educational administrators, educational supervisors, curriculum constructors and educational planners in our country should wake up to the task of the curriculum construction, curriculum development and curriculum transaction of value-oriented education and its aims and objective, method of teaching and techniques by understanding a critical examination of the present set up of value-oriented education for human well being, and further assessment , in order to sustain and to strengthen value education, India needs a fast development in the area of research on value-oriented education. This can be done by strengthening the pillars of professional education particularly the teacher education. Otherwise, the ignorance of value-oriented education will result in exploitation, corruption, aggression, destruction, disaster, selfishness and hatred. In short, it may be said that value-oriented education regulates positive education and control negative things. In the words of Nelson Mandela, “Do not educate your child to be rich. Educate him to be happy so when he grows up, he will know the value of things, not the price”. Value-Oriented Education is an integral part of teacher education as well as school education and ultimately study of Bhagavad-Gita’s Teachings must become a part of all courses in Humanities and Social Sciences at University level also. Bhagavad-Gita’s Teachings must also be raised considerably so as to promote a deep understanding of its theory and principle to solve the everyday problems of life for achieving values of education. All constructive and creative works related to Bhagavad-Gita and its Teachings, it is felt that there is a great deal has been done to the development of Value-Oriented Education and its dominant factors with special reference to philosophical outlook, much has also been done to

value-oriented education in India to draw in broad an outline of value education and much has so far been also done for recreating and reconstructing a better balanced society in our country through the disciplines of knowledge, devotion and action and a great importance was given on the democratic concept of education as the means of discovering truth. Greater emphasis is being paid to value-oriented education through a dialogue between Arjuna, human being and Lord Krishna, Supreme Being. All the books and writings on Bhagavad-Gita, is the most important inspiring literature of the value-oriented education, propounds cardinal principles of axiology, of course, yields useful information regarding a true guide for all human beings, and also gives details of philosophical foundation of education as well as helps in progressive basis of education for the betterment of the pupils of the our society as a whole.

It is to be quite honest and fair, the field of value-oriented education, based on axiology branch of philosophy, is too much vast and it is not easy to achieve a well balanced perspective of what is really happening and what is lacking in our research work. The study under consideration has been carried out with the recognizing, comprehending, examining critically, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating the value-oriented education with respect to Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings has great relevance to the present-day inside schools, colleges, and universities or outside and it can bring about a dynamic change in the Educational system not only of the country, but also the world. Here, the impact of modifying patterns of the Indian educational system in the disciplines of knowledge, devotion and action, would be analyzed in depth and thus it may contribute in solving the everyday problems of individuals' life creatively and constructively in the new situation of the socio-psycho-physical environment for their wellbeing by achieving value-oriented education through Bhagavad-Gita's teachings.

Conclusion :

Education is not a mere pile of facts and data for memorization but a source of enlightenment and strength. Unfortunately, today education has a very limited purpose and has been linked with employment only. The success of education is measured with wealth and power acquired through education. In the words of Martin Luther

King, "The prosperity of a country depends not on the abundance of its revenues, nor on the strength of its fortification, nor on the beauty of its public building but its cultivated citizens, in its men of Education, enlightens and character." To have an access to the realization of thought and action with respect to Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings which serves as a foundation of nurturing values oriented education, which reflects for achieving values of education and beneficial for human' well-being. Keeping in view in mind, the author concludes the 'Value-oriented education' as "it is education which helps to fulfill the potentialities of the individuals' education through the three disciplines of action, knowledge and devotion which inculcates the values of education among individuals to lead to supreme bliss in order to gain physical value, mental value, moral value, disciplinary value, emotional value, social value, political value, practical value, cultural value, educational value, national value, international value, aesthetical value, ethical value, economical value, religious value, cognitive value, affective value, psychomotor value and so on , if the teachers enable to modify such values on the basis of three discipline of action, devotion and knowledge of Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings, - this is value -oriented education." Thus this appears to have made a considerable progress and development of the society. However, the present study suggests that Bhagavad-Gita's Teachings would be beneficial for the both students and teachers for inculcating value oriented education for the betterment of the society as a whole.

At last, I would like to mention that the biggest problem of today is lack of moral and ethical values and total neglect of 'emotional integration.' In this world of confusion and conflict, a teacher has to help his students to develop their own value system. Once students have their values clarified, they are able to perform better academically and socially. The real value-oriented education will be to make the learner felt that the quality of work that he is going to do in future is not to be determined by what others expect but what he expects from himself. Therefore, a system which emphasizes on vocationalisation and acquisition of modern technical skills along with inculcating sound moralistic character has to be highlighted.

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Revisiting Higher Education in Assam: A Critical Study of Value-Based Education and Contemporary Challenges

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Abstract :

Education is not merely the transmission of knowledge but a transformative process that shapes an individual's character, attitudes, and social responsibilities. In the contemporary era, higher education in India - and particularly in Assam - faces significant challenges arising from globalization, commercialization, and a declining emphasis on ethical and moral values. This paper critically examines the concept of value-based education and its relevance in addressing the crisis within higher education. Drawing upon philosophical insights and educational theories, the study highlights the necessity of integrating moral, cultural, and social values into academic curricula to ensure holistic development. The paper also explores the widening gap between education and value formation, emphasizing how institutions increasingly prioritize employability and economic outcomes over ethical development. In Assam, despite a rich cultural and intellectual heritage shaped by eminent personalities, there is a visible erosion of value consciousness among students, reflected in rising social and moral concerns. Using a qualitative and analytical methodology, the study investigates the structural and ideological challenges confronting higher education and

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proposes the integration of value-based approaches as a solution. The findings suggest that value-based education is essential not only for personal growth but also for social harmony and national development. The study concludes that revitalizing higher education through ethical grounding, cultural awareness, and character-building initiatives is crucial for creating responsible citizens and sustaining democratic values in society.

Keywords : Value-Based Education, Higher Education, Assam, Ethical Development.

Introduction :

Education is a lifelong process that shapes human behavior, intellect, and character. It is not confined to formal schooling but encompasses the continuous development of an individual through interaction with physical, social, and cultural environments. Thinkers such as Thomson emphasized that education produces lasting changes in habits, thoughts, and attitudes, thereby enabling individuals to adapt effectively to their surroundings. Similarly, J.S. Mill viewed education as a means through which each generation prepares the next for sustaining and advancing societal progress.

“The culture which each generation purposefully gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up and if possible for raising the level of improvement which has been attained” (Mill J.S. 1859)

Traditionally, education in India has been deeply rooted in ethical and spiritual values. However, in the modern era, the meaning and purpose of education have undergone significant transformation. The growing influence of globalization and market-driven forces has shifted the focus of higher education from character-building to career-oriented outcomes. This shift has created a dichotomy between education and values, raising serious concerns about the moral and social development of students.

In Assam, the situation reflects both continuity and disruption. The state has a rich legacy of intellectual and cultural contributions from eminent scholars and literary figures. Yet, contemporary higher education institutions face challenges such as declining value consciousness, increasing student unrest, and a lack of ethical orientation. This paper seeks to analyze these issues and explore how value-based education can play a transformative role in addressing them.

Objectives of the Study :

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the concept and significance of value-based education.
2. To analyze the challenges faced by higher education in India with special reference to Assam.
3. To explore the gap between knowledge-based and value-based education.
4. To highlight the role of educational institutions in promoting ethical and social values.
5. To suggest measures for integrating value-based education into higher education systems.

Methodology :

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical research methodology. It is primarily based on secondary sources, including books, journal articles, policy reports, and philosophical texts related to education and values. This conceptual and interpretative approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the issues under study.

Concept of Value-Based Education: Importance and Necessity :

Value-based education refers to the process of imparting moral, ethical, social, and cultural values alongside academic knowledge. It aims at the holistic development of an individual by nurturing qualities such as integrity, compassion, truthfulness, and social responsibility. The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes the sacredness of knowledge and its role in achieving self-realization. *“There is nothing in the world as sacred as knowledge. He who is perfected by yoga, all round development finds in the fullness of time.”* (Bhagabata Gita, Chapter-IV, VERSE-38)

Education, therefore, must create an environment that fosters the internalization of values, enabling individuals to act with conviction and commitment. D.S. Kothari also highlighted that values cannot merely be preserved in texts or monuments; they must be actively practiced and pursued. Regarding value-based education D.S.Kothari observed- *“The fundamental values of life, integrity, pursuit of truth and idealism cannot be sustained by embalming these in monuments and memorials or by inscribing them in textbooks, High ideals and great national goals are meaningless, unless we strive for them passionately and ceaselessly”* (2000:447).

The importance of value-based education can be understood in several ways:

- **Character Formation:** It helps in building moral integrity and ethical awareness.
- **Social Harmony:** It promotes mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation.
- **Personal Development:** It fosters emotional intelligence and self-discipline.
- **National Development:** It creates responsible citizens committed to societal welfare.

In the absence of value-based education, knowledge becomes mechanical and devoid of purpose. Therefore, integrating values into education is essential for meaningful and sustainable development.

Challenges of Higher Education in India and Assam :

Commercialization and Globalization :

One of the most pressing challenges confronting higher education in India is the rapid commercialization of educational institutions under the influence of globalization. With the emergence of a market-oriented approach, education is increasingly being perceived as a commodity rather than a public good. Private institutions, in many cases, prioritize profit generation over academic excellence and ethical formation. This has led to the commodification of knowledge, where degrees are often valued more for their market utility than for intellectual or moral enrichment.

Globalization, while opening avenues for technological advancement and international collaboration, has also intensified competition among institutions. Universities are compelled to align their curricula with global market demands, often at the cost of local cultural and ethical priorities. Consequently, students are treated as consumers, and education becomes a transactional process. This shift undermines the foundational purpose of education as a means of holistic development and social transformation, eroding its ethical and humanistic dimensions.

Decline of Value Orientation :

Another significant concern is the gradual erosion of moral and ethical values within the educational system. Traditional Indian education emphasized character-building, discipline, and spiritual growth alongside intellectual development. However, contemporary education largely focuses on measurable outcomes such as grades, employability, and professional success.

This excessive emphasis on performance and competition often sidelines the cultivation of virtues like honesty, compassion, and social responsibility. As a result, students may excel academically but lack ethical judgment and a sense of civic duty. The decline in value orientation is reflected in increasing instances of corruption, intolerance, and social insensitivity among educated individuals. This trend indicates a serious imbalance in the objectives of education, necessitating a renewed focus on value-based learning.

Curriculum Limitations :

The existing curriculum structure in many higher education institutions is another critical challenge. Most curricula are heavily content-driven and examination-oriented, with little scope for integrating value-based education. Subjects are often taught in isolation, without connecting theoretical knowledge to real-life ethical dilemmas or social issues.

This compartmentalization leads to a fragmented understanding of education, where students fail to see the relevance of their learning in shaping their personal and social lives. Moreover, there is a lack of interdisciplinary approaches that could foster critical thinking and ethical reasoning. Value education, when included, is often treated as an auxiliary subject rather than being embedded within the core curriculum. This limits its impact and reduces it to a formality rather than a transformative force.

Student-Centric Issues :

The challenges faced by students themselves constitute an important dimension of the crisis in higher education. Increasing academic pressure, competition, and societal expectations contribute to high levels of stress, anxiety, and mental health issues among students. In extreme cases, this has led to incidents of self-harm and suicide, highlighting the urgent need for a more supportive and value-oriented educational environment.

Furthermore, the absence of strong ethical guidance has resulted in various forms of deviant behavior among youth, including academic dishonesty, substance abuse, and involvement in socially undesirable activities. The rapid influence of digital media and changing lifestyles has further complicated the situation, often exposing students to conflicting values and moral ambiguity. The lack of emotional and

ethical support systems within educational institutions exacerbates these issues. Counseling services, mentorship programs, and value-based initiatives are often inadequate or absent, leaving students ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life.

Context of Assam :

In Assam, the challenges of higher education are intensified by specific socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors. While the state boasts a rich intellectual and cultural heritage, there is an increasing disconnect between traditional values and contemporary educational practices. The influence of globalization and modernization has led to a gradual erosion of indigenous cultural values, which were once integral to the educational process.

Economic disparities and limited access to quality educational resources further hinder the development of a robust higher education system in the region. Many institutions struggle with inadequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified faculty, and limited research opportunities. These structural issues, combined with the decline in value orientation, create a complex set of challenges.

Historically, Assam has produced eminent literary and cultural figures who exemplified dedication, patriotism, and a deep sense of social responsibility during their student life. Their commitment to societal welfare and cultural preservation served as a model of value-based education in practice. However, contemporary students often lack such orientation due to changing societal dynamics, increased individualism, and the influence of global consumer culture.

To address these challenges, it is essential to reconnect higher education in Assam with its cultural roots while simultaneously adapting to modern demands. Integrating value-based education with regional cultural traditions can play a crucial role in restoring balance and ensuring the holistic development of students.

Education vs. Value-Based Education : A Critical Analysis

In the contemporary educational landscape, a fundamental tension exists between the prevailing model of modern education and the ideals of value-based education. Modern education, particularly in the context of globalization and technological advancement, tends to prioritize the acquisition of information, technical skills, and professional competencies. While these aspects are undeniably important for

economic growth and individual career advancement, they often overshadow the moral, ethical, and humanistic dimensions of learning. This overemphasis on cognitive and utilitarian outcomes creates a significant imbalance in the educational process. Individuals may emerge from the system as highly skilled professionals, yet lack the ethical sensitivity, social responsibility, and moral judgment necessary to apply their knowledge constructively. In such a scenario, education risks becoming mechanistic - focused on “what to think” and “how to perform,” rather than “how to live” and “why to act.”

In contrast, value-based education seeks to restore this imbalance by emphasizing the holistic development of the individual. It integrates intellectual growth with moral and ethical formation, thereby nurturing not only informed minds but also responsible and compassionate citizens. Value-based education is rooted in the understanding that knowledge must be guided by values to be meaningful and beneficial to society.

At its core, value-based education emphasizes:

- **Integration of knowledge with ethical reasoning:** It encourages students to critically examine the moral implications of their actions and decisions, ensuring that knowledge is applied responsibly.
- **Development of a sense of responsibility:** It fosters accountability towards oneself, society, and the environment, promoting a sense of duty and civic engagement.
- **Cultivation of empathy and social awareness:** It nurtures sensitivity towards the needs and perspectives of others, thereby strengthening social cohesion and harmony.

The dichotomy between modern education and value-based education gives rise to several critical issues:

- **Knowledge without Character:** When knowledge is divorced from ethical considerations, it can be misused for harmful or exploitative purposes. Scientific and technological advancements, for instance, may be employed in ways that undermine human welfare if not guided by moral principles.
- **Skill without Ethics:** Professional competence without ethical grounding can lead to corruption, malpractice, and a lack of integrity in various fields. This is evident in cases of corporate fraud, academic dishonesty, and unethical professional behavior.

- **Success without Values:** The pursuit of success defined solely in terms of wealth, status, or power can result in social inequality, moral decay, and a loss of collective well-being. Such a model of success often neglects the importance of justice, compassion, and sustainability.

A critical analysis reveals that the separation of education from values is not merely an academic concern but a societal crisis. It affects the quality of human relationships, the functioning of institutions, and the overall health of a democratic society. Therefore, the integration of value-based education into mainstream educational systems is not optional but imperative.

Bridging this gap requires a multidimensional approach. Educational institutions must move beyond rote learning and examination-oriented practices to incorporate ethical discourse, experiential learning, and community engagement. Teachers play a crucial role as facilitators of values, serving as role models who embody the principles they seek to impart. Additionally, curricula must be redesigned to embed value-based perspectives across disciplines rather than confining them to isolated courses.

Discussion :

The foregoing analysis clearly indicates that higher education in Assam is presently at a critical juncture, characterized by a paradoxical coexistence of quantitative expansion and qualitative deficiency. Over the past decades, there has been a notable increase in the number of higher educational institutions, student enrollment, and access to academic opportunities. However, this expansion has not been matched by a corresponding improvement in the quality of education, particularly in the domain of value formation. The emphasis on infrastructure, certification, and employability has often overshadowed the deeper purpose of education as a means of cultivating ethical awareness, social responsibility, and holistic human development.

This imbalance has led to a situation where higher education produces technically competent graduates who may lack moral clarity and civic consciousness. The absence of a strong value foundation not only affects individual character but also has broader societal implications, including rising intolerance, ethical compromises, and weakening social cohesion. In the specific context of Assam, these

concerns are further intensified by socio-cultural transitions, economic challenges, and the gradual erosion of indigenous value systems.

In this context, it becomes imperative for educational institutions to recognize that value-based education is not a supplementary or optional component but a foundational necessity. It must be systematically integrated into the educational framework rather than being treated as an add-on or peripheral subject. Such integration requires a reorientation of both curriculum and pedagogy.

Firstly, value-oriented courses and modules should be incorporated into the core curriculum across disciplines. These courses should not merely present abstract moral principles but engage students in critical reflection on ethical issues relevant to their academic fields and everyday lives. Interdisciplinary approaches can be particularly effective in connecting values with knowledge.

Secondly, experiential learning and community engagement should be promoted as essential components of higher education. Activities such as social service, rural outreach programs, environmental initiatives, and internships with community organizations can help students internalize values through direct experience. Learning by doing fosters empathy, responsibility, and a deeper understanding of social realities.

Thirdly, ethical discussions and case studies should be integrated into classroom teaching. By analyzing real-life situations involving moral dilemmas, students can develop critical thinking skills and ethical reasoning. This approach encourages active participation and helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Fourthly, teacher training in value education is crucial for the effective implementation of these initiatives. Teachers play a pivotal role as facilitators and role models, and their attitudes and conduct significantly influence students. Therefore, professional development programs should equip educators with the skills and sensitivity required to impart value-based education.

Beyond institutional efforts, the role of policymakers is equally significant. Educational reforms must adopt a holistic perspective that balances academic excellence with ethical development. Policies should encourage the inclusion of value-based frameworks, provide support for

innovative pedagogical practices, and ensure accountability in maintaining educational standards.

Moreover, the promotion of a value-driven educational environment requires collaboration between educational institutions, families, and society at large. Families serve as the primary agents of value transmission, while society provides the broader cultural context. A coordinated effort among these stakeholders can create a supportive ecosystem that reinforces ethical behavior and social responsibility. In essence, addressing the challenges of higher education in Assam demands a paradigm shift from a purely utilitarian model of education to one that is integrative and value-centric. Such a transformation is essential not only for individual development but also for building a just, harmonious, and progressive society.

Conclusion :

Education is not merely a means of acquiring knowledge but a process of holistic development that shapes the intellect, character, and spirit of an individual. The challenges facing higher education in Assam reflect a broader crisis in the educational system, where the emphasis on economic and professional outcomes has overshadowed the importance of values. Value-based education offers a viable solution to this crisis by promoting ethical awareness, social responsibility, and personal growth. It is essential for creating a balanced and harmonious society where individuals contribute positively to national development. The vision of a developed and prosperous India can only be realized when education is rooted in strong moral and ethical foundations. Therefore, integrating value-based education into higher education is not just desirable but imperative for the future of society.

“A developed India by 2047 or even earlier is not a dream. It need not even be a mere vision in the mind of many Indians. It is mission we can all take up. By 2047 the people of India will be better educated, wealthier and more prosperous than any time in our long history.”

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From Intuition to Intelligence: How AI Is Rewriting the Financial Fate of India's Retail Investors

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Abstract :

Over the past twenty years, India's retail investment landscape has undergone a profound shift. Decision-making once guided by intuition, informal tips, and scattered information is increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. This chapter examines how AI is transforming the way Indian retail investors access markets, assess risk, form behavior patterns, and build long-term wealth. As digitization accelerates, internet access expands, and financial inclusion deepens, tools such as robo-advisors, algorithmic trading systems, predictive analytics, and personalized planning apps are making advanced investment strategies accessible beyond institutions and high-net-worth individuals.

Set within India's distinct socio-economic environment, the chapter highlights the realities of first-generation investors, behavioral biases, and culturally rooted attitudes toward risk. It traces the transition from instinct-led choices to evidence-based decision-making, while also addressing the ethical, regulatory, and technological challenges this shift creates. Issues of algorithmic transparency, data protection, digital literacy, and uneven adoption are critically explored.

Drawing on theory, market trends, and practical examples from India's fintech sector, the chapter argues that AI represents a structural

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force reshaping retail finance. It concludes by stressing regulation, investor education, and human–AI collaboration nationwide.

Keywords : *Artificial Intelligence; Retail Investors; Financial Inclusion; Fintech in India; Behavioral Finance; Algorithmic Decision-Making*

Introduction :

India's financial markets have long been defined by striking contradictions. The country combines one of the world's fastest-growing economies and an increasingly vibrant equity market with a retail investor base that has historically relied on limited information and informal decision-making channels. For decades, household investment choices were shaped less by structured analysis and more by family advice, neighborhood brokers, media speculation, and instinctive judgments. Deeply rooted behavioral biases—such as herd behavior, overconfidence, and fear of loss—often guided financial decisions, allowing intuition to outweigh analytical intelligence in the everyday financial lives of Indian investors (Reserve Bank of India (RBI), 2019) (Thaler & Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*, 2008).

This long-standing balance is now being reshaped by the rise of artificial intelligence. AI-driven financial technologies are steadily transforming how retail investors access information, evaluate risk, and make investment decisions. Tools such as algorithm-based trading platforms, robo-advisors, and data-driven portfolio recommendation systems have moved beyond elite institutions and become part of mainstream retail investing. What was once the preserve of global hedge funds is now embedded in mobile trading applications used by first-time investors across urban and semi-urban India (Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), 2022).

This chapter explores how AI is redefining the financial trajectory of India's retail investors by shifting decision-making from subjective intuition toward data-driven intelligence. Importantly, this transition does not imply the elimination of human judgment. Intuition continues to play a role, particularly in interpreting personal goals, life circumstances, and risk tolerance. Instead, AI acts as an augmenting force—challenging emotional decision-making, reducing information asymmetry, and offering systematic insights in markets characterized by volatility and uncertainty (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017).

The Indian context makes this transformation especially significant. Large-scale digitization initiatives such as Aadhaar, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and widespread smartphone adoption have created the infrastructure necessary for rapid fintech innovation. At the same time, policy-driven efforts toward financial inclusion have introduced millions of new participants into formal financial markets, many with limited prior exposure to investing (World Bank, 2021). AI operates at the intersection of these developments, serving both as an enabler of access and a disruptive force reshaping traditional advisory and brokerage models.

By tracing this evolution, the chapter seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of how AI-driven finance is influencing investor behavior, decision-making quality, and financial agency. Rather than portraying AI as a purely technological upgrade, it positions intelligent finance as a structural shift—one that has the potential to either empower retail investors or deepen existing inequalities, depending on how it is governed, understood, and adopted.

The Traditional Landscape of Retail Investing in India :

For much of India's post-independence history, retail investing remained limited in scope and participation. Household savings were predominantly allocated to physical assets such as gold and real estate or to low-risk instruments like fixed deposits and government savings schemes. Equity markets were often perceived as speculative arenas suitable only for insiders or seasoned traders. This perception was reinforced by limited financial literacy, opaque market practices, and periodic market scandals that eroded public trust.

Retail investors who did participate in equities often relied on intuition shaped by anecdotal evidence, personal networks, and media narratives. Stock tips circulated through word of mouth or television shows, while brokers played a gatekeeping role, controlling access to information and execution. Fundamental and technical analysis, though available in theory, remained inaccessible to most investors due to cost, complexity, and lack of education.

Behavioral finance research helps explain this pattern. Indian retail investors have historically exhibited biases such as herd behavior, loss aversion, overconfidence, and recency bias (Barberis & Vishny, 1998). Decisions were frequently driven by emotions rather than systematic

evaluation, leading to suboptimal outcomes, especially during periods of market volatility.

The limitations of this intuition-driven system were structural rather than individual. Information asymmetry favored institutional players, while retail investors lacked the tools to process vast amounts of financial data. In this context, intelligence was not absent but inaccessible. AI's entry into the financial ecosystem fundamentally altered this dynamic by lowering barriers to analysis and personalization.

The Rise of AI in India's Financial Ecosystem :

Artificial intelligence in finance is not a sudden phenomenon but the result of incremental technological advances converging with economic and regulatory changes. In India, this convergence accelerated in the 2010s with the growth of fintech startups, cloud computing, and mobile internet. AI applications in finance range from credit scoring and fraud detection to portfolio optimization and customer engagement. Retail investing has emerged as a particularly fertile domain for AI adoption. Robo-advisory platforms use algorithms to assess investors' risk profiles, financial goals, and time horizons, generating personalized portfolio recommendations at a fraction of the cost of traditional advisors. Machine-learning models analyze historical data and market signals to identify patterns that may elude human analysts. Natural language processing tools parse news, earnings reports, and social media sentiment to provide real-time insights.

India's regulatory environment has also played a role in facilitating this growth. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has gradually recognized and regulated investment advisors and algorithmic trading frameworks, providing a degree of legitimacy and oversight. While regulatory caution remains, the direction has been toward enabling innovation while protecting investors.

Importantly, AI adoption in India reflects local realities. Platforms are designed to be mobile-first, multilingual, and cost-sensitive, catering to first-time investors from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This localization distinguishes India's AI-driven investment ecosystem from those of developed markets and underscores its potential to reshape financial inclusion.

From Gut Feeling to Data-Driven Decisions :

The most profound impact of AI on retail investing lies in its ability to convert raw data into actionable intelligence. Where intuition once filled informational gaps, AI now provides structured insights grounded in statistical analysis and predictive modeling. This shift does not eliminate uncertainty but reframes it within probabilistic frameworks that enhance decision quality.

For example, AI-powered tools can simulate multiple market scenarios, estimate downside risk, and suggest asset allocations aligned with individual goals. Such capabilities were previously available only to institutional investors with access to sophisticated analytics. By democratizing these tools, AI reduces informational inequality and empowers retail investors to make more informed choices.

However, the transition from intuition to intelligence is not merely technical; it is psychological. Retail investors must learn to trust algorithmic recommendations while retaining critical judgment. Over-reliance on AI can be as problematic as blind intuition, particularly if algorithms are poorly designed or trained on biased data. The challenge lies in cultivating a balanced relationship where AI informs decisions without overriding human agency.

Behavioral finance research suggests that structured decision aids can mitigate cognitive biases by imposing discipline and consistency (Thaler & Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*, 2008). In this sense, AI acts as a behavioral nudge, steering investors away from impulsive actions and toward long-term strategies. Yet, the effectiveness of this nudge depends on transparency, user understanding, and alignment with investors' values.

Democratization of Wealth Creation :

One of the most compelling narratives surrounding AI in finance is its potential to democratize wealth creation. In India, where income inequality and financial exclusion remain pressing concerns, AI-driven investment platforms offer a pathway to broader participation in capital markets. Low minimum investment thresholds, automated rebalancing, and personalized guidance make investing accessible to individuals who were previously excluded.

This democratization is particularly significant for young investors and those in semi-urban and rural areas. Mobile-based platforms

eliminate geographical barriers, while vernacular interfaces enhance usability. AI-driven credit assessments also enable access to margin products and investment-linked credit for individuals with limited formal credit histories.

Yet, democratization is not automatic. Digital divides persist, and algorithmic systems can inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities if not designed inclusively. Investors with higher digital literacy and financial awareness may benefit disproportionately from AI tools, widening outcome gaps. Therefore, the promise of democratization must be accompanied by deliberate efforts in education, design, and regulation.

Behavioral Transformation of Retail Investors :

Artificial intelligence (AI) is not merely a tool for executing trades or analyzing data; it is increasingly reshaping the behavior of retail investors. By providing continuous feedback, tracking performance, and visualizing progress toward financial goals, AI systems influence how investors perceive risk, reward, and long-term outcomes. Features such as gamified interfaces, real-time alerts, and interactive dashboards can increase engagement, motivating users to monitor their portfolios more actively. While such mechanisms can foster disciplined investing, they also carry the risk of encouraging excessive trading or short-term decision-making if not designed with behavioral safeguards in mind (Baker & Nofsinger, 2010).

In the Indian context, where emotional and intuition-driven investing has historically been widespread, AI has begun to promote more structured and theoretically sound behaviors. Platforms that automate systematic investment plans (SIPs), portfolio rebalancing, and goal-based contributions help investors adhere to long-term strategies rather than attempting to time market movements. These AI-driven nudges align investor behavior more closely with financial theory, reducing impulsive decisions influenced by fear, greed, or social pressures (Reserve Bank of India (RBI), 2019). For example, automated reminders to maintain SIP contributions or notifications about asset allocation adjustments encourage consistency and discourage panic selling during market downturns.

Despite these benefits, the behavioral transformation induced by AI is not uniformly positive. A growing reliance on algorithmic

recommendations can lead to overconfidence in model accuracy, causing investors to underestimate the inherent uncertainty and risk associated with financial markets (Thaler & Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*, 2008). Blind trust in AI tools may also result in complacency, where investors neglect to critically evaluate recommendations or understand the assumptions and limitations underlying algorithmic models. Transparency is therefore crucial; investors must be aware of potential biases in AI models, the data sources they rely on, and the scenarios under which predictions may fail (Fisch, 2019).

Overall, AI has the potential to guide Indian retail investors toward more disciplined, long-term-oriented strategies while mitigating behavioral biases that have traditionally hindered financial outcomes. However, this transformation must be accompanied by investor education, clear communication of algorithmic limitations, and carefully designed engagement features that promote responsible decision-making. Only then can AI act as a constructive force in reshaping investor behavior without inadvertently fostering overconfidence, reliance on automation, or risky trading practices.

Ethical, Regulatory, and Data Privacy Concerns :

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into retail investing introduces a complex set of ethical, regulatory, and data privacy challenges that cannot be overlooked. AI systems in finance rely on large volumes of personal and financial data, making the protection of sensitive information a top priority. In India, data protection frameworks, such as the proposed Personal Data Protection Bill, seek to balance technological innovation with individual rights. However, enforcement mechanisms are still developing, and public awareness of data privacy obligations is limited, leaving many investors potentially vulnerable to misuse or breaches of their personal information (Kshetri, 2018) (Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, 2022).

Algorithmic transparency presents an additional concern. Many AI-driven tools operate as black-box models, meaning their decision-making logic is opaque to end-users. Retail investors may receive portfolio recommendations or risk assessments without a clear understanding of how these suggestions are generated. This opacity makes it difficult for investors to challenge or verify decisions, raising

questions about accountability and fairness. Regulators face the delicate task of ensuring that AI systems remain auditable and explainable without restricting the development of innovative financial technologies (Fisch, 2019).

Ethical considerations also extend to the broader stability of financial markets. The widespread adoption of similar algorithms by multiple investors or platforms can unintentionally create correlated behaviors. During periods of market volatility, such clustering of AI-driven decisions may amplify systemic risk, triggering rapid sell-offs or herd-like movements that exacerbate market swings (Hendershott et al., 2011). Mitigating these risks requires not only robust regulatory oversight but also the continuous monitoring of algorithmic behavior and the development of guidelines for responsible AI deployment in financial services.

Ultimately, addressing ethical, regulatory, and data privacy concerns in AI-driven retail investing requires a multidimensional approach. Policymakers, financial institutions, and technology developers must collaborate to establish frameworks that prioritize transparency, protect sensitive data, and ensure market stability. Simultaneously, investor education is crucial so that users understand the implications of AI recommendations, the risks associated with algorithmic trading, and their rights in the digital financial ecosystem. Only by combining regulatory vigilance with informed human engagement can AI realize its potential to enhance retail investing in India without compromising ethical or legal standards.

The Future of Human-AI Collaboration in Investing :

The future of retail investing in India will not be shaped by machines alone, nor will it remain anchored solely in human intuition. Instead, it is increasingly clear that the most effective investment decisions will emerge from collaboration between human judgment and artificial intelligence. While AI systems are highly efficient at processing large volumes of data, detecting patterns, and executing decisions with speed and consistency, they lack the ability to fully understand personal values, life goals, emotions, and socio-cultural realities that strongly influence financial behavior (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017).

In a country like India-where many retail investors are first-time participants navigating formal financial markets-human insight

plays a vital role. Investment decisions are often shaped by family responsibilities, income uncertainty, cultural attitudes toward risk, and long-term aspirations such as education, housing, or retirement. These factors require contextual interpretation that algorithms alone cannot provide. AI can support this process by offering data-backed insights, portfolio recommendations, and risk assessments, but the final judgment must remain human-led to ensure alignment with individual priorities (Thaler, *Misbehaving: The making of behavioral economic*, 2016).

Rather than replacing investors or advisors, AI is best viewed as an enabling tool that enhances discipline, reduces behavioral biases, and improves access to sophisticated strategies. Research shows that AI-driven platforms can help investors overcome emotional decision-making, such as panic selling during market downturns or excessive risk-taking during bullish phases (OECD, 2021). However, without adequate understanding, investors may either distrust these tools or rely on them blindly, both of which carry risks.

This is where education becomes critical. Financial literacy in India must move beyond traditional concepts of savings, interest, and diversification to include digital and algorithmic literacy. Investors should understand, at a basic level, how AI models work, what data they use, and where their limitations lie. Such awareness empowers individuals to question recommendations, recognize potential biases, and use technology responsibly (Jung & Puzmaz, 2018).

Hybrid advisory models that combine AI-powered tools with human guidance are likely to define the next phase of retail investing. These models offer efficiency and scalability while preserving trust, empathy, and accountability. When supported by strong regulatory oversight and transparent system design, human-AI collaboration can democratize investment opportunities and promote more resilient financial outcomes.

Ultimately, the goal is not automation for its own sake, but empowerment. By blending human judgment with intelligent systems, India can foster an investment ecosystem that is inclusive, informed, and capable of supporting sustainable wealth creation across diverse segments of society.

Conclusion :

AI is fundamentally rewriting the financial fate of India's retail investors by transforming how decisions are made, risks are perceived,

and opportunities are accessed. The shift from intuition to intelligence represents a structural change in the financial ecosystem, with profound implications for inclusion, behavior, and wealth creation.

This transformation is neither inherently benevolent nor inherently harmful. Its outcomes depend on design choices, regulatory frameworks, and the capacity of investors to engage critically with technology. When aligned with transparency, education, and ethical governance, AI has the potential to empower millions of Indian retail investors and contribute to more inclusive and resilient financial markets.

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জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাৰ কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী

নাট : এটি আলোচনা

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সংক্ষিপ্তসৰ :

অসমীয়া সংগীত, সাহিত্য, নাটক, চলচ্চিত্ৰ তথা সামগ্ৰিকভাৱে অসমীয়া শিল্পজগতলৈ অভিনৱত্ব প্ৰদান কৰা অনন্য সৃজনীশীলতাৰ প্ৰতীক স্বৰূপ ৰূপকোঁৱৰ জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱ। তেখেতৰ নাটকসমূহত বিভিন্ন দিশৰ প্ৰতিফলনে এক মনোৰম সৌন্দৰ্য্য ফুটি উঠিছে। লগতে তেখেতৰ চিন্তাধাৰাৰ সূক্ষ্মতম সূক্ষ্মতম চিত্ৰ অংকনে পাঠকৰ হৃদয়স্পৰ্শী হৈ পৰিছে। আমাৰ আলোচনাৰ বিষয় হিচাপে তেখেতৰ “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটকখনৰ সূক্ষ্ম সূক্ষ্ম বিষয় বাছি লোৱা হৈছে।

জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱৰ ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ নাটকখনৰ এটি আলোচনা দাঙি ধৰাই আমাৰ উদ্দেশ্য।

আমাৰ আলোচনাত ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ এখন সাৰ্থক ট্ৰেজিক নাটক হিচাপে উপস্থাপনৰ মাজতে আমাৰ আলোচনাৰ পৰিসৰ সীমাবদ্ধ থাকিব।

বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ সহায়ত আলোচিত বিষয় প্ৰস্তুত কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ’ব। ইয়াৰ বাবে মুখ্য আৰু গৌণ সমলৰ সহায় লোৱা হৈছে।

সময়ৰ পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ লগে লগে প্ৰস্তাৱিত আলোচনাৰ গুৰুত্ব আৰু প্ৰাসংগিকতা যথেষ্ট পৰিমাণে আছে। লগতে এনেধৰণৰ আলোচনাৰে পৰৱৰ্তী পাঠক সমাজৰ অলপ হ’লেও সহায় হ’ব বুলি আশা কৰিব পাৰি।

ভূমিকা অৱতৰণিকা :

কুৰি শতিকাৰ আদি ভাগত জন্ম গ্ৰহণ কৰা যি কেইজন মহান পুৰুষে

¹ সহকাৰী অধ্যাপিকা, ইন্দিৰা গান্ধী মহাবিদ্যালয়, বেইটমাৰী, বঙাইগাঁও

অসমৰ সাংস্কৃতিক দিশত নৱজাগৰণৰ সূচনা কৰিছিল; সেইসকলৰ উজ্জ্বল জ্যোতিষ্কৰ ভিতৰত জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ শাৰদীয় আকাশৰ ভোটাটৰা স্বৰূপ। জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ জ্যোতিৰ উজ্জ্বলতাই সমগ্ৰ অসমীয়া জাতিক এখন বেলেগ জগতৰ লগত পৰিচয় কৰাই দিলে। মাথো গীতিকাৰ, সুৰাকাৰ, নাট্যকাৰ, চিত্ৰশিল্পী কিম্বা বোলছবি পৰিচালক ৰূপেই নহয়; অসমীয়া জাতি গঠনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এক অত্যন্ত সংস্কৃতিবান ধাৰা সৃষ্টিৰ মহানায়ক ৰূপেও জ্যোতিৰ জ্যোতিচিৰ প্ৰবাহমান।

অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যত এখনি বিশিষ্ট আসন অধিকাৰ কৰি থকা নাটক হ'ল জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱৰ “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”। সংলাপ চৰিত্ৰ চিত্ৰণ, পৰিৱেশ চিত্ৰণ আদি একাধিক বিশিষ্টতাৰ আবেগেৰে সমৃদ্ধ “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ আটাইকেইখন নাটৰ ভিতৰত পাঠক আৰু সমালোচকৰ বেছি আদৰৰ। ড॰ মহেশ্বৰ নেওগৰ ভাষাত এই নাটকখনৰ মূল গুণসমূহ হ'ল- “নাটকীয় অভিনৱত্ব, কলা-কৌশলৰ পৰিপাট্য কাহিনী উপস্থাপন আৰু চৰিত্ৰ বিন্যাসৰ স্বাভাৱিকতা।” সামাজিক নাট হ'লেও কল্পনাত ৰামধেনুবুলীয়া পৰশ আৰু ঐতিহাসিক পৰিৱেশত গুৰু গম্ভীৰ পাৰিপাৰ্শ্বিকতাই “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ক প্ৰদান কৰিছে এক অনন্য আবেগৰ বাজ্জয়তা। নাটৰ গদ্যৰীতি বলিষ্ঠ আৰু মুক্তিময় হ'লেও পৰিৱেশত তাড়নাই ইয়াক সময়ে সময়ে পৰিণত কৰাইছে কবিতা সুলভ কোমল উক্তিলৈ। কতো উজুতি নোখোৱা কাহিনীৰ কৰুণাত্মক পৰিণতিয়ে সমগ্ৰ নাটখনিত বিয়পাই দিয়ে এক কলাসুলভ সৌন্দৰ্য্যৰ হাঁহি আৰু অশ্ৰুত কণাৰে তীব্ৰ বিপ্লৱৰ মৰ্মস্পৰ্শী বেদনা অথবা নানা চিন্তাৰ অৱকাশেৰে সমৃদ্ধ এই সৌন্দৰ্য্য। মুঠৰ ওপৰত অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যত “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” সদায়েই একক আৰু অনন্য।

বিষয়ৰ গুৰুত্ব :

অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যৰ ইতিহাসত ৰূপকোঁৱৰ জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱেই প্ৰথমজন নাট্যকাৰ; যিজনাই পৰম্পৰাগত নাট্যৰীতিৰ পৰা আঁতৰি আহি অসমীয়া নাটকৰ বিষয়বস্তু, ভাৱবস্তু আৰু ৰূপবস্তুত এক নতুন ৰূপ দিয়ে। তেওঁৰ বৰ্ণাঢ্য নাট্য প্ৰতিভাৰ স্বাক্ষৰ বহনকাৰী এখন নাটক হ'ল “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”। জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱেই প্ৰথমজন নাট্যকাৰ; যিজনৰ নাটকত দেখা যায় বিশালতাৰ সাহিত্যদৰ্শ আৰু বিপুলাত্মন কালচেতনা। তেখেতৰ এনে ধৰণৰ ৰচনাসম্প্ৰদায় সমগ্ৰ অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যৰ খ্যাতি অৰ্জন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। কিন্তু সময়ৰ আগ্ৰাসনৰ লগে লগে প্ৰস্তাৱিত কৰ্মৰ গুৰুত্ব আৰু প্ৰাসংগিকতা যথেষ্ট পৰিমাণে আছে।

গৱেষণাৰ উদ্দেশ্য :

সমগ্ৰ অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যৰ প্ৰসিদ্ধ ৰূপকোঁৱৰ জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱৰ “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটখনিক এখন সাৰ্থক নাটক, ট্ৰেজেডি বা ট্ৰেজিক নাটক হিচাপে

আলোচনা আগবঢ়োৱা হৈছে। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ নাটকখনৰ প্ৰতিটো চৰিত্ৰত জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ সুকীয়া বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰি চোৱাৰ উদ্দেশ্যেৰেই উক্ত বিষয়সমূহ আমাৰ আলোচনাৰ বিষয় হিচাপে বাছি লোৱা হৈছে।

গৱেষণাৰ পৰিসৰ আৰু পৰিসীমা :

অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যৰ ইতিহাসত সৰ্বকালৰ, সৰ্বক্ষণৰ এটি চিৰস্মৰণীয় নাম ৰূপকোঁৱৰ জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱ। সুন্দৰৰ পূজাৰী আগৰৱালাৰ নাট ৰচনাৰ গুৰুত্ব সৰ্বপ্ৰথমে সময়ৰ ফালৰপৰা। তেওঁৰ অফুৰন্ত শৈল্পিক প্ৰতিভা আৰু নাটকীয়া কলা-কৌশল সম্বন্ধে মস্তক স্থিত তীক্ষ্ণ পাৰদৰ্শিতাই অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যত নাট্যকাৰ ৰূপে তেওঁৰ স্বীকৃতি কেৱল কালগত নহয়; নৈপুণ্যগতৰূপতো প্ৰতিভাত কৰিছে। তেখেতৰ ৰচনা সম্ভাৰে সমগ্ৰ অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ ভঁৰাল চহকী কৰি থৈ গৈছে। আমাৰ এই আলোচনাত আগৰৱালাদেৱৰ “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটকখনক নিৰ্বাচন কৰা হৈছে। এইক্ষেত্ৰত “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটকখনক এখন সাৰ্থক নাটক হিচাপে, ট্ৰেজিক নাটক হিচাপে আমাৰ আলোচনা পৰিসৰ সীমাবদ্ধ থাকিব।

গৱেষণাৰ পদ্ধতি আৰু সমল সংগ্ৰহ :

বিষয়টোৰ আলোচনা আগবঢ়াতে বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ সহায় লোৱা হৈছে। মুখ্য সমল হিচাপে “জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ ৰচনাৱলী”ক প্ৰধান্য দিয়া হৈছে। গৌণসমল হিচাপে বিষয়ৰ সৈতে সম্পৰ্কিত বিভিন্ন প্ৰাসংগিক গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী তথা আলোচনা পত্ৰই ঠাই পাইছে।

বিষয় প্ৰৱেশ :

“কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটকখনি অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যৰ জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱৰ শ্ৰেষ্ঠ অৱদান। চৰিত্ৰ সৃষ্টিত পৰিস্থিতি-পৰিকল্পনা নাটৰ মৌল আবেদন এই সকলো বিষয়তে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যত এক অনুপম সৃষ্টি। “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” এক সাৰ্থক তথা ট্ৰেজিক নাটকৰ পিনৰপৰা আপুৰুগীয়া সম্পদ হিচাপে বিবেচিত হৈছে।

এখন সাৰ্থক হিচাপে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” :

“কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটখনিত একে সময়তে এহাতে শ্বেল্পপীয়েৰৰ ৰোমাণ্টিক নাট্য-শৈলী আৰু আনহাতে বাণাৰ্দ্ৰশ্বৰ চিন্তামূলক নাটকৰ গুণৰাজি পৰিস্ফুট হৈ উঠিছে। মাক ৰাজমাওক সন্তুষ্ট কৰিবৰ বাবে নিজ ইচ্ছাৰ বিৰুদ্ধে গৈও নাটখনিৰ নায়ক সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে ৰাজ্যত প্ৰধান-মন্ত্ৰীৰ ছোৱালী কাঞ্চনমতীক বিয়া কৰায়। কিন্তু যেতিয়াই তেওঁ গম পালে যে নৱ পৰিণীতা স্ত্ৰী কাঞ্চন আচলতে অনঙ্গ নামৰ অন্য এজন যুৱকৰ প্ৰতিহে আসক্তা; তেতিয়াই তেওঁ বনভোজলৈ যোৱাৰ অজুহাতত কাজিৰঙাৰ হাবিত নিজৰ বন্ধু আৰু পত্নীৰ পূৰ্বৰ প্ৰেমিক অনঙ্গৰ ওচৰত কাঞ্চনমতীক আঘাত

অনুভৱ কৰি তীব্ৰ সমাজ সচেতন আৰু স্পষ্টবাদী কাঞ্চনে বিষ খাই আত্মহত্যা কৰে। এই ঘটনাই মানুহৰ মাজত বু-বু-বা-বা কৰি সৃষ্টি কৰে আৰু আটাইৰে সন্দেহ ঘনীভূত হয় কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী ছোৱালীৰ ওপৰত এই শেৱালীৰ দৰাচলতেই নাটখনিৰ নায়িকা শেৱালীৰ প্ৰতি থকা তীব্ৰ প্ৰেমৰ তাড়নাকেই সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে বিবাহিতা স্ত্ৰীক ত্যাগ কৰিলে- এই ভুল ধাৰণা বদ্ধমূল হৈ ৰাজমাওৰ মগজুত খোপনি পোতাৰ লগে লগেই তেওঁ মনে মনে শেৱালীক নগা পাহাৰলৈ পঠাই দিয়ে। এই কথা গম পোৱাৰ লগে-লগেই শেৱালীয়ে এই কথা ভালকৈয়ে জানে যে তাইৰ দৰে সাধাৰণ লিগিৰী এজনীৰ বাবে সমাজক আৱমাননা কৰে তেন্তে তেওঁ ৰাজসিংহাসনতো হেৰুৱাই আনকি জীৱনো বিপদাপন্ন হ'ব পাৰে। সেয়ে তাই কোঁৱৰক এনে অপবাদৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা কৰিবৰ বাবেই পাহাৰৰ জুৰিত জপিয়াই আপোনঘাতী হয়। চমুকৈ “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটখনিৰ কাহিনী এয়ে।

নাটকখনিৰ সবাতোকৈ আকৰ্ষণীয় দিশ হৈছে ইয়াৰ চৰিত্ৰ চিত্ৰণ। নাট্য-সাহিত্যৰ ইতিহাসত পোন-প্ৰথমবাৰৰ বাবে জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদে অসমীয়া নাটকত এজন প্ৰগতিশীল বৈপ্লৱিক নায়ক সৃষ্টি কৰিছে মূল চৰিত্ৰ সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰৰ যোগেদি। অভিজাত আৰু ৰক্ষণশীল মানসিকতাৰ পৰা সম্পূৰ্ণভাৱে মক্ত হ'ব পৰা নাই যদিও সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে যে সৃষ্টিশীল বিপ্লৱী মনৰ প্ৰতীক, তাত সন্দেহ নাই। এই কালজয়ী বিপ্লৱী মন আৰু সংশ্লিষ্ট সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ মাজত হোৱা সংঘাতেই নাটখনিক ট্ৰেজেদিৰ ৰূপ দিছে।

নাটকখনিৰ নায়িকা শেৱালী যেন সঁচাকৈয়ে এপাহি নিয়ৰত তিতা শেৱালীহে। এফালে কৰুণ কোমল সৌন্দৰ্য্যৰে আলুসুৰা; আনফালে মনৰ দিপ্তীৰে দীপ্তিমতী শেৱালী অনাদৃতা। তথাপিও প্ৰেমৰ বাবে, প্ৰেমাস্পদৰ বাবে, তাই নিজৰ জীৱন আত্মত দিব পাৰে। থৈ যাব পাৰে তাইৰ প্ৰেমভৰা বাউলী হিয়া। মুঠৰ ওপৰত কঠিন কোমলে মিলি শেৱালী হৈ উঠিছে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ৰ মহত্বতম আকৰ্ষণ। অন্য দুটি নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ কাঞ্চন কুঁৱৰী আৰু ৰাজমাও নিজ নিজ সামাজিক মৰ্য্যাদাৰ সীমাৰেখাৰ ভিতৰত স্ব-মহিমাৰে প্ৰতিষ্ঠাতা। মূলতঃ এই দুই নাৰীৰ তীব্ৰ সমাজ সচেতনতা আৰু আত্মভিমানই নাটখনিৰ সংঘাত সৃষ্টিৰ অন্যতম উৎস। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও নিজ নিজ স্থাপন সুদৰ্শন অনংগ, বপুৰা, বৈৰতী আদি অন্যান্য চৰিত্ৰসমূহেও নাটখনিক এক অন্যান্য মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিছে।

‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ নাটখনিৰ প্ৰতিটো চৰিত্ৰৰ পৰিস্ফুৰণত গভীৰভাৱে সহায় কৰিছে ইয়াৰ সংলাপসমূহে। বিশেষকৈ কাঞ্চন আৰু সুন্দৰৰ কথোকথনত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা গভীৰ অৰ্থপূৰ্ণ সংলাপ বোধকৰো অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যতে বিৰল হ'ব। অনঙ্গৰ মুখত দিয়া স্বগতোক্তিও নাটখনিত এক অভিনয় সংযোজন। কোনো চৰিত্ৰৰ মুখতে

অতিৰিক্ত সংলাপ প্ৰয়োগ নকৰাৰ ফলতেই নাটখনিৰ প্ৰতিটো চৰিত্ৰ হৈ পৰিছে সৰল আৰু গীৰ্জীয়াপূৰ্ণ। আনকি প্ৰথম অংকৰ চতুৰ্থ দৰ্শনটো কেৱল বিৱৰণীৰ মাজেৰেই শেষ কৰা স্বত্বেও নাটকৰ ক্ৰিয়াশীলতা হ্ৰাস হোৱা নাই; বৰং বৃদ্ধিহে হৈছে। তদুপৰি নাটকৰ নাটকীয়তাও ক্ৰিয়াশীলতা বৃদ্ধিৰ বাবে প্ৰয়োজনীয় সংঘাত, উৎকণ্ঠা আৰু সাদৃশ্য সাৱলীল সংযোজনে নাট্য কাহিনীক প্ৰদান কৰিছে আৰু অধিক গতিশীলতা।

মাথো চৰিত্ৰ বা সংলাপ সৃষ্টিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতেই যে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ত চমৎকাৰিত্বৰ উদ্ভৱ হৈছে এনে নহয়। কিন্তু নাট্যৰীতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰটো অভিনয়ত্বৰ স্ফূৰণ ঘটাইছে। বিশেষতঃ নাটখনিৰ ভাষাত শেৱালীৰ কৰুণ মৃত্যুৱে সুন্দৰৰ জীৱনলৈ কঢ়িয়াই অনা মৰ্মান্তিক দুখে মাথো ট্ৰেজিক আবেদনেই সৃষ্টি কৰা নাই, দৰ্শক পাঠকৰ হৃদয়ত মৰ্মস্পৰ্শী বেদনাক উদ্ৰেক ঘটাবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

নাটখনিৰ অন্য এক বিশেষ মন কৰিবলগীয়া দিশ হ’ল ইয়াৰ নাট্য নিৰ্দেশনা। অসমীয়া নাটকত ইতিপূৰ্বে সংযোজন নোহোৱা এই নাট্য নিৰ্দেশনাৰ মূলতে আছিল জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ ওপৰত পৰা পাশ্চাত্য নাট্য ৰীতিৰ প্ৰভাৱ। বিশেষকৈ শ্বেক্সপীয়েৰৰ ৰোমাণ্টিক নাট্যশৈলী আৰু জৰ্জ বানাৰ্ডশ্বৰ চিন্তামূলক নাট্যধাৰাই বিশেষভাৱে পেলোৱা প্ৰভাৱে জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদক অসমীয়া নাট্য-সাহিত্যকো বিশ্বৰ দৰবাৰলৈ লৈ যোৱাৰ প্ৰস্তুতি খতিয়ান “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাট।

এই সমস্ত সম্পদৰ উপৰিও “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটত আৱদ্ধ আছে এক নিটোল কাহিনী যি কাহিনীৰ চমু খতিয়ান ইতিপূৰ্বে দাঙি ধৰা হৈছে। বিচাৰ কৰি দেখা যায় যে নাটখনিৰ বিষয়বস্তু বা কাহিনী প্ৰবাহ যদিও কাল্পনিক তথাপি ইয়াক নিৰ্মাণ কৰা হৈছে মধ্যযুগীয় সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ ওপৰত ভেজাদি। ইয়াত উত্থাপিত হৈছে এনে কেতবোৰ সমস্যা যিবোৰক একে আঘাৰতে যুগকেন্দ্ৰীক আখ্যা দিব নোৱাৰি, এইবোৰ মানুহৰ বাস্তৱ জীৱনত সদায়ে পুৰণি কুঃসংস্কাৰ আৰু গোড়ামিৰ বিৰুদ্ধে নতুনত্বই অটল জেহাদ বা বিপ্লৱ। সৰ্বোপৰি “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” কাহিনীত আছে নাট্যকাৰৰ এক সংস্কাৰকামী মনৰ চিনাকী। এই প্ৰসংগত নাট্যকাৰে নিজেই লিখিছে- সমাজৰ প্ৰকৃত সাংস্কৃতিক জীৱন বিকাশ কৰিবলৈ হ’লে সেই সমাজৰ ভিতৰত থকা সংস্কৃতি বিৰোধী সকলো সমস্যা সমাধান হ’ব লাগিব। মানুহৰ স্বাৰ্থপৰতা, লোভ, সংকীৰ্ণতা আৰু ক্ষমতা লিপ্সাৰপৰা উদ্ভৱ হোৱা মানৱ সমাজৰ নানা গোন্ধ আঁতৰ কৰিব লাগিব। এইবোৰকে আঁতৰ কৰিবলৈ মানুহৰ প্ৰতিৰোধ আৰু সংঘাতমূলক অভিযানেই হৈছে বিপ্লৱী নায়ক। তেওঁৰ বিপ্লৱী মানসিকতাই নাট্য কাহিনীলৈ সংঘাত আনিছে আৰু এই সংঘাতেই নাটকৰ পৰিসমাপ্তি ঘটাইছে যি সমাপ্তিতেই নিহিত হৈ আছে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ৰ সৰলতা।

জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ অনুপম নাট্য প্ৰতিভাৰ গুণত “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ত এফালে

উদ্ভাষিত হৈছে। মগজুৰ চিন্তা আৰু আনফালে ব্যাকুল হৈ পৰিছে হৃদয়ৰ মৰ্মবেদনা। হৃদয় আৰু মগজুৰ এই মণিকাঞ্চন সংযোজনতে ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’য়ে লাভ কৰিছে এক অনুপম সৌন্দৰ্য্য- এই কথাত সন্দেহ নাই। সেয়ে হ’লেও কিন্তু নাটখনিৰ দুই এঠাইত সংলাপ কিম্বা প্ৰবন্ধ ভংগীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কিছু ত্ৰুটিয়ে ভুমুকি নমৰাকৈ থকা নাই। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে- শেৰালি আৰু ৰেৱতীৰ আগত ৰাজমাৰে ‘ধুন মাৰি ধুন মাৰি গা দেখাই গা দেখাই মোৰ ল’ৰাটো বলিয়া কৰিলে’ বুলি কোৱা কথাষাৰতে মাথো চৰিত্ৰটোৰেই পদমৰ্য্যাদা লাভৰ কৰা নাই; নাটকৰ গাভীৰ্য্যও বিঘ্নিত কৰিছে। এনেদৰে নগা পাহাৰৰ সৌন্দৰ্য্য বৰ্ণনাই অনঙ্গৰ মুখত কবিতাধৰ্মী যি দীঘলীয়া সংলাপ দিছে সেইবোৰ কবিতাহে হ’লগৈ নাট্যধৰ্মী সংলাপ নহ’ল।

এনেদৰে দুই এটা দোষ-ত্ৰুটি বাদ দি অন্যান্য দিশৰ পৰা “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” এক অভিনৱ সৃষ্টি সেই কথাত দ্বিমত নাই। অসমীয়া নাট্য সাহিত্যৰ ইতিহাসত কাল্পনিক নাট কিন্তু বাস্তৱতাৰ দাবীদাৰ এই “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”য়ে এফালে যেনেকৈ সমস্যামূলক নাটক হিচাপে এক সুকীয়া মৰ্য্যাদা লাভ কৰিছে; আনফালে এখন উৎকৃষ্ট ট্ৰেজেডি হিচাপেও পৰিগণিত হৈছে। সমালোচক ড॰ মহেন্দ্ৰ বৰাই কৈ যোৱাৰ দৰে সঁচাই- “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী অসমীয়া নাট কাৰেঙৰ লেখৰ লিগিৰী মাথোন নহয় কাৰেঙ সাজোৱাত ধুনীয়া কুঁৱৰী যাৰ সন্মুখত নাটঘৰৰ সকলো তীৰ্থযাত্ৰীয়ে আঁঠু লয়। সন্দেহ নাই অসমীয়া নাটকৰ বুৰঞ্জীত এক অপূৰ্ব সৃষ্টিহিচাপে জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ এই “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ৰ সন্মান যাউতিযুগীয়া হৈ ৰ’ব।

ট্ৰেজিক নাটক হিচাপে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ঃ

“কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটখনিক ট্ৰেজিক নাট হিচাপে আলোচনা কৰাৰ পূৰ্বে অথবা ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ নাটকত ট্ৰেজেডিৰ কি কি লক্ষণ পৰিস্ফুট হৈছে তাক আলোচনা কৰাৰ আগতে ট্ৰেজেডি কি সেই কথা জানি লোৱাৰ প্ৰয়োজন হৈ পৰে। মাথোন কৰণ পৰিণতিয়েই সকলো সময়তে ট্ৰেজেডিৰ লক্ষণ ফুটাই তুলিব নোৱাৰে। অৰ্থাৎ ট্ৰেজেডিৰ কিছুমান সুকীয়া লক্ষণ আছে, যিবোৰ অতি সূক্ষ্মৰূপতো ট্ৰেজেদীক ফুটাই তুলিব পাৰে। যেনে- ট্ৰেজেদিত জীৱনৰ গভীৰ সমস্যা উত্থাপিত হয়। গাভীৰ্য্য আৰু সংযমশীলতা ট্ৰেজেডিৰ প্ৰধান লক্ষণীয় বৈশিষ্ট্য। ট্ৰেজেডিৰ পৰিণতিয়ে মানুহৰ মন শোকেৰে আছন্ন কৰি ৰাখে। মানৱ অন্তৰৰ ভয় আৰু সহানুভূতিৰ উদ্ৰেক ঘটে।

ট্ৰেজেডিৰ এনে বিশেষত্বসমূহ আলোচনা কৰিলে দেখা যায় যে ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ নাটকৰ কাহিনী অতি দুখাত্মক। নায়িকা শেৱালীৰ যি পৰিস্থিতিত মৃত্যু হয়। সেই পৰিস্থিতিত অকণো সুখৰ পোহৰ দেখা নাযায়। প্ৰেমিক সুন্দৰৰ পৰা বিচ্ছেদ, ৰাজ আভিজাত্যৰ মানসিক শোষণ, ৰাজমাওৰ স্বাৰ্থপৰ মনোভাৱ আৰু ঈৰ্ষাৰ কৰলত জ্বলি ছাঁই হৈ যোৱা শেৱালীৰ লিগিৰী জীৱনত আমি সুখ বা আনন্দৰ পোহৰ

খন্তেকৰ বাবেও দেখা নাই। অন্তঃত শেৰালীৰ যি কৰুণ পৰিণতি তাত তাই কোনো দোষ নাই। পৰিৱেশ, পৰিস্থিতি, সমাজনীতি আদিয়ে শেৰালীক মৃত্যুৰ মুখলৈ আগবঢ়াই দিয়ে। এনে পৰিণতিয়ে সকলোৰে মনলৈ এক দুখৰ বন্যা বোৱাই আনে। যাৰ ফলস্বৰূপে নাটখনক একে আষাৰে ট্ৰেজেডি বুলি কোৱাত অকণো সংকোচ নহয়। কিন্তু সেই বুলি কেৱল মৃত্যুৱেই এখন নাটকত ট্ৰেজেডিৰ কাৰণ হ'ব নোৱাৰে। কাৰণ মৃত্যুৱে জীৱনৰ সমস্ত দুখ, সংঘাতৰ অন্তঃ পেলাই। সেয়ে মৃত্যু ট্ৰেজেডিৰ প্ৰধান বৈশিষ্ট্য হ'ব নোৱাৰে। এনে ক্ষেত্ৰত 'কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী'ত প্ৰতিভাত হোৱা ট্ৰেজেডিৰ অন্যান্য লক্ষণসমূহো বিচাৰ কৰি চোৱাৰ প্ৰয়োজন আহি পৰে।

ট্ৰেজেডিৰ লক্ষণ পোন-প্ৰথমে নিৰূপণ কৰে এৰিষ্টটলে তেওঁৰ 'পয়েটিক' গ্ৰন্থত। সেই অনুসৰি ট্ৰেজেডি হৈছে ভয় আৰু সহানুভূতিৰ উদ্ৰেক কৰি তেনে ধৰণৰ মাত্ৰাধিকা ভাৱাবেগবোৰৰ বিমোচন কৰোৱা অভিনয়ৰ উপযোগী, ছন্দোৱদ্ধ, সংলাপযুক্ত কিছু পৰিমাণে ব্যাপক, স্বয়ং সম্পূৰ্ণ ঘটনাৰ অনুকৰণ বা উপস্থাপন। অৱশ্যে সাম্প্ৰতিক কালত যদিও এই সংজ্ঞাটিৰ কিছু পৰিবৰ্তন হৈছে। তথাপিও সাল-সলনিৰ মাজেৰে ই আজিও চলি আছে। সংজ্ঞাটো বিশ্লেষণ কৰি চালে দেখা যায় যে, ট্ৰেজেডী হ'ল জীৱনৰ কোনো গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ কাহিনীৰ নাট্যৰূপ। এনে নাট্যৰূপ 'কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী' নাটত বিৰাজমান। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও এৰিষ্টটলে অবাঞ্ছিত ভাগ্য বিপৰ্যয়কো ট্ৰেজেডীৰ লক্ষণ হিচাপে চিহ্নিত কৰিছে। সেইফালৰ পৰা চাবলৈ গলে "কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী" নাটকতো নায়িকা শেৰালীৰ যি ভাগ্য বিপৰ্যয় সেয়া অবাঞ্ছিত অৰ্থাৎ হঠাতে আহি পৰা। তদুপৰি নাটখনিৰ কাহিনীটো ব্যাপক; যিয়ে কৰুণ ৰস সৃষ্টিক সহায় কৰিছে। সৰ্বোপৰি এৰিষ্টলৰ মতে-দুখ বিপৰ্যয় আদিৰে ভাৰাক্ৰান্ত কৰি কাহিনী এটাক নাটকীয় ৰূপ দিলেই সি ট্ৰেজেডী হৈ নুঠে। যেতিয়ালৈকে ই দৰ্শক পাঠকৰ অন্তৰত ভয় আৰু সহানুভূতিৰ উদ্ৰেক কৰাব নোৱাৰে। 'কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী' নাটকত শেৰালিৰ দুখ, বিপৰ্যয়ৰ কাহিনীয়ে স্বাভাৱিকতে আমাৰ অন্তৰত সহানুভূতিৰ জন্ম দিয়ে।

নাটখনিৰ নায়িকা শেৰালি শুভ্ৰ শেৰালিৰ দৰেই কোমল, সামান্য কৰ্কশ পৰশতেই যি মৰহি যায়। সত্যপ্ৰসাদ বৰুৱাৰ মতে- "শেৰালিৰো দুৰ্বলতা আছিল। ছেগ পায়ো তাই সুন্দৰক সুবিধা নিদিলে তাইক গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ মহত্বৰ আদৰ্শৰ আহ্বানে তাইক দুৰ্বল কৰি পেলালে। স্বভাৱসুলভ কোমলতাই আত্মপ্ৰতিষ্ঠাৰ বাটত হেঙাৰ দি তাইৰ আত্মবিলুপ্তিৰ বাট মুকলি কৰি দিয়ে। নায়িকা শেৰালিৰ এনে আদৰ্শৰ পৰিণতিয়েই পৰিশেষত নাটখনিক ট্ৰেজেডিৰ ৰূপ দিছে। প্ৰেমৰ মহত্বৰ আদৰ্শৰ কাৰণে নাটখনিত অৱশেষত নায়িকাই আত্মহত্যা কৰিছে আৰু লগে লগে নাৰীৰ প্ৰেম সম্পৰ্কত থকা কঁৱৰৰ ভুল ধাৰণা ভগাত ভগ্ন হৃদয়ৰে শেৰালিৰ স্মৃতিত ভাগি পৰিছে- মৰ্মান্তিক বেদনাত আত্ম অনুশোচনা কৰিছে। স্বাভাৱিকতে এই মহত্বত দৰ্শক শ্ৰোতা

বা পাঠকৰ মন কৌঁৱৰৰ প্ৰতি জাগি উঠা সহানুভূতিত ভাৰাৱ্ৰান্ত হয় আৰু নাটখনিয়োও ট্ৰেজেডিৰ শাৰীলৈ গতি কৰে।

প্ৰকৃত ট্ৰেজিক নাটকৰ দৰেই “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”তো সুন্দৰ কৌঁৱৰ, শেৱালি বা অনঙ্গ কাঞ্চনৰ জীৱনলৈ নামি অহা দুৰ্যোগ বা শোকাবহ পৰিণতিৰ বাবে বাহ্যিক সংঘাত দায়ী নহয়, দায়ী নিজৰ চাৰিভিত্তিক দুৰ্বলতাই গঢ় দিয়া পৰিৱেশহে নাটখনিত নায়ক সুন্দৰ প্ৰকৃত অৰ্থতেই ট্ৰেজিক নায়ক। শেৱালিৰ মৃত্যুৱে সুন্দৰৰ জীৱনলৈ কঢ়িয়াই অনা মৰ্মাস্তিক দুখেই নাটখনিক ট্ৰেজেডীলৈ উত্তীৰ্ণ কৰিছে। এৰিষ্টটলৰ সংজ্ঞাৰে বিচাৰ কৰিলে দেখা যায় সুন্দৰৰ নিজ ভুলৰ বাবেই এই ট্ৰেজেডীৰ সৃষ্টি। আৰু সুন্দৰৰ সেই ভুল হ’ল অত্যাধিক আবেগ প্ৰৱণতা তথা সময়ৰ সিদ্ধান্ত সময়ত লব নোৱাৰাৰ মানসিকতা।

ট্ৰেজেডীৰ সৃষ্টি হয় তাতেই যতেই নাটকৰ মূল চৰিত্ৰটোৱে হাজাৰ শংকা, বিপদৰ মাজতো মূৰ তুলি থিয় হোৱাৰ আগ্ৰহ দেখে। ট্ৰেজেডীৰ নায়কে জীৱনৰ গভীৰৰো গভীৰলৈ গৈ সদায় সত্যৰ অনুসন্ধান কৰে। সাধাৰণতে নিৰ্বাহ কৰাৰ দৰে তেওঁ জীৱনক মানি লব নোখোজে। বাস্তৱ জগতৰ সৰহভাগ মানুহৰ জীৱনত দুৰ্ভাগ্য আছে; কিন্তু ট্ৰেজেডী নাই। কাৰণ সাধাৰণ মানৱে সদায় বাস্তৱ পৰিস্থিতিৰ লগত বুজাবুজি কৰে। কিন্তু ট্ৰেজেডীৰ নায়কে বাস্তৱ পৰিস্থিতিক মানি নলয়। তেওঁ জীৱনৰ প্ৰত্যাহান গ্ৰহণ কৰে। মানৱ জীৱনৰ অভিজ্ঞতাৰ সত্য উদ্ঘাটন কৰিবৰ বাবে তেওঁ ব্যাকুৰ হৈ পৰে। অধ্যাপক ড০ অমৰেশ দত্তৰ ভাষাত- “He is the seeker of absolute truth he wants to go through the whole gamut of human experience.” (Concept of tragedy)

বহুতো সমালোচকে কোৱাৰ দৰে সুন্দৰ কৌঁৱৰক দৰাচলতে একে আধাৰে নাৰী বিদ্বেষী আখ্যা দিব নোৱাৰি। ব্যক্তিগত ধাৰণাৰে চাবলৈ গ’লে অনুভৱ হয় নাৰী অন্তৰৰ এই পবিত্ৰতাৰ প্ৰেমৰ অনুভূতিক, কামনাৰ ধূলি-মাকতিৰ পৰা আঁতৰাই ৰাখিবলৈকে তেওঁৰ এই জীৱনযোৰা প্ৰচেষ্টা আৰু এই প্ৰচেষ্টাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত তেওঁ একোৰে লগত আপোচ কৰিবলৈ নিবিচাৰিছিল। এইখিনিতে সুন্দৰৰ চৰিত্ৰটো ট্ৰেজেডীৰ নায়কৰ চৰিত্ৰলৈ উন্নীত হৈছে।

এনেবোৰ কাৰণতে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ শ্ৰেষ্ঠ ট্ৰেজেডী। এগৰাকী বাকী আলোচকে ক’বৰ দৰে “একক আৰু অনন্য” (ড০ কৰবী ডেকা হাজৰিকা অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ ৰূপৰস, ১৯৮৮)। সৰ্বোপৰি কাল্পনিক বিষয়বস্তু ঘটনাৱলীৰ বিন্যাস, নায়কৰ কাৰু-কাৰ্য্য, নায়িকা আৰু পাৰ্শ্ব নায়িকাৰ শোকাবহ মৃত্যু আদিৰ সন্মিলিত ট্ৰেজিক আবেদনে “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী”ক প্ৰদান কৰিছে এক অনন্য মাত্ৰা সেই কথাত সন্দেহৰ অৱকাশ নাই।

কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰীৰ প্ৰতিটো চৰিত্ৰ জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ সুকীয়া বৈশিষ্ট্য :

আধুনিক অসমীয়া নাটকৰ পথ প্ৰদৰ্শক হিচাপে পোন-প্ৰথমবাৰৰ বাবে ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ৰ চৰিত্ৰ সমূহত যি মানসিক অন্তঃদন্দ আৰু সংঘাত আৰোপ কৰা হৈছে, সেই নাটখনিৰ শ্বেল্পপীয়েৰ, ইবছন, বানাৰ্দ্দৰ আদিৰ দৰে পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্যিকৰ নাট্যকৃতিৰ সমপৰ্য্যায়লৈ উত্তৰণ ঘটাইছে। গণশিল্পী হেমাংগ বিশ্বাসে কৈ যোৱা- “পুৰণি আৰু নতুনৰ সংগ্ৰামত নতুনক প্ৰথম আদৰি লোৱাৰ যি সংঘাত তাকেই মূৰ্ত প্ৰতীক আছিল ৰূপকোঁৱৰ বোলা কথাষাৰৰ প্ৰত্যক্ষ স্বৰূপ নাটখনিৰ অংগে-অংগে উদ্ভাসিত হৈ উঠিছে। জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ কলাত্মক তুলিকাৰ স্পৰ্শত ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ৰ প্ৰতিটো চৰিত্ৰই হৈ উঠিছে তীব্ৰ সংঘাতেৰে জৰ্জৰিত, মানসিক অন্তঃদন্দৰে উদ্বেলিত আৰু সুকীয়া সুকীয়া বিশেষত্বৰে সমুজ্জ্বল। কাৰ্য্যত চৰিত্ৰ সৃষ্টিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বহিঃদন্দৰ তুলনাত অন্তঃদন্দ আধিক্যই নাটখনিক প্ৰদান কৰিছে এক অনন্য মাত্ৰা। সমকালীন সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ নীচতা, দ্ৰুততা, ফোপোলা আভিজাত্য, নিষ্ঠুৰতা, বিভৎসতা আদিৰ কৰলত পৰি প্ৰতিটো চৰিত্ৰই ছটফটাইছে। প্ৰতিটো চৰিত্ৰই হৈ পৰিছে মৌন, নিসংগ আৰু মানসিক দন্দত জৰ্জৰিত।

মাতৃ ৰাজমাক সন্তুষ্ট কৰিবৰ বাবেই নিজ ইচ্ছাৰ বিৰুদ্ধে গৈয়ো নাটখনিৰ নায়ক সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে ৰাজ্যৰ প্ৰধান মন্ত্ৰীৰ ছোৱালী কাঞ্চনমতীক বিয়া কৰায়। কিন্তু যেতিয়াই তেওঁ গম পালে যে নৱপৰীনিতা স্ত্ৰী কাঞ্চন আচলতে অনঙ্গ নামৰ অন্য এজন যুৱকৰ প্ৰতিহে আসক্তা; তেতিয়াই তেওঁ বনভোজলৈ যোৱাৰ অজুহাতত কাজিৰঙাৰ হাবিত নিজৰ বন্ধু আৰু পত্নীৰ পূৰ্ব প্ৰেমিক অনঙ্গৰ ওচৰত কাঞ্চনমতীক থৈ আহেগৈ। এই কথাতেই আত্ম সন্মানত আঘাত অনুভৱ কৰি তীব্ৰ সমাজ সচেতন আৰু স্পষ্টভাষী কাঞ্চনে বিহ খাই আত্মহত্যা কৰে। এই ঘটনাই মানুহৰ মাজত বুকু বা বাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰে আৰু আটাইৰে সন্দেহ ঘনীভূত হয়। “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” শেৱালীৰ ওপৰত। এই শেৱালীয়েই দৰাচলতে নাটখনিৰ নায়িকা। শেৱালীৰ প্ৰতি থকা তীব্ৰ প্ৰেমৰ তাড়নাতেই সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে বিবাহিতা স্ত্ৰীক ত্যাগ কৰিলে- এই ভুল ধাৰণা বদ্ধমূল হৈ ৰাজমাওৰ মগজুত খোপনি পোটাৰ লগে লগে তেওঁ মনে মনে শেৱালীক নগা পাহাৰলৈ পঠিয়াই দিয়ে। এই কথা গম পোৱাৰ লগে লগে শেৱালীৰ জীৱন ৰক্ষাৰ্থে সুন্দৰ নগা পাহাৰলৈ যায়। কিন্তু শেৱালীয়ে এই কথা ভালকৈ জানে যে ৰাজকুমাৰ হৈ সুন্দৰে যদি তাইৰ দৰে সাধাৰণ লিগিৰী এজনীৰ বাবে সমাজক অৱমাননা কৰে তেন্তে তেওঁ ৰাজ-সিংহাসনতো হেৰুৱাবই লাগিব আনকি জীৱনো বিপদাপন্ন হ’ব পাৰে। সেয়ে তাই কোঁৱৰক এনে অপবাদৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা কৰিবৰ বাবে পাহাৰৰ জুৰিত জপিয়াই আপোনঘাটী হয়। চমুকৈ “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” কাহিনী এয়ে। “কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী” নাটখনিৰ সবাতোকৈ আকৰ্ষণীয় দিশ হৈছে ইয়াৰ চৰিত্ৰচিত্ৰণ। নামেৰেই

নিজৰ চাৰিত্ৰিক বিশিষ্টতা প্ৰকট কৰিব খোজা চৰিত্ৰসমূহৰ দ্বন্দ্বই নাটখনিৰ প্ৰকৃত সৌন্দৰ্য্য নিৰ্মান কৰিছে। ব্যক্তি স্বতন্ত্ৰতাৰ বিৰোধী, গোৰা আৰু আপোচহীন, সমাজ এখনৰ প্ৰতিনিধিৰ বাবেই নাৰী বা মাতৃ হৈও ৰাজমাওৰ চৰিত্ৰত কোমলতাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে অংকিত হৈছে ৰজাঘৰীয়া দান্তিকতা, গোড়ামী, অভিমান, নাট্যকাহিনীত সংঘাত আৰু গতিশীলতা সৃষ্টিৰ বাবে ৰাজমাও প্ৰধান চৰিত্ৰ ৰূপে অংকিত হৈছে। ৰাজমাওৰ লগত তেওঁৰ পুত্ৰৰ যি তীব্ৰ সংঘাত অথবা ৰাজকাৰেঙৰ দুটা খেয়ানী আৰু অভিমানী চৰিত্ৰৰ যি ব্যক্তিকেত্ৰীক দণ্ডতাৰ জৰিয়তে পৰোক্ষভাৱে দৰাচলতে সামাজিক মূল্যবোধ আৰু আদৰ্শত দণ্ডহে সাৱলীল ৰূপত উপস্থাপিত হৈছে।

নাটখনিৰ নায়ক সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰৰ বন্ধু অনঙ্গৰামৰ পূৰ্ব প্ৰেমিকা আৰু সুন্দৰৰ পত্নী এই দুয়োটা ৰূপৰ মাজেদি পৰিস্ফুট হোৱা কাঞ্চনমতী চৰিত্ৰটো নিজ বিশিষ্টতাৰ বলত সোনৰ দৰেই উজলি উঠিছে। হৃদয়ৰ ভাৱবেগক অস্বীকাৰ নকৰিও কাঞ্চনে ভাৰতীয় আদৰ্শৰ ওপৰত কোনো প্ৰকাৰে কুঠাৰাঘাত কৰিব নিবিচাৰে। কাঞ্চনৰ প্ৰতিটো বক্তব্যৰ মাজেদি সমাজৰ প্ৰতি গভীৰ আস্থাশীলতা প্ৰকাশিত হৈছে- “সমাজে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিবলৈ কোনো অধিকাৰ দিয়া নাই।” কাঞ্চন ভয়শূন্য, দৃঢ়চেতনা আৰু স্পষ্টবাদী নাৰী। প্ৰতিটো কথাতেই যুক্তিৰ প্ৰাধান্য থকা এই চৰিত্ৰটিৰ আগত সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰ অনঙ্গ, সুদৰ্শন আদি পুৰুষ চৰিত্ৰও মূৰ্ছিত্বতে নিম্প্ৰভ হৈ পৰে। ভাৰতীয় সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ প্ৰতি গভীৰ আস্থাশীল কাঞ্চনে সমাজৰ বিধান অস্বীকাৰ কৰিব নোৱাৰিয়েই প্ৰকৃত অৰ্থত সুন্দৰক স্বামীৰূপে পাব খোজে। সেইবাবেই কোঁৱৰৰ যুক্তি খণ্ডন কৰি নিজৰ বলিষ্ঠ যুক্তি আগবঢ়াবলৈকেও তাই কুঠাবোধ কৰা নাই- “বিবাহৰ দ্বাৰাই শাৰীৰিক সম্বন্ধ ঘটে। মানসিক সম্বন্ধ হ’ব লাগিব বুলি সমাজে ধৰি লয়, নিৰ্দেশ দিয়ে। ভালপোৱা মানসিক সম্বন্ধ; শাৰীৰিক সম্বন্ধ তাৰ উদ্দেশ্য নহ’বও পাৰে।”

কাঞ্চনমতীৰ এই ৰূপ সাধাৰণ ভাৰতীয় নাৰীৰ মাজত বিচাৰি পোৱাতো কঠিন। সেয়ে হ’লেও কিন্তু আদৰ্শ আৰু জীৱনক একেডাল শিকলিৰে বন্ধাৰ যি পৰিকল্পনা তাই কৰিছিল শেষ পৰ্য্যন্ত সেই পৰিকল্পনাত তাই অটল হৈ থাকিব নোৱাৰিলে। অনঙ্গৰ প্ৰতি গভীৰভাৱে অনুৰক্তা হোৱাৰ পিছতো অদৃষ্ট আৰু সমাজৰ বিধান মানি তাই সুন্দৰকে স্বামী বৰণ কৰিলে সঁচা; কিন্তু সেই স্বামীৰ দ্বাৰাই নিষ্ঠুৰভাৱে প্ৰত্যাখিত হৈ স্বাভিমান আৰু গ্লানিৰ জ্বালা বুকুত লৈ আত্মহত্যাৰে তাইৰ জীৱনৰ অৱসান ঘটালে। সাহস আৰু মানসিক দ্বন্দ্বৰ এনে প্ৰাচুৰ্য্যই পিছে কাঞ্চন কুমাৰী চৰিত্ৰটিক নিম্প্ৰভ কৰা নাই বৰং অধিক উজ্জ্বলহে কৰি তুলিছে।

নাটখনিৰ নায়িকা শেৱালী যেন সঁচাকৈ এপাহি নিয়ৰত তিতা শেৱালীহে। এফালে কৰুণ কোমল সৌন্দৰ্য্যৰে আলসুৱা আৰু আনফালে মনৰ দিপ্তীৰে দিপ্তীমতী শেৱালী অনাদৃত। তথাপিও প্ৰেমৰ বাবে, প্ৰেমাস্পদৰ বাবে তাই নিজৰ জীৱন আত্মত দিব পাৰে। থৈ যাব পাৰে তাইৰ প্ৰেম ভৰা ৰাঙলী হিয়া। মুঠৰ ওপৰত

কঠিনে কোমলে মিলি শেৱালী হৈ উঠিছে ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ৰ মহত্বতম আকৰ্ষণ। শেৱালিৰ বুকুভৰি থকা মৰমে মৰমৰ লগৰী বিচাৰে যদিও সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰ তাইৰ বাবে দূৰ আকাশৰ জোন। তেওঁক ভাল পোৱাতো তাইৰ বাবে ভুল, পাপ, সমাজৰ চকুত অক্ষমণীয় অপৰাধ। সেইবাবেই তাই ৰাজতন্ত্ৰৰ কঠিন বান্ধোনত আৱদ্ধ হৈ তাইৰ প্ৰেমাস্পদক এৰি ৰাজমাওৰ নিৰ্দেশত নগাপাৰত পাইছে গৈ। তথাপিও কিন্তু হৃদয়েৰে তাই সুন্দৰক ভাল পায়। কিন্তু সেয়া তাই নাজানে। নিজ অন্তৰক ফাঁকি দিব নোলোৱা স্বভাৱটিৰ বাবেই তাই প্ৰেম আৰু বিচ্ছেদ, প্ৰাপ্তি আৰু ত্যাগৰ দোত উটি ভাহি গৈ নগাপাহাৰ পায়গৈ আৰু শেষ মূৰ্ত্বত্বত এদিন কোঁৱৰক “এনেয়ে ভালপাওঁ” বোলা এই চৰিত্ৰটিয়ে প্ৰণয়ৰ বাবে গভীৰ আত্মত্যাগৰ নিদৰ্শন ৰচি আত্মহত্যা কৰে। নাৰীত্বৰ সমস্ত কোমলতা আৰু সাংসাৰিক জটিলতাৰে বিধস্ত হৈ পৰা শেৱালী মানসিক কাৰুণ্যৰে উজ্জ্বল। ৰাজমাৰে যত অনৰ্থৰ মূল শেৱালী বুলি গণ্য কৰাত তাই ভয় খোৱা, কোষত পৰি চিৎকাৰ কৰি উঠা, ৰাজমাওৰ নিৰ্দেশত কাৰেং ত্যাগ কৰা সুন্দৰৰ মৰমৰ পোহৰত জোৰ ল’ব খোজা আৰু শেষত কোঁৱৰৰ বাবে আত্মহত্যা কৰা আদি দৃশ্যাৱলীয়ে চৰিত্ৰটিৰ মানসিক দ্বন্দ ফুটাই তোলাত বিশেষভাৱে সহায় কৰিছে।

ৰজমাও, শেৱালী, কাঞ্চন আদি চৰিত্ৰৰ বৈশিষ্ট্যৰাজিৰ সৈতে যি সামাজিক আৰু ব্যক্তিগত দ্বন্দ সাধিত হৈছে তাৰ মাজেদিয়েই ‘কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী’ নাটকৰ মুখ্য পুৰুষ চৰিত্ৰ সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে প্ৰাণ পাই উঠিছে। নাট্য সাহিত্যৰ ইতিহাসত পোন প্ৰথমবাৰৰ বাবে জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদে অসমীয়া নাটকত এজন প্ৰগতিশীল, বৈপ্লৱিক নায়ক সৃষ্টি কৰিছে সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰ চৰিত্ৰটোৰ যোগেদি। ড॰ সত্যেন্দ্ৰ নাথ শৰ্মাই লিখিছে— “সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰক সৌন্দৰ্য্য আৰু সৃষ্টিমূলক বিপ্লৱী মনীষাৰ প্ৰতীক স্বৰূপে দেখুৱাবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছে। এই বৈপ্লৱিক চেতনাই জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰো জীৱন চেতনা।’

শেৱালিৰ স্নেহ কোমল সংস্পৰ্শ লভিবলৈ কোঁৱৰ ব্যাকুল। কিন্তু প্ৰচলিত নিয়মৰ আভিজাত্যই, তেওঁক তেনে কৰাৰ পৰা বিৰত ৰাখে। ইয়াৰ ফলতেই তেওঁৰ মনত সৃষ্টি হয় এক গভীৰ অন্তঃদ্বন্দ্ব। এই অন্তঃদ্বন্দ্বত থকা সৰকা হৈ তেওঁ হৈ পৰে অস্থিৰ, উদ্ভ্ৰান্ত। আপাত দৃষ্টিত কোঁৱৰ নাৰী বিদ্বেষী, কিন্তু শেৱালীৰ নিৰ্বাসনৰ পিছতে কোঁৱৰৰ এই বিদ্বেষৰ অন্তপৰে আৰু তেওঁৰ হৃদয়ৰ বৈপ্লৱিক সত্ত্বাটি সাৰ পাই উঠে। দুই বিপৰীত ধৰ্মী আদৰ্শৰ সমাহাৰত আটক ধুনীয়াকৈ সৃষ্টি চৰিত্ৰটিৰ মাতৃৰ সৈতে হোৱা আলাপত নাট্যকাৰে সাৱলীলভাৱে বৰ্হিসংঘাত আৰু অন্তঃসংঘাত সৃষ্টি কৰিছে। অৱশ্যে বৰ্হিসংঘাতৰ তুলনাত অন্যান্য চৰিত্ৰৰ দৰে এইটি চৰিত্ৰ অন্তঃসংঘাতৰ প্ৰাৱল্যহে অধিক। দৃঢ়তাৰ পৰা নামি অহাৰ ক্ষোভ থাকিলেও সামাজিক পৰম্পৰাৰ প্ৰভুত্ব স্বীকাৰ কৰি সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে কাঞ্চনকুমাৰীৰ পানি গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ বাধ্য হৈছে। আকৌ যেতিয়া তেওঁ কাঞ্চন আৰু অনঙ্গৰামৰ পূৰ্ব প্ৰণয়ৰ কথা জানিব পাৰিলে তেতিয়া তেওঁ জীৱনৰ সত্য উপলব্ধি কৰি প্ৰেমৰ স্বাধীনতা প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিবলৈ উঠি পৰি

লাগিছে। এসময়ত জ্যোতি্যভিমানী প্ৰকট কৰিব ঢোজা ৰাজকোঁৱৰ আৰু লিগিৰীৰ ব্যৱধান মানি লোৱা, তিৰোতাৰ অন্তৰেই নাই বুলি ধাৰণা কৰা সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে নিজে শেৱালীৰ প্ৰেম স্বীকাৰ কৰি লৈছে আৰু কাঞ্চন তথা অনঙ্গকো প্ৰেমৰ স্বাধীনতা অপৰ্ন কৰিব খুজিছে। চৰিত্ৰটি একে আদৰ্শতে স্থিৰ, অবিচল নহয়। ভাবৰ এনে বৈপৰীত্যই সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰ চৰিত্ৰটোক আৰু অধিক গতিশীলতা প্ৰদান কৰিছে।

নাটখনিৰ অন্যান্য চৰিত্ৰৰ ভিতৰত সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰৰ বন্ধু অনঙ্গৰাম আৰু সুদৰ্শনো সামাজিক ৰীতি-নীতিৰ বৃত্তত আৱদ্ধ আৰু মানসিক ভাৱ-চিন্তাৰ খেলি-মেলিৰ তীব্ৰ অন্তঃদ্বন্দ্বত বিধস্ত। নাট্যকাহিনীত অৱশ্যে সুদৰ্শনৰ ভূমিকা তেনেকৈ নাই যদিও তেওঁ সমাজৰ সৈতে সদায় এক আপোচমূলক নীতি গ্ৰহণৰহে পক্ষপাতি। আনহাতে ওতঃপ্ৰোতভাৱে সম্পৰ্ক থকা এটা প্ৰধান চৰিত্ৰ।

সুন্দৰৰ পত্নী কাঞ্চনৰ পূৰ্ব প্ৰেমিত অনঙ্গৰামে সমাজৰ কথা চিন্তিয়েই প্ৰণয়ৰ কথা প্ৰকাশ নকৰিলে। সুন্দৰ কোঁৱৰে এই কথা জনাৰ পিছতো তেওঁ আনকি- “মই তোমালোকৰ জীৱনৰ পৰা আঁতৰি যাম।” বুলি প্ৰেমিকা আৰু বন্ধুৰ বাবে ত্যাগ স্বীকাৰ কৰিবলৈকো প্ৰস্তুত হৈছে। দেখা যায় প্ৰেম আৰু সমাজৰ নিয়মৰ মাজত উটি ভাহি থকা সৰকা হ’লেও অনঙ্গ চৰিত্ৰত সমাজৰ প্ৰভাৱৰ প্ৰতি সদায়ে দুৰ্বলতা আছে। সেইবাবেই সুন্দৰে কাঞ্চনক গতাই দিবলৈ ওলোৱাত তেওঁ কৈছে- “সুন্দৰ সমাজ তোমাক নালাগিব পাৰে, কিন্তু মোক লাগে। পুৱাৰ পৰা গধূলিলৈকে, জন্মৰ পৰা মৃত্যুলৈকে সমাজৰ লগত আমাৰ সম্পৰ্ক।”

ইয়াৰ পূৰ্বলৈকে অনঙ্গৰামক দুৰ্বল মানসিকতাৰ চৰিত্ৰ যেন লাগিলেও সমাজৰ প্ৰতি গভীৰভাৱে আস্থাশীল অনঙ্গই সামাজিক পবিত্ৰতাৰ পক্ষত থিয় দি সুন্দৰৰ মুক্তিৰ বিৰোধিতা কৰিব পাৰিছে আৰু এইখিনিতে তেওঁৰ চৰিত্ৰটো উজ্জ্বল হৈ উঠিছে।

এনেদৰে আলোচনা কৰিলে দেখা যায় যে সম্পূৰ্ণ আধুনিক চিন্তা ধাৰাৰে অভিনৱ উপস্থাপন ৰীতিৰ মাধুৰ্য্যৰে চৰিত্ৰসমূহৰ অন্তঃদ্বন্দ্বক সুন্দৰভাৱে প্ৰকট কৰি তথা পৰস্পৰৰ বিপৰীতমুখী চৰিত্ৰৰ সমাহাৰেৰে কাৰেঙৰ লিগিৰী হৈ পৰিছে অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ অন্যতম শ্ৰেষ্ঠ নাটক।

সিদ্ধান্তঃ

- বিষয়টো আলোচনাৰ পৰা আমি এনে এক সিদ্ধান্তত উপনীত হ’ব পাৰো—
- ক) সাধাৰণ মানৱক মহামানৱলৈ ৰূপান্তৰিত কৰিবৰ বাবে ভাৰতীয় চেতনাৰে বিশ্বচেতনালৈ উত্তৰণ ঘটাব বিচাৰিছে।
 - খ) জনতাৰ অন্তৰত লুকাই থকা শিল্পীপ্ৰাণক জাগ্ৰত কৰি এখনি চিৰসুন্দৰ অপূৰ্ব জগত সৃষ্টিৰ ইচ্ছা কৰিছে।
 - গ) জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱে সুগভীৰ চেতনাৰে মানৱ জীৱনত নতুনত্বৰ সন্ধান কৰিছে।

ঘ) মানৱ কল্যাণেই ভাৰতীয় ধৰ্ম আৰু সংস্কৃতিৰ মূলমন্ত্ৰ। বেদ, উপনিষদৰ সাৰস্বা উপদেশক আৰ্হি হিচাপে লৈ তেওঁ কিছুমান গীতেৰে নাটকখনিক মনোমুগ্ধকৰ কৰিছে।

গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী :

- ১। গৌঁহাই, হীৰেণ (সম্পা) : জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ ৰচনাৱলী। প্ৰকাশক, অসম প্ৰকাশন পৰিষদ। পৰিমার্জিত আৰু পৰিবৰ্ধিত ষষ্ঠ সংস্কৰণ, ডিচেম্বৰ ২০০৩।
- ২। অধিকাৰী, শুকদেৱ : পঙ্কজ কুমাৰ বৰা (সম্পা): চেতনাৰ সন্ধান। প্ৰথম খণ্ড। প্ৰকাশক, অধ্যক্ষ শিং মহাবিদ্যালয়, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ ১০ জানুৱাৰী, ২০১২।
- ৩। ডেকা, নমিতা : লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰা (সম্পা): জ্যোতি অন্বেষণ। প্ৰকাশন বাণী মন্দিৰ। প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ ১৭ জুন, ২০০৩।
- ৪। বৰুৱা, প্ৰহ্লাদ কুমাৰ : জ্যোতি মনীষা। প্ৰকাশক বনলতা। দ্বিতীয় প্ৰকাশ। মাৰ্চ, ১৯৯৭।
- ৫। বৰুৱা, ভবেন : (প্ৰসঙ্গ) জ্যোতি প্ৰসাদ। প্ৰকাশক বনলতা। প্ৰথম সংস্কৰণ, নৱেম্বৰ, ২০০২।



তিৰা সমাজৰ প্ৰচলিত ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা : এটি আলোচনা (বিশেষ উল্লিখনসহ কৰাইগুৰি গাঁও)

ড° অমৰজ্যোতি কোঁৱৰ¹

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ :

অসম তথা উত্তৰ পূব অঞ্চলত বসবাস কৰা ভূমিপুত্ৰসকলৰ তিৰা (লালুং) জনগোষ্ঠী অন্যতম। প্ৰাক্ ঐতিহাসিক যুগৰে পৰা তিৰাসকলে এই অঞ্চলত বসবাস কৰি আহিছে। বৰ্তমান সময়ত অসমৰ নগাঁও, মৰিগাঁও, কাৰ্বি আংলং, কামৰূপ জিলাৰ বিভিন্ন ঠাইত সিঁচৰিত হৈ বাস কৰি থকা দেখা যায়। লগতে ধেমাজি, শদিয়া, তিতাবৰ আদি অঞ্চলতো কিছুমান তিৰালোকে বাস কৰি থকা দেখা যায়। ইয়াৰ উপৰি মেঘালয় ৰাজ্যৰ খৈৰাম আৰু মিলিম ষ্টেটৰ কিছু অঞ্চলত এক বৃজন সংখ্যক তিৰালোকে বাস কৰি থকা দেখা যায়। প্ৰাধিকানযোগ্য যে, মংগোলিয়ান গোষ্ঠীৰ অষ্ট্ৰিকসকল খ্ৰীষ্টপূৰ্ব ৪৫০০ত ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূব কোণেদি চীন দেশৰ পৰা তিব্বত হৈ কামৰূপলৈ প্ৰব্ৰজিত হৈছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ দ্বিতীয় দলটি ব্ৰহ্মদেশৰ পৰা আহি 'টিয়াং' নামে প্ৰদেশত বাস কৰিছিল। কালক্ৰমত ই টিনচিয়াং বা জিনচিয়াং > টিনটেন বা জিনটেং > জয়ন্তীয়া নামে জনাজাত হৈছিল। এই জয়ন্তীয়া নামে জনাজাত হৈছিল। এই জয়ন্তীয়া শব্দৰ শেষৰভাগ 'তীয়া' শব্দৰ পৰাই 'তিৰা' হৈছে বুলিও বহুতে মত প্ৰকাশ কৰে। আকৌ তিব্বতৰ ফালৰ পৰা প্ৰব্ৰজিত হোৱাসকলক 'তিব্বতীয়'ৰ পৰা তিপেৰা > তিৰা > তিৰা হোৱা বুলিও কোৱা হয়। কালক্ৰমত তিৰাসকলে নিজকে 'তিৰা লিবিং' বা 'তিৰা লিবুং' বুলি কৈছিল। তিৰা ভাষাত লিবিং শব্দই 'মানুহ' অৰ্থ বুজায়। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত এই লিবিং বা লিবুঙৰ পৰা 'লালুং'

¹ সহকাৰী অধ্যাপক, অসমীয়া বিভাগ, বৰপেটা বঙাইগাঁও মহাবিদ্যালয়, লাংলা, বৰপেটা

শব্দৰ প্ৰচলন হোৱা বুলি কব খোজে। বৰ্তমান সময়ত লালুংসকলে তিৱা বুলি পৰিচিত হৈছে।

উক্ত আলোচনাত তিৱাসকলৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাৰ বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰা হ'ব। সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত প্ৰচলিত ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাটোৱেই একোখন সমাজৰ শান্তি-শৃংখলা ৰক্ষাত সহায় কৰি আহিছে। দেখা যায় যে দেশৰ শান্তি-শৃংখলা ৰক্ষা কৰাৰ পৰিৱেশটো নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰি থকা সাংবিধানিক বিধি ব্যৱস্থা তথা দেশৰ আইন-কানুনৰ শিপাডালো সামাজিক ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাটোৰ ভিতৰলৈকে বিস্তৃত হৈ আছে। যাৰ বাবে সামাজিক ন্যায়ব্যৱস্থাৰ গুৰুত্বও অপৰিসীম। সমাজত অপৰাধ, অন্যায়-অনীতি আদি অসামাজিক কামবোৰ নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰি ৰখাত এই সামাজিক ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাটোৱে গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আছে। তিৱাসকলৰ মাজত ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা অতীতত চলি আহা নিয়ম বৰ্তমান কেনেদৰে চলি আহিছে সেই বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰাটোৱে মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য। কৰাইগুৰি গাঁৱত বৰ্তমান সমাজত ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাৰ কেনেধৰণে প্ৰচলন হৈ আহিছে সেই বিষয়ে বিশ্লেষণ কৰাৰ লগতে আধুনিকতাৰ ফলত হোৱা পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ বিষয়ে বিশ্লেষণ কৰা হৈছে।

বীজ শব্দ : তিৱা, সমাজ, লোকাচাৰ, লোকসংস্কৃতি, ন্যায়।

অৱতৰণিকা :

উত্তৰ-পূৱ ভাৰতৰ বহুজাতিক, বহুভাষিক আৰু বহু ধৰ্মীয় বৈচিত্ৰৰ অঞ্চল। ইয়াৰ মাজত তিৱা জনগোষ্ঠীও অন্যতম। মানুহৰ জন্মৰ পৰা মৃত্যুলৈ যি কাৰ্য কৰা হয় সেয়ে সংস্কৃতিৰ অন্তৰ্গত। সংস্কৃতিয়ে একোটা জাতিৰ সৃষ্টি প্ৰতিভাকেই প্ৰতিফলিত কৰে। তিৱাসকলৰ সামাজিক শৃংখলা যথেষ্ট শক্তিশালী। তিৱাসকলৰ সামাজিক গাঁথনিটো অতীতৰ পৰাই কিছু বিশ্বাস আৰু পৰম্পৰাৰ ভেটিত গঢ় লৈ উঠিছে। পুৰণি কালত ৰজাসকলৰ ৰাজকাৰ্য পৰিচালনা কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ৰাজ পাৰিষদবৰ্গ থকা কথাটো ঐতিহাসিকভাৱে সত্য। তিৱা ৰজাসকলে ৰাজকাৰ্য্য পৰিচালনাৰ সুবিধাৰ বাবে ৰাজপাৰিষদ নিযুক্ত কৰিছিল। এডৱাৰ্ড চাহাবৰ দৰে বুৰঞ্জী প্ৰণেতাৰসকলে উত্তৰ-পূৱ অঞ্চলত শাসন কৰা ৰজাসকলে ১২ গৰাকীকৈ ৰাজ পাৰিষদ নিযুক্তি দিয়াৰ তথ্য সন্নিৱিষ্ট কৰিছে। আনকি, জয়ন্তীয়া ৰজায়ে তেনে ১২ গৰাকী পাৰিষদ নিযুক্ত কৰি ৰাজকাৰ্য্য পৰিচালনা কৰাৰ তথ্য আছে। অতীতত তিৱাসকলৰ সৰু সৰু অঞ্চল সামৰি ক্ষুদ্ৰ ক্ষুদ্ৰ ৰাজ্য আছিল য'ত একোজন ৰজাৰ বা মুৰব্বী আছিল। এই ৰজাসকলে পাৰিষদবৰ্গ নিযুক্ত কৰিছিল এনেধৰণেৰে বৰবৰুৱা, জেলা, হাৰিকুঁৱৰী, সেনাপতি, বৰমাজি, গড়ভেটেৰা, দুৱাৰদৰৈ, দ্বাৰবিচনী পাতৰ পাৰিখা, দেউৰী, তামুলী ইত্যাদি। এইসকলক কৰ্ম অনুসৰি দায়িত্ব ভগাই দিয়া হৈছিল। কাৰ্য্য সম্পাদনৰ বাবে কিছু নীতি-নিয়ম বান্ধি দিয়া হৈছিল। এনে ৰীতি-নীতি পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে প্ৰচলিত হ'লৈও

কঠোৰভাৱে পালন কৰা হৈছিল। তেনেদৰে গাঁওসমূহত তিৱা সমাজৰ মাজত কিছু বিশেষ ৰীতি-নীতিৰে সামাজিক আৰু ধৰ্মীয় পৰম্পৰাবোৰ পালন কৰা হয়। এনেবোৰ কাৰ্য সম্পাদনা কৰোঁতে গাঁৱৰ মুৰব্বী বা মুখীয়ালজনে মুখ্য ভূমিকা পালন কৰে।’ (পাতৰ, মিলেশ্বৰ : তিৱা জনগোষ্ঠী সামাজিক ৰূপৰেখা, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০১৮, প্ৰকাশক : শ্ৰীপবন মান্তা, মুখ্য কাৰ্যবাহী সদস্য, তিৱা স্বায়ত্ত পৰিষদ, অসম, মৰিগাঁও, পৃষ্ঠা : ৮৪)

লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তাৰ আধাৰতহে সংস্কৃতিৰ উদ্ভৱ হয়। লোকজীৱনৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তাৰ বাবেই ৰীতি-নীতি সৃষ্টি হয়। সংস্কৃতি হৈছে কোনো এটা সমাজৰ জীৱন-যাপনৰ সামগ্ৰিক ৰূপ যিটো তেওঁলোকৰ বিশ্বাস, ৰীতি-নীতি, আচাৰ-ব্যৱহাৰ, কলা-কৃষ্টি, ভাষা, সাহিত্য, ধৰ্ম দৰ্শন সামাজিক সংগঠন আৰু বস্তুগত উৎপাদনৰ দ্বাৰা গঠিত হয়। ই এটা সমাজৰ সদস্যসকলৰ মাজত প্ৰজন্মৰ পৰা প্ৰজন্মলৈ হস্তান্তৰিত হোৱা এক জটিল আৰু গতিশীল সংক্ৰমণ। সংস্কৃতি হৈছে মানৱ সমাজৰ আত্মা। সমাজখন সুপৰিচালিত হ'বৰ বাবেই ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা প্ৰয়োজনৰ মানুহৰ জন্মৰ পৰা মৃত্যুলৈ যি কাৰ্য কৰা হয় সেইটোৱে সংস্কৃতিৰ অন্তৰ্গত। ই সমাজক একত্ৰিত ৰাখে, ঐতিহাসিক সত্তা প্ৰদান কৰাৰ লগতে ভৱিষ্যতৰ বাবে পথ নিৰ্দেশনা দিয়ে।

মৰিগাঁও জিলাৰ অন্তৰ্গত কৰাইগুৰিগাঁও। এই গাঁও পূব দিশত আঠুভঙাবিল, আটিগাঁও ধৰমতুল, পশ্চিম দিশত পদুমপুখুৰী, এজাৰবাৰী, উচ্চতৰ মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়, উত্তৰ দিশত বেতনী গোণামাৰা আৰু দক্ষিণত সাৰপতীয়া বিল, ভেৰভেৰী বিল আৰু চনোৰাবড়ী ৰেল ষ্টেচন।

এই গাঁও ইতিহাসে ঢুকি পোৱা কিমান সময়ৰ পৰা গঢ় লৈ উঠিছিল সঠিককৈ কব পৰা নাযায়। এটা কথা ঠিক যে ইতিহাসৰ যিমান সময়ৰ পৰাই গঢ় লৈ নুঠক কিয় জীৱন আৰু জীৱিকাৰ স্বার্থত পূৰ্ব প্ৰজন্মই এই গাঁও স্থাপন কৰিছিল। জনা হোৱাৰ পৰাই দেখা পাওঁ যে আমাৰ গাঁওখন নিজৰ জনগোষ্ঠীৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ। সেইবাবেই হয়টো প্ৰজন্মৰ পিছত প্ৰজন্মই নিজৰ সংস্কৃতি মানি আহা দেখা যায়। অতীতৰ পৰাই গাঁৱৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাত জেলাৰ প্ৰাধান্য থকা দেখা যায়। জনা হোৱাৰ পৰা দেখিছোঁ গাঁৱৰ বিভিন্ন সমস্যা সমাধানৰ বাবে গাঁৱৰ তিনি আলিত মেল বহা দেখা যায়। কিন্তু সময়ৰ লগে লগে শিথিলতা অহা দেখা যায়। আধুনিক জীৱন শৈলীয়ে গাঁৱৰ লোকসকলৰ মাজতো ভুমুকি মৰা দেখা যায়। শিক্ষা পোহৰ পৰাৰ লগে লগে পূৰ্বৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ কিছু এৰা-ধৰা দেখা যায়।

অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য আৰু লক্ষ্য :

অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য হৈছে কোনো বিষয়ৰ ওপৰত অনুসন্ধান বিচাৰ কৰা। অতীতৰ পৰা তিৰাসকলে সকলো নগোষ্ঠীয় ভাষা সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ লগত সন্মিলনৰ ভাৱে

বসবাস কৰি আহিছে। বৰ্তমান সময়ত তিৰাসকলে লাহে লাহে নিজস্বতা বাদ দিছে যদিও বহুখিনি সাহিত্য ভাষা আৰু সংস্কৃতি নিজৰ মাজত বৰ্তাই ৰাখিছে। সাম্প্ৰতিক সময়ৰ অতি ব্যস্ততাৰ মাজতো সেই তাগিদা প্ৰগাঢ়তা তেওঁলোকৰ জীৱন শৈলীত নিহিত হৈ আছে নে, সংকটাপন্ন হৈ পৰিছে, সেই উদ্দেশ্যক সাৰোগত কৰি আগবঢ়াইছে। তিৰাসকলে বৰ্তমান কেনেধৰণে ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা পালন কৰি আছে তাৰ অধ্যয়ন কৰাই আলোচনা পত্ৰখনৰ প্ৰধান উদ্দেশ্য আৰু লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰাসংগিকতাৰ প্ৰচাৰ কৰাই অধ্যয়নৰ লক্ষ্য।

তথ্য আহৰণৰ উৎস :

আমাৰ আলোচ্য অধ্যয়নটিত তথ্য সংগ্ৰহৰ বাবে পুথিভঁড়ালৰ প্ৰধান উৎস (Primary source) হিচাপে গ্ৰহণ কৰা হৈছে। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত তিৰালোকসকলৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাৰ লগত সম্পৰ্ক থকা বিভিন্ন লেখকৰ গ্ৰন্থ, প্ৰবন্ধ সমালোচনামূলক লিখনি প্ৰয়োজন সাপেক্ষে বিভিন্ন আলোচনী, বাতৰি কাকত, কৃত্ৰিম বুদ্ধিমত্তাৰ আদিকো তথ্য সংগ্ৰহত গৌণউৎস (Secondary source) ৰূপে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হৈছে।

গৱেষণাৰ বিষয় :

তিৰা সমাজে কেনেকৈ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা মানি আহিছে লগতে কৰাইগুৰি গাঁৱৰ বিশেষ উল্লিখনসহ লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ দিশটো আলোচনা কৰা। এই গাঁওখন মৰিগাঁও জিলাৰ অন্তৰ্গত। মধ্য অসমৰ অন্তৰ্গত এই গাঁওখনত তিৰালোকসকলে কি ৰূপত ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা ধৰি ৰাখিছে সেই বিষয়ে দাঙি ধৰাটোৱে মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য। এই লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ জৰিয়তে অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ সমৃদ্ধি আৰু ঐতিহ্যক জনপ্ৰিয় কৰাৰ লক্ষ্য।

ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা :

আদিম ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা মানৱ সভ্যতাৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ পৰাই বিশেষকৈ কৃষিৰ উদ্ভৱ আৰু স্থায়ী জনবসতি গঠনৰ লগে লগে (খ্ৰীষ্টপূৰ্ব ১০,০০০ৰ পিছৰ) ক্ৰমে বিকশিত হৈ আছিল। ইয়াৰ এক সংহত ৰূপ আমি খ্ৰীষ্টপূৰ্ব ৩০০০-২০০০ৰ ভিতৰত গঢ় লৈ উঠা প্ৰাচীন নগৰ-ৰাষ্ট্ৰসমূহত (যেনে মেছপটেমিয়া, ইজিপ্ত, সিন্ধু উপত্যকা) প্ৰাণীত হোৱা লিখিত আইন সংহিতাসমূহত দেখিবলৈ পোওঁ। গতিকে ইয়াৰ উৎপত্তি কোনো এটা নিৰ্দিষ্ট বছৰত নহয়, এক দীৰ্ঘ historical বা ঐতিহাসিক প্ৰক্ৰিয়াৰ মাজেৰে হৈছিল।

তিৰা সমাজটো ধীৰে ধীৰে গঢ় লৈ উঠিছিল ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা। এই ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা এতিয়াও লিখিত ৰূপত পোৱা নাযায়। পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে প্ৰজন্মৰ পিছত প্ৰজন্মই মানি আহা দেখা যায়। তিৰা সমাজৰ এক বিশেষ অনুষ্ঠান হৈছে ‘চামাদি’ বা ‘ডেকাচাং’। তিৰা সমাজ জীৱনত চামাদিৰ প্ৰভাৱ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। চামাদিৰ মূল বিষয়ববীয়াসকল হ’ল— চাংদলৈ, চাংমাজি, কৰাইমাজি, ছৰুমা আৰু গ্ৰা-পাছাই অৰ্থাৎ বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠ ডেকা। চামাদি সাধাৰণতে পাছাই (যুৱক)সকলৰ অনুষ্ঠান। ইয়াত মহিলা বা যুৱতীৰ

প্ৰৱেশ নিষেধ। যুৱকসকলৰ ভিতৰত খৰকিয়া পাস্তাই (৭ৰ পৰা ১৬ বছৰ বয়সৰ) পাস্তাই (১৭-২৮ বছৰ বয়সৰ), গ্ৰা-পাস্তাই (২৮-৩৭ বছৰ বয়সলৈকে) সকলে চামাদিত অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হয়। চামাদিৰ মাধ্যমেদিয়েই যুৱকসকলক জীৱন আৰু জীৱিকাৰ পাঠ দিয়া হয়। সামাজিক ৰীতি-নীতি, পৰম্পৰা আদি পালনৰ নিৰ্দেশনা দিয়া হয়। সামাজিক ৰীতি-নীতি, পৰম্পৰা আদি পালনৰ নিৰ্দেশনা দিয়া হয়। সামাজিক শৃংখলা ৰক্ষা কৰাৰ পাঠ দিয়ে। জ্যেষ্ঠজনক সন্মান কৰা, কনিষ্ঠক মৰম-চেনেহ কৰা মহিলাক মৰ্যাদা দিয়া, অপৰাধ, অপকৰ্ম ৰোধ কৰা আদি বিষয়টো জ্ঞান দিয়া হয়। অসামাজিক অনৈতিক কাৰ্যৰ পৰা বিৰত ৰখাৰ বিষয়ে জ্ঞান দিয়া হয়। এইবোৰৰ উপৰিও জীৱন-জীৱিকাৰ উপাদেয় দিশবোৰো চামাদিত আলোচনা কৰা হয়। কৃষিকাৰ্য কৰা, চিকাৰ কৰা, শত্ৰুৰ পৰা আত্মৰক্ষা কৰা আদিৰ পাঠ দিয়া হয়। উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বন আদিত অংশগ্ৰহণ কৰা গীত-নৃত্য আদিত সহযোগ কৰা আদিৰ বিষয়েও এই চামাদিত আলোচনা কৰা হয়। সেয়ে, চামাদিত কৃষি সঁজুলি, চিকাৰৰ অস্ত্ৰ-পাতি, উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বনৰ বাদ্য-যন্ত্ৰ আদি এই চামাদিতে সংৰক্ষণ কৰা হয়। চামাদিত বিষয়-ববীয়াসকলৰ কঠোৰ অনুশাসনৰ অধীনত যুৱকসকলে থাকিব লগা হয় আৰু সেয়ে পাস্তাই (যুৱক)সকল নৈতিকভাৱে যথেষ্ট সবল বুলি কোৱা হয়। চামাদিৰ নীতি-নিয়ম কোনো পৰ্যায়তে শিথিল কৰা নহয়।^২ (পাতৰ, মিলেশ্বৰ : তিৱা জনগোষ্ঠী সামাজিক ৰূপৰেখা, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০১৮, প্ৰকাশক : শ্ৰীপবন মান্তা, মুখ্য কাৰ্যবাহী সদস্য, তিৱা স্বায়ত্ত পৰিষদ, অসম, মৰিগাঁও, পৃষ্ঠা, ৮৫-৮৫)

সামাজিক ন্যায় :

সামাজিক বান্ধোন আমাৰ সমাজত যথেষ্ট কটকটীয়া। তিৱাসকলৰ মাজত দুই ধৰণৰ অনুশাসনমূলক ব্যৱস্থা প্ৰচলন আছে। এটা হ'ল সামাজিক আৰু আনটো হ'ল ধৰ্মীয়। সমাজৰ অনুষ্ঠান, সভা-সমিতি, উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বন সম্পৰ্কীয় ৰীতি-নীতি এইবোৰ দিশত সামাজিক ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা বৰ্তি আছে। লগতে ধৰ্মীয় দিশত পূজা-পাতল, উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বন আদিত ধৰ্মীয় ব্যৱস্থা প্ৰচলিত আছে। এই দুয়োটা দিশত উদ্ভৱ হোৱা সমস্যাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত প্ৰচলিত ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাবে সমাধান কৰা হয়। সামাজিক বা ধৰ্মীয় দিশত চলি থকা ৰীতি-নীতি উলংঘন কৰিলে জৰিমনা, দণ্ড আদি বিহাৰ ব্যৱস্থা আছে। চোৰ-ডকাইত, অপকৰ্ম, অসৎ কাৰ্য, নীতি উলংঘন কৰিলে জৰিমনা, অৰ্থ দণ্ড আদি ব্যৱস্থা প্ৰচলিত আছে।

তিৱা সমাজৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা বৈশিষ্ট্য :

ক) তিৱা সমাজৰ চূড়ান্ত দণ্ড হিচাপে কেতিয়াও মৃত্যুদণ্ড দিয়া নহয়। খ) শাৰীৰিক শাস্তি প্ৰদান কৰা নহয়। গ) বিচাৰৰ ব্যৱস্থা সাধাৰণতে তিনিখলপীয়া পৰ্যায়ত কৰা হয়। যেনে— খেল বা বংশ পৰ্যায়ত, গাঁও পৰ্যায়ত আৰু আঞ্চলিক বা

বাৰখেলীয়া বিচাৰ পদ্ধতি। যদিহে এই তিনিটা পৰ্যায়তে বিচাৰৰ কোনো বিষয় নিষ্পত্তি নহয়। তেনেহ'লে— বাৰখেলীয়া বিচাৰে সংশ্লিষ্ট এলেকাৰ ৰজাৰ বিবেচনাৰ বাবে বিষয়টো উপস্থাপন কৰে। ঘ) মেল বা খেল বিচাৰৰ মুৰব্বীয়ে জৰিমনা বা দণ্ড ঘোষণা কৰে। ঙ) মেল বা বিচাৰৰ সিদ্ধান্ত 'বাদী' আৰু 'আবাদী' দুয়োপক্ষই মানি লয়। চ) অপৰাধ বা দোষৰ প্ৰকাৰ অনুসৰি দণ্ড বা জৰিমনাৰ পৰিমাণ নিৰূপণ কৰে। ছ) লঘু অপৰাধৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত তামোল-পাণ এবটাৰেও দোষৰ পৰা ৰেহাই দিয়ে। জ) তিৰা সমাজৰ প্ৰধান বিচাৰপতি হ'ল লৰ'। লৰ'ক পুৰোহিত বুলিও কোৱা হয়। বিচাৰ সভাত লৰ'ৰ ভূমিকাই মুখ্য। তিৰা সমাজত সাতগৰাকী লৰ' আছে। যেনে— মাৰ্জং লৰ', আমচে লৰ', আমনি লৰ' আৰু লম্ফৈ লৰ', দুৰুংলৰ', ৰংখৈ লৰ' আৰু মাৰ্জং লৰ'। এই সকল নিজস্ব ফৈদ অনুসৰি মুৰব্বী। তেওঁলোকেই ফৈদ অনুসৰি বিচাৰ কাৰ্য চলোৱা বা পূজা-পাতল আদি কাৰ্য পৰিচালনা কৰে। বিচাৰৰ ৰায় লৰ'ই দিয়ে। ঝ) চামাদি অনুষ্ঠানৰ বিষয়ববীয়া চাংদলৈ, চাংমাজিসকলে বিচাৰত নিজৰ মতামত দিব পাৰে। ঞ) ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা পৰিচালনা কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত জেলা আৰু বজেলা বিষয়াসকলে লৰ'ক সহায় কৰে। ট) গাঁৱৰ গাঁওবুঢ়াক যথোচিত মৰ্যাদা দিয়ে। গাঁওবুঢ়াজন গাঁৱৰ বংশ, খেল বা ফৈদ নিৰ্বিশেষে সকলোৱে মুৰব্বীৰ ভূমিকা পালন কৰে। গাঁৱৰ প্ৰতিজন ব্যক্তিৰ সামাজিক দিশটোও বহুলাংশে গাঁওবুঢ়াজনৰ ব্যক্তিত্বৰ ওপৰতে নিৰ্ভৰ কৰে। সমাজৰ শান্তি-শৃঙ্খলা বিঘ্নিত হ'লে খেল, বংশ বা ফৈদ অনুসৰি মেল বা বিচাৰ অনুষ্ঠিত কৰিবলৈ সভা আহ্বান কৰে। মেল বহাৰ ঠাইখিনিক 'খোলা' বুলি কোৱা হয়। ঠ) বাৰিকা (আহুয়ক) : মেললৈ গাঁৱৰ মুখিয়াল মানুহবোৰক মাতিবলৈ বাৰিকাক দ্বায়িত্ব দিয়া হয়। বাৰিকাই ৰাজত্ৰাকৈ ঘোষণা কৰে নাইবা ঘৰে ঘৰে গৈ মেললৈ মাতি আহে। মেল বা বিচাৰ সভাত লৰ'ই মুখ্য ভূমিকা পালন কৰে, গাঁওবুঢ়াই বিচাৰৰ বিষয়ৰ আঁত ধৰে।

কৰাইগুৰি গাঁৱৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা :

আমাৰ গাঁওখন ১০০ শতাংশই তিৰালোকেৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ। জনা হোৱাৰ পৰা দেখি আহিছে যে গাঁৱৰ প্ৰতিজন ব্যক্তিয়ে সুস্থভাৱে বসবাস কৰি থকা স্বার্থতেই ন্যায়ব্যৱস্থা পৰিচালনা হোৱা। গাঁৱৰ তিনি আলিত মেল বা বিচাৰ বহে। এই মেললৈ বাৰিকাই গাঁৱৰ মুখিয়ালব্যক্তিসকলক আমন্ত্ৰণ কৰে। এই মেলত প্ৰথমে যিজন ব্যক্তিয়ে জগৰ লগাইছে তেওঁৰ পৰিয়ালৰ বুঢ়াজনে সকলোৰে সন্মুখত বিষয়বস্তুটো দাঙি ধৰিব লাগে। তাৰ পিছত সকলোৱে মতামত গ্ৰহণ কৰাৰ পিছত লৰ'ই শান্তি ঘোষণা কৰে। শান্তি জগৰ অনুসৰি নিৰ্ণয় কৰে। জগত ডাঙৰ হ'লে জুই, পানী আলগ কৰে। জুই পানী আলগৰ মূল ধাৰণাটো হ'ল সেই ব্যক্তিজনৰ ঘৰখনে পৰিয়াল, খেল ক'তোৰে ৰাজত্ৰা স্থানত উপস্থিত হ'ব নোৱাৰিব। যাৰ বাবে এনে শান্তি ঘোষণা কৰিলে বংশ

বা ফৈদৰ বুঢ়াজনে খেলৰ বুঢ়াখিনি লগত আলোচনা কৰি ভোজ-ভাত মদ, এফুৰণ, গাহৰি, মাছ আদিয়ে গাঁৱৰ ৰাইজক এসাজ খোৱাব লাগে। ভোজ-ভাত যদি দিব নোৱাৰে তেনেহ'লে কেঁচাই কেঁচাই মাৰিব লগা হ'লে খেলৰ বুঢ়া লৰ' গাঁওবুঢ়া আদিকৰি গাঁৱৰ মুখিয়াল ব্যক্তিজনে এটা নিৰ্দিষ্ট পৰিমাণৰ টকা নিৰ্দ্ধাৰণ কৰি দিয়ে। ধৰি লোৱা হ'ল দণ্ড অনুসৰি টকাৰ পৰিমাণ ভিন্ন হয়। ১০,০০০ (দহ হাজাৰ), ৫,০০০ (পাঁচ হাজাৰ), ৩,০০০ (তিনি হাজাৰ), ১,০০০ (এক হাজাৰ) নাইবা ৫০০ (পাঁচ শ) টকা। নহ'লে কোনো শাস্তি পাঁচটিয়া তামোলৰ বঁটায়েও উদ্ধাৰ কৰা হয়। শাস্তিৰ পৰা উদ্ধাৰ কৰিলে বা পৰাচিত কৰিলে সোণ, ৰূপ, আৰৈ চাউল, দুবৰি বন, তুলসী, ভৰা কলহৰ পানী আৰু এঁৱা গাখীৰ মিশ্ৰণ কৰি বুঢ়াসকলৰ আশীৰ্বাদ লৈ গাঁৱৰ প্ৰতিঘৰতে ছটিয়াই দিয়া হয়। লোকবিশ্বাস যে গাঁৱৰ সকলোৱে সিদিনাৰ পৰা মুক্ত। পাপত পৰি থাকিলে গাঁওখনত সুখ, শাস্তি নাহে বুলি বিশ্বাস কৰে। লৰ'ৰ ৰায়ক গাঁৱৰ সকলোৱে মানি লয়। এইদৰে আমাৰ গাঁৱৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাটো পৰিচালিত হৈ আহা দেখিছোঁ। ১২টা ফৈদৰ বা বংশৰ ১২ জন বুঢ়া, লৰ', গাঁও-বুঢ়া লগতে বৰ্তমান গাঁৱৰ উন্নয়ন সমিতিৰ সভাপতি আৰু সম্পাদক আৰু যুৱসংঘৰ সভাপতি আৰু সম্পাদকৰ মতামত গ্ৰহণ কৰি লৰ'ই ৰায় দিয়া দেখা যায়।

পিতৃ-মাতৃক প্ৰহাৰ কৰিলে :

যদি গাঁৱৰ কোনো সন্তানে পিতৃ বা মাতৃক প্ৰহাৰ কৰা কাৰ্য প্ৰত্যক্ষ হয় নাইবা এই কথাটো গাঁওবুঢ়াৰ দৃষ্টিগোচৰ হয়, তাৰ বাবে 'মেল' বা 'বিচাৰসভা' বহে। বিচাৰত সকলো পক্ষৰ মতামত গ্ৰহণ কৰা হয়। আৱশ্যক হ'লে সাক্ষীৰ মতামত লোৱা হয়। অভিযুক্ত দোষী সাব্যস্ত হ'লে-শাস্তি বিধান ঘোষণা কৰা হয়। এনে দোষৰ বাবে সমাজক দোষীয়ে ভোজ-ভাত গাহৰিৰ মঙহেৰে দিব লাগে। বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলত জৰিমনাৰ পৰিমাণ কম-বেছি দেখা যায়। ঘোষিত জৰিমনা নিৰ্দিষ্ট দিনত দিব লাগে। জৰিমনা দিবলৈ অপাৰগ হ'লে বা নিদিলে সমাজচ্যুত কৰে আৰু জৰিমনা দিয়াৰ পাছতহে দোষীয়ে পুনৰ খেল-সমাজৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হ'ব পাৰে। পিতৃ-মাতৃক প্ৰহাৰ কৰা বা অপমান কৰা অপৰাধ গুৰুতৰ হিচাপে গণ্য কৰা হয়। কিছু অঞ্চলত জৰিমনা হিচাবে মদৰ ৫টা পৰ্যন্ত মথিয়া (কলহ) দিব লগা হয়।^{১০} (পাতৰ মিলেশ্বৰ : তিৱা জনগোষ্ঠী সামাজিক ৰূপৰেখা, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০১৮, প্ৰকাশক : শ্ৰীপৱন মান্তা, মুখ্য কাৰ্যবাহী সদস্য, তিৱা স্বায়ত্ত পৰিষদ, অসম, মৰিগাঁও, পৃষ্ঠা : ৮৭)

জ্যেষ্ঠজনক হাত দঙা বা অপমান কৰা :

কোনো ব্যক্তিয়ে যদি জ্যেষ্ঠজনক মাৰিবলৈ হাত দাঙে বা অপমান কৰে তেনে দোষৰ বাবেও জৰিমনা দিব লাগে।

গো-হত্যা :

কোনো ঘটনা বা দুৰ্ঘটনা ক্ৰমে যদি গৃহস্থৰ হাতত গৰু বা গাইৰ মৃত্যু হয় তাক গো-হত্যা বুলি গণ্য কৰা হয়। এবাল দি থোৱা গৰু পাক খায় নাইবা গোহালিৰ খুঁটাত নেজ পাক খাই গৰুৰ মৃত্যু হয় নাইবা বন্ধা বছি টান খাই গৰুৰ মৃত্যু হয়, তেনেহ'লেও গৃহস্থ গো-হত্যা অপৰাধত অপৰাধী হয়। এনে পাপৰ পৰা মুক্তি পাবলৈ অপৰাধীয়ে গাত গৰুৰ পঘা এডাল মেৰিয়াই লৈ এসপ্তাহ পৰ্যন্ত বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলত ভিক্ষা মাগিব লাগে। সেই ব্যক্তিজনে ভিক্ষা মাগিবলৈ গৈ গৃহস্থৰ চোতালত থিয় হৈ গৰুৰ দৰে হেম্বেলিয়াই দিব লাগে, ভিক্ষা নিদিয়া পৰ্যন্ত মাত-কথা নকয়। ভিক্ষা দিয়াৰ পাছত মাতষাৰ দিয়ে। এনেদৰে ৭ দিন (কোনো অঞ্চলত ৩০ দিন) ভিক্ষা সংগ্ৰহ কৰাৰ পাছত পাপমুক্ত হোৱা বুলি সমাজে উদ্ধাৰ কৰি লয়। এক মান্দলিক কাৰ্যৰ জৰিয়তে অৰ্থাৎ সমাজক ভোজ-ভাত, মদ এফুৰণ আৰু তামোল-পাণৰ বাঁটাৰে ১০টা মুদ্ৰা দি এনে পাপৰ পৰা মুক্ত হয়।^৪ (পাতৰ, মিলেশ্বৰ : তিৱা জনগোষ্ঠী সামাজিক ৰূপৰেখা, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০১৮, প্ৰকাশক : শ্ৰীপবন মান্তা, মুখ্য কাৰ্যবাহী সদস্য, তিৱা স্বায়ত্ব পৰিষদ, অসম মৰিগাঁও, পৃষ্ঠা : ৮৮) কৰাইগুৰি গাঁৱৰ লোকসমাজতো গো-হত্যা কৰিলে ৭ দিন গাত গৰু পঘা এডাল মেৰিয়াই ভিক্ষা মাগিব লাগে। লগতে গাঁতৰ ৰাইজক ভোজ-ভাত, মদ এফুৰণ আৰু তামোল-পাণৰ বাঁটা দিব লাগে। সেই দিনাখনৰ পৰা সেই ব্যক্তিজনৰ লগতে পৰিয়াল আৰু বংশৰো পাপমুক্ত হৈছে বুলি ধৰা হয়।

অবৈধ বিয়া :

তিৱাসকলৰ মাজত একে কুলৰ ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীৰ মাজত বিবিহ নিষিদ্ধ। তিৱাসমাজত এই নিয়ম অতি কঠোৰভাৱে পালন কৰে। যদি একে কুলৰ ভিতৰত বিবাহ সম্পন্ন কেনেকৈ হ'লে— তেনে যুগ্ম জীৱন আৰম্ভ কৰা ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীক গাঁৱৰ পৰা বহিষ্কাৰ কৰা দেখা যায়। তিৱা সমাজত অতীতৰ পৰা একে কুল বা বংশৰ মাজত তেজৰ সম্পৰ্ক আছে বুলি মানি আহিছে। যাৰ কাৰণে হয়টো তিৱাসমাজত অবৈধ বিবাহ নিষিদ্ধ।

অবৈধ সম্পৰ্ক :

তিৱা সমাজত যদি কোনো পুৰুষ আৰু মহিলাৰ মাজত অবৈধ সম্পৰ্ক কথা ৰাইজে জানিব পাৰে আৰু মেল বা বিচাৰত যদিহে সঁচা প্ৰমাণিত হয় তেনেহ'লে শাস্তি হিচাবে গাঁৱৰ পৰা দুয়োজনকে বহিষ্কাৰৰ নিৰ্দেশ দিয়ে। দোষীয়ে কোনো কাৰণতে গাঁৱত বসবাস কৰাৰ অনুমতি নাপায়। এনে অপৰাধৰ কোনো জৰিমনাৰ দ্বাৰা বুজাবুজি কৰা নহয়।

চুৰি কাৰ্য :

গাঁৱত যদি কোনো ব্যক্তিয়ে চুৰি কাৰ্যত লিপ্ত হোৱা কথা ৰাইজে জানিব পাৰে আৰু সেই কথা বিচাৰত প্ৰমাণিত হ'লে অপৰাধীক অৰ্থদণ্ডেৰে দণ্ডিত কৰা হয়।

উপসংহাৰ :

তিৰাসমাজৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা হৈছে এক সম্প্ৰদায়ভিত্তিক, মৌখিক, পুনৰ্স্থাপনমূলক আৰু সন্মতিমূলক প্ৰণালী। ই ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় আনুষ্ঠানিক ন্যায়পালিকাৰ দৰে বিচ্ছিন্ন নহয়, বৰং সমাজৰে এক অন্তৰ্নিহিত অংগ। আধুনিক কালত ই ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় আইনৰ সৈতে সংগতি ৰাখিবলৈ অভিযোজিত হৈ আছে যদিও ইয়াৰ মৌলিক উদ্দেশ্য সামাজিক ঐক্য ৰক্ষা কৰাটোকে প্ৰাধান্য দিয়া দেখা যায়। সমাজৰ অপৰাধ, অন্যায়া-অনীতি আদি অসামাজিক কামবোৰ নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰি ৰখাত এই সামাজিক ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থা অতি পুৰণি কালৰে পৰাই প্ৰচলিত। আধুনিক সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত বা আধুনিক জীৱন শৈলীত বসবাস কৰা মানুহে প্ৰাচীন সমাজৰ ন্যায় ব্যৱস্থাক লঘু কৰিবলৈ বিচাৰিলেও ইয়াৰ গুৰুত্ব হ্ৰাস পোৱা নাই।

সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী :

পাতৰ মিলেশ্বৰ : তিৱা জনগোষ্ঠী সামাজিক ৰূপৰেখা, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০১৮, প্ৰকাশক : শ্ৰীপবন মান্তা, মুখ্য কাৰ্যবাহী সদস্য, তিৱা স্বায়ত্ত পৰিষদ, অসম, মৰিগাঁও।

পাতৰ মিলেশ্বৰ : তিৱা জাতিৰ সমাজ আৰু সংস্কৃতি, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০১৫, প্ৰকাশক : তিৱা বুদ্ধিজীৱী মঞ্চ, অসম, মৰিগাঁও।

দেউৰী, মনেশ্বৰ : অসমীয়া জাতি আৰু সংস্কৃতি গঠনত লালুং (তিৱা) সকলৰ অৱদান, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ২০১১, প্ৰকাশক : অসম জনজাতি আৰু অনুসূচিত জাতি গৱেষণা প্ৰতিষ্ঠান জৱাহৰ নগৰ, গুৱাহাটী-২২।



শ্রীমন্ত শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ অক্ষীয়া নাটত নন্দনতত্ত্ব আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক দিশ : এক বিশ্লেষণ

ড° ৰমি কলিতা দাস¹

সাৰাংশ :

শ্রীমন্ত শঙ্কৰদেৱে পঞ্চদশ-ষোড়শ শতিকাৰ অসমৰ সামাজিক আৰু ধৰ্মীয় জীৱনত এক মৌলিক পৰিৱৰ্তন সাধন কৰিছিল। তেওঁ প্ৰৱৰ্তন কৰা একশৰণ নামধৰ্ম কেৱল এটা ধৰ্মীয় আন্দোলন হিচাপে সীমাবদ্ধ নাথাকি, ই এক সামগ্ৰিক সাংস্কৃতিক আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক জাগৰণৰ সূচনা কৰিছিল। সমাজত জাতি-বৰ্ণভেদ, আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ কঠোৰতা আৰু কুসংস্কাৰৰ মাজত শঙ্কৰদেৱে ভক্তি, সমতা আৰু নৈতিক জীৱনদৰ্শনৰ এক নতুন পথ প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰিছিল। এই আদৰ্শসমূহ সাধাৰণ জনৰ মাজত প্ৰচাৰ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অক্ষীয়া নাট আছিল তেওঁৰ এক শক্তিশালী মাধ্যম। অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ জৰিয়তে শঙ্কৰদেৱে সংগীত, নৃত্য, অভিনয়, চিত্ৰকলা, আহাৰ্য্য (পোশাক-প্ৰসাধন), মঞ্চ-ব্যৱস্থা আৰু ভাষাৰ এক সৃষ্টিশীল সমন্বয় সাধন কৰিছিল। এই নাটসমূহত ভক্তিৰসক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি এক আধ্যাত্মিক নন্দনতত্ত্বৰ বিকাশ দেখা যায়, য'ত শিল্প আৰু সাধনাৰ একাত্মতা প্ৰতিফলিত হয়। নাটৰ ভাষা আছিল সহজ আৰু সুলভ, যাৰ ফলত সকলো শ্ৰেণীৰ মানুহে ইয়াত অংশগ্ৰহণ কৰিব পাৰিছিল। ভাওনা প্ৰথাৰ জৰিয়তে এই নাটসমূহ গাঁওৰ সমাজজীৱনৰ সৈতে নিবিড়ভাৱে সংযুক্ত হৈছিল। এই প্ৰবন্ধত শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ অক্ষীয়া নাটত নিহিত নন্দনতাত্ত্বিক মূল্যবোধসমূহ বিশেষকৈ ভক্তিৰস, নৈতিক আদৰ্শ, সামাজিক সমতা আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক ঐক্য - বিশ্লেষণ কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস হৈছে।

মূল শব্দ : অক্ষীয়া নাট, নন্দনতত্ত্ব, ভক্তিৰস, ভাওনা, শঙ্কৰদেৱ, সাংস্কৃতিক জাগৰণ।

¹ সহকাৰী অধ্যাপিকা, অসমীয়া বিভাগ, দমদমা মহাবিদ্যালয়, দমদমা

ভূমিকা :

১৪৪৯ খ্রীষ্টাব্দত নগাঁও জিলাৰ বৰদোৱাত জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰা শ্ৰীমন্ত শঙ্কৰদেৱ অসমৰ ইতিহাসত এক যুগান্তকাৰী ব্যক্তিত্ব হিচাপে স্বীকৃত। পঞ্চদশ শতিকাৰ অসমৰ সামাজিক আৰু ধৰ্মীয় পৰিৱেশ আছিল নানা সমস্যাৰে জৰ্জৰিত। সমাজত জাতি-বৰ্ণভেদ, কুসংস্কাৰ, বলিপ্রথা, আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ জটিলতা আৰু ধৰ্মীয় আড়ম্বৰ অত্যন্ত প্ৰবল আছিল। সাধাৰণ মানুহ ধৰ্মীয় জ্ঞান আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক চেতনাৰ পৰা বহু পৰিমাণে বঞ্চিত আছিল, কিয়নো ধৰ্মচৰ্চা মূলতঃ সংস্কৃত ভাষা আৰু পণ্ডিত-নিৰ্ভৰ ব্যৱস্থাৰ মাজত সীমাবদ্ধ আছিল। এনে এক সময়ছোৱাত শঙ্কৰদেৱে এক নবচিন্তাৰ সূচনা কৰে আৰু সমাজ-সংস্কাৰৰ লক্ষ্য লৈ একশৰণ হৰি নামধৰ্মৰ প্ৰচাৰ আৰম্ভ কৰে। শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ ধৰ্মীয় দৰ্শনৰ মূল আধাৰ আছিল ভক্তি, সমতা আৰু ঈশ্বৰৰ প্ৰতি একনিষ্ঠ শৰণাগতি। তেওঁ বিশ্বাস কৰিছিল যে সমাজৰ প্ৰকৃত উন্নতি সম্ভৱ মাথোঁ নৈতিক আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক সংস্কাৰৰ জৰিয়তে। এই সংস্কাৰৰ বাবে শিক্ষাৰ বিকল্প নাই বুলি তেওঁ অনুধাৱন কৰিছিল। কিন্তু সেই শিক্ষা যদি জটিল ভাষা আৰু আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ মাজত আবদ্ধ থাকে, তেন্তে ই জনসাধাৰণৰ ওচৰ নাপায়। সেয়ে তেওঁ স্থানীয় ভাষা, সংগীত, কাব্য আৰু নাট্যকলাৰ জৰিয়তে ধৰ্মীয় আৰু নৈতিক আদৰ্শসমূহ জনমানসত প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰে। এই প্ৰেক্ষাপটত অক্ষীয়া নাট এক শক্তিশালী আৰু ফলপ্ৰসূ মাধ্যম হিচাপে আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰে। অক্ষীয়া নাট কেৱল নাট্যসৃষ্টি নহয়; ই আছিল এক সামগ্ৰিক শিক্ষামূলক আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰচেষ্টা। সংগীত, নৃত্য, অভিনয়, সংলাপ আৰু চিত্ৰকলাৰ সমন্বয়ে শঙ্কৰদেৱে এনে এক নাট্যধাৰা গঢ়ি তোলে, যিয়ে জনসাধাৰণক একে সময়তে আনন্দ আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক শিক্ষা দুয়োটা প্ৰদান কৰিছিল। নাটসমূহৰ বিষয়বস্তু মূলতঃ ভাগৱত আৰু পুৰাণভিত্তিক হ'লেও ইয়াৰ উপস্থাপন ভংগী আছিল সহজ, সুলভ আৰু হৃদয়গ্ৰাহী।

যদিও শঙ্কৰদেৱে 'মূল্যবোধ' শব্দটো তাত্ত্বিকভাৱে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা নাছিল, তথাপি তেওঁৰ অক্ষীয়া নাটসমূহত নৈতিক, আধ্যাত্মিক আৰু নন্দনতাত্ত্বিক চেতনাৰ স্পষ্ট প্ৰকাশ দেখা যায়। সত্য, দয়া, সমতা, ভক্তি আৰু মানৱিকতাৰ দৰে মূল্যবোধসমূহ নাটৰ চৰিত্ৰ, সংলাপ আৰু ঘটনাপ্ৰবাহৰ মাজেৰে সজীৱ হৈ উঠিছে। ফলস্বৰূপে, অক্ষীয়া নাট অসমৰ সমাজ-সংস্কাৰ আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক জাগৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অধ্যায় হিচাপে পৰিগণিত হৈছে।

অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ উদ্ভৱ আৰু স্বৰূপ

অক্ষীয়া নাট অসমীয়া বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্য আৰু নাট্যসংস্কৃতিৰ এক অনন্য অৱদান। ই ভাওনা বা শঙ্কৰী নাট বুলিও জনা যায়। "অক্ষীয়া" শব্দটোৰ অৰ্থ হৈছে 'অঙ্কযুক্ত' বা এক অঙ্কত সম্পূৰ্ণ হোৱা নাট। এই নাটসমূহ সাধাৰণতে একাক্ষিক,

অৰ্থাৎ একেটা অঙ্কতেই কাহিনীৰ সূচনা, বিকাশ আৰু পৰিসমাপ্তি সম্পন্ন হয়। যদিও ই একাক্ষিক, তথাপি ইয়াৰ গঠন, উপস্থাপনা আৰু সংগীত-নৃত্যৰ সমন্বয় ইহঁতক এক সম্পূৰ্ণ আৰু সুযম নাট্যৰূপ প্ৰদান কৰে। অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ মুখ্য বৈশিষ্ট্য হৈছে ভক্তিবসৰ আধিক্য, সংগীত আৰু নৃত্যৰ প্ৰাধান্য, আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক আদৰ্শৰ সুস্পষ্ট প্ৰকাশ।

শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ নাট্যপ্ৰতিভাৰ প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ আছিল চিহ্নযাত্ৰা। এই নাট্যপ্ৰয়াসক আধুনিক অৰ্থত পেণ্টোমাইম বুলি ক’ব পাৰি, কিয়নো ইয়াত সংলাপতকৈ দৃশ্যায়ন আৰু চিত্ৰকল্পৰ গুৰুত্ব অধিক আছিল। চিহ্নযাত্ৰাত ভগৱান বিষ্ণুৰ সপ্ত বৈকুণ্ঠৰ চিত্ৰায়ণ কৰা হৈছিল, যাৰ জৰিয়তে দৰ্শকক এক আধ্যাত্মিক আৰু নান্দনিক অভিজ্ঞতা প্ৰদান কৰা হৈছিল। ইয়াৰ মাজেৰে শঙ্কৰদেৱে উপলব্ধি কৰিছিল যে নাট্যকলাৰ মাধ্যমে আধ্যাত্মিক বাণী অধিক ফলপ্ৰসূভাৱে প্ৰচাৰ কৰিব পৰা যায়।

পিছলৈ তেওঁ ছয়খন পূৰ্ণাঙ্গ অক্ষীয়া নাট ৰচনা কৰে — পত্নীপ্ৰসাদ, কালীয়দমন, কেলীগোপাল, ৰুক্মিণীহৰণ, পাৰিজাত হৰণ আৰু ৰামবিজয়। এই নাটসমূহৰ কাহিনী মূলতঃ ভাগৱত, ৰামায়ণ আৰু অন্যান্য পুৰাণৰ পৰা সংগৃহীত, কিন্তু ইয়াৰ উপস্থাপনা সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ নিজস্ব সৃষ্টিশীলতাৰে সমৃদ্ধ। প্ৰতিটো নাটত কৃষ্ণ বা ৰামৰ লীলাৰ মাধ্যমে ভক্তি, ধৰ্মনিষ্ঠা, নৈতিকতা আৰু ঈশ্বৰপ্ৰেমৰ আদৰ্শ প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰা হৈছে।

অক্ষীয়া নাট সংস্কৃত ৰূপকৰ অনুকৰণ নহয়। যদিও ভাৰতীয় নাট্যশাস্ত্ৰৰ কুমান মৌলিক উপাদান — যেনে সূত্ৰধাৰৰ উপস্থিতি, ৰস-ভাবৰ ব্যৱহাৰ, সংগীত আৰু নৃত্যৰ সংমিশ্ৰণ - ইয়াত দেখা যায়, তথাপি ই এক স্বতন্ত্ৰ আৰু স্বকীয় নাট্যধাৰা। ইয়াৰ ভাষা হৈছে ব্ৰজাৱলী - অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী প্ৰভৃতি উপাদানেৰে গঠিত এক সুললিত কৃত্ৰিম ভাষা - যিয়ে নাটসমূহক এক বিশেষ সাহিত্যিক মৰ্যাদা প্ৰদান কৰিছে। অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ উপস্থাপনা সাধাৰণতে নামঘৰ বা সত্ৰত অনুষ্ঠিত হয় আৰু ইয়াক “ভাওনা” বুলি কোৱা হয়। ভাওনাত নাট্য, সংগীত, নৃত্য, আহাৰ্য্য, মুখা আৰু আলোক-ব্যৱস্থাৰ এক সামগ্ৰিক সমন্বয় দেখা যায়। ই কেৱল নাট্যপ্ৰদৰ্শন নহয়; ই এক সামাজিক-ধৰ্মীয় অনুষ্ঠান, যিয়ে সমাজৰ সকলো শ্ৰেণীৰ লোকক একত্ৰিত কৰে।

এইদৰে অক্ষীয়া নাট অসমৰ ভক্তি আন্দোলনৰ এক শক্তিশালী সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰকাশ, যিয়ে আধ্যাত্মিক সাধনা আৰু নান্দনিক অভিব্যক্তিৰ মাজত এক সুযম সমন্বয় সাধন কৰিছে।

নন্দনতাত্ত্বিক উপাদানসমূহৰ বিশ্লেষণ

ভক্তিবস আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য্যবোধ

অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ নন্দনতাত্ত্বিক গঠন বিশ্লেষণ কৰিলে স্পষ্ট হয় যে ইয়াৰ প্ৰধান আৰু প্ৰধানতম ৰস হৈছে ভক্তিবস। ভাৰতীয় ৰসতত্ত্বৰ আলোচনাত ভক্তিবসক

কেতিয়াবা শৃঙ্খৰ বা শান্ত বসৰ অন্তৰ্গত হিচাপে বিবেচনা কৰা হয় যদিও বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিত ই এক স্বতন্ত্ৰ আৰু পৰিপক্ক নান্দনিক অভিজ্ঞতা ৰূপে বিকশিত হৈছে। শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ অক্ষীয়া নাটসমূহত কৃষ্ণ বা ৰামৰ লীলা-কথাৰ মাধ্যমে এই ভক্তিবস এক কেন্দ্ৰীয় শক্তি হিচাপে ক্ৰিয়াশীল। নাটসমূহত শৃঙ্খৰ, বীৰ, কৰুণ, হাস্য আদি বসৰ সংযোজন থাকিলেও, সমগ্ৰ নাট্যপ্ৰবাহক নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰি থকা মূল চেতনা হৈছে ঈশ্বৰৰ প্ৰতি একনিষ্ঠ প্ৰেম আৰু শৰণাগতি।

এই ভক্তিভাৱ কেৱল ধৰ্মীয় আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ সীমাত আবদ্ধ নহয়; ই এক গভীৰ নন্দনতাত্ত্বিক চেতনা। ভক্তিবসৰ অভিজ্ঞতা লাভ কৰাৰ অৰ্থ হৈছে আত্মাৰ সৈতে পৰমাত্মাৰ মিলনৰ এক সৌন্দৰ্যময় অনুভৱ। ইয়াত সত্য (আধ্যাত্মিক বাস্তৱতা), শিৱ (কল্যাণ) আৰু সুন্দৰৰ (নান্দনিক আনন্দ) এক সমন্বয় সাধিত হয়। নাটৰ চৰিত্ৰসমূহে যেতিয়া কৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰতি আত্মসমৰ্পণ কৰে বা তেওঁৰ লীলাত অংশগ্ৰহণ কৰে, তেতিয়া দৰ্শকৰ অন্তৰত এক আধ্যাত্মিক আনন্দৰ সঞ্চাৰ হয়। এই আনন্দ ইন্দ্ৰিয়সুখৰ পৰা পৃথক; ই এক শুদ্ধ, মননশীল আৰু আত্মমুখী অনুভূতি। অক্ষীয়া নাটত সংগীত, নৃত্য আৰু গীতৰ ভূমিকা ভক্তিবস সৃষ্টিত বিশেষ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। বৰগীতৰ সুমধুৰ সুৰ, তালবদ্ধ নৃত্যভঙ্গী আৰু আবৃত্তিমূলক সংলাপে দৰ্শকৰ মনক ধীৰে ধীৰে এক আধ্যাত্মিক পৰিৱেশলৈ লৈ যায়। এই সমন্বিত শিল্প-উপস্থাপনে নাটকক কেৱল দৃশ্য-শ্ৰাব্য অভিজ্ঞতাত সীমাবদ্ধ নাৰাখি এক অন্তৰ্মুখী সাধনাৰ ৰূপ প্ৰদান কৰে। ভাওনাৰ সময়ত দৰ্শক আৰু অভিনেতাৰ মাজৰ সীমাৰেখাও কিছু পৰিমাণে লুপ্ত হয়; সকলোৱে মিলি এক সামূহিক ভক্তি-অনুভূতিৰ অংশীদাৰ হয়।

সৌন্দৰ্য্যবোধমূলতঃ মনৰ শুদ্ধতাৰ অনুভূতি। শঙ্কৰদেৱে উপলব্ধি কৰিছিল যে সৌন্দৰ্য্য কেৱল বাহ্যিক অলংকাৰত নহয়, ই অন্তৰৰ পবিত্ৰতাত নিহিত। সেইবাবেই তেওঁ নাটত অতি জটিল মঞ্চসজ্জাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে সুষম, সৰল আৰু অৰ্থবহ উপস্থাপনা বাছি লৈছিল। পোশাক-প্ৰসাধন, মুখা, আলোক-ব্যৱস্থা আৰু গীত-সংগীতৰ সমন্বয়ে তেওঁ এনে এক নান্দনিক পৰিৱেশ সৃষ্টি কৰিছিল যিয়ে দৰ্শকৰ মনক শুদ্ধ, সংযত আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক কৰি তোলে। এইদৰে অক্ষীয়া নাটত ভক্তিবস আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য্যবোধ পৰস্পৰ অবিচ্ছেদ্য। ভক্তি ইয়াৰ আত্মা, আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য্য হৈছে তাৰ প্ৰকাশভংগী। এই দুই উপাদানৰ সমন্বয়ে শঙ্কৰদেৱে এক এনে নাট্যধাৰাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছিল, যিয়ে একে সময়তে শিল্প, সাধনা আৰু নৈতিক শিক্ষাৰ বাহক হিচাপে অসমৰ সাংস্কৃতিক জীৱনত স্থায়ী স্থান অধিকাৰ কৰিছে।

সংগীত আৰু নৃত্যৰ নান্দনিকতা

অক্ষীয়া নাট সংগীতবিহীন কল্পনা কৰিব নোৱাৰি। সংগীত ইয়াৰ প্ৰাণ, আৰু নৃত্য ইয়াৰ দেহগত প্ৰকাশ। নাটৰ সূচনাত নান্দী-গীতেৰে এক পবিত্ৰ আৰু মঙ্গলময়

পৰিৱেশ সৃষ্টি কৰা হয়, যিয়ে সমগ্ৰ উপস্থাপনাক আধ্যাত্মিক তাৎপৰ্য প্ৰদান কৰে। সমাপ্তিত মুক্তিমঙ্গল ভটিমা গোৱা হয়, যাৰ মাধ্যমে ঈশ্বৰৰ কৃপা আৰু মুক্তিৰ প্ৰাৰ্থনা কৰা হয়। এই আৰম্ভণি আৰু সমাপ্তিৰ ধাৰণাই নাটকক এক সম্পূৰ্ণ সাধনামূলক আকাৰ প্ৰদান কৰে। শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ ছয়খন অক্ষীয়া নাটত প্ৰায় ১১৯টা গীত সংযোজিত থকা বুলি ধৰা হয়, যিয়ে ইয়াৰ সংগীতময় বৈশিষ্ট্য স্পষ্ট কৰি তোলে।

এই গীতসমূহ কেৱল কাহিনীৰ অংশ নহয়; ইহঁতে চৰিত্ৰৰ অন্তৰ্দ্বন্দ্ব, আনন্দ, বেদনা, আকুলতা আৰু শৰণাগতিৰ অনুভূতি প্ৰকাশ কৰে। ভাৱীয়াই গীতৰ মাধ্যমে নিজৰ আবেগ দৰ্শকৰ ওচৰলৈ শিপায় দিয়ে। বৰগীতৰ সুৰ, লয় আৰু ছন্দ এক গভীৰ আধ্যাত্মিক আবহ সৃষ্টিত সহায়ক। গীতসমূহত ব্যৱহৃত ভাষা আৰু ছন্দ সহজ আৰু হৃদয়গ্ৰাহী, যাৰ ফলত দৰ্শকে সহজেই ইয়াৰ সৈতে সংযোগ স্থাপন কৰিব পাৰে। এইদৰে সংগীত নাটকত ভক্তিৰস জাগ্ৰত কৰাৰ এক প্ৰধান মাধ্যম হিচাপে ক্ৰিয়াশীল। গায়ন-বায়নৰ সমবেত সংগীত অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ এক উল্লেখযোগ্য বৈশিষ্ট্য। খোল, তাল, নেগেৰা আদি বাদ্যযন্ত্ৰৰ সুষম ব্যৱহাৰে নাট্য-মঞ্চত এক ছন্দোময় আৰু ঐশ্বৰিক পৰিৱেশৰ সৃষ্টি কৰে। গায়ন-বায়নৰ সংগতি, তালৰ নিয়মিত স্পন্দন আৰু সূত্ৰধাৰৰ ৰাগ-প্ৰদান মিলি নাট্যপ্ৰদৰ্শনক এক সামূহিক আধ্যাত্মিক অভিজ্ঞতালৈ ৰূপান্তৰিত কৰে। দৰ্শক আৰু শিল্পীৰ মাজত এক সজীৱ সংযোগ স্থাপিত হয়, যাৰ ফলত নাটক এক সামূহিক ভক্তি-অনুষ্ঠানৰ ৰূপ লয়।

নৃত্য অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ আন এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ নান্দনিক উপাদান। সূত্ৰধাৰৰ ভূমিকা ইয়াত বিশেষভাবে লক্ষণীয়। তেওঁ কাহিনীৰ বৰ্ণনা কৰাৰ লগতে নিজে নৃত্যৰ মাধ্যমে ভাব-প্ৰকাশ কৰে। সূত্ৰধাৰৰ নিয়ন্ত্ৰিত আৰু সুশৃঙ্খল নৃত্যভঙ্গীয়ে নাট্যৰস অধিক গভীৰ কৰে। কৃষ্ণ নৃত্য, গোপী নৃত্য, ৰাস নৃত্য আদি বৈচিত্ৰময় নৃত্যৰূপ নাটকক অধিক দৃষ্টিনন্দন আৰু আবেগময় কৰি তোলে। বিশেষকৈ ৰাস নৃত্যত বৃত্তাকাৰ গতি, ছন্দময় পদক্ষেপ আৰু সংগীতৰ সমন্বয়ে এক অপূৰ্ব সৌন্দৰ্য্যৰ সৃষ্টি হয়। এইদৰে সংগীত আৰু নৃত্য অক্ষীয়া নাটত কেৱল অলংকাৰ নহয়; ইহঁত নাট্যৰ মূল নান্দনিক শক্তি। এই সমন্বিত শিল্প-প্ৰকাশে দৰ্শকৰ মনক শুদ্ধ কৰি ভক্তি আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য্যৰ এক ঐকান্তিক অনুভূতি জাগ্ৰত কৰে।

ভাষা আৰু সংলাপৰ নান্দনিকতা

অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ নান্দনিক গঠনত ভাষা আৰু সংলাপৰ ভূমিকা বিশেষভাবে গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। শঙ্কৰদেৱে এই নাটসমূহত ব্ৰজাৱলী ভাষাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিছে, যি এক কৃত্ৰিম কিন্তু সুললিত সাহিত্যিক ভাষা। ব্ৰজাৱলী মূলতঃ মৈথিলী আৰু অসমীয়াৰ উপাদানেৰে গঠিত, কিন্তু ইয়াৰ ৰূপ-সংগঠন সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ সৃষ্টিশীল প্ৰতিভাৰ ফল। এই ভাষাৰ ব্যৱহাৰে নাটসমূহক একাধাৰে আধ্যাত্মিক গাভীৰ্য আৰু কাব্যময়

কোমলতা প্ৰদান কৰিছে।

ব্ৰজাৱলীৰ অন্যতম বৈশিষ্ট্য হৈছে ইয়াৰ সংগীতধৰ্মিতা। শব্দৰ বিন্যাস, ধ্বনিগত সুষমা আৰু ছন্দোবদ্ধ বাক্য গঠন নাট্যৰ সৃষ্টিত সহায়ক। সংলাপসমূহ কেৱল কাহিনীৰ অগ্ৰগতিৰ বাবে প্ৰয়োজনীয় তথ্য প্ৰদান কৰা মাধ্যম নহয়; ইহঁতে ভাব, ৰস আৰু নৈতিক আদৰ্শৰ গভীৰ প্ৰকাশ ঘটায়। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে, কৃষ্ণ বা ভক্ত চৰিত্ৰসমূহৰ মুখেৰে উচ্চাৰিত বাক্যসমূহত ভক্তিভাৱ, বিনয় আৰু শৰণাগতিৰ সুৰ স্পষ্টভাৱে ধ্বনিত হয়। এই সংলাপসমূহ দৰ্শকৰ হৃদয়ত এক সুকোমল আধ্যাত্মিক স্পন্দন জগাই তোলে।

অক্ষীয়া নাটত সূত্ৰধাৰৰ ভাষা বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। তেওঁ কাহিনী বৰ্ণনা কৰাৰ লগতে দৰ্শকৰ সৈতে এক সজীৱ সংযোগ স্থাপন কৰে। সূত্ৰধাৰৰ সংলাপত কেতিয়াবা ব্যাখ্যামূলক ভংগী, কেতিয়াবা কাব্যময় অলংকাৰ, আৰু কেতিয়াবা হাস্যৰ সৰল স্পৰ্শ দেখা যায়। ইয়াৰ ফলত নাট্য-প্ৰবাহ একঘেয়ামী নহয়; বৰঞ্চ ভাষাৰ বৈচিত্ৰ্যই নাটকক অধিক জীৱন্ত কৰি তোলে। সংলাপসমূহত অলংকাৰ, উপমা আৰু পুনৰুক্তিৰ সুন্দৰ প্ৰয়োগ দেখা যায়, যিয়ে নাটকক সাহিত্যিক উচ্চতা প্ৰদান কৰে। এই ভাষাগত সৌন্দৰ্য দৰ্শকৰ মনত এক বিশেষ নান্দনিক আনন্দৰ সৃষ্টি কৰে। নাট্য-উপস্থাপনৰ সময়ত এই সংলাপসমূহ সংগীত আৰু নৃত্যৰ সৈতে মিলি এক সমন্বিত শিল্প-অভিজ্ঞতা ৰূপে পৰিণত হয়।

এইদৰে ব্ৰজাৱলী ভাষাৰ কাব্যময়তা, সংলাপৰ ছন্দোবদ্ধতা আৰু ধ্বনিগত সুষমাই অক্ষীয়া নাটসমূহক এক অনন্য নান্দনিক ৰূপ প্ৰদান কৰিছে। ভাষা ইয়াত কেৱল প্ৰকাশৰ মাধ্যম নহয়; ই নাট্যৰ আত্মা আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য্যৰ অন্যতম আধাৰ।

ৰূপ-সজ্জা, মঞ্চ আৰু দৃষ্টিনন্দন উপাদান

অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ নান্দনিক গঠনত ৰূপ-সজ্জা (পোছাক-প্ৰসাধন), মঞ্চ-ব্যৱস্থা আৰু অন্যান্য দৃষ্টিনন্দন উপাদানৰ বিশেষ ভূমিকা আছে। এই নাটসমূহ সাধাৰণতে মুকলি মঞ্চত অভিনীত হয় আৰু নামঘৰ বা কীৰ্তনঘৰেই ইয়াৰ প্ৰধান অভিনয়ক্ষেত্ৰ। নামঘৰৰ আভ্যন্তৰীণ গঠন নিজেই এক পবিত্ৰ আৰু সামূহিক সাধনাস্থল; সেয়ে ইয়াত অনুষ্ঠিত নাট্যপ্ৰদৰ্শনে ধৰ্মীয় আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক তাৎপৰ্য্য লাভ কৰে। মঞ্চ-ব্যৱস্থা সাধাৰণ হলেও সুশৃঙ্খল। সূত্ৰধাৰ, গায়ন-বায়ন আৰু ভাৱৰীয়াৰ বাবে বিশেষ স্থান নিৰ্ধাৰিত থাকে। গায়ন-বায়ন একপাশে সুশৃঙ্খলভাৱে বহে, সূত্ৰধাৰ মঞ্চৰ কেন্দ্ৰস্থল দখল কৰে, আৰু ভাৱৰীয়াসকলে নিৰ্দিষ্ট গতিপথ অনুসৰি অভিনয় কৰে। এই নিয়মবদ্ধ বিন্যাসে নাট্য-উপস্থাপনাত শৃঙ্খলা আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য দুয়োটা বজাই ৰাখে।

ৰূপ-সজ্জা বা পোছাক-প্ৰসাধন অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ দৃষ্টিনন্দন বৈশিষ্ট্যৰ অন্যতম আধাৰ। চৰিত্ৰ অনুসৰি পোছাক নিৰ্দিষ্ট কৰা হয়, যাৰ ফলত দৰ্শকে সহজেই চৰিত্ৰ

চিনাক্ত কৰিব পাৰে। শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণৰ পীত বসন, ময়ূৰপাখী শিৰোভূষণ আৰু বঙীন অলঙ্কাৰে তেওঁৰ ঐশ্বৰিক সন্তোক দৃশ্যমান কৰে। ৰামচন্দ্ৰৰ ধনু-বাণ, বজাৰ জহৰ চোলা, ঋষি-মুনিৰ সাদাসিধা বসন — এই সকলো উপাদানে নাট্য-চৰিত্ৰসমূহক জীৱন্ত ৰূপ প্ৰদান কৰে। পোশাকৰ ৰং, অলংকাৰ আৰু আকাৰ-আকৃতিৰ সুযম ব্যৱহাৰে নাটকত এক সজীৱ দৃশ্য-সৌন্দৰ্যৰ সৃষ্টি হয়।

অন্ধীয়া নাটত মুখা আৰু পুতলিকাৰ ব্যৱহাৰো বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। বিশেষকৈ অসুৰ, নাগ বা অন্যান্য অতিপ্ৰাকৃত চৰিত্ৰসমূহ উপস্থাপনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত মুখাৰ প্ৰয়োগ নাটকক অধিক প্ৰাণৱন্ত কৰি তোলে। এই মুখাসমূহ কেৱল ভয়ংকৰ বা অলৌকিক ৰূপ দৰ্শাবলৈ নহয়; ইহঁতে নাট্যৰ ভাৱগম্ভীৰতা আৰু কল্পনাশক্তিৰ বিস্তাৰ ঘটায়। পুতলিকাৰ সহায়ত কিছুমান বিশেষ দৃশ্য অধিক বাস্তৱসন্মতভাৱে উপস্থাপন কৰা হয়, যাৰ ফলত দৰ্শকৰ মনত ঘটনাৰ প্ৰভাৱ গভীৰ হয়। প্ৰাকৃতিক ৰং — যেনে হেঙুল, হাইতাল, নীল, সেন্দূৰ আদিৰ ব্যৱহাৰ - শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ সৃষ্টিশীল মনোভাৱ আৰু স্থানীয় সম্পদৰ প্ৰতি তেওঁৰ সচেতনতা প্ৰমাণ কৰে। এই ৰংসমূহে পোশাক, মুখা আৰু মঞ্চসজ্জাত এক উজ্জ্বল কিন্তু সুযম আভা সৃষ্টি কৰে। এইদৰে ৰূপ-সজ্জা, মঞ্চ-ব্যৱস্থা আৰু দৃষ্টিনন্দন উপাদানসমূহ অন্ধীয়া নাটক কেৱল ধৰ্মীয় উপস্থাপনাত সীমাবদ্ধ নাৰাখি এক পূৰ্ণাঙ্গ নান্দনিক শিল্পৰূপত প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিছে।

অন্ধীয়া নাট আৰু অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ পুনৰ গঠন

অন্ধীয়া নাট কেৱল মনোৰঞ্জনৰ মাধ্যম হিচাপে বিবেচনা কৰিব নোৱাৰি; ই আছিল শ্ৰীমন্ত শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ সামাজিক আৰু সংস্কৃতিৰ পুনৰ গঠনৰ এক শক্তিশালী অস্ত্ৰ। পঞ্চদশ-ষোড়শ শতিকাৰ অসমত যি ধৰ্মীয় আড়ম্বৰ, জাতিভেদ, কুসংস্কাৰ আৰু সামাজিক বৈষম্য প্ৰচলিত আছিল, তাৰ মাজত অন্ধীয়া নাটে এক নৱজাগৰণৰ সূচনা কৰিছিল। নাটসমূহৰ কাহিনী যদিও ভাগৱত, ৰামায়ণ বা পুৰাণৰ পৰা গৃহীত, তথাপি ইয়াৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত উদ্দেশ্য আছিল মানৱিক মূল্যবোধৰ প্ৰচাৰ আৰু সমাজত নৈতিক সচেতনতা সৃষ্টি কৰা। অন্ধীয়া নাটৰ মাধ্যমে ভক্তি, দয়া, সমতা আৰু ভ্ৰাতৃত্ববোধৰ বাণী প্ৰচাৰিত হৈছিল। নাট্য-মঞ্চত সকলো শ্ৰেণীৰ মানুহ একত্ৰিত হৈ ভাওনাৰ অংশীদাৰ হোৱাৰ সুযোগ পাইছিল। এই সামূহিক অংশগ্ৰহণে সমাজত এক নতুন ঐক্যবোধৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছিল। জাতি-বৰ্ণৰ কঠোৰ বিভাজনৰ বিপৰীতে শঙ্কৰদেৱে একশৰণ হৰি নামধৰ্মৰ মাধ্যমে সমতাৰ আদৰ্শ প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিছিল, আৰু অন্ধীয়া নাট আছিল সেই আদৰ্শৰ জীৱন্ত প্ৰকাশ। নাটৰ চৰিত্ৰসমূহৰ আচৰণ, সংলাপ আৰু ঘটনাপ্ৰবাহে দৰ্শকক নৈতিক জীৱনৰ পথ দেখুৱাইছিল। নামঘৰ আৰু সত্ৰসমূহ অন্ধীয়া নাটৰ উপস্থাপনৰ কেন্দ্ৰস্থল হিচাপে গঢ় লৈ উঠিছিল। এই স্থানসমূহ কেৱল ধৰ্মীয় অনুষ্ঠানৰ বাবে নহয়, বৰঞ্চ শিক্ষা, সংস্কৃতি আৰু সামাজিক আলোচনাৰো কেন্দ্ৰ হৈ পৰে। গায়ন-বায়ন,

ভাওনা, পাঠ-প্ৰবচন আদিৰ মাধ্যমে এই প্ৰতিষ্ঠানসমূহে জনসাধাৰণৰ মাজত আধ্যাত্মিক আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনাৰ বিকাশ ঘটায়। সেয়ে ক'ব পাৰি যে অক্ষীয়া নাট অসমৰ গ্ৰাম্য সমাজত এক বিকল্প শিক্ষাব্যৱস্থা ৰূপে ক্ৰিয়াশীল হৈছিল।

পাঁচশ বছৰৰ অধিক সময় ধৰি এই নাট্যধাৰাই অসমৰ জনজীৱনত গভীৰ প্ৰভাৱ বিস্তাৰ কৰি আহিছে। যুগে যুগে সামাজিক আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিবৰ্তন ঘটিলেও অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ মূল আদৰ্শ অটল হৈ আছে। একৈশ শতিকাতো ইয়াৰ প্ৰাসঙ্গিকতা সুস্পষ্ট। আধুনিক মঞ্চ-প্ৰযুক্তি আৰু নতুন ব্যাখ্যাৰ মাধ্যমে ইয়াক পুনৰ উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে, তথাপি ইয়াৰ আধ্যাত্মিক আৰু নৈতিক ভিত্তি অবিচল। বিভিন্ন ভাৰতীয় আৰু বিদেশী ভাষালৈ অনুবাদ হোৱাৰ ফলত অক্ষীয়া নাটে বিশ্বদৰবাৰত স্বীকৃতি লাভ কৰিছে। এইদৰে অক্ষীয়া নাট অসমৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ পুনৰ গঠনৰ এক ঐতিহাসিক দলিল, যিয়ে অতীতৰ পৰা বৰ্তমানলৈ সমাজক নৈতিকতা, ভক্তি আৰু ঐক্যৰ পথেৰে আগুৱাই লৈ গৈছে।

উপসংহাৰ

শ্ৰীমন্ত শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ অক্ষীয়া নাটসমূহ বিশ্লেষণ কৰিলে স্পষ্টভাৱে প্ৰতীয়মান হয় যে ইয়াত নন্দনতত্ত্ব আৰু ভক্তিভাৱৰ এক অপূৰ্ব সমন্বয় সাধিত হৈছে। এই নাটসমূহ কেৱল ধৰ্মীয় কাহিনীৰ নাট্যৰূপ নহয়; ইহঁত এক সামগ্ৰিক শিল্প-সাধনা, য'ত আধ্যাত্মিকতা আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য্য একে সুত্ৰত সাঙুৰ খাই আছে। শঙ্কৰদেৱে উপলব্ধি কৰিছিল যে সমাজ-সংস্কাৰৰ বাবে বিত্ত উপদেশ যথেষ্ট নহয়; মানুহৰ হৃদয় স্পৰ্শ কৰিব পাৰিলেহে স্থায়ী পৰিবৰ্তন সম্ভৱ। সেই কাৰণে তেওঁ সংগীত, নৃত্য, কাব্য, অভিনয়, আহাৰ্য্য আৰু মঞ্চ-ব্যৱস্থাৰ সমন্বয়ে এক সম্পূৰ্ণ নাট্যধাৰাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰে, যিয়ে দৰ্শকৰ মনত একে সময়তে আনন্দ আৰু নৈতিক চেতনা জাগ্ৰত কৰে। অক্ষীয়া নাটত ভক্তিবাদ হৈছে কেন্দ্ৰীয় শক্তি, কিন্তু এই ভক্তি কোনো সংকীৰ্ণ ধৰ্মীয় আবেগ নহয়। ই এক শুদ্ধ, মননশীল আৰু নান্দনিক অভিজ্ঞতা, য'ত সত্য, শিৱ আৰু সুন্দৰৰ মিলন ঘটে। নাটৰ মাধ্যমে ঈশ্বৰৰ লীলাৰ উপস্থাপন দৰ্শকক আত্মসমীক্ষাৰ দিশে আগুৱাই নিয়ে। সংগীতৰ সুৰ, নৃত্যৰ লয়, ভাষাৰ কাব্যিকতা আৰু দৃশ্য-উপস্থাপনৰ সৌন্দৰ্য্য মিলি এক আধ্যাত্মিক পৰিৱেশৰ সৃষ্টি কৰে। এই অভিজ্ঞতাই দৰ্শকৰ অন্তৰত শান্তি, সংযম আৰু কল্যাণবোধৰ বিকাশ ঘটায়।

শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ অক্ষীয়া নাটৰ আন এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ দিশ হৈছে ইয়াৰ সামাজিক তাৎপৰ্য্য। এই নাটসমূহৰ জৰিয়তে তেওঁ সমাজত সমতা, ভ্ৰাতৃত্ব আৰু নৈতিকতাৰ আদৰ্শ প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিছিল। নামঘৰ আৰু সত্ৰসমূহ নাট্য-উপস্থাপনৰ কেন্দ্ৰ হিচাপে গঢ় লৈ সমাজৰ শিক্ষা আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক বিকাশৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰে। ফলস্বৰূপে, অক্ষীয়া নাট অসমৰ সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিচয়ৰ অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংশ হিচাপে পৰিগণিত

হয়। পাঁচশ বছৰৰ অধিক সময় ধৰি এই নাট্যধাৰাই নিজৰ প্ৰাসঙ্গিকতা অক্ষুণ্ণ ৰাখিছে। আধুনিক যুগতো ইয়াৰ শিল্পমূল্য আৰু নৈতিক বাণী সমানভাৱে তাৎপৰ্য্যপূৰ্ণ। বৰ্তমান বিশ্বায়নৰ যুগত যেতিয়া সাংস্কৃতিক স্বতন্ত্ৰতা বহুক্ষেত্ৰত সংকটাপন্ন, তেতিয়া অক্ষীয়া নাটে অসমীয়া জাতিসত্তাৰ এক শক্তিশালী প্ৰতীক হিচাপে কাম কৰে। বিভিন্ন ভাষালৈ অনুবাদ আৰু আন্তৰ্জাতিক মঞ্চত উপস্থাপনৰ মাধ্যমে ইয়াৰ শিল্পমূল্য বিশ্বদৰবাৰত স্বীকৃতি লাভ কৰিছে।

শেষত ক'ব পাৰি যে শঙ্কৰদেৱৰ অক্ষীয়া নাট হৈছে এক সামগ্ৰিক কলা-ধাৰা, য'ত সংগীত, নৃত্য, সাহিত্য, অভিনয় আৰু চিত্ৰকলাৰ সমাহাৰে এক নান্দনিক জগতৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছে। এই নাটসমূহে দৰ্শকৰ মনত সৌন্দৰ্য্যবোধ, ভক্তি আৰু নৈতিক চেতনা জাগ্ৰত কৰি সমাজ-সংস্কাৰৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গভীৰ প্ৰভাৱ পেলাইছে। সেয়ে অক্ষীয়া নাট কেৱল অসমৰ সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্য নহয়; ই বিশ্বসাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্যৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো এক মূল্যবান আৰু চিৰস্থায়ী অৱদান।

প্ৰসংগপুথি :

- ১। নেওগ, মহেশ্বৰ (২০০৯) সত্ৰীয়া নৃত্য আৰু সত্ৰীয়া নৃত্যৰ তাল, প্ৰথম খণ্ড, গুৱাহাটী, অসম প্ৰকাশন পৰিষদ।
- ২। Barua, B. Kr. (2009). Sankaradeva Vaishnava Saint of Assam. Guwahati-01, Bina Library.
- ৩। Phukan. B. (2011) Srimant Sankaradeva Vaishnava Saint of Assam. Guwahati-01, Kaziranga Books.
- ৪। Das, K.S (Ed. 2014) Luit to Thames. Vol. xv. Guwahati-05, S.H Education Trust.
- ৫। দেৱগোস্বামী, কেশৱানন্দ (৩য় সংস্কৰণ, ১৯৯৯) অঙ্কমালা, ডিব্ৰুগড়, বনলতা।
- ৬। Neog, M. (1998). Sankaradeva and His Times Early history of the Vaisnava Movement. Guwahati, Layers Book Stall.



ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ শিশুগীত : এটি আলোচনা

বৰ্ণা শৰ্মা¹

১.০০ ভূমিকা :

সাহিত্যৰ এটা গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ আলোচ্য বিষয় হৈছে গীতি সাহিত্য। অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ জগততো গীতিসাহিত্যৰ স্থান অতুলনীয়। প্ৰাচীন কালৰে পৰা অসমীয়া সাহিত্যত গীতি সাহিত্য চৰ্চাৰ পৰম্পৰা বিৰাজমান। লোকগীত-চৰ্যাগীত আদিৰ উদ্ভৱৰ দিনৰে পৰা অসমীয়া সাহিত্যতো গীতি-সাহিত্য চৰ্চাৰ পৰম্পৰা সূচনা হোৱাতো অনস্বীকাৰ্য। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত বিভিন্ন কবি-সাহিত্যিকসকলৰ আশাসুধীয়া প্ৰচেষ্টাত গীতি সাহিত্য ৰচনাৰ পৰম্পৰাৰ বিকাশ ঘটিবলৈ ধৰিলে। এইক্ষেত্ৰত গুৰু দুজনাৰ বৰগীত, পঁচালী কবি দুৰ্গাবৰৰ গীতিৰামায়ন আদিৰ নাম বিশেষভাৱে উল্লেখযোগ্য।

অসমীয়া গীতি সাহিত্য জগতত শিশু গীত সমূহৰ ভূমিকা অনস্বীকাৰ্য। এই গীতসমূহৰ মাজেৰে শিশুসকলৰ কল্পনাপ্ৰৱন মনটোক বিভিন্ন ধৰণেৰে আনন্দ প্ৰদান কৰা হয়। এনে প্ৰেক্ষাপটত কেতিয়াবা এনে গীতসমূহৰ মাজেৰে বিভিন্ন অলৌকিক ঘটনা-পৰিঘটনাকো আকৰ্ষণীয় ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰিবলগীয়া হয়। কিয়নো শিশুমন খুব কোমল। সেয়েহে তেওঁলোকৰ কোমল মনটোক বাস্তৱৰ কঠোৰতাৰ সৈতে পোনপটীয়াকৈ মুখামুখি কৰালে হয়তো কোনোবাখিনিত তেওঁলোকৰ কোমল চিন্তাধাৰাত আউল লগাৰ অৱকাশ থাকে। সেয়েহে তেওঁলোকৰ বাবে এখন সুন্দৰ কল্পনা জগতৰ সৃষ্টি কৰি তাৰ মাজেৰে তেওঁলোকৰ কল্পনা প্ৰৱণতাক ইতিবাচক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে আগবঢ়াই নি বাস্তৱ জীৱনৰ বিভিন্ন আদৰ্শৰ সৈতে পৰিচয় কৰি দিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হয়। এনে কৰাৰ বেলিকা কবি-সাহিত্যিকসকলে নানা ধৰণৰ প্ৰাকৃতিক সমল, জীৱ-জন্তু, অলৌকিক ঘটনাৰ আশ্ৰয় ল'বলগা হয়। আমাৰ বিশিষ্ট শিল্পী ভূপেন হাজৰিকাইও কিছুসংখ্যক শিশুগীত ৰচনা কৰি থৈ গৈছে। শিশুসুলভ ধ্যান-

¹ সহকাৰী অধ্যাপিকা, অসমীয়া বিভাগ, পণ্ডিত দীনদয়াল উপাধ্যায় আদৰ্শ মহাবিদ্যালয়, তুলুঙীয়া

ধাৰণাৰ প্ৰতি লক্ষ্য ৰাখি তেওঁ গীতসমূহৰ মাজত কল্পনাৰ ৰহণ সানি এক অভূতপূৰ্ব ৰূপত সজাই-পৰাই তুলিছিল। অৱশ্যে কল্পনাৰ মাজৰে তেওঁ শিশুসকলৰ বাবে জীৱনৰ আদৰ্শ তথা কৰণীয় সন্দৰ্ভতো অলেখ কথাৰ সমাৱেশ ঘটাইছে। আমাৰ আলোচনাত ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ শিশুগীত সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ'ব।

২.০০ সূচক শব্দ :

শিশু, চন্দ্ৰ, ৰেলগাড়ী ইত্যাদি।

৩.০০ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য, পৰিধি আৰু সমল :

গীতিসাহিত্যৰ আলোচনাত শিশুগীতৰ প্ৰাসংগিকতা গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। এই গীতসমূহৰ মাজেৰে শিশুমনৰ ধ্যান-ধাৰণাক এক ইতিবাচক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে সজাই-পৰাই তুলিবলৈ সহায়ক হয়। তদুপৰি এই গীতসমূহত ব্যৱহৃত কোমল সুৰ তথা শিশুসুলভ শব্দৰাজিৰ মাজেৰে শিশু মনস্তত্ত্বক সুস্থৰূপত গঢ় দি তুলিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হয়।

আমাৰ আলোচনাত ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ দ্বাৰা ৰচিত শিশুগীত সমূহৰ বিষয়বস্তু সন্দৰ্ভত আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ'ব উক্ত আলোচনাত ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ শিশুগীত সমূহৰ লগতে বিভিন্ন গ্ৰন্থ-আলোচনা আদিৰ সহায় লোৱা হ'ব।

৪.০০ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি :

আমাৰ আলোচনাৰ বাবে মূলতঃ বৰ্ণনাত্মক আৰু বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ সহায় লোৱা হ'ব।

৫.০০ মূল বিষয়বস্তু :

শিশুসকল ঈশ্বৰৰ অনবদ্য দান। মানৱ বিকাশৰ এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ স্তৰ হৈছে শৈশৱ আৰু বাল্যকাল। এই সময়চোৱাত শিশুসকলে নিজৰ মন-মগজুত ক্ৰীড়া কৰি থকা চিন্তা-চৰ্চাসমূহৰ বৰ্হিপ্ৰকাশ কৰিবলৈ প্ৰচেষ্টা কৰে। শিশুসকল কল্পনাপ্ৰণৱ। বিচিত্ৰ কল্পনায়ে তেওঁলোকৰ মন-মগজু ৰোমাঞ্চিত কৰি তুলে। শিশুসকলে ৰংচঙীয়া জগত এখনত বিচৰণ কৰে। সেয়েহে ৰঙৰ সৈতে শিশু মনৰ এক এৰাব নোৱাৰা সম্পৰ্ক লক্ষণীয়। ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ “ৰং কিনিবা কোনে” - গীতটিৰ মাজেৰে শিশুসকলৰ ৰঙীন মনটোৰ উমান পোৱা যায়। প্ৰকৃতিৰ বিভিন্ন উপাদানক সমল হিচাপে লৈ তেওঁ শিশুসকলক বিভিন্ন ৰঙৰ সৈতে পৰিচয় কৰাই দিছে :

“ৰং কিনিবা কোনে

বাও ধানৰ সোণ পথাৰৰ হালধীয়া চৰাই

....ৰং কিনিবা কোনে?”

আকৌ শিশুসকলক ৰঙৰ পৰিচয় দিয়াৰ লগতে তেওঁৰ শিশুগীত সমূহৰ মাজেৰে শিশুসকলৰ বাবে ন-ন জ্ঞানৰো সমল বিচাৰি পোৱা যায়। শিশুসকলৰ কল্পনা শক্তি প্ৰবল। সেয়েহে ভূপেন হাজৰিকাই এই গীত সমূহৰ মাজেৰে তেওঁলোকৰ

কল্পনা শক্তিক ইতিবাচক দিশেৰে আগবঢ়াই লৈ যোৱাৰো প্ৰয়াস কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। পকা ধান, সৰিয়হ আদিৰ ৰং হালধীয়া, বগলী বগা, আকাশ নীলা, ইন্দ্ৰধনু বিভিন্ন ৰঙৰ সমষ্টি আদি কথাৰ উল্লেখ শিশু সকলক উক্ত বিষয়বস্তুৰ সন্দৰ্ভত সঠিক জ্ঞানেৰে সমৃদ্ধ কৰিছে :

“বগ পাখিৰ বগা বিচাৰি

খালো মই হাবাথুৰি

.....সকলো ৰঙৰ বেহা কৰে ইন্দ্ৰধনুখনে।”

হাজৰিকাই এই গীত সমূহত সমাজখনক ভাল পাবলৈও শিশুসকলক শিকাইছে। সমাজখনৰ উন্নতিৰ বাবে সদায় এটা নিঃস্বার্থ মনৰ অধিকাৰী হোৱাতো দৰকাৰী। সেয়েহে তেওঁৰ পৰা ৰং কিনাৰ মূহূৰ্তত পইচা দিয়াৰ প্ৰয়োজন নাই বুলি কৈছে আৰু লগতে শিশুসকলক তেওঁ খুব কম সময়ৰ বাবেহে আহিছে বুলি অৱগত কৰিছে আৰু সেয়েহে সকলোকে সোনকালে তেওঁৰ পৰা ৰং কিনিবলৈ কৈছে। ইয়াৰদ্বাৰা হাজৰিকাই প্ৰকাৰান্তৰে মানৱ জীৱন যে ক্ষণ্তিকীয়া আৰু এই ক্ষণ্তিকীয়া জীৱনটোক সাৰ্থক কৰাৰ বাবে সমাজখনলৈ হাঁহি বিলোৱাতো অতিকৈ জৰুৰী সেই কথাকে শিশুসকলক উপস্থাপন কৰা যেন বোধ হয়। সুস্থ সমাজ এখনতহে সুস্থ জীৱন যাপন কৰিব পাৰি। সেয়েহে শিশুসকলক তেওঁ নিজৰ হাঁহিৰে সমাজখনত ৰং বিলাবলৈ আহ্বান জনাইছে :

“ৰং বেচোতা মই

দেশ-বিদেশে বেহা আছে

মই নাথাকো বৈ।....

ৰঙৰ বাবে নালাগে,মোক পইচাপাতি

মাথোঁ তুমি ৰং লোৱা লৰি লৰি আহি

সেই ৰঙেৰে ধৰা বিলোৱা খিল খিলকৈ হাঁহি”

ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ শিশুগীত সমূহত আমাৰ অসমৰ শাক-পাচলিৰ নিদৰ্শনো পোৱা যায়। শিশুসকল সততে পাচলি খোৱাৰ প্ৰতি আগ্ৰহী নহয়। সেয়েহে নিজৰ বাগিছাৰ পাচলিৰ সোৱাদ যে অপূৰ্ব আৰু বজাৰৰ পাচলিতকৈ ঘৰৰ নিজে কৰা পাচলিৰ সোৱাদ যে বেছি জুতি লগা সেই সন্দৰ্ভতো তেওঁৰ পাচলিৰ গীতত উল্লেখ পোৱা যায়:

“পাচলিৰ বাগিচা

সৰু বাগিচা

মোৰ সৰু বাগিচা

জানো দেখিছা?

.....

কবি, মুলা, উৰহি, শাক-লফা, লাই
পুৱাতেই ছিঙো মই খৰাহি ভৰায়।
বজাৰত পাচলি বহু পোৱা যায়
“পিচেগ্লমোৰ বাগিচাৰ দৰে নহয়।”

একেদৰে অসমীয়া বৰ্ণমালা আৰু সংখ্যাঙ্কনৰ নিদৰ্শনো ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ শিশুগীত সমূহে বহন কৰে। সৰু সৰু ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীবোৰৰ মনতো সততে চঞ্চলা হোৱাতো স্বাভাৱিক। সেয়েহে সিহঁতৰ বাবে প্ৰতিটো কথাৰ আকৰ্ষণীয় ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰিলেহে সিহঁতৰ সেই বিষয় সমূহৰ প্ৰতি আগ্ৰহ জন্মে। বিশেষকৈ গীত-মাতৰ মাজেৰে কন-কন শিশুসকলক খুব সহজেই কিবা এটা শিকাৰ প্ৰতি আগ্ৰহী কৰি তুলিব পাৰি। ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতসমূহত এনে আকৰ্ষণীয়তা বিৰাজমান। তেওঁৰ বৰ্ণমালা আৰু সংখ্যা ঙ্কন সমৃদ্ধ গীতটিৰ মাদকতাই সুকীয়া। এই গীতে শিশুসকলক কেৱল বৰ্ণমালা তথা সংখ্যাৰ ঙ্কন দিয়াই নহয়; বৰং শিশুসকলৰ বাবে জানিবলগীয়া কথা কিছুমানো উল্লেখ কৰিছে :

“অ-হ'ল অসমৰ প্ৰথম আখৰ
অসমৰ অকণি অসমতে ঘৰ

.....

এ-যায় নাজিৰালৈ এৰোপ্লেনত উঠি
ৰঙা নীলা বেলুনৰ কিমান যে ফুৰ্তি

.....

০-শূণ্য হ'ল ৰসগোল্লা গোল গোল ভাই
শূণ্যৰ দৰে বলী আৰু কোনো নাই”

আকৌ, নিজৰ দেশ তথা সমাজখনৰ প্ৰতি সকলোৱে ভালপোৱা ভাৱ ৰাখিব লাগে আৰু সেয়েহে যিমান পাৰি নিজৰ দেশ তথা সমাজৰ মান ৰাখিব পৰা কৰ্ম কৰাতো সকলোৰে নৈতিক কৰ্তব্য। শিশুসকলকো আমি সৰুৰে পৰা নিজৰ দেশ-সমাজৰ বাবে সৎ কৰ্ম কৰি যোৱাৰ বাবে শিকাৰ লাগে। শিশুসকল দেশৰ ভৱিষ্যত। সেয়েহে তেওঁ চন্দ্ৰলৈ মানুহ যাবলৈ ওলোৱা বুলি শুনা মাত্ৰকে আমাৰ দেশৰ উঠি অহা শিশুসকলেও যাতে অদূৰ ভৱিষ্যতে এনেধৰণৰ সাহসী কাম কৰি দেশক গৌৰৱান্বিত কৰিব পাৰে তাৰ বাবে নিজৰ গীতেৰে তেওঁলোকক জাগ্ৰত কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। তদুপৰি সমাজৰ অগ্ৰজসকলে অন্ধবিশ্বাসৰ কৰণত পৰি অন্ধকাৰৰ দিশে লৈ যোৱা সমাজখনক সৰু সৰু জোনাকী পৰুৱাৰ দৰে উঠি অহা শিশুসকলক পোহৰ কৰি তুলিবলৈ আহ্বান জনাইছে :

“ব্রহ্মপুত্ৰৰ দুটি পাৰ দলঙে লগলগালে
চন্দ্ৰৰ বুকুলৈ মানুহ যাবলৈ ওলালে!
.....আমি অকণি ওলামেই দলে দলে ওলামেই

.....
ডাঙৰ ডাঙৰসকলৰ পোহৰৰ সমাজখন
অন্ধবিশ্বাসৰ একাৰে কেতিয়াবা ঢাকিলে
আমি সৰু সৰুবোৰে জোনাকী পৰৱা হৈ
পোহৰ বিলাওঁ বুলি দলে দলে ওলামেই
ক'ৰবাত কেনেকৈ ডাঙৰসকল নোলালে।”

একেদৰে “আমি ভাইটি ভণ্টি”-শীৰ্ষক গীতটিত ভূপেন হাজৰিকাই শিশুসকলৰ বাবে সমন্বয়ৰ আদৰ্শ দাঙি ধৰিছে। শদিয়াৰ পৰা ধুবুৰীলৈ বিভিন্ন জাতি-জনগোষ্ঠীৰে অসমৰ সমন্বয়ৰ সংস্কৃতিক গীতটিৰ মাজেৰে দাঙি ধৰিছে। এই সমন্বয়ত যে কিমান আনন্দ তাৰ বৰ্হিপ্ৰকাশো গীতটিৰ মাজেৰে বিচাৰি পোৱা যায় :

“শদিয়াৰে ভাইটি
কোকোৰাঝাৰৰ ৰাভাৰ স'তে
লোহিত মুখৰ কণটি
ইমানসোপা আমি আছো
কিমান যে ফুৰ্তি”

অসমীয়া সমাজত নিচুকনি গীতৰ গুৰুত্ব অপৰিসীম। “নিচুকনি গীত” হৈছে ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীক ওমলোৱা আৰু নিচুকুওৱা গীত।” ১.অ.সা.স.ই, পৃ.২৭ ইয়াক ঠাই বিশেষে ধাইনাম বুলিও কোৱা হয়। এই গীতবোৰত কল্পনাৰ দৌৰাত্ম্য অনেক। আকাশৰ জোন-বেলি-তৰায়ে শিশুসকলৰ সৈতে কথা পতাকে ধৰি মুহূৰ্ততে গছৰ বগৰী সৰি পকা, জোনবায়ো মইনাক মোনা সীবলৈ বেজি যোগান ধৰা অলেখ-অযুত কল্পনাই এই গীতসমূহক সমৃদ্ধ কৰিছে। ভূপেন হাজৰিকাইও মিঠা কোমল সুৰত ৰচিত নিচুকনি গীতৰ আৰ্হিত শিশুসকলৰ বাবে গীত ৰচনা কৰিছিল। এনে গীতৰ মাজেৰে তেওঁ বাস্তৱত অসংলগ্ন হ'লেও শিশুমনৰ উপযোগী স্বপ্নীল জগতখনৰ সুন্দৰ উপস্থাপন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে আৰু লগতে বাস্তৱত জীৱনটোক যাপন কৰাৰ পৰম আদৰ্শ সম্বন্ধেও শিশুসকলক অৱগত কৰিছে :

“আমাৰে মইনা শুইছে

.....
দুখীয়াক যি ফেৰা কৰিলা কৰুণা
তাকে যেন নিনিয়া কাঢ়ি।

ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ শিশুগীতসমূহ সাঁচা অৰ্থত মাদকতাৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ। উক্ত গীতসমূহৰ ভাষাও সাৱলীল। মিঠা-কোমল শিশুসুলভ ভাৱ-ভাষাই গীতসমূহক সুকীয়া মৰ্যাদা প্ৰদান কৰিছে। তদুপৰি গীতসমূহত প্ৰয়োগ কৰা শব্দসমূহো শিশুসুলভ সৌন্দৰ্যৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ। তেওঁৰ আন তত্ত্বগধূৰ গীতসমূহৰ বিপৰীতে শিশুগীত সমূহত শিশুসকলৰ সহজে বোধগম্য হ'ব পৰাকৈ শব্দসমূহৰ প্ৰয়োগ কৰিছে। তদুপৰি প্ৰায়বোৰ গীততেই শাৰীবোৰৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত লক্ষণীয়। ইয়ে গীতসমূহক শিশুসকলৰ বাবে আকৰ্ষণীয় কৰি তুলিছে। প্ৰকৃতিৰ সমল বোৰৰ উল্লেখ গীতসমূহক শিশুসকলৰ বাবে বঙীন কৰাৰ লগতে প্ৰকৃতিৰ সৈতে তেওঁলোকক একাত্ম হোৱাৰো সুযোগ দিছে। ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ, চন্দ্ৰ আদি তৎসম শব্দ, সুৰ্য্য ককাই আদি স্বৰভক্তিৰে সাধিত শব্দ, খিল-খিল, বাক্-বাক্ আদি প্ৰতিধ্বন্যাত্মক শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ তেওঁৰ শিশুগীত সমূহত পোৱা যায়। তদুপৰি ইলিহী মাছ, বসগোন্ধা আদি বাংলা শব্দ, ৰাভা, ঐনিতম আদি ক্ৰমে ৰাভামূলীয় তথা মিছিং শব্দৰ প্ৰয়োগ, এৰোপ্লেন, ইংৰাজ, চকলেট আদি ইংৰাজী শব্দৰো ব্যৱহাৰ পোৱা যায়। আকৌ, “মনটি”, “ছবিটি”, “কণটি”, “যি ফেৰা” আদি শব্দৰ টি, ফেৰা আদি নিৰ্দিষ্টতাৰাচক প্ৰত্যয়ৰ ব্যৱহাৰেও গীত সমূহৰ মাধুৰ্য্যতা বাহাল ৰাখিছে। একেদৰে “ইন্মানসোপা”, “ডাঙৰসকল” আদি শব্দত সোপা, সকল আদি বহুবচনাত্মক প্ৰত্যয়ৰ ব্যৱহাৰো গীতসমূহত সঠিক ৰূপত হোৱা বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। সৰু-সৰু, পকা-পকা, বছৰে-বছৰে আদি দ্বিৰূপৰ ব্যৱহাৰেও তেওঁৰ শিশুগীতসমূহ শুনিবলৈ শুৱলা কৰি তুলিছে।

৬.০০ সামৰণি :

অসমীয়া গীতিসাহিত্যৰ জগতত ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতসমূহৰ স্থান গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। তেওঁৰ গীতসমূহৰ মাজেৰে সমাজৰ প্ৰতিটো দিশেই সুন্দৰ ৰূপত প্ৰতিভাসমান হৈ উঠাতো লক্ষণীয়। অন্যান্য গীতসমূহৰ দৰে তেওঁৰ শিশুগীত সমূহেও শিশুসুলভ ধ্যান-ধাৰণাৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে জীৱনৰ আদৰ্শসমূহকো স্পষ্ট কৰি তুলিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। সেয়েহে এই গীতসমূহে শিশুসকলৰ কল্পনাপ্ৰবন মনটোক বঙীন কৰি তোলাৰ লগতে তেওঁলোকক জীৱনৰ বাস্তৱ জ্ঞান সম্পৰ্কেও অৱগত কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। অৰ্থাৎ শিশুসুলভ কল্পনাপ্ৰবণতাৰ মাজেৰে তেওঁ শিশুসকলক প্ৰকাৰান্তৰে সমাজৰ একোগৰাকী আদৰ্শ ব্যক্তি হিচাপে গঢ়ি তোলাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰি গৈছে।

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৩. দত্ত, দিলীপ কুমাৰ : ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীত আৰু জীৱনৰথ। বনলতা : গুৱাহাটী, ৫ম প্ৰকাশ, ২০১১।
৪. ভৰালী, বিভাঃ সম্পাঃ সাহিত্য সৌৰভ। চন্দ্ৰ প্ৰকাশ, গুৱাহাটী, দ্বাদশ প্ৰকাশ, ২০২৩।
৫. শৰ্মা, সত্যেন্দ্ৰনাথ : অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ সমীক্ষাত্মক ইতিবৃত্ত। সৌমাৰ প্ৰকাশ : গুৱাহাটী, ১০ম সংস্কৰণ, ২০১৮।



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