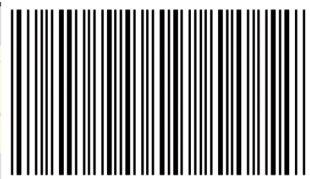


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Editorial

Gitanjali Chawla

Artificial Intelligence is an integral part of our lives and though doomsayers may scream blue, there is no wishing it away. Not only has it transformed economies, boosted both production and consumption but has shaped the lives we live, the products we purchase, the relationships that we forge and the language we speak. Its benefits are wide and varied, literally in every sector. There is greater efficiency and has made processes and production cost and time effective. In the medical field, there is more accurate diagnosis and relatively risk-free procedures; in education, pedagogy can be tailored, evaluation and assessment made more specific; in the corporate sector, there is improved decision making and optimisation and innovation are the buzz words. Data is the driving force of Artificial Intelligence; it identifies patterns and is predictive in nature lending its ability to make targeted and informed decisions, and that too at superhuman speed.

Based on big data, algorithms, deep learnings and sensors etc, AI has infiltrated every aspect of the quotidian and is significantly influencing our choices and action but what is a matter of grave concern is that AI is governing our choices and belief systems as well. Grocery apps such as Big Basket, Zepto and Blinkit etc predict what one would like to order, and don't give the users time to think because it is at the doorstep even before due consideration has been given. Zomato and Swiggy decide when one wants to celebrate with a fancy meal delivered piping hot and if one is having a meltdown or feeling low, all it takes is a special delivery to uplift moods. More importantly, these apps know what one would like to eat and when. No more agonising over choices as the algorithm knows us better than we do. Based on our viewing choices, pop ups

inform what we would like to watch on OTT and Make my trip and its likes will send reminders about how stressful life has been and how it is imperative take a break and so on. Algorithmic life is definitely easier, and more comfortable, it spares us the time we would have spent thinking. And time is precious, it certainly cannot be wasted on thought.

We are no longer under the rule of colonial hegemonies but are firmly enslaved by capitalist coercions. Subtle dominance is woven through our purchasing power and aspirations, insidiously dictating our intentions and choices. Gramsci's ideological apparatus is resurrected in contemporary times as we, the prosumers, follow suit believing it to be our consent and choice. Furthermore, social and mass media and AI work in tandem to create images, simulacra which are far removed from reality, but the real danger is that the representations are more real than the reality itself. While AI's transformative potential has been much touted, not enough attention is being paid to the ethical concerns of its use and abuse. Biases are perpetrated and stereotypes reinforced as algorithms rely on large volumes of data which may already have biases latticed in them which get amplified as volumes increase manifold. The recent wave of ChatGPT's Ghibli-sisation of facial images should ring alarm bells as social media is flooded with anime forms of humans, flouting copyright issues which lie with Studio Ghibli and its founder Hayao Miyazaki, who calls it "an insult to life itself". Not only does it devalue the work of illustrators but also disrespects artistic creativity and integrity. This was only one example from recent times where AI swamped the public imagination and raised concerns of privacy and security. Consent is seldom factored as surveillance and data mining track preferences, lifestyles and behaviours. Lives are open books which are now being written by AI itself. Social media accounts are being monitored, manipulative advertising and ideological indoctrination writ large unabashedly, and what is even more perturbing is how it is being lapped up by the masses. Facial recognition carries hazards as can be evinced from the Cambridge Analytica scandal. An innocuous personality quiz app on Facebook, gathered data and profiled individuals which then led to targeted political advertisements to influence voters and sway elections. Such breaches of confidentiality are not just restricted to social media users for political gain but also to manipulate consumerism. Advertisements are targeted and consumer profiles used to bombard images and products leading to rampant exploitation. Chatbots have replaced customer service agents,

Grammarly corrects language, and apps offer to complete your sentence while Deepseek and Gemini – “ the most intelligent AI models, built for the agentic era” allure researchers with full length research at the click of an ‘enter’. The agentic era as a google search reveals is a new phase in the development of AI systems wherein it can autonomously plan, make decisions, execute and solve problems without human interventions.

AI is shaping the lives we live, in every conceivable sphere. And there is a greater need to set boundaries, to factor in ethical concerns about its limits. Its usage though much desirable needs to be responsible and accountable. Its processes need to be transparent and systems fair and unbiased. Discrimination and perpetration of biases and stereotypes should be mitigated. Furthermore, inclusivity and diversity must be consciously factored in whether it is in suggestive use of language or images or in any mode of communication. Privacy needs to be respected and prioritised and even more importantly data needs to be protected. Robust mechanisms should be in place to ensure there is no infringement and security risks. AI should also be accessible and foster digital literacy and competency. While its target is to promote growth and make systems more efficient and smoother, but it should not be at the cost of the user. The need of the hour is to make it more human centric rather than consumer driven. It should prioritise the wellbeing of the end user, and the buck should stop with the humans creating AI. It should be monitored at every stage from visualising to creating it as the ethical responsibility lies with the creator. Be it developers or researchers, industry leaders or academic institutions, the moral responsibility and accountability lies with all stakeholders. Civil society must also don the role of moral crusaders and be watchdogs to prevent breach of ethical boundaries. Ethics steering committees should be mandatory for every organisation involved in its creation to ensure accountability and transparency, to flag potential breaches and to guarantee commitments and safeguard interests. Compliances should be adhered to at every step and there should be checks and balances to mitigate any risk of unethical practices, even if inadvertent. Artificial Intelligence is an integral part of our lives, and its purpose should be to aid humans and not exploit, manipulate or replace them.

Caste Narratives in Socio-cultural Perspectives

Charu Arya

Abstract

Understanding Caste in the historical perspective can be broadly analysed as division of people on the basis of their ethnic and economic skill-based divisions. This leads us to develop a deeper understanding of the need for creating caste divisions, that could not sustain their original roots and gradually developed to make these divisions as permanent categorisation based on the birth of an individual into a particular caste. This research will analyse various perspectives that allowed an understanding of various discourses born out of narratives that open this discourse further and create an opportunity to build neo-dalit perspectives towards Dalit identities. Dalit narratives are strong arguments that emphasise the need for bringing these narratives in to mainstream literary canon. Reading Ambedkar to Yagati Chinna Rao to Bama in detail, this paper will build a discussion around Dalit identities from a critical perspective.

Keywords: *Caste, Dalit narratives, Discourse, Neo-dalit, Dalit intellectuals*

Caste and Anthropological History

Social and ethnographical history of India has created enough scope for detailed analysis and research on Indian social classification. The society has been through major divisions and sub-divisions of people into their ethnic identities based on skill oriented economic divisions creating class and caste orders. Reading Indian history and anthropological studies help us to understand the complex system of division of people into different communities, constructing various class based castes in India. The complexity lies around diverse theories and arguments that have been derived from the scriptures and historical

arguments to decipher evolution of the Indian caste system.

Studying the genesis of various castes reveals that division of people was on the basis of their occupational or economical division. Either on the basis of skill that they used to earn their living or their earnings that they would make from that skill. These were not considered as castes in the beginning, but were considered as classified divisions that were skill based and could easily help people to be separated into communities and later divide them into various occupation-based sections of the society. The divisions were easy at first because people made their earnings through one or another skill. Gradually, there were multiple aspects that started affecting these divisions.

Reading Ambekar's arguments on caste and its roots in Valerian Rodriguez's *The Essential Writings of B. R. Ambedkar (2002)* and Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread (2009)*, the question of origin of castes and the moral legislative that were responsible for the proper functioning of castes in Indian society is highlighted in detail. Caste has been justified as caste legislations and traditional practices. These traditions usually demolish the reformatory justifications that challenged caste hierarchy or the movements that protested against the caste system. Analysing the roots of caste system leads to further details. The social dimensions were important for any caste to function within its role and power and the same could not be interfered with or transferred to any other castes during any circumstances. Castes were endogamous and the intersection of castes was limited to a certain extent and only between the castes which were considered higher in position and conduct. Historically, there was no specific era that gives any specific time when *jatis* started getting treated as castes. These *jatis* functioned like religious systems and traditions based on purity or impurity of people within *varnas*. These systems functioned in all social and political platforms. Practices which were born out of division of occupations were publicly accepted and performed as genuine authentic traditions. These traditions were never changed from the days of Buddha to Phule to the days of Ambedkar. All these historical reformers understood that caste system cannot be rectified or cannot be restructured, the only way to remove the caste practises was to stop practicing caste altogether.

Ambedkar in his extensive research in *Who were the Shudras?*(1946) questions the historical and religious scriptures. His in-depth study and the final outcome

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of this book, was to establish the fact that the *varnas* were races who fought with each other. And they were divided into varnas only through the scriptures written by the castes that considered themselves superior and pure but were not the natives.

The caste practices were sifted otherwise but were religiously practised through social and traditional customs to strengthen the caste identities. These identities were practised and followed strictly and were visible to all occupants who came to India during the colonial days. The colonizers could see how these castes functioned and the dominating castes were empowered in all forms to practice the religious legislatures from the days of history. The efforts to make inclusive policies failed at all fronts and even in the post-independence era there were not many changes in the caste practices and its evil traditions. Hierarchical caste practices became more active as evil practices of discrimination and untouchability at the social framework. It cannot be denied that after the saint poets in the history, Ambedkar was considered an educated leader, who earned his respect with his radical reformative movements and continuous efforts to bring an end to the caste discrimination, in many ways, was responsible for provoking the oppressed communities of Dalits to raise their voice. His writings like *Who were the Shudras* (1946) dig deep into the history and origin of the *varna* system and his undelivered speech of 1936, *Annihilation of Caste* (2022), were his strong efforts to let people understand how caste can be removed from the Indian social structure to build a nation with the removal of evil practice of untouchability with people who belonged to the same nation. His valid arguments gave reason to Dalits to speak and fight for their rights.

In *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar*, Rodrigues describes, 'Basic Features of Indian Constitution' as laid down by Ambedkar. Along with other arguments, he also describes that Ambedkar from the beginning saw it as a major opposition against the democratic society and suggested, "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic" (p. 485). For Ambedkar, discrimination and exclusion on the basis of caste, ethnicity, gender and religion were the basis of exclusion of oppressed communities, hence, this oppression could be stopped only through inclusive policies.

Despite all these writings and reformative movements, he finally moved into the phase of reformation against evil caste practices like untouchability, and in *Annihilation of Caste* (2022), he strongly advocated the removal of caste system as the only solution to end this evil practice. He finally considered that moving out of the caste system was the only way to save lower castes from their victimization and suffering. And his final protest was his conversion to Buddhism as the only solution to end caste discrimination in his life. This path of conversion was religiously adopted by his followers.

Caste Identities and literature

Caste identities were dynamic and never saw any re-structured system after the end of colonial rule. The agenda to eradicate untouchability and caste discrimination was though done on paper, by putting an end to it in the Indian Constitution, but never became a practice in the real social world. Caste structure never draws parallel lines but forces caste-based communities to accept dominance of the upper castes. In Joshil K. Abraham and Judith Misrahi-Barak's *Dalit Literatures in India*, G. N. Devy describes in "Caste Differently" that there must have been some reasons or rationale that justifies bestowing these powers to certain castes. He writes,

The eighth to the eighteenth century is the period when the principle of *jati* became the main principle for social segregation in India. The *jatis* had no clear metaphysical basis. They were more an expression of difference in terms of language, region, occupation, cultivation practices, food habits and skills. But these differences, once accepted, lead to a particular *jati* formation, with its identity being invariably expressed in terms of the specific practice of worship. (2016, p. 21)

Narratives were strong modes of establishing the self and individual in a larger context. Literature that was written within the framework of narratives was further strengthened with the context around it. In every narrative the writer was in an assertive mode to describe his or her own experience as the reliable source of information for the readers. It refuses to be questioned as the writing has its own argument and experience in the whole narrative. These narratives were read with the certificate of authentication that the writers attached with it by calling it an 'autobiographical journey'. Usual descriptions and incidents in the narratives were always woven on the basis of the lived experiences of the

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writer. The writers in such writings were aware of the effect that their writings will make.

Why Dalit literature remains a literature of negativity? It has been accepted as a literature full of expressions that deals with the victimisation and sadness of people in these narratives. It always demonstrates the society that was responsible for inflicting pain and suffering in the life of excluded sections of society who belong to the margins of these castes. Dominant castes never allowed merging or any kind of connection with the people of dominated castes and they were usually not included in the main caste structure, were pushed to remain in the peripheries, marginalised, hence, were the victim of exclusion, deprivation and discrimination at the level of individual or the whole community. Social customs and traditions were deeply rooted and would easily manage life of people by keeping them into separate divisions. There were religious legislations that were set up by certain religious preachings delivered by certain texts. But their validity was always searched and researched in centuries.

In Devy's words, "The why, the wherefore and the how of *varna* and *jati* in Indian civilization need to be opened again and again, since they are like festering and mortal wounds that need to be cured and healed, or surgically removed" (2016, p. 16).

The caste narratives were basically constructing a literature to claim their identity as oppressed castes standing at the periphery of the caste system and voicing their sufferings in the literary world. These narratives in the postcolonial era have become not only a literature that challenges the within and outside of caste system but have also created a gaze that looks from outside to the inside of the caste system. The critics have analysed their voice as the voice of new identity, voice of 'Others'. The challenge for the narratives of oppressed communities was to construct a 'counter narrative' to the well accepted usual autobiographies defined as authentic text written by the someone who has been through the journey of his life and was finally writing about his experiences. This helped in building a new perspective to view the caste system as a system that discriminated historically with the marginalized castes. Theories on these narratives also created a postcolonial perspective where the social discourse was challenged as the culture that created an argument against the democratic set up in the social system and the society based on myth. These perspectives

were built to understand how socio-cultural values could destroy the social justice that remains non inclusive for certain castes. Zecchini in the article “No Name is Yours Until You Speak It” (2016), writes,

One of the relevant premises of postcolonial theory is to rethink the ‘center’ from the peripheries; the West from the perspective of the non-West; nationalism from those that nationalism has rendered homeless or stateless; disciplines, modernity, history and other so-called universal or global categories from non-Western locations and narrations. (p. 58)

Discussing further, as per this theory, Dalit literature seems to be reclaiming their relevance in the suffering brought during their subjugation. This brings us to understand how these Dalit narratives were constructing a subjective theory around oppression to make their voice heard. These discourses were also voicing the rebuilding of caste structures by giving voice to the castes who were denied to speak for centuries. Zecchini argues,

It represents the power that tears bodies away from their ‘natural’ destination, from ascribed places and functions. By giving names, inventing singularities and subjects, making visible and audible what was previously invisible, inaudible or ‘unsayable’, and challenging the exclusive system of repartition between what is ‘same’ and ‘other’, proper and improper, noble and vile, but also what, ‘counts’ and what does not, this literature is intimately linked to the political. (p. 59)

Dynamics of Dalit Literature

Arguing Dalit literature to be political, establishes it as a literature of firm arguments. These arguments were based on the experiences and narratives that were challenging the empowered castes and were constructing a new strength for the weak and deprived castes. The political nature of this literature was bringing in theories which were essential for reclaiming the identity of the deprived and the downtrodden castes as the castes that were revolting against the subjugation and were building their arguments through their narratives of lived realities filled with their traumatic experiences.

Dalit narratives were claiming their identity through expressions that were not polished or sophisticated but were as raw and real as they could be. The cultural deprivation of these castes was more connected with the kind of vocabulary

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used for them. The language which was full of the abuses and the language that degraded Dalits further to the level that was lower than the level of being treated as humans. Improper way of addressing or use of caste names as abuse could be seen in the narratives of Om Prakash Valmiki and of Sharankumar Limbale. Their autobiographies were translated from Hindi and Marathi, respectively, to English to make it possible for the global readers to know about their life as Dalits and how their narratives could be read as the traumatic sufferings or the suffering of their communities. The language in these two autobiographies was harsh and full of caste names which were used to insult them. Valmiki in *Joothan* (2008) argues to find an emancipatory change in his own life through empowerment he got by acquiring education but he could not end caste discrimination in the real social world. We saw a similar radical approach in *Akkarmashi* (2003), where Limbale post education finds himself empowered enough to raise philosophical questions on the humanitarian ground. He could not find answers but felt slightly relieved with his right to expression.

The experiences shared by Bama in her autobiographical writings *Sangati* (2005) and *Karukku* (2012) were strong articulations of her sufferings and victimization. She has been the representative of her community. Her narrative begins with her childhood days when she witnessed the atrocities on her own family and other people of her caste. She could easily feel caste around her. She as a small girl could see how women around her suffered caste discrimination and were deprived of access to many facilities around them. She describes how difficult it was for her to understand that the people of her family and her community were barred to enter the upper caste lanes. She witnessed how women of her community were assaulted and how men of their locality were tortured because of the caste conflict. She soon realised that there was a clear-cut demarcation of caste boundaries between the localities and people from the lower castes were barred from entering into the lanes of upper caste localities. These boundaries were not physical but were directed in the form of caste legislatures that lower castes could not enter the upper caste lanes. Bama being a girl, could feel the caste discrimination as a little girl but she understood it better as a harsh reality when she grew up to understand suffering of her own people.

Bama's narratives have also raised a strong question around caste being a transcending socio- cultural norm. Rules made for castes were supposed to

be strictly followed. She grew as a Dalit but at the same time she was also a Christian. She attended the prayers in the Church with her family and knew that caste will not enter these boundaries because Church belongs to God. Gradually, she started facing discrimination inside the Church, as the Indian-Christian communities carried caste burdens with them and change of religion had no influence on the evil practices like untouchability in the Indian caste system.

Dalits were asserting on voicing the discrimination and atrocities they had to face for centuries but no one from the literate section thought of writing their history. Denial of their rightful space in history and literature later became the reason for voicing their painful experiences and for writing a parallel history. In *Dalit Writings: Emerging Perspectives*, Raj Kumar writes in “The ‘Other’ Indians Reading Dalit Discourse in Joseph Macwan’s *Angaliyat*” (2022) how caste as a social institution discriminates and functions in the society around us. He writes,

Untouchability and atrocity are the by-products of the caste society. Both are evil in nature and heinous in their practices. While the practices of untouchability make Dalits the virtual slaves of caste society, atrocities bring further untold miseries in their lives, sometimes killing them. We have read news of atrocities allegedly perpetrated on Dalits by the upper castes. Cases of uprooting Dalits from their homes, depriving them of their lands, denial of the use of public wells, tanks, bathing ghats and burial grounds, forbidding them from entering into shops, hotels, restaurants and temples, refusal of police and medical help, refusal of services by barbers and washer men and even preventing them from ‘growing moustaches upwards’, ‘riding bicycles’, etc., are very often reported. (p. 23)

These instances were based on various incidents recorded through writings that were visible in the literary world in the post-colonial era. Literature is about expressions that are made through any form of writing and Dalits did not want to wait for the time when they will be given the right to express. Raj Kumar argues that Dalit literature is not a literature which has simply been born but is the outcome of the cultural conflict. Gradually, radical reformative movements started by Ambedkar encouraged Dalits to write about their untold sufferings and the cruel impact of caste legislatures on the lower castes. The term ‘Dalit’

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works as an umbrella that covers all people who were oppressed but it has now become a caste. Common phrases using 'Dalit' as a caste was not justified. Dalits were not any caste in the varna system but the historical oppression of the people in the hierarchical *varna* system contextualised these people as the 'oppressed' in the caste system.

Formation of identities within caste system have been denied to lower castes. Their identities demanded their proof of existence and provides them certain ownership within the caste system, but they never existed within the caste structure. It can be said that they were not allowed to be visible in the main system but were very much part of the 'denied' castes. Devy describes that these castes were not addressed as castes but were the varnas which were basically communities. These communities were either the 'dominating communities' or 'dominated communities.' And then these communities were addressed as castes during the colonial days. These castes followed strict social religious traditions and breaking these traditions was punishable offence as per the moral legislatures.

Forming the New Canon

The literature coming from Dalits was the new literature. But autobiographies were not given much of importance in the initial stages. G. N. Devy in the introduction of *The Outcaste* (2003) by Limbale, describes that Dalit literature had no model to look at. He writes,

They were not autobiographies of person at the fag-end of their lives, looking back on life with cool composure. They were not even the life stories of persons who had already become accomplished writers. Writing the autobiographies made many of them (except Daya Pawar and Shankar Rao Kharat) writers. In this sense they were not even 'autobiographies'. They can best be described as 'social epiphanies', expressions of a never before mentioned intensity. (p. xxii)

In an article in Bhosle's book *Sociology of Dalit Literature* (2015), Milind Awad in his chapter, "Epistemic Foundation of Dalit Writing" writes,

It is important to note here that, the term Dalit is not an already given construct; it is a discourse in the making. Each novel, poem, and political speech simultaneously articulates the particular concerns of the writer,

poet, or social activist and also creates the shared space of what it means to be a Dalit. (p. 15)

Another essential characteristic of Dalit writing is that, it is not originally and essentially a literary exercise. They are the same social phenomenon which are more than a literary event, a socio-cultural action in the form of a literary performance.(pp. 15-16)

In the face of identities, economic identity has seen a lot of change. Margins can be merged and people may shift from one economic identity to another one with the new postcolonial global Indian shift in commerce and new opportunities. But the caste identities seem to remain intact and strongly embedded in the social hierarchical structure. They never changed with the development, change in education system or any other progress that the country was making otherwise.

Marxist division separates the castes into classes and should have allowed people from one class to go to another class only if attains social and economic equality. But this was not happening for the people who were from the oppressed communities because of multi layered oppression that they saw in the Indian caste system. These issues have been strongly argued in poetic expressions by Dalit poets. It is visible in the poetries of Namdeo Dhasal *Golpitha* (1972) where he describes the oppression of Dalit and tribal women who were pushed in the world of prostitution very easily. Castes were not dynamic but were exclusively granted at the time of birth to the individuals. Dalit narratives voice the oppression that they faced and they tried to enter into the literary world through their expressions in their own language.

Language plays a major role in describing Dalit writings as the writings of the oppressed castes where they did not exit the raw and harsh language to make their writings more literary. Instead they started including these local words into their writings and giving them space in the literature of literates. The essence of these narratives lay in their rural and caste languages where mostly caste names have been used as abuses. As much as we see this in the narrative of Limbale, these caste abuses have been retained by Valmiki in *Joothan*. An autobiography that was written later, Valmiki's narrative was another painful description of atrocities and discrimination that his community faced in his village. The stench of his surrounding and the filth that he had to cross stayed with him despite the better living conditions that he acquired after attaining

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education. Denial of access to the usual human needs like water, house and food created a historical sense of deprivation in the oppressed castes and this led to their belief in creating their own world. These were constructed through their writings and the space that allowed them to express the historical victimization. Caste cultures questioned their identities and this led to create the counter culture that was their own. These counter cultures are also considered as the culture of 'other' that has its own language and its own effort to create a new culture that allows the oppressed communities to express their trauma.

All the narratives by the oppressed communities have raised questions on denial of their human rights for centuries. The purpose of these narratives was not to increase the corpus of literature but these expressions worked in two ways - one was to make themselves heard as the representatives of the oppressed communities and second was to bring radical changes in the social, political and economic fronts on the grounds of possible human moral values. They were assessing the rigid caste structure and were advocating the necessary changes that could bring an end to the historical discrimination against the lower castes. They raised questions and gave answers through the philosophical reasoning and through their understanding of Indian socio-cultural history. We can see Limbale doing that through the questions he raised in *Akkarmashi* and his efforts to find answers in the etymological Indian history.

Dalit narratives are not destroying the positive but are creating a neo-Dalit identity through their strong recommendation of a culture which has to be rational. Ambedkar argues the same through his immense knowledge of culture and its under currents. He suggested a nation that should be divided into states on the basis of language in his book *Thoughts on Linguistic States*. (1955) This was suggested as a solution to create equality and fraternity in the socio-cultural spheres. As described by Yagati Chinna Rao,

Ambedkar argued that the creation of states should be based on equal distribution of population, and their capitals should be centrally located in those states... In fact, he noted that one language can unite people and two languages are sure to divide them. Culture is conserved by language.' (2022, p. 37)

Baby Kamble in *The Prison we Broke* (2009) finds solution to bring an end to the trauma and suffering of Dalits by offering the option of educating their

children. And the same was advocated by Valmiki where he tries to find some relief with access to education. Zecchini writes, “The right to name one’s self, to take control of one’s representation, is an act of power. Dalits have named themselves ‘Dalits’. This has implied discarding other official paternalist or complacent terms like untouchables, pariahs...” (p. 67).

The answers are not so simple. Dalits have used this term to indicate their oppression but not their identity. Dalit word has its own negative connotation and in the coming years, Dalits will find their identity in the names like Empowered, *Baraabar* or *Sammaanit*. These identities will create a new discourse to understand values and traditions based on equality and humanity. The philosophies in all the narratives are strongly creating a sense of literate world for future generations. Caste discrimination stays and is still existing around along with many traditions that need reformation. Dalits are moving towards constructing a history which was denied to them for centuries. They have used the word ‘Dalit’ to indicate the oppressed section of society, but they must deny to wear it as their identity. Dalit cannot be a name but it can be a literary discourse that will challenge the immoral treatment of oppressed communities and re-establish more humane culture which should become the Indian identity in the future years.

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Deliberating Articulation: A Postmodern Appropriation

Ruchi Nagpal

Abstract

Articulation theory is a recent phenomenon which has gained currency in the recent times for the reasons which can fairly be attributed to the zeitgeist. Articulation, which might simply mean “to express” and which, in sociological terms would mean appropriation of certain forms and practices gets extended and convoluted as it enters the postmodern domain. Articulation as a concept walks a tight rope as within its broad rubric it subsumes all expressions and manifestations. The current paper tries to deliberate upon the conception of articulation by conceptualising the distinction between deliberate articulations and unconscious articulations. As it does, the paper delves into the Freudian theory of Unconscious which holds the fundamental problems for such a dyad by explicating unconscious articulations like ‘bundle actions’ and ‘Freudian slips’ which are more expressive than conscious attempts. The paper, thus, eventually looks at the postmodern appropriation of the concept of articulation which transcends words as well as linguistic and paralinguistic mediums. It couches the discourse of articulation within the embryo of sublime, the most powerful postmodern force, which defines postmodernism more prominently as opposed to words and artifacts. The paper, as it brings the argument home keeps the debate open for all essential deliberations vis-à-vis articulation and tries to necessitate the dialogue further.

Keywords: *Articulation, Postmodernism, Unconscious, Freud, Sublime*

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Articulation theory is a recent phenomenon which has gained currency in the recent times for the reasons which can fairly be attributed to the zeitgeist. Articulation, which might simply mean “to express” and which in sociological terms would mean appropriation of certain forms and practices gets extended and convoluted as it enters the postmodern domain. The term might have emerged from the works of Antonio Gramsci and then further developed or appropriated by theorists like Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Stuart Hall, but the idea of articulation is not new to the readers but in the recent times, it has heralded a discourse which invites a dialogue. Articulation theory extends the idea of articulation further wherein it not only jumps the semiotic and semantic domains but it also counter-questions the very idea of articulation. And as Humboldt (1999) writes,

The articulated sound, the foundation and essence of all speech is extorted by man from his physical organs through an impulse of his soul; and the animal would be able to do likewise, if it were animated by the same urge. (p. 23)

Humboldt, in talking about articulation talks about language which is the basis of articulation and something which is “Already in its first and most indispensable elements [...] is so utterly and exclusively rooted in man’s spiritual nature, that its permeation is sufficient, though necessary, to transform the animal sound into the articulated one” (p. 24). Articulation happens through the linguistic medium, but it transcends the linguistic domain and happens otherwise through the medium of sound, actions, and expressions as well. A work of literature qualifies as the articulation of the author’s ideas and mind; likewise, a painting, a piece of music and a sculpture also qualify as articulation of the artist’s state of mind. Any speech or action by a person qualifies as articulation, which proposes the fundamental problem of defining the very concept. Humboldt, when talking about articulation says that it is more the will and power to articulate than the medium, which may be multifarious. Humboldt alludes to deaf and dumb people who despite being at loss of senses articulate and express their ideas and views and he thus writes,

All access by ear is closed to them, but they learn to understand what is said by the movement of the speaker’s vocal organs, and from writing, whose essence already consists wholly of articulation; and they speak themselves, when guided as to the position and motion of their vocal organs. (p. 32)

Humboldt, thus, talks about the power of articulation or the desire to express vis-à-vis the medium wherein the former supersedes. And hence it is the intent to articulate rather than the medium (linguistic as well as the paralinguistic) which gains supremacy in this discourse.

One could deduce from here that the power to express through words, sound, actions or expressions could come under the broad rubric of articulation. Irrespective of the medium, it is the latent desire which gets prominence in the discourse of articulation and the idea gets enunciated herewith. But the very idea that the term escapes any straitjacketing might take one into the reductionist logic of anything and everything being articulation. One could look at a plethora of definitions which are trying to articulate the very idea of articulation. Lawrence Grossberg (1986) for example defines articulation as

the production of identity on top of differences, of unities out of fragments, of structures across practices. Articulation links this practice to that effect, this text to that meaning, this meaning to that reality, this experience to those politics. And these links are themselves articulated into larger structures, etc. (p. 52)

Hall, in defining articulation gives a skeptical view of the idea wherein the uniform connection makes sense under certain conditions, and it is something which might not be an absolute or certain which holds true for all times. As he avers:

...the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness.' The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected. (p. 78)

Several other theorists and critics have tried to give a well formulated and encapsulating definition to articulation, but the idea still holds conceptual, foundational problems for the readers. Bruno Latour in his book, *Pandora's*

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Hope (1999) tries to ascribe another definition to articulation which is rather complex in its right and fogs the very concept. According to one of the critics, it is a sort of definition that needs a lot of other definitions. Latour writes of articulation:

Like translation, this term occupies the position left empty by the dichotomy between the object and the subject or the external world and the mind. Articulation is not a property of human speech but an ontological property of the universe. The question is no longer whether or not statements refer to state of affairs, but only whether or not propositions are well articulated. (p. 303)

All these definitions open new horizons from where it becomes an endless play of signification and interpretation vis-à-vis articulation. Where do we draw the line then? What would quintessentially be articulation and what would escape the idea of articulation which covers almost everything from words to sounds to actions and any other kind of expression. One could perhaps differentiate the thoughts, actions, sounds and expressions which are a conscious and deliberate attempt of the human mind vis-à-vis other expressions which are unconscious. Humboldt connects the idea of articulation to the power of mind per se which attaches a kind of conscious deliberate leveling to it. Humboldt writes that “Articulation rests upon the power of mind over the vocal organs...” (p. 36). When privileging the mind, the idea of deliberateness becomes pertinent in the understanding of articulation. A deliberate uttering, thus, would qualify as articulation and something which is not deliberate might not fall under the ever so broad rubric of articulation. An accidental utterance, sound, expression or action is not immediately the concern and result of a conscious mind, and the action thus might not qualify as articulation if we may consider it so. An accidental action, utterance might not be an articulation of the person’s state of mind, but this point can be further contradicted by Freudian theory of psychoanalysis wherein prominence is given to the unconscious actions rather than the conscious, deliberate actions as they express the state of mind of a person more piercingly than any conscious action. A Freudian slip thus would very well be considered and read as an articulation as it reveals more about the human mind. This understanding furthers the entire discourse of articulation wherein conscious and unconscious actions get complexly intertwined. As Zaria Gorvett writes in a 2017 BBC article:

Ah, the Freudian slip. There are the things you want to say, the things you could get away with saying and the things it would be utterly disastrous to utter – which, invariably, are what actually comes out of your mouth. It's the greatest fear of any public speaker. But what really causes these errors? And do they have any hidden meaning?

Otherwise known as parapraxis, these verbal stumbling could reveal forbidden urges – such as sex and swearing – which were usually locked safely within the unconscious mind. Verbal errors aren't random at all, but puzzles to be decoded. (p. 1)

An unconscious bundle action as explicated by Freudian framework as well as a conscious deliberate actions and utterances would thus qualify as articulation, but a further distinction can be drawn between an action which is unconscious that reveals more about our repressed desires and something completely accidental and incidental which might have no relation with the human mind (conscious as well as unconscious), whatsoever. One could explain this idea through a fictional example: one could imagine an actor in the middle of a performance on stage who deliberately falls on the stage owing to a sequence in the play and another person walking on a street who 'accidently' stumbles on a boulder and falls. 'Accident' being the keyword here, one notices that the two incidents cannot be equated since former was a deliberate, conscious action to express something (to act) whereas the latter was a mere accident. The former incident is an 'articulation' of a certain act by the actor through his body whereas the latter corresponds to no 'articulation' of any kind. Therefore, when something is uttered accidently i.e., a sound/action happens accidently with the articulator not being aware of it, that might not qualify as articulation since the idea of articulation upholds some power and agency and it cannot be undermined by making anything and everything qualify as articulation.

The dyad can be constructed as deliberate/accidental vis-à-vis articulation but such a straitjacketing or pinning down would raise questions and queries in a postmodern world which is plagued by multiplicity and escapes all kinds of definitional parameters. Hall says that "Postmodernism is the biggest success story going" (p. 222) primarily because all the subjective and diverse ideas come into play under postmodernism and differences are celebrated as much as they are acknowledged. Articulation in a postmodern world then becomes

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as much about in-articulation as much as it is about articulation. The very idea of something which cannot be articulated puts us at the center of postmodern debate wherein all signification and meaning breaks loose. A deliberate attempt then to articulate something through any medium, linguistic as well as paralinguistic might fail when the representation per se escapes the cognitive apparatus. Jean Francois Lyotard, the most notorious of postmodern thinkers writes that postmodern manifests itself through sublime rather than words or artifacts. And in enunciating the postmodern discourse he writes:

The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. (1984, p. 75)

Lyotard makes a case for sublime and in defining the very idea of sublime, Lyotard goes back to Immanuel Kant and his *Critique of Judgement* (1790) wherein Kant defines Sublime as this peculiar amalgamation of fear and pleasure which in its entirety escapes representation and thus is inarticulate-able. “The sublime feeling is therefore a kind of ‘rapid alternation’ between the fear of the overwhelming and the peculiar pleasure of seeing that overwhelming overwhelmed” (Branco, 2022, p. 1). The very idea of something which cannot be articulated or represented gets fore-grounded in postmodern times because as Lyotard says, the cognitive apparatus conceives but fails to represent and this failure primarily becomes the most explicit feature of sublime wherein the deliberate attempt at articulation fails and renders the very idea of articulation awry in some sense. If that be the case, the very idea of re-thinking articulation gets reiterated in postmodern times wherein the play of representation or articulation transcends the very mediums through which one can articulate and rests and rejoices in the unrepresentability. To explain the idea further, Lyotard gives the example of early Malevich whose ‘White on White’ makes an excellent case. Kazimir Malevich was a Russian Avant-Garde artist, one of the key figures of Suprematism and art theorist who made Suprematist Composition, “White on White” in 1918 which was abstract oil on canvas painting:

Part of a series of “white on white” works begun by Malevich in 1916, the

work depicts a white square, portrayed off centre and at an angle on a ground which is also a white square of a slightly warmer tone. The work measures 79.5 by 79.5 centimetres (31.3 in × 31.3 in). Malevich dispenses with most of the characteristics of representational art, with no sense of colour, depth, or volume, leaving a simple monochrome geometrical shape, not precisely symmetrical, with imprecisely defined boundaries. Although the artwork is stripped of most detail, brush strokes are evident in this painting and the artist tried to make it look as if the tilted square is coming out of the canvas. Malevich intended the painting to evoke a feeling of floating, with the colour white symbolising infinity, and the slight tilt of the square suggesting movement. (Wikipedia, para. 2)

Various ideas and theories related to this work of art suggest that the painter wished to articulate something immense, “a feeling of floating” (Branco, 2022, p. 1) and yet the literal understanding of the work would make a case for the fact that the artist has stripped the artwork to nothing. Invoking a strong feeling through nothing which has latent ideas embedded in it is what calls for the aesthetic of sublime. Sublime is contained in a very subjective experience determined by a certain relationship between the power of reason and the power of imagination. Kantian definition or enunciation of these aesthetics happens primarily through the idea of unavailability and therefore Malevich’s art work becomes a prime example. Aesthetic judgment is referred to a form that is precisely not a conceptual form imposing its law to the manifold of sensation. And therefore, when Lyotard develops this idea he also takes recourse in paralinguistic elements and seems to say that “we know the world through language but it cannot be reduced to language” (1984, p. 79). The concept of articulation thus gets challenged and redefined in the postmodern times wherein no straitjacketing is possible, and no definition can fully encapsulate the concept, and it flows freely challenging not just the intention, conscious or otherwise but also the medium through which one tries to articulate as well as what can and cannot be articulated. Linda Hutcheon (2014) called postmodern “a contradictory enterprise” in her work, *The Politics of Postmodernism* and the concepts which come into contact with the postmodern become equally contradictory and un-definable. Postmodernism not only allows deliberations around articulation, but it also challenges the very plinth of it. When the very idea contests with the discourse of sublime, a newfound understanding of

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it springs forth that allows for a cessation of words, excess of which almost always overwhelms. As many debates and expressions as postmodernism allows at the heart of it, the other side of postmodernism also aspires towards an aesthetic which articulates with a sense of profound numbness, that is enchanting. It deliberately asks and invests in the aesthetic of sublime as it recognizes the covert power of the discourse. Lyotard necessarily borrows from Kant because it is in Kant that the idea is foregrounded in a manner that allows for a postmodern appropriation of it. When this powerful discourse shakes hands with the discourse of articulation in the postmodern times, it not only broadens the horizon for both but also challenges the literary expressions. Sublime allows for a rendering of the concept which is replete with multiplicity but also aspires towards a wholesomeness that is contradictory. And in the context of articulation, the postmodern idea is of going beyond the very idea of representation and rendering it in a space where there is a free play not only of the idea of articulation through various linguistic and paralinguistic mediums but also an internal play of articulation and what cannot be articulated.

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Theorizing indigeneity & Indigenous Feminism Reflected in the Narratives of Easterine Kire

Himalee Deka

Abstract

The paper intends to explore the various aspects of indigeneity that are ingrained in the sociocultural dynamics of the Angami-Naga community. While situated among close-knit indigenous communities such as the Angami Nagas, the ideological idea of indigeneity has played a decisive role in influencing the broader discourse of feminism. Situating the ideological notion of indigeneity in the context of Northeast India has been a tough task and plagued with contestations. Yet the very idea of it has been a vital notion to theorise feminism in the context of communities native to the region. The paper will analyse the novels – *A Terrible Matriarchy* & *The Respectable Woman* written by the prolific Naga writer Easterine Kire in the above-mentioned context.

Keywords: *Indigeneity, Indigenous feminism, Angami Naga, Socio-cultural dynamics*

Introduction

The notion of indigeneity has been a contested term as its definition is not fixed. The term has many variations all around the world. In Australia, the indigenous people are recognised as “aboriginals”, while in anthropology they are acknowledged as “tribes” or termed “Adivasis” by the activists of Asia. However, we can come to a comprehensive understanding by the theoretical approach of Social Anthropologist, Guenther, who opines, “Indigenous is a term applied to people – and by the people to themselves – who are engaged

in an often desperate struggle for political rights, for a land, place and space within a modern nation's economy and society" (2006, p. 17). But it gets more complicated as one tries to situate it in the context of the Northeast region of India as this part has been home to multitudes of communities, mostly heterogeneous who migrated, settled and located themselves in different parts of the region at different points of history. Since most of the communities had to go through the challenges of displacement due to harsh life on the hilly terrains, they have been particular about their territorial area and prefer to be identified by their ethnicities. All the communities have their distinct customs, cultural practices and hence at times in order to assert and be protective about their territorial, cultural rights, one community can threaten another community which ultimately leads to conflicts based on ethnicities. In such a scenario, women inhabiting the region find themselves at the disadvantage of being caught in between the hostility committed to each other in the power struggle.

Although issues of indigenous women are still under-examined and not given much importance within the larger spectrum of feminism which again is being charged with allegations of euro-centrism, it is possible to locate it within the rubric of feminism. Within the larger picture of women's subordination, issues of indigenous women fall outside of the larger narrative. But the "strategic essentialism" of being denied equal representation, and equal opportunities puts them in a situation of being related to each other, being in a position to be able to empathize with other women. Emerging as a post-colonial field of study, Indigenous feminism attempts to look at the issues of cultural identity, nationalism, and decolonization in the context of indigenous communities. As an academic field, it seeks to unravel the "collusions between colonialism and patriarchy" (Suzack, Huhndorf, Perreault & Barman, 2010, p. 1), as well as interweave gender with ethnic identity and geographical location. The changing patterns of women's position in the Indigenous communities across time are particularly challenging, especially in the contexts of changes in the societal patterns of Indigenous societies by colonization their subjugation to colonial rule as a community, interventions by colonial officials in their traditional beliefs to "civilize" them. Indigenous feminism seeks to analyze all the mentioned aspects by placing "gender" at the centre.

Indigenous communities of the northeast had the perks of being guarded by laws and constitutional provisions even before the Indian Union was granted

independence. Although, these provisions help them to continue their distinct way of life, at times they stand against the laws that are formed to protect women's rights. Emma LaRocque elucidates, "Although traditions help us to retain our identities as aboriginal people; as women, we must be circumspect in our recall of tradition. We must ask ourselves whether and to what extent tradition is liberating to us as women" (1996, p. 14). In this regard, Samir Das opines:

Women's democratic struggles are in many ways embedded in ethnicity and ethnic movements and the success of their struggle depends not so much on their ability to stand alone (for that is what seldom happens in any society) but very much on how they steer and negotiate their way through conflict between their gender identities as women and as members of some particular ethnic communities. (2013, p. 56)

Women's self-determination in Indigenous communities has been contested as well as they have been relegated to the periphery "first by patriarchal colonial law, policies, and institutions, later by Indigenous men" (Suzack, Huhndorf, Perreault & Barman, 2010, pp. 1-17), who have embraced and internalized the patriarchal colonial rules and that led to the erasure of indigenous women's rights, responsibilities and practices related to the cultural practices that go with those responsibilities.

Women from the indigenous societies have been seen as the subject of many discussions. They are seen as the "exotic other" in the discourse of post-coloniality, whereas in the larger discourse of feminism, they are constantly compared to women of privileged communities due to their supposed better situations, and in the discourse of indigenous feminism, they are seen as dispossessed from their previous better position due to infiltration of the patriarchal practices after colonization as well as attempts to bring to the fore the practices that have become established norms of the indigenous societies which play their part in subjugating women benevolently. It is a fact that women in indigenous societies have advantages, and indigenous cultures are far more liberal regarding posing impositions to their women. They are in a precarious position where their counterparts regard them as being in better situations. On the one hand, it becomes difficult for them to even realize the injustice done to them, whereas it becomes more difficult to let others (outsiders) know their precariousness.

Women in indigenous communities like Angami have undergone different stages of oppression in various stages of history. H. Vanlalhruaia opines, "...there are various levels of patriarchy such as pre-colonial tribal patriarchy, colonial, Christian missionary, and post-colonial ethnic patriarchy" (p. 20). Although he states it in the context of Mizoram, it is equally applicable to the indigenous communities of the Northeast. Nonetheless, the oppression and subordination of women remain almost same in all the forms of patriarchy. In this context, echoing the claims made by Indigenous feminists, Vanlalhruaia expounds, "Tribal patriarchy in the pre-colonial period was more flexible and adjustable than the colonial and post-colonial patriarchy" (p. 20). The standardized form of patriarchy that exists in present times among the communities of Nagaland is the result of the colonial influence that had seeped into the socio-cultural dynamics and alternated many traditional beliefs including flexibility vis-à-vis gender. Built on the ethos of cultural beliefs, indigenous societies like the Nagas had their own set of reservations regarding women's role yet their roles and contributions were acknowledged and celebrated. Albeit they were limited to the private space in that era too, there was some flexibility compared to the present rigid form of patriarchy.

The selected works have authentic women characters belonging to indigenous communities of Nagaland whose lives have been subjected to a 'softer' form of oppression due to their conventional social standing in society. Their subjection to patriarchal oppression has been way more different than other communities. There has been a complex layer of colonial history of settlers, codification of certain sects enmeshed with impacts of modernization of the traditional setup which added to women's subjugation within indigenous societies like the Nagas.

It is important to mention certain customary laws which are a set of rules that are based on the customs of indigenous communities. Therefore, they can also be defined as customs constructed along the lines of ethnic identity and "objectively verified within a particular social setting" (Customary Law and Intellectual Property System, 2013, p. 2). Nonetheless, it has been roughly understood as "non-registered law in the context of tribal society" (Pospisil, 1971, pp. 194-95). It is conflictive in nature as on the one hand, it empowers the protected indigenous communities to have autonomy, on the other end, whenever the issue of women's position within tribal communities and their reiterating demand to make changes emerge male members often cite customary laws as a shield to

refrain from making any effort to bring about positive changes. Proponents of that school of thought often argue against women's rights on ancestral property citing provisions of customary laws to maintain the status quo of women being the "other". However, there is no benefit of doubt that customary laws are an integral part of the conventional setup of indigenous communities and have been playing a vital role in upholding the traditional values of indigenous societies. Anthropologist Malinowski propounds that customary law is,

the positive law governing all the phases of tribal life, consists then of a body of binding obligations, regarded as a right by one party and acknowledged as a duty by the other, kept in force by a specific mechanism of reciprocity and publicity inherent in the structure of their society. (2014, p. 58)

With the passage of time, a series of questions have emerged in the context of customary law's flexibility, and usage within the modern times as sometimes it appears unbending to the modern norms. However, in present times, the complexity of a subtle yet strenuous tug of war between the constitutional law and customary law that govern an indigenous society has enshrouded women in a zone of make believe where they are made to believe their presumed empowered position. In this regard, Patricia Mukhim opines:

Do we enjoy a better liberal space to live our lives by our own rules? I am afraid not. Rules that govern our conduct are circumscribed by our make patriarchs much before we Were even conscious that we have to abide that clearly stated paradigm (2019, p. 9).

Contextualizing Indigenous Feminism in Kire's Selected Works

Easterine Kire's selected works have authentic women characters belonging to indigenous communities of Nagaland whose lives have been subjected to a 'softer' form of oppression due to their conventional social standing in society. Their subjection to patriarchal oppression has been way more different than other communities. There has been a complex layer of colonial history of settlers, codification of certain aspects enmeshed with impacts of modernization of the traditional setup which added to women's subjugation within indigenous societies like the Nagas. Kire's *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2013) depicts a

patriarchal world, where patriarchal values have been internalized in such a manner as to give rise to a formidable matriarchal oppression. The novel also sheds light on the customary rules cum laws that add to the woes of women. The fact that “the grandmother” becomes the “terrible matriarch” that she is in the present not only because of the internalization of patriarchy but also because of the injustice done to her mother due to her not being able to bear a son. The male relatives subdued her mother citing the provisions of customary laws that bar women (not having sons) from inheriting anything after the death of their husbands. In such situations, whatever property including land the husband owned immediately goes to the immediate male relative. The grandmother had been a witness to the sufferings of her mother as a child and she learned that it is foremost to have a male member in the family to be protected from such precarity.

Kire in the introduction to *A Terrible Matriarchy* has pointed out elaborately, “The non-status of women is seen again and again. Daughters do not inherit ancestral property” (p. viii). The non-status of women in society is a common factor in pushing them to seek security and stability in the marital relationship and look out for the benevolence of male relatives. On the other hand, it unfolds the complex layers of gender oppression on three levels - social, economic, and political and ironically three generations of women are shown to bear its brunt - grandmother, mother, and Dielieno. To top it all, the grandmother herself becomes the advocate for the male-centric society as she strongly believes that it is the male heir who can give her security and earn respect for their family in society. The opening line of the novel, “My grandmother didn’t like me” (p. 1) and the grandmother’s insistence on offering the best piece of meat to her grandsons are only an indicator of how patriarchal notions are steeped into the consciousness of society that create boundaries in terms of everything where women, from their childhood, are conditioned to believe that they have to follow a certain set of societal rules to be a “good girl/ woman” in their life.

Usually, Naga society has been regarded as a classless and flexible society, but the boundaries put up by patriarchy are forcefully present and create a section of marginal class comprised of women within the rubric of classless society, and like any other marginal class, these women have been deprived of opportunities, oppressed and made to internalize those notions so that they become the carrier of the oppression themselves. Kire has aptly employed

the character of the grandmother to portray those women who become an integral part of the patriarchal ideals and eventually, that leads to subjugation of women by women themselves. In the novel, we get to see that during the process of exerting traditional values and customs, the 'terrible matriarch' tried to inculcate in Dielieno the 'rules of conduct' in order to be 'a good wife' in her forthcoming days. From making the protagonist stay with her (grandmother) to teach Dielieno the household chores including fetching water from the village, everything was made difficult for Dielieno as she has to fit into the image of a "good Naga wife" in the future.

Yet another novel by Kire, *A Respectable Woman* (2019) negotiates with the established order of gender in a more nuanced way. From breaking away from the irrational societal norms, being not married at the socially accepted "right age" to ending up adopting a child without being married and beyond that still standing tall, the protagonist defied the gender norms. It also unfolds the intricacies of customary laws that come into play while putting restrictions on women. The chapter titled "The Perfect Victim", sheds light on the cultural practices that are rooted in patriarchy. The scene when the protagonist, Kevino asks questions to the family in the context of her best friend's (Beinuo) miserable married life with Meselhou:

...what's wrong with our culture that can allow this kind of behavior? Why should we follow a culture that allows a man to be so cruel to his wife? To which her family member replied...you heard Ato say that her brothers had the cultural right to take a woman away from a cruel husband. Sad to say, Beinuo had no brothers. But in the absence of brothers, her male cousins could have stepped and taken her away. Even her father had every right to do that. (p. 148)

This passage is a reflection of how some cultural practices in indigenous societies empower men to be the decision-makers in each and every aspect of life, whereas women have been conditioned to follow that.

The Prism of Indigeneity, Women & The Conclusion

The prism of indigeneity through which the paper has sought to identify the pertinent aspects of Naga society (Angami Nagas) will always be there to put forward the idea of how an indigenous society functions and there can be

certain aspects that could give the feign impression of women's liberated status in indigenous communities like Angami. However, the mentioned hegemonic aspects of patriarchy will always be felt or reflected in indigenous societies too. The emerging literature in English of the region, in this case of Nagaland has always depicted the harsh social realities of discrimination - be it of gender, centre/periphery or the conflicts vis-à-vis various intricate aspects of the region. The selected writer has always been vocal about the socio-political realities of the state and has been a voice of many subalterns suppressed throughout years in the region. And among the marginalized ones, women's issues are the ones that find the focal position in her writings. Through her writings she paints women in the midst of crisis who find their space being violated multiple times and yet the subjugation they are made to do is often being seen in a kind/soft form. Their benevolence of subjugation is often equated with their assigned liberty of being mobile in public space. Being better and getting equal status are two different conceptual notions and cannot or should not be used synonymously.

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Evaluating War of Ideas - Jacobin and Anti-Jacobin Concepts

Akhilesh Kumar

Abstract

The war of ideas in the late eighteenth century was an important watershed moment in British history. It signified the pouring over of radical ideas inspired by the French Revolution. This tumultuous period in history affected the discourses on politics, gender, literature and culture. Debates on gender, human rights and reflections on the political scenario shaped further discussions on law and women's rights. This paper will explore the clash of ideals through select works of Jane West, Thomas Paine, Edmund Burke, Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More. An attempt has also been made to trace the different modes of thought about radicalism circulating during this time.

Keywords: *Eighteenth century, Radicalism, Jacobin, Revolution, Gender*

In France, the war of ideas in the form of intellectual differences has been fought in many forms, especially in the late eighteenth century. The political battle of ideologies started with the tyranny of Louis XIV (1754-1793), King of France. This war of ideals was influenced by French bourgeois philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Voltaire (1694-1778) and Montesquieu (1689-1755). The French Revolution was carried out against aristocratic, tyrannical and despotic power. The monarchy and church were exploiting the common people, and both these institutions were displaying their hypocrisy. For instance, in churches, the clergymen were preaching to the common people about a belief system in which they had lost their faith. The Revolution also unleashed, in many senses, a philosophical war of ideas. There were aristocrats who were

unwilling to allow people to control their fate and lives and, on the other hand, influenced by the American Revolution and the writings of the philosophers and other intellectual thinkers of the time there was a considerable rise in the number of people who came to believe in ideas of freedom from aristocratic power. These dreams gave hopes where they could live lives on their terms and be able to choose their representatives.

The ideological war in England in the 1790s was influenced by the French Revolution, where society was divided into two camps of revolutionaries and anti-revolutionaries. In the revolutionary camp, most people belonged to the middle class, just like the insurgents in the French Revolution. Needless to say, this middle class was progressive and most of the people belonging to the aristocratic class were deeply conservative. In her book *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (1975), Marilyn Butler convincingly discusses this polarization as she sees it in the literary and social realms. During this discussion, Butler highlights the division of Jacobins as progressive and anti-Jacobins as conservatives.

The Anti-Jacobins, or the conservatives, used to believe in emotions, sentiments and feelings. They were anti-revolutionaries. They have critiqued revolutionary ideology. For instance, Edmund Burke remains one of the tallest figures amongst the anti-revolutionaries. He critiques revolutionary ideology in his treatise *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). In this treatise, he defends all aristocratic classes and the monarchy. This work reveals that Burke expected anarchy to break out right after the French Revolution. It is quite conspicuous that he critiques dissenters. He says that tradition and authority are to be respected and maintained. And further, talking about the 1688 Glorious Revolution in England, he interestingly uses that conservative revolution to show it as a progressive and even radical revolution.

The Anti-Jacobins, or the conservatives also mistrusted the self. One finds this representation in most of their novels or other literary works, where the characters who were shown to rely on themselves rather than on some patriarchal figure of authority or tradition, were always shown to be the cause of suffering not only for themselves but also for their own community as a whole. The progressives were against emotions, sentiments, feelings and sensibility. Their emphasis was on reason. Robert Bage (1730-1801), William Godwin (1756-1836), Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809), Thomas Paine (1737-1809) and

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Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) were some of the most prominent writers of this group. Their works highlighted the importance of the individual self and stressed the significance of being able to make decisions by relying on reason rather than being influenced by authority, tradition, or patriarchal figures. For instance, Paine in his book *Rights of Man* (1792), challenged Burke's anti-revolutionary ideas, which he talked of length in his book *Reflections on the Revolutions in France* (1790). He says that this revolution was not against the monarch but was against the monarchy, as a system of exploitation that had for centuries oppressed the people of France, who were now willing to change their modes of thinking and living. Talking about Burke's ideas of the goodness of monarchy and how those ideas were for all time, Paine says:

It requires but a very small glance of thought to perceive that, although laws made in one generation often continue in force through generations, yet they continue to derive their force from the consent of the living. A law not repealed continues in force, not because it cannot be repealed, but because it is not repealed; and the non-repealing passes for consent. (p. 14)

He then continues to show how the French Revolution happened and the important role that the people played in the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789. Paine uses these ideas to evaluate that with the French Revolution, there was a change in the way people now wanted to govern themselves and in the way they saw the idea of the nation changing. As Paine advocates, in a monarchy, the sovereignty of the nation lives in the person of the King, but in a democracy, the sovereignty lies in the people of the nation, in other words, it is with the people and not with any one person. Wollstonecraft also contested Burke's ideals. In her book *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), she says that men should get equal property and also be treated on an equal footing as far as gender is concerned. Incidentally, *Vindication* is a direct response to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Family was yet another ground on which Burke and Wollstonecraft differed. Another ground on which Wollstonecraft and Burke differed was on the role of the family. In *Family Feuds: Wollstonecraft, Burke, and Rousseau on the Transformation of the Family* (2006), Eileen Hunt Botting examines how family was an important site of gendered power struggles. Rousseau was among the first to begin his discussions on the family and its role in society, while Burke and Wollstonecraft joined in and further shaped these discourses. In eighteenth century English society, the family and the rules

governing its existence were important topics of discussion. It generated ideas on the treatment of women, gender roles, marriage, family property and so on. In their discussions on the nature and evolution of family, Rousseau and Burke feared a complete breakdown of the patriarchal nature of the family. To them, the family was the space that taught people about morality and social norms. The family was also a cushion against the infringement of the 'modern'. For Burke, the family was associated with the feminine and "beautiful" – something that did not sit well with Wollstonecraft, especially with the rising consciousness and awareness of women's participation in roles beyond the domestic.

Literary scholars from both sides of the establishment were publishing books that went against each other, and they counter-argued ideas through their literary publications. This clash was taking place in the public realm. It is also important to mention that they were critiquing each other's ideas, but at the same time, they were also following each other's views; in other words, there were many common beliefs in their works. They used this belief according to the situation, time and context. Burke's advocacy for the Glorious Revolution and American Revolution and his anti-revolutionary approach related to the French Revolution is the best example of the argument mentioned above. Godwin also, in his work *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), presents his views which are against the institutional tradition. He emphasizes individual liberty because he believes that governance always cultivates tyranny and exploitation through manipulation and power. He is also against the institution of matrimony. Overall, it would not be inappropriate to say that he was the champion of anarchy.

In the late eighteenth century, an ideological war over the issue of women's rights and empowerment is increasingly evident. During this time, the condition of women was deplorable. This pathetic condition can be judged by the fact that an important philosopher of the time, Jean Jacques Rousseau, in his treatise on education, *Emile* (1762), spoke about women in the most degrading terms. In Book Five of *Emile*, he says that women were made for man's delight, they ought to make themselves pleasing, their proper business is to bear children, and they are dependant for their honour, reputation and conduct on men. They did not have any socio-political or economic rights; and patriarchal principles restricted their freedom. They were objects of pleasure. After their marriage, they became the property of their husband. She had no

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right over her possessions. The man had complete control over her body. In other words, the woman's body belonged to her husband as his property. Two prominent women, Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More aired different ideas for the progress of women and led the way for many women to articulate their desires. Wollstonecraft's *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) talks about socio-political and economic progress for women. She emphasises on the individual progress of women and equal rights as enjoyed by men. She says that women are equal to men and can exercise free will in their lives. She expressed a strong dislike for astrology and other superstitious ideologies. She critiques Rousseau and wants women to develop as good mothers, but at the same time, she also wants women to grow as educated beings in the social world. In the essay titled "Reflections on Inequality, Respect, and Love", Sylvana Tomaselli writes:

Like most eighteenth-century thinkers Wollstonecraft did not conceive of women as passive victims of the social and historical process. Unlike many of her near contemporaries, however, such as Diderot and Rousseau, she did not think of the history of woman as a narrative of her emancipation from her abject subjection to man in the state of nature. (2016, p. 20)

Tomaselli further writes –

The condition of women, and men for that matter, was proportionate to the means of their commodification and that, in the *Vindication of the Rights of Men*, was inherently linked to property accumulation through marriage, and in her later writings, through the intensification of the culture of conspicuous consumption in commercial society. (p. 20)

According to Wollstonecraft, women are not sexual objects created for the pleasure of men, as Rousseau writes in his fifth book of *Emile*. Her entire idea contradicts Rousseau's idea about women, which is visible in chapter Five of *Emile* (1762). It is ironic, on the one hand, that Rousseau states in the opening line of *The Social Contract* (1762) that "Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains" (p. 156). Unlike Wollstonecraft, More also discusses the same issue, but in different ways. Her evangelical ideas overshadow her concerns about female education. According to a critic, More indicates that women should be passionless, this view is problematic since More's ideals over the female issue is influenced by evangelicalism. According to Patricia Demers and N. K. Miller,

More was the first woman whose ideas of the germs of Victorian traditions are visible. She emphasises female education in the context of religion in her treatise *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education: With a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune* (1799). She says that through education, women can become good mothers. She advises that a woman should participate in works of charity, they should try to educate the poor, go to orphanages, and do other social work. She also emphasises that women should satisfy their sexual appetite only through the institution of marriage. She also had opinions on what books women should read. Thus, it is evident that while both Wollstonecraft and More talk about the progress of women, More binds women to institutions for any progress. More embodied a complex ideological position as she was advocating for women's education and moral advancement within the established patriarchal framework. Moreover, while Wollstonecraft sees women as equal to men, More sees women as sexually inferior to men. The two women's ideologies and advocacy for women's agency were an important driving force in eighteenth century English women's consciousness about their rights and roles in society as well as in their homes. In *Before Victoria: Extraordinary Women of the British Romantic Era*, Elizabeth Campbell Denlinger writes about the two "political and social extremes" inhabited by these two women. Unlike Wollstonecraft, who defied any definition, More was known as a moral reformer who was almost like a Christian saint. Denlinger notes how motherhood was important to both of these women's political concerns. While More viewed motherhood as a practice that should be carried out from the home, Wollstonecraft saw a mother's "best life" while participating in civil and public life in general. More's paradoxical thoughts about women and motherhood involved the development of individual education for the benefit of children.

The future of these gendered ideologies became prevalent in two different ways. More's ideals progressed in the Victorian world since the repression of women was strong and enforced with might and the concept of monster and angel was popular during the period those women who were submissive, polite and blind followers of patriarchy were treated as angels while those women who were rebellious against patriarchy even through their rational approach they were considered as monsters. The character of Helen Burns as an angel and the character of Bertha Mason as a monster in *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte

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Bronte (1816-1855) is the best example. Wollstonecraft's revolutionary ideology was enforced only in later times since the radical part of her ideas were seen to be useful only later for their radicalness. Twentieth-century feminist critic Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) accentuates the opinion of Mary Wollstonecraft in her own literary works. Her essay on Mary Wollstonecraft also proves her championship related to the concept associated with female upliftment. The political sensibilities of More and Wollstonecraft were quite prominent in their literary works titled *Maria: or The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) and *Coelebs in Search of a Wife. Comprehending Observations on Domestic Habits and Manners, Religion and Morals* (1808). She writes that "Wollstonecraft's heroine has been crippled by sensibility, while More shows her readers the dangers of excess sentiment through secondary characters, but both authors see the value of intelligent, decisive, even strong-minded women" (162). It is evident in each of the above cases, that there can be no one or definite way of evaluating these ideological positions. They are constantly in conflict with one another and are also being influenced by opposing ideologies.

The enduring influence of Romantic poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, reveals the future trajectory of these ideologies. They were optimistic about the Revolution in the early years but later they became pessimistic and were saddened by the tyranny and despotism that the Revolution had fallen into. The later generation of Romantic poets like Shelley and Keats, were inspired by the French Revolution and had hoped that the old ideals would also change in Britain making way for newer ones. Ideas about the potential of the Revolution and the hopes associated with it are found in the works of Shelley where he talks about revolution against the ideology of the ruling class in *Ode to the West Wind* (1820), *Ode to Liberty* (1817) and *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). John Keats also talks about these ideas in his poems *Hyperion* (1820) and *The Fall of Hyperion* (1856). In "The Politics of the Greater Romantic Poets", J. W. Thomas (1921) writes about the political leanings of some of the major Romantic writers such as Robert Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, the Old Tory Thomas Scott, Byron, Shelley and Keats. In his essay, Thomas writes about how Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were initially quite aligned with the radicalism of the Revolution but later on became conservative. While acknowledging the initial similarities between Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey, Thomas writes of a "second likeness" – that of a "common failure... to appreciate domestic problems". He writes,

All showed interest enough in questions of foreign politics, and-even in later years-unusual individuality for Tories. When France came to represent Tyranny rather than Liberty, all three turned against her, finally, with varying degrees of acquiescence, accepting the return of the Bourbons as the best solution of the inter- national difficulty. All three, it must be noted, rejoiced at the rise of the Spanish people against the French. (1921, p. 20)

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Media Literacy in Indian Vedic Literature

Sudhir K Rinten, Chanchal Sachdeva Suri & Fakira Mohan Nahak

Abstract

Media Literacy is a required literacy for understanding communication and the text in a given environment. Communication has co-existed with society and humanity. From the very beginning of communication in pictographic form, a common understanding and experiences were required for the interpretation of the message. In the contemporary world, when communication is deliberate and sustained with greater impacts on human life with the help of technology, the literacy of the media and its uses are very much required. Different schools of thought have analysed and dissected varying methods to give media literacy to their citizenry to combat the challenges. The aim of this paper is to delve into ethical and legal considerations of different communication models. The fundamental purpose of Vedic Education System in ancient India was to develop morality and ethics. This paper is a commentary on the Media Literacy components of Vedic Literature.

Keywords: *Media Literacy, Communication, Vedic Literature, Morality, Ethics*

Introduction

The role and influence of media and communication in our day-to-day life is enormous. Its uses and effects cannot be ignored in our contemporary media culture. This is reflected in various walks of life in some form or another (Cheung & Dubey, 2012). To meet the challenges that arise due to influences on culture, communication, understanding and the values it is important to understand the meaning of the text and the message. Several scholars have

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suggested media literacy among citizenries be incorporated and developed to comprehend, analyze and understand the message and its meaning (Abu-fadil, 2007; Dotzler, 2012; Mason, 2016; Worsnop, 2004) . The requirement to incorporate media literacy in school curricula was also advocated by various institutions and organizations along with different scholars (Bazalgette, 2010; Chandana, 2022; Kačínová et al., 2014; Marín et al., 2015; Vrabec et al., 2013). Indian Vedic Literature was a source of education for a very long period keeping in mind the requirements of the culture and communication in Indian society. The Indian education system still focuses on the values and the motives of education based on the morals inferred from the communication process of the past. This paper is an analytical analysis of Indian Vedic Literature towards media literacy of the disciples and the citizenry, and how values and skills can fulfill the contemporary requisites of media literacy in contemporary media environments.

It is accepted that the interrelation of the functional skills of the media and cultural factors constructs media literacy. This is the key to identifying, evaluating and critically appreciating a text for acceptance and perception. Media literacy also gives an idea of the content creation process (Silverblatt et al., 2022) which will enable the media literate individual about the process and procedural lacunas of media and the construction of the messages. Media literacy will orient the learners' perception to judge the content, and the meaning based on its requisites and uses. The ability to critically evaluate the content, text and message is required to understand the meaning in a given socio-cultural environment (Silverblatt et al., 2022). Contemporary media penetration, accesses and the consumption behavior affects the flow of information. In the Indian scenario, media is capturing the common space of life at a great pace.

Indian Media Scenario

Mass media is capable of producing harmful effects on individuals and society (Potter, 2013). Indian Mass Media scenario is quite different from other countries. Indian multicultural society is a cluster of multi-linguistic societies as well. That is why, the Indian Media is diversified in its socio-cultural nature and treatment. The multicultural and multi-linguistic nature of Indian society provides an opportunity for heterogeneous media access to the citizenry. This heterogeneous nature of the Media and Entertainment Industry is not only

a multi-faceted communication provider but also acts as a huge segment of business. With various shades of communication and dependencies of business (Table 1), media adopts various techniques of spreading information to the society.

Table 1
Media and Entertainment Industry in India

SN	Media	Consumers	G r o w t h rate		Remarks
1	Broadband Subscribers	876.53 Million			Top five broadband service providers have more than 98 % of the subscribers. Wireless broadband had a higher growth rate in rural areas.
2.	Total Telephone	1179.21 Million (30.78 Million Wire line included)			Urban Tele- density 133.55% Rural Tele- density 57.97% (TRAI- Nov-2023)
3.	Mobile Users	1148.43 Million			India spends 82% time on mobile phone apps for media and entertainment.
4.	Print Media	Total RNI registered 146045 With 391712282 Daily circulation (annual statement 2021-23)			As per the Annual Statement 2021-2022 issued Print Media can manage a growth rate of 1.05% from the previous year (Press in India 2021-22, 2023).
5.	Television	210 Million (BARC, 2022)			India's Broadcasting and cable TV market is 13.61 Billion Dollars (TechSci Research, 2023).

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6	Radio	92% of the Area and reach up to 99.19 % of the population with the help of 262 Radio stations (Prasar Bharti). Total 388 private FM radio stations. (Indian Express, February 1, 2023) As per the List of Commissioned Community Radio Stations Having Valid GOPA as of 01.12.2023 of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting there are a total 460 operational Community Radio Stations in India.	
7.	Internet	The digital media segment in India is growing with a 30% growth rate and will achieve a 6.9 Billion dollar figure in 2022 (Jain, 2023). Online gaming reached at a figure of 1.6 Billion dollars in 2022. (Jain, 2023) The share of regional content in TV and OTT is about 50%. (Jain, 2023) The Digital advertising industry – 6.1 Billion Dollars. (Jain, 2023)	
8.	others	This is also interesting that the animation and VFX industry in India is growing by 29% with a current market value of 1.3 billion dollars (Jain, 2023).	
9.	Films	1600+ films per year	The Industry reached to 1.2 Billion dollar theatrical collection (Jain, 2023).

The varied content for heterogeneous audiences is available on all the platforms, irrespective of their psychographic deviations and requisites.

Media Literacy and the Indian Vedic Text

Media literacy comprises the skill set required to create, understand, and interpret the meaning of the text supplied by the media at various stages. These skills will provide enhanced understanding of communication and the text of communication but also will regulate its consumption and influence in daily life. According to Vedic understanding, as pointed out by Adhikary (2014), communication is a phenomenon of transmitting knowledge, information and

the idea to another person involved in the process. This may be indigenous or varied in terms of their nature. Vedic and post-Vedic schools of thought were very clear about the literacy of the communication process. The concepts of 'Sahridayata', 'Rasaswadana' and 'Sadharnikaran' were under the influence of understanding the communication process.

Communication was defined by various researchers and institutions later, but the phenomenon's existence has existed since the existence of humans and society. Available literature may define the process in its understanding, but nobody can ignore the influences and effects of societal concepts on the communication process. Even in the process of early communication "*Shruti*" was the acceptable mode of communication. Vedic literature was communicated in the same format and considered a source of knowledge. In the Vedic system of communication, society was at the top of the priority list of communication.

The Western philosophers also believed that Culture and communication are inseparable, and mass communication, as we've seen, is a particularly powerful, pervasive, and complex form of communication (Stanley, 2017). Culture is created by communication, and it affects cultural practices. So, it is important to understand the communication process to deal with its influences on society and individuals. Media literacy may be defined as a critical understanding of media texts and the creative ability to produce them (Duran & James, 2007). This skill will provide an opportunity to understand the process of message design and its influences on life. In other words "communicative competence" (Burn & Durran, 2007) is the key to understanding media literacy. Carolyn Wilson (2019) argues that "all media is constructed, it constructs reality" (p. 6). The opinions and views of reality are based on the communication received, analysed and perceived. Receivers negotiate the meaning of the message based on the constructed reality of the individual, which is affected by several factors like commercial implications, business models, ideological factors, values, social and political implications, grammar and codified reality etc. (Pungente, 1987). Indian Vedic texts are also vocal about the same.

According to Yajnavalkya Smriti, there are fourteen sources of knowledge including Vedas, Vedangs and the Purana. There are four Vedas i.e. *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda*, and six Vedangs ie. *Shikha*, *Kalpa*, *Vyakarna*, *Nirukta*, *Chanda* and *Jyotisha*, *Purana*, *Nyaya*, *Meemamsa* and

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Dharmshashtra (Tiwari, n.d.). The knowledge about the source and content is the basic requirement of Media Literacy. The Yajnavalkya Smriti states the source of knowledge for the common man. The *Samhita*, *Shikah* and *Meemamsa* are further extensions and clarifications about the grammar, narratives of the message and the meaning of the statements. The Vedic *Suktas* are *Mantras*, and *Meemamsa* are the observations and clarifications of the same for a common man (Tiwari, n.d.).

Formation of society is not a phenomenon of vacuum, the role of communication is always there to formulate a society of any nature, whether they have systematic communication channels or not, but the presence of communication is proven in the act itself. As God-fearing people, fear of nature gave birth to a lot of mystic communication about the almighty to the Indian society. The Indian communication system of “*Shruti parampara*” was derived from the two-way communication process and the ‘Guru’ was an important nucleus of the communication process with communication in dialogue form (Adhikary, 2014). The “*Guru Stotam*” was a known practice of the all-teaching learning centres in the Vedic study system.

*Gururbrahmaa Gururvishnur gururdevo Maheshwarah
Gururev Param Brahma Tasmai Shree Gurave Namah*

(Gurugita, 1:58)

‘Guru’ is the “*Brahma*” (The Creator), ‘Guru’ is the “*Vishnu*” (the Preserver), ‘Guru’ is “*Maheshwara*” (the Destroyer). ‘Guru’ is the absolute supreme power. I bow to that ‘Guru. (Bresnan, 2018) ‘Guru’ was given an equal importance to “*Parambrahma*”. One can understand the importance of ‘Guru’ as a communicator in Indian Vedic Education (Sengupta, 2020).

There was no dominance of the ‘Guru’ in the process of communication but the selection of ‘Guru’ was an important process and has been said that the selection of the ‘Guru’ should be judicious. In ‘*Shiksha Valli*’ of ‘*Taittiriya Upnishad*’ it is said that “*Yanyavadhani Karmani. Tani Sevityavani. No Itrani. Yanyasmakam Sucharitani. Tani Tavyopasyani. No Itrani (Taittiriya Upnishad Shikshavalli, 2024)*. This means a disciple should follow those virtuous actions only which are free from blemishes appreciable (*Taittiriya Upnishad Shikshavalli, 11:2*).

Thus the “Guru” himself suggests the judicious selection of the learnings. This is to create awareness about the impact of the message on individuals and society (Chinmayananda, 1962), a major component of media literacy, as defined by Art Silverblatt, Anubhuti Yadav and Vedabhyas Kundu in their book ‘Media Literacy Keys to Interpreting Media Messages’ published in 2022.

It is important to understand that Media Literacy is not limited to understanding the messages and the process of the channels, it is there to develop an understanding of the construction of the message from various angles, motivations for disseminating information and the selection of the content and selection of the terms to be communicated (Huguet et al., 2019). The ancient Indian text is full of such instructions in the process of communication. Normally the text starts in a dialogue form, like ‘Shrimad Bhagvatgita’ begins with ‘Dhritrashtra Uvach’

Dharmkshetre Kurukshetre samveta yuyutsavah

Maamkah pandvashchaiv kimura sanjay.

(Shrimadbhagvadgita, 1:1)

King Dhritrashtra is enquiring about the actions of his sons and the Pandavas gathered on the battlefield (Shrimadbhagvadgita, 2018). The very first Shloka of the text describes the power of information for a blind man and the power of dialogue in the process of communication.

The very popular Shloka is as follows:

satyam bruyat priyam bruyanna bruyat satyamapriyam

priyam ca nanrtam bruyadesa dharmah sanatanah

(Manusmritih 4:138)

the role of the communicator is defined by the oration of truth. He shall speak the truth only, the agreeable truth. The truth which is not agreeable should not be communicated. The agreeable untruth is also not to be communicated. This should be considered as the law of communication. The finding of the truth is the responsibility of the communicator between agreeable and truth. In case of any doubt, the communicator should develop the ability of such an individual who himself is not affected by the knowledge he has received from the various

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sources. Indian Vedic communication system advocates truth in all forms, its beauty and perfection (Krishnamurthy, 1999). In ‘*Shrimad Bhagvadgita*’ the qualities of the person who can understand the text of any communication is established through Shloka no. 53 of chapter two.

Shrutivipratipanna te yada sthasyati nishchala

Samadhavachla budhdhistda yogamvapsyasi

(Shrimadbhagvadgita, 2:53)

When your conscious is not disturbed by the figurative language of Vedas and you will adopt the meaning of the same in your “*Samadhi*” of self-realization then only you can achieve divine consciousness to deal with the issues (Shrimadbhagvadgita, 2018). The divine consciousness is nothing more than the interpretation of the meaning of the situation and the “*Aapad Dharma*.” The person who has achieved that divine consciousness will be considered as “*sthit pragaya*”. In the next shloka Arjuna says

Sthitipragasya ka bhasha samadhistasy keshav

Sthitidhih kim prabhashet kimasiit vrajet kim

(Shrimadbhagvadgita, 2:54)

This is the enquiry about the qualities of a “*sthit pragaya*” individual especially about how he speaks, what is the language and what the gesture and posture he follows. Further, the text describes the personality traits of the “*sthit pragaya*” individual in the form of a dialogue delivered by Shri Bhagwan. He describes the traits as if he is not influenced by any factors which may be regulated by senses only. He is not affected by feelings and emotions or materialistic sense objects and even willingness to achieve it. In short “a person who is not being affected by *Kam, Krodh, Lobha and Moha*” (Shrimadbhagvadgita, 2018). It does not mean that the Indian communication system is giving less importance to “*karma*.” “*Karma*” is important and the way one performs his duties is more important in achieving the desired goals than because the way a leader behaves is adopted by the common man so one should present morals and values in his act, which is to be followed by others. (Shrimadbhagvadgita, 2018)

*Yadydacharit shresthastdevetaro janah
Sa yatpramanam kurute lokastdanuvartate*

(Shrimadbhagvadgita, 3:21)

The act is defined as a message to the disciples the act should be by the values so that others can follow the same. The characteristics of the communicator, the message and the values imbibed in the message all are intact with the communicator.

Media literacy in Indian text is not limited to the process only, it is very much part of the behaviour of the communicator. That is why 'dharma' is defined accordingly in different roles and responsibilities. The knowledgeable individual is defined by his acts and behaviour. The role of the communicator is associated with responsibility and the social construct. The source of communication should be authentic and trustworthy. That is why the role of the guru is given the top priority in "shruti" and is also reinforced in various texts of Indian literature.

*Yah Kashitvkasychiddharmo Maluna Parikirtatah
Sah Sarvohbhihito Vede Sarvagyanmayo Hi Sah*

(Manusmritih, 2:7)

*Sarvam Tu Samvekshedyam Nikhilam Gyanchakshusha
Shruti Pramanyato Vidwan Swadharme Vivishet Vai.*

(Manusmritih, 2:8)

*Shrutismrityuditam Dharmanutishthan Hi Manavah
Ih Kirtipraptepti Pretya Chanuttamam Sukham*

(Manusmritih, 2:9)

The practices defined are the outcome of Vedas, the supreme treasure of knowledge. Disciples are advised to follow them after verification of their respective religious practices by their wisdom, references to Vedas and critical evaluation of the "dharma Shastra". Those who follow the practices prescribed in "The Vedas" and "Smritis" will achieve divine pleasure and fame in life (Dwivedi, 1917).

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The Indian text was not the text to be followed as it is, this gives an edge to the disciples and followers to adopt the path of critical evaluation, to find a correlation with their “Dharma Shastra” and the use of ‘judicious wisdom’ in the adaptation of the statements mentioned in the texts. That is what is required in the contemporary world to understand a text circulated in any media. Indian Vedic text is very particular about the message adaptation.

The role of the communicator and the receiver was also defined and perceived properly. The flow of knowledge was not defined by the linear methods only. This was associated with the receiver’s calibre, efforts, and willingness.

Dharmartho Yat N Syatam Shushruta Vapi Tadwidha

Yatr Vidya N Vaktavya Shubham Bijmivoshre

(Manusmritih, 2:112)

Vidyayaiv Samam Kamam Martavyam Brahmavadina

Aapadyapi Hi Ghorayan N Twenmirine Vapet

(Manusmritih, 2:113)

The disciple who is not able to get Wealth, Knowledge, or “Dharma” (the meaning relies on moral practices) should not be taught. The seeds that are not sown properly are useless. This means after the teaching-learning process a disciple must receive some sort of influence on any walk of life like wisdom, practices, or the profession. Meaningful communication must have an impact on the life of the receiver. If it is not communicated effectively, knowledge should die along with the person who is spreading it. If the receiver is not able to utilise that information one should not communicate with. The role of the receiver was established along with the role of the communicator. Such a powerful acceptance of the importance of the communication process was established in the Indian texts. The communicator should not communicate the fact in a form that can affect the receiver’s emotions adversely. These media literacy components were very much part of the Indian teaching–learning process and were appreciated by society.

The Indian ancient folk tales were very particular about the ethics and the literacy of the perception. One of the folk tales of Panchtantra “*The Blind Men And The Elephant*” is a pure illustration of the perception and the perspective

(Kolb, 2017). The story is about the perspective of the communicator and the receiver both at the same time. The information remains the same but the perspective of accessing the information and presenting it to others may vary as per the perception of the beholder.

The principles of Vedic education in India were to inculcate values and social concerns in the disciples. To enrich the power of Voice, Vision and Audition they used to chant mantras like “*Vang Me Aasye Astu, NasorMen Pranoastu, Akshno Men Chakhcurastu*” which means my speech should be controlled and conscious, my nostrils should be filled with ‘*Pranvayu*’ and my eyes must have the vision (Khushalani, 2023). These are not only the symbol of the life but also a major components of communication where sender and receivers use these senses judiciously to complete the communication process. The Vedic Education was dedicated to developing “*Shradhdha*” “*Medha*” and “*Anumati*” along with other coefficients and outcomes of the knowledge. These characteristics were equal to understanding media literacy in the contemporary world. “*Shraddha*” was known to be the knowledge, theory and collection of facts with logic and experiences, “*Medha*” was an inspiration to originality and the “*Anumati*” is to understand, comprehend, and acceptance to the opinions of others (Khushalani, 2023). The reception of the messages was controlled by the “*Bhadram Karnebhi, Shrudiyam devah*”(Shuklayajurveda, 25:2:1) which means that whatever we hear should be auspicious, what so ever we see should be auspicious and adorable to the eyes (HYN Himalayan Yoga Academy, 2023). The division of “*Para*” and “*Apara*” was based on the knowledge of the physical world, spiritual knowledge and self-realization. For critical thinking, the Rishis suggested to follow “*Padartha*” in the “*Nyaya*” school of Indian Philosophy. They are systematic and appropriate steps for decision-making in any circumstance. A few of them were required to understand the communication phenomenon, like “*Pramana*”, the means of right knowledge is the key to understanding the information coming to the receiver. The “*Prameya*” is the object of right knowledge and the “*Samasya*” (doubt) and Prayojana (Motive) were taught for the questioning of the information and the motive behind the information circulated. If a disciple is developing the capability to doubt any information and find out the motive behind the communication, he will be able to critically appreciate not only the text but can verify the knowledge coming to affect the process (Mahesh Prabhu, 2019).

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The education in the Indian Vaidik System was

Tata karm yatr bandhay sa vidya ya vimuktaye
Aaya saya param karm vidyanya shilp naipudyanam

(Shrivishnupuranam, 1:19:41)

This means the action should provide liberty and the knowledge should show the divine path, others are there to give you skills. The divine path is the inclusion of all the components of any knowledge where “Pramana,” “Prameya”, “Samasya” and “Prayojana” are clear and attainable. This skill is media literacy - the ability to effectively and efficiently comprehend and use any form of mediated communication (Stanley, 2017). Although the literacy to comprehend and understand written words existed before the advent of the printing press around 5000 years ago (Stanley, 2017), but the literacy about the text and the message following the culture and the society is comprehended with the literacy (Silverblatt et al., 2022). The Indian Vedic literature was very particular about the communicator, the medium and the message. The perception and the influence of communication were also the core while communicating or planning to communicate. The role and characteristics of the Sender and the Receiver were pre-defined as per the requirement of media literacy.

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Typology of Research Studies Used in Political Science

Prabira Sethy & Ritu Kohli

Abstract

The present paper is an endeavour to define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information for advancing knowledge in any branch of study and find answers to questions and solutions to problems and in the process determine the economic, social and political development of a nation. Secondly, it examines the main objectives of research to find out the truth, which is hidden, and which has not yet discovered. Thirdly, research being a fact-finding inquiry, the paper underscores certain characteristics of its own. Fourth, the paper categorizes research into natural and human sciences. And finally, the study deliberates in its presentation the typology of research studies used in the discipline of Political Science based on their intended aims and anticipated results.

Keywords: *Observation, Prediction, Explanation, Qualitative, Quantitative Research*

Introduction

A logical and methodical quest for fresh and practical information on a certain subject is called research. A pursuit for knowledge is also commonly referred to as research. Research can also be described as a methodical, scientific search for relevant data on a certain subject. Research is actually an art form of scientific inquiry. "Research is defined by the dictionary as a thorough investigation or inquiry, particularly via the pursuit of novel information in any

Typology of Research Studies used in Political Science

field of knowledge” (Kothari & Garg, 2019, p. 1). Research is viewed by some as a progression from the known to the unknown. It is, in fact, a voyage of discovery. The essential instinct of curiosity is present in all of us. Our curiosity forces us to delve deeper and gain better knowledge of the unfamiliar when it confronts us. This curiosity is the source of all knowledge, and the process one uses to learn about anything unknown is referred to as study (Kothari & Garg, 2019, p. 1). In the popular nursery rhyme

*“Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
How I Wonder What You Are”*

The terms “how” and “what” are used in this rhyme to basically sum up what research is. It is an inquiry into using unbiased, methodical analysis to find answers to social and scientific issues. Finding hidden facts is the result of a quest for knowledge. Knowledge in this context refers to information about things. The data may be gathered from a variety of sources, including human experience, literature, journals, nature, and other sources. Research can result in fresh insights into the body of knowledge. Progress in a field can only be achieved via research. In fact, research is civilization and shapes a country’s political, social, and economic growth. The findings of scientific study frequently compel a shift in the philosophical perspective on issues that go well beyond the narrow purview of science.

Science and technology are not the only fields that conduct research. Other fields of study include languages, literature, history, political science, sociology, and many more. Research must be an active, thorough, and methodical process of inquiry regardless of the topic in order to find, analyse, or modify facts, events, behaviours, and hypotheses. Research and development also includes the use of research findings to improve human life quality or to advance knowledge in other fields.

Studies, experiments, observations, analysis, comparisons, and reasoning are all used in research. In actuality, research is everywhere. We know, for instance, that smoking cigarettes is bad for health, that heroin is addictive, that cow dung is a good source of biogas, that the virus protozoan plasmodium causes malaria, and that the virus HIV (Human Immuno Deficiency Virus) causes AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome). How did we find out about all of

these? Only via investigation were all of these facts learnt. More specifically, it looks for hypotheses, correlations, explanations, and predictions about events (Pani, 2015, p. VI).

In reality, research is the process of coming up with a reliable answer to an issue by carefully and methodically gathering, analysing, and interpreting data. The most crucial method for expanding knowledge, fostering advancement, and helping people better relate to their surroundings in order to fulfill their goals and resolve problems is research. It is among the best methods for resolving issues, but it is not the only one. Thus, research is a process in which an individual repeatedly observes a phenomenon, gathers data, and then makes certain conclusions based on the findings. Finding answers to unexplained occurrences is the goal of research in order to dispel skepticism and rectify misinformation. Put simply, it refers to the pursuit of information, answers, and solutions to issues.

As a result, research adds something new to the body of knowledge, which advances it further. It is enough to say that research is an effort to find the truth by using techniques like experimentation, comparison, study, and observation. In summary, research is the pursuit of knowledge through methodical, objective approaches to problem-solving (Pani, 2015, p. 4).

Understanding the Concept of Research

The term ‘research’ is frequently used in academic contexts. Depending on the context, it can signify different things to different people. An examination of these various nuances of the word ‘research’ would be quite instructive. Nowadays, individuals look up information and data about whatever they are interested in on the internet. This activity is occasionally called research (Kevin, 2021, p. 3).

The terms “re” and “search,” which stand for “to search again” or “a rigorous examination to re-understand or re-examine the facts, or to search for new facts or change previous ones in any discipline of study, are the two words that make up the word ‘research’” (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 1). Simply said, research is any intellectual examination conducted in an effort to find facts, truths, or certainties. Research is also a systematic endeavour to learn new things. Research begins whenever conventional theory is deemed insufficient to account for the facts that are currently occurring. Old theories are either

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refuted, modified, or new hypotheses are proposed by research. As a result, it implies an ongoing quest for information and comprehension (Pani, 2015, p. 1).

Research, then, is a methodical, scientific, and analytical approach to the systematic search for new knowledge in any field of study. The guiding elements of research that aid in the discovery of new facts are ongoing search and investigation. The pursuit of new information also aids in the acceptance, rejection, and modification of information already found in the literature. To the average person, the term “research” connotes a thorough examination of a topic, particularly with the goal of finding (new) information. Few others see it as a search for something fresh (Sarangi, 2010, p. 8).

While social research focusses on societal issues, physical sciences deal with things or objects that may be tested in a lab setting under controlled circumstances. While the social sciences do not deal with physical events that are entirely under human control, the physical sciences do. Social science research is skewed towards human conduct, which is impacted by a wide range of factors, including social, psychological, economic, physical, and temperamental. Testing such human beings in a lab is something we can never hope to do. Even if that were done, their reactions would be influenced by the unnatural circumstances and would not be natural (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 3).

In its broadest sense, ‘Research’ refers to a determined and thorough effort to learn about and comprehend social and physical processes. It is an endeavour to establish facts or principles in a manner that is scientific. It is an approach to the scientific finding of true values. One way to define it would be the use of the scientific approach to analyse difficulties (Pani, 2015, p. 31).

Defining the Concept of Research

Numerous definitions of research can be found in relevant literature on research. Here are some quotes from renowned academics who have defined research in ways that are widely accepted:

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the research as “a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge” (Sarangi, 2010, p. 8). In the words of Clifford Woody, “research is a careful inquiry or examination in seeking facts or principles, a diligent investigation to ascertain something” (Sarangi, 2010, p. 8). Webster’s Twentieth

Century Dictionary defines the term “‘Research’ as a careful, patient, systematic, diligent inquiry or examination in some field of knowledge undertaken to establish facts or principles” (Pani, 2015, p. 31). The Chambers Universal Learners’ Dictionary defines it as “a close and careful (usually scientific) study to (try to) find out (new) facts or information” (Kevin, 2021, p. 3). Nicholas Walliman states “research is a term used liberally for any kind of investigation that is intended to uncover interesting or new facts” (Kevin, 2021, p. 3). C.R. Kothari states that “the search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem is research” (p. 1).

It is clear from the previous definition of research that it is essentially a search for knowledge. However, in scholarly discourse, the term ‘research’ does not relate to a straightforward search; rather, it denotes a scientific search employing methodical procedures, methods, and techniques with the overarching goals of characterizing, elucidating, forecasting, and managing the study’s subject matter. Therefore, it is a methodical process of determining a problem or question, then formulating a plan of action to address the issue or provide an answer by carefully gathering, evaluating, and interpreting evidence for the goal. An expansion of current knowledge involving a shift from the known to the unknown as uncovered by the inquiry is the result of this scientific search.

Objectives of Research

The goal of research is to use scientific methods to find answers to questions. The primary goal of research is to uncover the hidden truth that hasn’t been found yet. Thus, research also has certain fundamental goals. The following are some significant research goals:

1. Helps to explore and understand human behaviour

Every human being behaves differently. The hardest thing in society to forecast is human psychology. In their behaviour, there are always variations. Therefore, an understanding of human behaviour is necessary to maintain stability and equilibrium. Thus, research aids in the investigation and comprehension of social life and human behaviour.

2. Helps in portraying accuracy

Research aids in accurately illustrating the traits of a specific person, circumstance, or group within a community or organization and helps create

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growth strategies.

3. Helps to extend, correct or verify knowledge

The human test for a given good is constantly evolving. As a result, human nature is to constantly seek for new things. Therefore, research aids in the extension, correction, or verification of knowledge that is either unknown or hidden.

4. Provides explanations

A variety of answers for social phenomena were discovered that could not be described through the investigation.

5. Predicts frequency

It aids in forecasting how frequently a given event will occur or how it will be connected to another event.

6. Provides new insights

New understandings of organised society and its social systems are brought about via research.

7. Tests existing theories

Additionally, studies evaluate or refute preexisting theories and update them in light of new data. Thus, new hypotheses are created, changed, or tested in addition to the current theories.

8. Understands the organizational and social contexts

Research also aims to comprehend social life, the environment, decision-making process, organisational culture, etc., in order to better manage human conduct in social and organisational situations (Sarangi, 2010, p. 10).

Purposes of Research

Research in whatever field of inquiry has four purposes, i.e., describing, explaining and predicting phenomena and ultimately controlling events as follows:

Describing and Explaining

This is an effort to comprehend the world in which we live. Acquiring knowledge, establishing facts, and creating new techniques are the goals of research. This

understanding is demonstrated by the ideas that have been produced and how well they describe the world we live in.

Prediction

In the context of research, predictions are typically expressed as hypotheses, which are precise, unambiguous claims that are open to scientific confirmation or denial. Depending on whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected, we might formulate theories or generalisations about different scenarios. Given these circumstances, we can say that this is likely to occur.

Control

This comes from what we know and the fact that theories have been successfully verified. Control is an example of how research may be used to address actual issues and circumstances, enabling us to influence our surroundings. Understanding how variables relate to one another allows us to manipulate our surroundings to our advantage. Research on effective strategies to address indiscipline in schools can serve as an example of this. Once the best tactics have been found, they can be used to lower the rate of indiscipline in schools and raise student accomplishment (Majhi & Khatua, 2013, p. 3).

Characteristics of Research

As a fact-finding investigation, research has unique qualities. Crucial aspects of research are given below:

1. A scientific program is research. It explains the cause-and-effect relationship. The goal of research is to find a solution to an issue or provide an answer to a query.
2. The development of generalization of ideas or principles that aid in prediction is the focus of research.
3. Empirical data or observable experiences serve as the foundation for research.
4. Research necessitates precise description and study.
5. New information is gathered from primary or secondary sources as part of research. If at all possible, research aims to collect original quantitative data and translate it into numerical measures.

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6. Research necessitates in-depth understanding of the topic.
7. Research should be rational and objective, using all available tests to confirm the information gathered and the methods used.
8. Research is meticulously documented and shared.
9. Research is an activity that requires patience and is not rushed. Personal sentiments and preferences are consistently avoided by researchers.
10. When research yields controversial findings that face social criticism, it might occasionally take guts.
11. Research has accelerated the rate of progress and is a means of achieving it.
12. The man's problems led to the creation of research. Therefore, helping people is the goal of the research (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 2).

Classification of Research

Two major categories can be used to classify research:

1. Research in Physical or Natural Sciences.
2. Research in Social or Human Sciences.

While social research focuses on societal issues, physical sciences involve private objects or things that may be tested in a lab setting under controlled conditions. The physical sciences study things that are entirely under human control, whereas the social sciences don't.

Social scientists tend to focus on human behaviour which is impacted by a wide range of elements including economic, psychological, social, physical, and temperamental. It is impossible to test such human beings in a lab. Their reactions would not be natural even if it were done; instead, they would be aware of the contrived circumstances (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 3).

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Research is a general phrase for a scientific investigation of an issue. Based on their intended aim and anticipated results, research studies are divided into various types. Research studies in political science are often categorized as follows:

- a. Descriptive vs. Analytical Studies,

- b. Applied vs. Fundamental Studies,
- c. Quantitative vs. Qualitative Studies,
- d. Conceptual vs. Empirical Studies.

Descriptive vs. Analytical Studies

The researcher's goal in descriptive studies is to measure, observe, and comprehend social events as they actually occur. To get the necessary data, descriptive studies employ surveys and fact-finding investigations. Such research results in a description of social reality as it is now or was in the past. Examples of descriptive research include examinations of a group's demographics or socioeconomic circumstances, consumer preferences and purchasing patterns for particular goods, etc. The results of descriptive studies serve as valuable starting points for additional research or initiatives (Kevin, 2021, p. 11). In political science, a descriptive study might be a survey that gathers information on people's attitudes and beliefs through questionnaires in order to determine the current public opinion on a proposed policy change, such as calculating the proportion of citizens who support or oppose a new environmental regulation. Analysing voting trends in a given area, such as looking at the demographics of voters in a state to find trends in voting behaviour based on variables like age, income, and party affiliation, is another example of a descriptive study in political science.

The scope of analytical research extends beyond the simple description of various phenomena. Analysing the connections between the variables in the study is its main goal. It also explores and attempts to explain the causes that underlie the occurrences being studied. It is not just descriptive of the things under study; it is explanatory in character. Using statistical analysis to determine which factors most significantly influence voter participation, an example of an analytical study in political science research methods would be analysing the effects of various campaign strategies on voter turnout in a particular election. This study would entail deconstructing complex data in order to comprehend the causal relationships between campaign strategies and voter behaviour.

Applied vs. Fundamental Studies

Applied research is a type of study that looks for a solution or response to a real-world issue or query. A non-systematic approach to addressing particular

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research challenges or difficulties is called applied research. These concerns may pertain to individuals, groups, or society as a whole. The reason it is referred to as “non-systematic” is that it jumps right into solving problems. Because it employs the existing scientific instruments to uncover solutions, it is frequently referred to as a “scientific process.” The researcher identifies the issue, formulates a hypothesis, and then conducts experiments to test it, much like in conventional research. It delves further into the results of genuine or fundamental research. The researcher employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques including questionnaires, interviews, and observation techniques, to gather data for the applicable study. Applied research techniques help solve particular issues or provide answers to specific queries. It is based on solutions. An illustration of this would be low employee motivation within a company or sector. This is a real-world issue that a researcher can examine and ultimately resolve. Practical solutions to current issues are necessary for applied research. Action research is another name for this type of study (Kevin, 2021, p. 11).

Deriving generalisations from the study to support theory formulation is the main goal of fundamental research, often known as “pure” or “basic” research. The main tenets of theories in the subject are typically the findings of basic research studies, which have a wider range of applications. An example of fundamental research is the study of human behaviour to determine the reasons underlying particular behaviours. Fundamental research, as contrast to applied research, attempts to provide knowledge that will broaden scientific understanding without any particular or focused goals. This kind of study is carried out by researchers in an effort to advance our understanding of fundamental scientific concepts. Forming an idea or phenomena in scientific theory is the goal of fundamental study, which is more akin to pure curiosity. An examination of how various voting systems (such as proportional representation versus first-past-the-post) affect the degree of political participation in different nations could be a foundational study in political science research methods. The goal would be to comprehend the underlying mechanisms and causal relationships between electoral systems and citizen engagement without focusing specifically on the policy implications in a given context. The main objective is not always to address a particular policy issue in a certain nation, but rather to advance a more comprehensive understanding of the connection between voting systems and political involvement. In order to find trends and evaluate theoretical

claims, this study would probably compare data from several nations with various voting systems. To test theories regarding the effects of voting systems, the researcher may employ statistical analysis of survey data on political engagement and voter turnout in various nations.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Studies

Studies that employ quantitative data gathered from secondary sources or primary data gathered and represented numerically are known as quantitative studies. Quantitative studies use statistical tools for data analysis since they deal with numerical data (Kevin, 2021, p. 11). In political science, a quantitative study might be a study that examines the relationship between demographic characteristics such as age, income, and educational attainment and election turnout by using a large-scale survey with closed-ended questions that enables statistical analysis of the numerical data gathered

Qualitative research focuses on qualitative occurrences that are not quantified but rather described through written language. For qualitative research, traditional statistical data analysis tools are useless. New analytical techniques that are appropriate for qualitative research are being developed and tested. In-depth interviews with activists from a particular political movement to learn about their motivations, experiences, and viewpoints on the movement's objectives would be a good example of a qualitative study in political science research. This would provide rich, detailed insights into their political behaviour and the underlying causes of their actions. Analyzing the political dynamics and decision-making procedures inside a single nation or region in order to comprehend a particular political phenomenon is another example of a qualitative study in political science.

Conceptual vs. Empirical Studies

Important ideas that explain the connections between various concepts are part of scientific knowledge about a subject. Based on the information pertinent to the theories, conceptual studies focus on defining and improving the concepts included in such theories. Without necessarily gathering empirical data on particular cases, a political science conceptual study could analyse various theoretical definitions, historical interpretations, and modern applications of the concept of "democracy" in different nations. This would essentially explore

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the concept's complexities and nuances while focusing on how the idea is understood and applied in various political contexts.

Research studies that concentrate on experience, observation, and experiments pertaining to social issues are known as empirical studies. When conducting such investigations, the researcher begins by formulating a working hypothesis regarding the study's potential conclusion. To evaluate the validity of the hypothesis, facts or data pertaining to the research problem are gathered through surveys, experiments, or observation. Empirical research is used to draw broad findings that attempt to explain the current state of social reality. Conducting a survey of voters in a particular area to examine the relationship between their educational attainment and their preference for a particular political party is an example of an empirical study in political science research methods; this entails gathering quantitative data via surveys to test a hypothesis regarding the relationship between these variables (Kevin, 2021, p. 12).

Apart from these typical research study categories, there are other kinds of studies that are periodically employed depending on particular needs, like historical studies, case studies, simulation studies, etc. (Kevin, 2021, p. 12).

Conclusion

From the above analysis we can conclude that social sciences constitute a distinct academic discipline which deals with different aspects of human behavior. It is an important academic discipline which has evolved a research methodology suitable for the specific features of social sciences including political science. Research is a scientific study about a specific problem which has economic, social and political relevance. The diverse methods used in the research study are collectively called research methods, while the prescription of the suitable method of conducting scientific research is known as research methodology. The purpose of research and the materials to be used in the study determine the type of study to be followed. Research studies which is being used in political science have been classified into different categories as descriptive vs. analytical, applied vs. fundamental, quantitative vs. qualitative and conceptual vs. empirical. Different research studies used in political science are significant because they provide a systematic way to understand political phenomena, analyze political behavior, institutions, and policies through empirical evidence, allowing researchers to develop theories that explain how political systems

operate, ultimately informing public policy, enhancing democratic governance, and fostering civic engagement.

We can infer from the aforementioned analysis that the social sciences are a separate academic field that examine various facets of human behaviour. It is a significant academic field that has developed a research approach appropriate for the unique characteristics of social sciences, such as political science. A scientific investigation of a particular issue with economic, social, and political implications is called research. Research methodology is the recommendation of the best way to carry out scientific research, whereas research methods are the various approaches employed in the study taken together. The type of study to be conducted depends on the goal of the research and the materials to be employed. Political science research studies are divided into several kinds, including conceptual versus empirical, applied versus basic, quantitative versus qualitative, and descriptive versus analytical. Different political science research studies are important because they offer a methodical approach to comprehend political phenomena, analyse political behaviour, institutions, and policies using empirical data, and enable researchers to formulate theories that explain the workings of political systems. These theories then inform public policy, strengthen democratic governance, and promote civic engagement.

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Bridging the Financial Inclusion Gap: Analysis of Gender Disparities and Rural-Urban Gap for Financial Inclusion Policies

Rakesh Kumar & Saumya Shukla

Abstract

This paper explores the evolving role of finance in economic development, emphasizing financial inclusion in India. Using World Bank Global Findex data from 2011-2021. The study analyses trends in financial access and the usage of financial inclusion indicators such as the percentage of formal financial accounts, account usage, credit and debit card holdings, inactive accounts, reasons for account inactivity, and reasons for not having a financial account with a formal financial institution. The primary focus of the paper is on descriptive analyses and major policy initiatives in India for financial inclusion

Keywords: *Financial inclusion, World Bank Global Findex Survey, Gender, Rural, Urban, Financial Accounts*

Introduction

One of the most contentious topics in economics is the role of finance in economic development. There are two primary perspectives on this issue. The first argues that economic growth is driven by real factors, with finance playing a secondary role as a facilitator. The second view, however, considers finance to be crucial for reducing market frictions, enhancing resource allocation, and driving economic progress. A financial system consisting financial institutions, markets, products, and services, all of which contribute to lowering transaction costs and risks within an economy, serves as a bridge between savers and investors,

transforming high-risk assets into lower-risk ones. Additionally, it enables the conversion of short-term maturity assets into long-term investments, thereby supporting sustainable economic growth.

A well-functioning financial market enhances efficiency by addressing issues such as asymmetric information, adverse selection, and moral hazard. In a perfectly competitive financial system, these inefficiencies are minimized, leading to optimal economic outcomes (Demirgüç-Kunt, 2006). Furthermore, financial inclusion ensures that a larger segment of the population has access to financial services which boosts competition in the economy.

The nationalization of the Reserve Bank of India in 1949 and of State Bank of India in 1955, followed by the nationalization of 14 banks in 1969 and six more in 1980 greatly expanded the reach of banking services in rural areas, reducing the dependence of rural households on exploitative moneylenders and increasing their access to the formal financial system. Another landmark event occurred in 1991 with the introduction of economic reforms, including financial sector reforms, which marked a shift in the focus of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) towards financial inclusion, particularly during the 11th Five-Year Plan. Since then, the RBI and the GoI have implemented various policies of financial inclusion.

The first phase of financial inclusion was from 1950 to 1970. During this phase the general public had limited access to private sector banking. During the second phase from 1970 to 1990 expansion of banking services to underserved rural areas took place under the influence of socialist policies. The third phase, from 1991 to 2005, is marked by economic liberalization and financial sector reforms and in the fourth phase, from 2005 to 2014, special policies for financial inclusion were formulated to target the underprivileged sections of the society. In the final phase, from 2014 to the present, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and various other policy initiatives were taken which significantly improved financial inclusion.

Microfinance and the Self-Help Group (SHG)-Bank Linkage Program have played a crucial role in the journey of financial inclusion in India. NABARD launched a pilot project on the SHG-Bank Linkage Program in 1992 with just 255 self-help groups linked to banks. By 2021, the number self-help groups had increased to 73,87,123.

The Mudra Yojana (2015) provides loans to small businesses under three categories: Shishu (up to ₹50,000), Kishor (₹50,000-₹5 lakh), and Tarun (₹5-10 lakh), with 87% of loans under Shishu. The Stand-Up India scheme (2016) supports SC/ST and women entrepreneurs with loans between ₹10 lakh and ₹1 crore. The RBI has promoted financial inclusion through regional rural banks, NABARD, banking correspondents, and relaxed KYC norms. The Government of India formed committees, including the Rangarajan Committee (2006), recommending financial literacy programs and business correspondent models. Other key committees include Usha Thorat (2007, 2013) and Nachiket Mor (2013) for financial inclusion strategies

Objectives

This paper focuses on the development and comparison of a gender and rural-urban financial inclusion journey in India with the help of World Bank data. A thorough review of relevant literature has been conducted, covering the construction of financial indices, the relationship between finance and development, and the impact of gender equality on economic progress.

Literature Review

Salman & Nowacka (2020) examined the evolution of women's financial inclusion and institutional, religious, and societal barriers were identified as major obstacles to their financial inclusion. Chatterjee et al., (2019) studied the state of women's financial inclusion in India and found that while 77% of Indian women had access to formal financial services, around 42% of these accounts remained inactive. Bertay et al., (2020) observed that gender disparities in financial inclusion have a significant impact on economic development. Ain et al., (2020) analysed the relationship between economic growth, and development and financial inclusion 33 developing nations and found that financial inclusion and overall development are positively related. Thathsarani et al., (2021) investigated the influence of financial inclusion on economic development and human capital. from 2004 to 2018 for eight South Asian nations. They proved that financial inclusion and economic growth are positively related in the short term. Sahay et al., (2021) evaluated the role of digital financial inclusion in explaining GDP per capita growth 52 developing countries between 2011 and 2018, and concluded that digital financial inclusion significantly contributes to economic growth.

Gálvez-Sánchez et al., (2021) through bibliometric analysis proved that fintech and digitalisation as crucial factors in financial inclusion and in the attainment of sustainable development goals. Barajas et al., (2020) identifies religion, gender, income, and education as very important factors influencing financial inclusion. Sahay et al., (2018) highlighted those significant disparities in financial access which have led policymakers to prioritize financial inclusion policies. Secondly, financial inclusion has become a key component of economic reforms. However, despite its prominence on policy agendas, there is limited empirical evidence linking financial inclusion to macroeconomic outcomes. Their analysis, using various data sources, suggested that while financial inclusion aligns with macroeconomic objectives, an excessive focus on inclusion could lead to financial instability. The impact of financial inclusion is not uniform, as its effectiveness varies based on the services provided. The study also stressed that empowering women through financial access enhances the benefits of inclusion. Since financial inclusion is multidimensional, different indicators play distinct roles.

Data and Methodology

Primary source of data for the present study are the World Bank Global Findex Surveys. World Bank has conducted 04 findex surveys till data. The first was conducted in 2011 followed by 2014, 2017 and 2021. The World Bank Global Findex Survey is the most comprehensive dataset on financial inclusion worldwide, published every three years since 2011. It provides insights into how adults (age 15+) around the world use financial services, including bank accounts, digital payments, savings, and borrowing. The paper utilizes data from all four Global Findex surveys for India. Since indicators vary across different Findex surveys, we have focused on the common indicators available across all surveys. The paper primarily focuses on the descriptive analysis of trends and developments in financial inclusion, with an emphasis on gender and rural-urban disparities.

Analysis and Findings

A. Overall trends in account ownership, inactive accounts, and reasons for not having an account

Financial inclusion has three main dimensions: availability, access, and usage.

Account ownership, using accounts for borrowing, and holding credit or debit cards are some of the important criteria for analysing financial inclusion.

Table1

Percentage of account holding across global findex surveys

Indicators	2011	2014	2017	2021
Account (% age 15+)	35.23	53.14	79.88	77.53

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2021

This dataset in Table 1 presents financial inclusion trends from 2011 to 2021, highlighting account ownership among individuals aged 15 and older. The percentage of people with financial accounts increased significantly from 35.23% in 2011 to 79.88% in 2017, before slightly declining to 77.53% in 2021.

Table 2

Reasons for not having a financial account

Reason for not having an account	2021
No account because financial institutions are too far away (% age 15+)	10.44
No account because financial services are too expensive (% age 15+)	10.42
No account because of a lack of necessary documentation (% age 15+)	6.52
No account because of a lack of trust in financial institutions (% age 15+)	7.75
No account because of insufficient funds (% age 15+)	8.61
No account because of religious reasons (% age 15+)	3.42
No account because someone in the family has one (% age 15+)	12.28

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2021

Various barriers prevented individuals from owning a bank account. The most common reason was that someone in the family already had an account (12.28%), reducing the perceived need for an additional one. Distance to financial institutions was another major obstacle, with 10.44% of individuals citing it as a challenge. Additionally, 10.42% found financial services too expensive, making

account ownership unaffordable for them. A lack of necessary documentation and distrust in financial institutions prevented 6.52% and 7.75% of people, respectively, from opening an account. Insufficient funds prevented 8.61% from maintaining an account. Religious beliefs also influenced 3.42% of individuals to opt out of formal financial institutions.

Table 3

Inactive account for age 15+

Indicators	2014	2017	2021
Has an inactive account (% age 15+)	17.39	30.62	27.44

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2014,2017,2021

Table 3 shows the percentage of individuals (aged 15+) who have an inactive financial account, including gender-based trends, over three periods (2014, 2017, and 2021). Inactive accounts increased significantly from 17.39% in 2014 to 30.62% in 2017, indicating that many individuals who opened accounts were not actively using them. By 2021, the percentage slightly decreased to 27.44%, suggesting some improvements in account usage but still a high level of inactivity

Table 4

Inactive accounts and reason for the inactivity in the accounts

Indicators	2021
Reason for not using their inactive account: bank or financial institution is too far away (% age 15+)	18.11
Reason for not using their inactive account: don't feel comfortable using the account by themselves (% age 15+)	11.24
Reason for not using their inactive account: don't have enough money to use an account (% age 15+)	14.4
Reason for not using their inactive account: don't trust banks or financial institutions (% age 15+)	18.05
Reason for not using their inactive account: no need for an account (% age 15+)	16.97

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2021

Limited banking infrastructure in rural areas poses a significant challenge, with 18.11% of individuals citing the distance to financial institutions as a barrier to account usage. Additionally, distrust in banks prevents 18.05% of people from engaging with financial services, as scepticism toward institutions remains a prevalent issue. For 16.97% of individuals, the lack of necessity for a bank account discourages participation in the financial system. Moreover, financial constraints play a role, with 14.4% believing their earnings are too low to justify maintaining an active account. Lack of confidence in using financial services independently affects 11.24% of account holders.

B. Gender Disparities and Financial Inclusion

This section discusses gender disparity in financial inclusion trends in India between 2011 to 2021 on the basis of Global Findex Survey by the World Bank. Account holding, account holding with financial institutions, borrowing from financial institutions, and credit and debit card ownership are the indicators used to analyse gender disparities in financial inclusion.

B.1 Analysis of Formal Financial Institutions Accounts (2011–2021)

Table 5 presents financial inclusion trends from 2011 to 2021 and compares disparities in account ownership among individuals aged 15 and older.

Table 5

Account Ownership disparities across Global Findex surveys

Indicators	2011	2014	2017	2021
Account (% age 15+)	35.23	53.14	79.88	77.53
Account, female (% age 15+)	26.49	43.13	76.64	77.55
Account, male (% age 15+)	43.74	62.76	83.01	77.51
Financial institution account (% age 15+)	35.23	52.75	79.84	77.3
Financial institution account, female (% age 15+)	26.49	42.64	76.64	77.47
Financial institution account, male (% age 15+)	43.74	62.47	82.94	77.15

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2011, 2014, 2017, 2021

Female account ownership saw a substantial rise from 26.49% in 2011 to 76.64% in 2017, and slightly increased to 77.55% in 2021. Male account ownership followed a similar pattern, growing from 43.74% in 2011 to 83.01% in 2017, before decreasing to 77.51% in 2021.

Table 6

Changes in financial account ownership across Global Findex surveys

Indicators	Growth 2011-14	Growth 2014-17	Growth 2017-21
Account (% age 15+)	50.84	50.32	-2.94
Account, female (% age 15+)	62.82	77.70	1.19
Account, male (% age 15+)	43.48	32.27	-6.63

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 6 presents the percentage growth in financial account ownership across three periods: 2011–2014, 2014–2017, and 2017–2021, with a focus on overall growth and gender-based trends. Strong Growth is achieved in early years in Early Years between 2011–2017. Between 2011 and 2014, account ownership rose 50.84%, driven by financial inclusion initiatives. And Between 2014 and 2017, growth remained high at 50.32%, indicating continued momentum in financial sector expansion. After a sharp increase in previous years, account ownership declined by 2.94% between 2017 and 2021, suggesting market saturation and economic challenges. Percentage growth in account ownership among female was 62.82% (2011–2014) and increased to 77.70% (2014–2017), reflecting significant efforts to bridge the gender gap. However, between 2017 and 2021, growth slowed to just 1.19%, indicating that most female who could access financial services had already done so. Percentage growth in account ownership for men was 43.48% (2011–2014) and dropped to 32.27% (2014–2017), showing a slower but steady increase. Between 2017 and 2021, male account ownership declined by 6.63%. Female registered the most significant inclusion gains, reducing the financial gender gap, but post-2017, engagement challenges may have emerged.

B.2 Analysis of Borrowing Trends from Formal Financial Institutions (2011–2021)

Table 7 presents data on the percentage of individuals (aged 15+) who borrowed

from formal financial institutions at four time points: 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2021.

Table 7

Borrowing from Formal Financial Institutions (2011–2021)

Indicators	2011	2014	2017	2021
Borrowed from a formal financial institution (% age 15+)	7.7	9.12	8.15	11.78
Borrowed from a formal financial institution, female (% age 15+)	6.74	6.18	6.21	10.19
Borrowed from a formal financial institution, male (% age 15+)	8.63	11.94	10.02	13.27

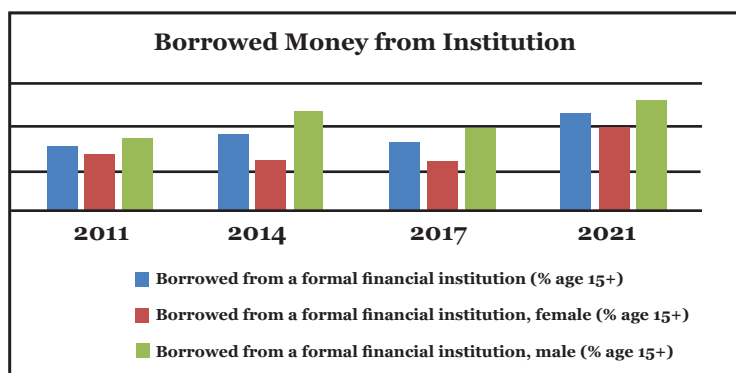
Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2011, 2014, 2017, 2021

Borrowing from formal financial institutions increased from 7.7% in 2011 to 11.78% in 2021. While there was moderate growth from 2011 to 2014 (7.7% to 9.12%), borrowing slightly declined in 2017 (8.15%), before rising significantly in 2021 (11.78%). Decline in 2017 may be the result of economic downturns, stricter lending policies and lower demand for formal credit during that period. Female borrowing during 2011–2017, declined from 6.74% (2011) to 6.18% (2014) and remained nearly stagnant in 2017 (6.21%). However, by 2021, there was a sharp increase to 10.19%. Male borrowing increased from 8.63% (2011) to 11.94% (2014) but then declined to 10.02% in 2017, reflecting a similar trend as overall borrowing. By 2021, borrowing among men rose to 13.27%.

Graph 1

Borrowed money from financial institutions

Source: Author's Construction



B.3 : Analysis of Inactive Financial Accounts (2014–2021)

The Global Findex Survey 2011 did not collect data on inactive accounts; therefore, our analysis is limited to the last three Findex surveys.

Table 8

Analysis of Inactive Financial Accounts (2014–2021)

Indicators	2014	2017	2021
Has an inactive account (% age 15+)	17.39	30.62	27.44
Has an inactive account, female (% age 15+)	18.23	34.67	32.32
Has an inactive account, male (% age 15+)	16.59	26.71	22.89

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2014, 2017, 2021

Account inactivity has remain consistently high throughtout the assesment period . It peaked in 2017 (30.67%) before decreasing in 2021(27.44%).The percenatge of females with inactive accounts was consistently higher than that of males throughtout the period.This suggests that while financial inclusion efforts helped more female gain access to formal fiancial sysytm ,but they were not in the position to use them due to various reasons.Inactive male accounts grew from 16.59% in 2014 to 26.71% in 2017, and by 2021, the percentage dropped to 22.89. Spike in inactive accounts between 2014 and 2017 , may be linked to mass financial inclusion initiatives where many new accounts were opened under PMJDY. During 2017–2021 a slight reduction in inactivity could be attributed to financial literacy programs, digital banking, and incentives for transactions.

B.4: Ownership of credit and debit cards across the four Global Findex survey years

The ownership of credit and debit cards among individuals aged 15 and above has registered significant changes across the four Global Findex survey years (2011, 2014, 2017, and 2021). Overall, credit card ownership remained low but demonstrated a gradual increase from 1.77% in 2011 to 4.62% in 2021.

Table 9

Ownership of credit and debit cards across the four Global Findex survey years

Indicators	2011	2014	2017	2021
Owens a credit card (% age 15+)	1.77	4.18	3	4.62
Owens a credit card, female (% age 15+)	1.04	1.57	2.3	2.38
Owens a credit card, male (% age 15+)	2.48	6.68	3.68	6.72
Owens a debit card (% age 15+)	8.4	22.07	32.72	27.07
Owens a debit card, female (% age 15+)	4.58	11.41	22.34	19.08
Owens a debit card, male (% age 15+)	12.12	32.32	42.77	34.52

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2011, 2014, 2017, 2021

A significant gender disparity is evident throughout the period. In 2011, only 1.04% of females owned a credit card compared to 2.48% of males. While both genders experienced an increase, the gap widened in 2014, when 6.68% of males owned a credit card compared to only 1.57% of females. By 2021, credit card ownership among males had risen to 6.72%, while female ownership remained significantly lower at 2.38%. This persistent gender gap highlights barriers that women face in accessing formal credit. Debit card ownership saw a more substantial increase compared to credit cards. In 2011, only 8.4% of individuals owned a debit card, but this surged to 32.72% in 2017 before slightly declining to 27.07% in 2021. The gender gap was significant in all years, with male ownership consistently higher than female ownership. In 2011, only 4.58% of females had a debit card, compared to 12.12% of males. This disparity persisted and peaked in 2017 when 42.77% of males owned a debit card, compared to 22.34% of females. However, both male and female ownership declined in 2021, with figures dropping to 34.52% for males and 19.08% for females. The decline in debit card ownership in 2021 may be linked to changes in banking behaviour, the rise of digital payment alternatives, or economic challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing these disparities requires targeted financial inclusion policies to ensure equitable access to financial services for both men and women.

C. Rural -Urban Disparities in financial inclusion

This section discusses Rural-Urban regional disparity in financial inclusion in

India for years 2021, using data from the Global Findex Survey by the World Bank 2021. Financial inclusion disparity is evaluated based on indicators such as account holding, account holding with financial institutions, borrowing from financial institutions, and credit and debit card ownership.

The dataset in Table 10 highlights financial inclusion disparities between rural and urban populations in 2021, covering account ownership, borrowing behaviour, and access to financial products.

Table 10

Financial Inclusion: Rural vs. Urban Comparison (2021)

Indicators	2021
Account, rural (% age 15+)	77.26
Account, urban (% age 15+)	77.83
Has an inactive account (% age 15+)	27.44
Has an inactive account, rural (% age 15+)	31.01
Has an inactive account, urban (% age 15+)	23.33
Borrowed any money from a formal financial institution or using a mobile money account, rural (% age 15+)	11.14
Borrowed any money from a formal financial institution or using a mobile money account, urban (% age 15+)	14.74
Borrowed any money (% age 15+)	44.79
Borrowed any money, rural (% age 15+)	45.18
Borrowed any money, urban (% age 15+)	44.35
Borrowed from a formal financial institution, rural (% age 15+)	10.57
Borrowed from a formal financial institution, urban (% age 15+)	13.18
Financial institution account, rural (% age 15+)	77.03
Financial institution account, urban (% age 15+)	77.62
Mobile money account, rural (% age 15+)	7.2
Mobile money account, urban (% age 15+)	14.17
Owns a debit card, rural (% age 15+)	19.74
Owns a debit card, urban (% age 15+)	35.52

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Owens a credit card, rural (% age 15+)	3.38
Owens a credit card, urban (% age 15+)	6.06

Source: World Bank Global Findex Survey 2021

Overall account ownership was relatively high in both rural (77.26%) and urban (77.83%) areas, showing near-equal financial inclusion. Financial institution accounts also followed a similar pattern (77.03% in rural vs. 77.62% in urban). Mobile money accounts, however, showed a significant urban-rural gap (7.2% in rural areas vs. 14.17% in urban areas), indicating greater digital financial penetration in urban regions. 31.01% of rural account holders have inactive accounts, compared to 23.33% in urban areas.

Formal borrowing (from financial institutions) was lower in rural areas (10.57%) compared to urban areas (13.18%), reflecting accessibility challenges in rural areas. Overall borrowing (including informal sources) was slightly higher in rural areas (45.18%) than urban (44.35%), suggesting reliance on informal credit in rural regions. Borrowing via mobile money or formal institutions was also lower in rural areas (11.14%) than in urban areas (14.74%), indicating urban advantage in digital and institutional lending. In urban areas debit card ownership was nearly twice than that of rural areas (35.52% urban vs. 19.74% rural), reflecting better access to financial services. Almost similar trends were visible for the credit card ownership and credit card uses. High account ownership parity suggests that financial inclusion efforts have broadly succeeded in both rural and urban areas. Urban areas have better access to financial products like debit/credit cards and digital financial services, highlighting a need to improve rural banking infrastructure. Rural reliance on informal borrowing suggests the necessity for more targeted rural credit programs. Mobile money adoption remains low in rural areas, indicating an opportunity for expansion through digital financial literacy and infrastructure development.

Conclusion

The paper delved into an in-depth analysis of financial inclusion barriers, particularly focusing on gender disparities and rural-urban gaps. The data highlighted key challenges such as distance to financial institutions, high service costs, lack of documentation, distrust in banks, and financial constraints. Women and rural populations are disproportionately affected, limiting their access to

formal financial services. To address these issues, policy recommendations include expanding banking infrastructure, promoting digital financial solutions, enhancing financial literacy—especially for women—introducing low-cost financial products, and simplifying account opening procedures. By implementing these strategies, financial inclusion can be improved, ensuring equitable access to financial services.

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Scale Validation of Self-Directed Learning Readiness Among Commerce Undergraduates: A Focus on Self-Management and Desire for Learning

Soma Garg

Abstract

The Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale was developed to assess students' readiness for self-directed learning (SDL) and help educators modify teaching strategies accordingly. This study aims to validate 'Self-management' and 'Desire for learning' scales for commerce students in Indian universities. An online questionnaire was administered to 81 Commerce Undergraduate students, consisting of 19 items across two subscales: Self-management (10 items) and Desire for learning (9 items). Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using AMOS (version 17) on two one-factor models due to the small sample size. Eight items were retained for the Self-management construct, with factor loadings ranging from 0.255 to 0.767. All nine items were retained for the 'Desire for learning' construct, with factor loadings ranging from 0.248 to 0.794. Model fit indices indicated good fit for both constructs: Self-management (RMSEA = 0.069, CMIN/DF = 1.385, p-value = 0.122) and Desire for learning (RMSEA = 0.042, CMIN/DF = 1.139, p-value = 0.282). The findings support the validity of these two constructs for commerce students in India. The validated scale can help instructors design and modify their pedagogy accordingly. This scale can be a useful tool for academicians in Indian universities in diagnosing students' learning needs and adapting teaching strategies accordingly, particularly

in light of the introduction of skill-based courses and elective papers in the National Education Policy 2020.

Keywords: *Self-directed learning readiness, Self-management, Desire for learning, Scale validation, AMOS, CFA*

Introduction

The Self Directed Learning Readiness Scale was developed among nursing students at University of Sydney in 2001 to help educators diagnose students' learning needs for modifying teaching strategies best suited to the students (M. Fisher et al., 2001) Self-directed learning (SDL) can be defined in terms of the amount of responsibility the learner accepts for his or her own learning. The self-directed learner takes control and accepts the freedom to learn what they view as important for themselves (M. Fisher et al., 2001).

Self-directed learning readiness among Commerce and Social Science students has not been studied in India although few studies in the field of medical education have been conducted. The students of Commerce differ in many respects from the students in the Medical field. Our undergraduate students are generally younger (17–20 years) than Western Medical students, more dependent on family and teachers, less independent on their own, more accustomed to rote learning and are less trained in SDL during their school years. The present study reports the findings of readiness for SDL among commerce students with respect to two constructs – Self management and Desire for learning.

Self-management involves the inner motivation that pushes students to take action, achieve goals, and keep moving forward, even when faced with obstacles and distractions. It is the foundation for obtaining good marks in college and achieving success in life. Desire for Learning refers to a student's intrinsic motivation and willingness to acquire new knowledge, develop skills, and seek understanding. This is a key factor for academic growth. Both self-management and desire for learning leads to self-directed learning activities .

This study aims to verify the validity and reliability of two constructs – self-management and desire for learning adapted for commerce/management education, addressing the need for a culturally relevant tool to assess self-directed learning readiness among commerce students in Indian University. The SDL scale may help teachers assess students' learning needs to be able to

implement teaching strategies best suited to the students.

According to Gopakumar et al.(2016) students generally adopt either of two types of learning: ‘surface’ learning aimed at passing the exams and ‘in-depth’ learning focusing on core concepts and their application. In India, many students adopt surface learning from a young age because they are conditioned to accept the information passed down by the teacher, and due to this, they often do not understand the need for self-learning. Measurement of SDLR among Indian students using a validated tool, could help the instructors to design and modify their pedagogy accordingly.

Data Collection

An online questionnaire was administered to the first, second and third year students of Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi studying BCom (Hons) course. Google forms were forwarded by the researcher as per the technique of convenience sampling during the year 2024. Out of total number of 81 respondents who filled the forms, 45 (56%) were males, 36 (44%) were females.

Methodology

Two single factor models were tested using maximum likelihood method in confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using the AMOS software (version 220). This approach allowed assessment of how well the data fitted the theoretical models. The separate analyses of the two one-factor congeneric models were chosen over a higher-order or multi-factor model as a result of the relative small sample size. A sample size of 81 participants limited the analysis to one factor model and did not allow for the examination of relationship between items across two constructs.

The Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale as given by Fisher et al. (2010) M. J. Fisher & King, 2010) was partially adopted. It consisted of a total of 19 items across two subscales: Self-management (10 items), Desire for learning (9 items). Two items were negatively phrased. Participants were asked to indicate the degree each item reflected their own characteristics using a five-point Likert scale where a score of 1 indicated strongly disagree and a score of 5 indicated strongly agree.

Analysis

Initially 10 items were taken in the analysis of ‘Self-Management’ construct. However, the factor loading of two items (namely ‘I am self-disciplined’; factor loading 0.1, ‘I am disorganised’ (reversed coded); factor loading 0.22) were very less hence those two factors were removed from the study. Table 1 presents the standard regression weights (factor loadings) for the resultant 8 items in the model for ‘Self-management’. Figure 1 shows Zero order construct for ‘Self-management’ with standardized regression weight. AMOS software (version 22) was used to run the model.

Table 1

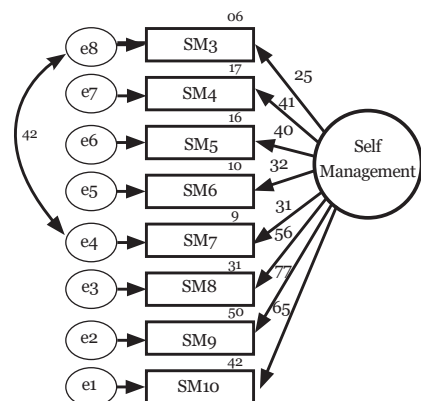
Factor loading of the items under Self-Management

SM1	I am self-disciplined	0.1
SM2R	I am disorganised	0.22
SM3	I set strict time frames	0.255
SM4	I have good management skills	0.414
SM%	I am methodical	0.4
SM6	I am systematic in my learning	0.318
SM7	I set specific times for my study	0.307
SM8	I prioritise my work	0.559
SM9	I can be trusted to peruse my own learning	0.767
SM10	I am confident in my ability to search out new information	0.648

Figure 1

Zero order construct for ‘self-management’ with standardized regression weight

In ‘Desire for learning’ construct, 8 items were taken. These items were same as that of Fisher et al.. These items had an acceptable level of factor loading ranging from 0.248 to 0.79; (Table 2). One item “I do not enjoy studying” was reverse coded but still had least factor loading. It was decided to retain



this item as its value was more than 0.2. Figure 2 presents the standard regression weights (factor loading) for the resultant nine items in the model for ‘Desire for learning’. Figure 2 shows Zero order construct for ‘Desire for learning with standardized regression weight. AMOS software (version 22) was used to run this model.

Table 2

Factor loading of the items under Desire for learning

Desire for learning Items

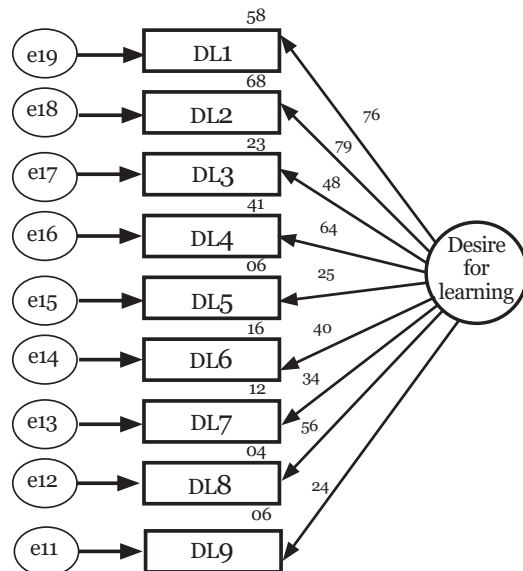
DL1	I want to learn new information	0.762
DL2	I enjoy learning new information	0.794
DL3	I have a need to learn	0.48
DL4	I enjoy a challenge	0.48
DL5R	I do not enjoy studying	0.248
DL6	I critically evaluate new ideas	0.399
DL7	I learn from my mistakes	0.342
DL8	I need to know why	0.557

Figure 2

Zero order construct for ‘desire for learning’ with standardized regression weight

Result

The model fit indices for ‘Self-management’ and ‘Desire for learning’ indicate that the data has good fit with the resultant models. The model fit indices of the two one-factor models are presented in Table 3. With multiple goodness-of-fit indices, Good fit is indicated



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by Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) values lower than 0.08, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) values higher than 0.90, and Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) >0.90.

Table 3

Reliability Statistics & Model fit Indicators

Indicators	Calculated values		Criteria for acceptance	Interpretation whether model is a good fit or not
	Self-Management	Desire for learning		
Cronbach's alpha	.697	.713	$\alpha \geq 0.7$ indicates acceptable internal consistency	It confirms that the scale is reliable
CMIN/DF =	1.385	1.139	acceptable if < 3	Good fit
p-value =	0.122	.282	$p > 0.05$ suggests a good fit	The model does not significantly differ from the observed data, indicating a good fit
GFI (Goodness of fit index)	0.925	0.924	≥ 0.90 is considered good	
AGFI	0.857	0.873	≥ 0.80 is acceptable	
NFI	0.783	0.812	acceptable if < 0.08	
RMSEA	0.069	0.042	acceptable if < 0.08	It Confirms that RMSEA is not significantly different from zero, hence it is good fit.

The calculated values of 'Self-management' Chi-square (χ^2) = 26.306, Degrees of Freedom (df) = 19. RMSEA = 0.069 (acceptable if < 0.08 CMIN/DF = 1.385 (acceptable if < 3) and p-value = 0.122 ($p > 0.05$ suggests a good fit. All these values indicate model fit for self-management (Table 3)

The calculated values of 'Desire for learning' Chi-square (χ^2) = 30.750, Degrees of Freedom (df) = 27, CMIN/DF = 1.13 (acceptable if < 3). Since the p-value (0.282) > 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, meaning the model does not significantly differ from the observed data, indicating a good fit. RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) is 0.042 which is less than 0.08 and hence in acceptable limits. All these values indicate model fit for 'desire for learning' (Table 3). The above analysis proves that both the models have a good fit proving that the scale is valid.

Limitations and Scope for further research

The analysis was based on students from a single Delhi University College hence the data might not necessarily align with students of other Indian universities. As the number of respondents were limited to 81 students, hence only zero order construct could be validated. Efforts should be made by future researchers to apply Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) and SEM (structural equation model) in the field of self-directed learning.

Conclusion

The finding of this study supports the validity of Self-directed Learning Scale. This scale would prove to be a useful tool in the diagnosis of student learning needs. In the current scenario where Government of India has implemented the National Education policy (NEP 2020) and as a consequence Universities across India are introducing new curricula with numerous skilled based courses and elective papers, it is imperative that researchers and academicians need to understand students' desire for learning and their degree of self-management. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the intricacies of self-directed learning is the need of the hour.

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