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Substance, Quality, and Mode in Jaina Ontology: An Introduction

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Abstract

Anekāntavāda, the theory that says that reality is multifaceted and cannot be fully grasped from a singular perspective, is a unique contribution to the world of philosophical thought. Jaina theory of substance along with correlated explanations of quality and mode provide the ontological basis for their pluralistic philosophical approach. In this short article, we will explore the Jaina theory of substance, along with its ontological ramifications into six substances (*ṣaḍ-dravya*): *jīva* (sentient soul) and five *ajīva* (non-sentient) categories *dharma* (medium of motion), *adharmā* (medium of rest), *pudgala* (matter), *ākāśa* (space), and *kāla* (time). We will also critically evaluate the interrelation between *guṇa* (qualities) and *pariyāya* (modes); a most importantly, we will discuss the *bhedavāda-abhedavāda* debate regarding this interrelation. Finally, by comparing Jaina ontology with *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and Buddhist philosophies, the article aims to focus on Jainism's unique reconciliation of permanence and change, offering a robust framework for understanding existence.

Keywords: Dravya, Guṇa, Paryāya, bhedavāda-abhedavāda debate

Jainism has a unique place within the Indian philosophical tradition, due to its uncompromising commitment to a pluralistic understanding of reality. This unique perspective can be found not only in their understanding of knowledge but also in their examination of reality. The Jaina understanding of ontology especially their explanation of dravya or substance reinforces their nuanced perspective of reality. The theory of substance, which was expounded by early Jain scholars, gives us a robust understand the world's perceived conflicts between things that don't change and things that do, as well as between things that are the same and things that are different. Within the Jaina tradition, dravya serves as both the foundational aspect of reality and a crucial element for comprehending the processes of transformation and continuity that define existence. Let us try to explore the Jaina theory of substance, analysing its ontological classifications, the complex international between qualities and modes. The controversy regarding the interpretation of the complex relationship between substance and modes are of great significance, as they ultimately highlight the unique contributions of Jaina thought to the broader discourse within Indian philosophical traditions.

Substance (Dravya):

The core of Jaina Darshana is the profound doctrine of *Anekantavada*, a viewpoint that aims to understand reality in its entirety by acknowledging the various ways it manifests. This pluralistic view of life, which recognises stability in the face of constant change, inevitably brings us to the concept of substance, or *Dravya*, another key concept in Jain philosophy.

In Jaina philosophy, *Dravya* refers to the various types of beings that collectively make up the fabric of reality. The term itself comes from a root that expresses the essence of flow, implying that anything that endures through the endless cycles of creation and death has a genuine and enduring essence. *Dravya* encapsulates the timeless quality in the midst of change, much like the steady flow of a stream. Accordingly, *Dravya* is the technical term used in Jain ontology to refer to the basic substances or categories that make up reality, each of which is distinguished by an innate ability to endure change.

Within the Jaina tradition, substance is characterised as an everlasting, self-sufficient entity that embodies inherent qualities and experiences transformations while maintaining its fundamental essence. This definition is thoughtfully expressed in significant Jaina writings, including *Tattvārthasūtra* (TS), *Pravacanasāra* (PS) by *Amṛtacandra*, and *Pañcāstikāyasāra* (PKS) by *Kundakunda*. The Jaina conception of substance incorporates the concepts of annihilation (*vyaya*), origination (*utpāda*), and permanence (*dhrauvya*), as well as the interaction of modes (*pariyāya*) and characteristics (*guṇa*). In the following discourse, we shall delve into this definition comprehensively, bolstered by textual citations.

Division of Substance:

Jaina metaphysics' unique doctrine of reality as a complex structure made up of eternal, yet ever-changing entities is based on the idea of *dravya* (substance). The foundational exposition of this theme provided by Acharya *Kundakunda* in his *Pravacanasāra* has influenced later developments in the tradition.

In the opening of his discourse, *Kundakunda* distinguishes between two primary categories: *jīva* (soul or sentient substance) and *ajīva* (non-sentient substance) (*Pravacanasāra* II.35). This distinction highlights the qualitative difference between consciousness and its absence and goes beyond simple classification to be philosophical. *Jīva* is the only substance that can experience, knowledge, and liberation because of its innate sentiency and *upayoga*, or manifestations of consciousness. *Ajīva*, on the other hand, includes everything that is insentient, paving the way for additional ontological differentiation.

Expanding on this dual framework, Jaina thinkers list six basic substances, referred to as the *ṣaḍ-dravya*. Of these, *ajīva* is analytically expanded into five different categories: *adharmā* (medium of rest), *dharma* (medium of motion), *pudgala* (matter), *ākāśa* (space), and *kāla* (time). In contrast, *jīva* remains singular as the conscious principle.

As the only one of the *ajīva dravyas* with form, colour, taste, smell, and touch, *Pudgala* occupies a special place. Along with the karmic particles that bind and conceal the soul's actual nature, it makes up the material universe. In the soul's cycle of enslavement and release, the conversion of *pudgala* into karmic matter is a crucial mechanism.

The Jain concept of *dharma* and *adharmā* is unique. These are metaphysical media that function as prerequisites for movement and rest, respectively, rather than ethical precepts. In the same way that water allows fish to swim and shade allows a traveler to rest, they do

not cause motion or stillness themselves; rather, they create the necessary conditions for these phenomena to occur.

Space, also known as *Ākāśa*, is thought of as an endless area that can hold all other substances. While the *loka* (the inhabited universe) and the *aloka* (the infinite void beyond) are distinguished in Jain philosophy, only the former is pertinent to metaphysical investigation because it contains the five other *dravyas*.

Time, also known as *kāla*, is proposed as a non-material entity that promotes continuity, change, and order in the cosmos. Even though time is not active in and of itself, it enables other substances to change and evolve, which makes origination and destruction processes understandable.

Dravya (Substance), Guṇa (Quality), and Paryāya (Mode):

As we have already noted, in Jaina metaphysics, a substance is defined by three essential attributes: origination, annihilation, and stability (*utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvyayuktam sat*, TS 5.30). This suggests that a substance is in a state of perpetual change, evolving in its expressions while preserving its fundamental essence. For example, regarding the essence of the soul (*jīva*), consciousness is its fundamental characteristic, enduring through various transformations (TS 5.29). Moreover, a substance is characterised by its inherent qualities and modes. The essence of these qualities and modes is inherently linked to the substance itself, as highlighted by Kundakunda: “There is without substance no quality whatever and no modification” (PS 110; PKS 12-13). Jaina theory of substance emphasises on the essential interconnectedness of essence, its attributes, and its variations.

The above passages highlight that *dravya* serves as the foundation that maintains its intrinsic essence (*svabhāva*) even as it experiences transformations through its manifestations (*paryāya*), which are facilitated by its inherent attributes (*guṇa*). Essence exists beyond the bounds of time, unformed by creation or obliteration (PKS 11, 15). The differentiation between essence and manifestation holds significant importance. *Guṇa* signifies the fundamental and lasting attributes of a substance, such as consciousness in a soul or the characteristics of colour and taste in matter, which are inherent and simultaneous with the essence of the substance. *Paryāya*, conversely, signifies transient alterations or conditions, exemplified by the metamorphosis of a golden pot into a golden bangle, wherein the essence (gold) persists unchanged while its manifestation varies (Soni, 1991, p. 84). Similarly, the essence of the soul (*jīva*) undergoes transformation through diverse states – ranging from hellish to human existence – yet its fundamental nature as consciousness remains constant. This timeless essence is articulated as being, intertwined with attributes and transformations. Kundakunda highlights the profound connection and individuality of substance and quality, asserting, “Really speaking what is substance is not quality, nor what is quality is not substance: this is a case of non-identity and not of absolute negation” (*Pravacanasāra* II.16, cited in Soni, 1991, p. 76). This permits Jainas to assert that a substance can undergo transformation while preserving its fundamental essence.

The Jaina tradition delineates two distinct forms of alterations (*paryāya*) pertaining to a substance:

- 1. The Transformations of Qualities:** These are inherent to the substance and occur simultaneously (*sahabhāvi* or *sahavarti*). The affective (emotional), cognitive (knowledge-related), and volitional (will-related) attributes of the soul are among them. These

attributes may present themselves in a state of illusion or in a state of clarity. For instance, the soul's transforming ability may cause its awareness to change from illusion to enlightenment.

2. Transformations of Substance: These are sequential and external, illustrating the empirical conditions of the soul, such as existing as a human or a being in torment. These states are transient and linked to the soul's journey through various existences.

The *Bhedavāda-Abhedavāda* Debate:

In Jaina philosophy, there is a disagreement between the difference (*bhedavāda*) and the non-difference (*abhedavāda*) between *guṇa* (qualities) and *pariyāya* (modes), as well as their position in respect to *dravya* (substance). According to Soni (1991), this disagreement highlights different views among Jaina philosophers, especially Kundakunda and Siddhasena Divākara, and has important consequences for comprehending the essence of matter and its transformations.

Bhedavāda: The Doctrine of Difference:

Bhedavāda asserts that the qualities and modes of a substance are distinct yet inherently intertwined with its essence. In Kundakunda's account, there are remarks that appear to suggest *abhedavāda*; however, as Soni has pointed out, he ultimately aimed to establish *bhedavāda*. Thus, Kundakunda became a significant advocate of this perspective, alongside *Umāsvāti*, *Pūjyapāda*, and *Vidyānanda*. This point of view posits that *guṇa* is *sahabhāva* (coeval and intrinsic to the substance), whereas *pariyāya* is *kramabhāva* (successive and extrinsic, manifesting temporarily) (Soni, 1991, p. 83; Tatia, 1994, p. 128). This distinction holds significant importance when examining the essence of the soul, where intuition and knowledge are viewed as separate qualities that function in succession within the ordinary realm, yet coexist in the state of complete awareness. Kundakunda's *Pravacanasāra* (II.16) points out the notion of non-identity: "What is substance is not quality, nor what is quality is not substance" (Soni, 1991, p. 76), suggesting that although *guṇa* and *pariyāya* are distinct, they are not entirely disconnected from *dravya*.

This perspective finds endorsement within the *Digambara* tradition, which highlights the importance of analytical clarity in differentiating between enduring qualities and fleeting manifestations. For instance, Upadhye employs the analogy of a golden pot and an earthen pot: while the essence of the pot remains unchanged, the attributes of gold and earth present a stark contrast. In a similar vein, a golden ring and a golden bangle possess the same intrinsic qualities of gold, yet they diverge in their forms – one being a ring and the other a bangle (Soni, 1991, p. 84; Upadhye, 1984, p. 65). The *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra* (28.6) underscores this distinction, clearly distinguishing between *guṇa* and *pariyāya* (Soni, 1991, p. 85). The *bhedavāda* perspective resonates with the Jaina metaphysical requirement to reconcile the persistent essence of a substance with its ability to undergo transformation, as illustrated by the triadic nature of *utpāda*, *vyaya*, and *dhrauvya* (*Pañcastikāya* 10, cited in Soni, 1991, p. 87).

The *bhedavāda* perspective also discusses the usefulness of Jaina soteriology. In the mundane condition, the uniqueness of *guṇa* like *darśana* and *jñāna* symbolises the soul's involvement with *karman*, which obstructs its full potential. In a state of liberation, the concurrent manifestation of these attributes indicates the soul's reversion to its intrinsic nature. This distinction safeguards the inherent qualities of the soul from being confused

with its transient conditions, thereby maintaining the purity of the Jaina journey towards liberation (*mokṣa*).

Abhedavāda: The Doctrine of Non-Difference:

In contrast, *abhedavāda*, advocated by Siddhasena Divākara (c. 500 CE), posits that *guna* and *pariyāya* are not separate entities but rather synonymous, as qualities are intrinsically encompassed within a substance and do not necessitate independent examination (*Sanmatitarkaprakarana* III.8–14, cited in Soni, 1991, p. 83). Siddhasena argues that Jaina scriptures, including the *Tattvārthasūtra*, focus solely on the substance perspective and the modification perspective, without reference to a distinct perspective of qualities (Soni, 1991, p. 83). He posits that *guna* is encompassed within *pariyāya*, as both articulate the modes of a substance's manifestation, thereby rendering any distinction between them unnecessary. In the all-knowing condition, perception and knowledge are not distinct activities but coalesce into the harmonious essence of the freed spirit, residing in its ideal form (Soni, 1991, p. 84).

Siddhasena's *abhedavāda* embodies a comprehensive perspective, highlighting the interconnectedness of a substance's attributes. He posits that differentiating between *guna* and *pariyāya* adds an unwarranted layer of complexity, since both serve as manifestations of the essence of the substance (*svabhāva*). This viewpoint resonates with the *Śvetāmbara* tradition, which often emphasises the cohesive essence of existence rather than focussing on analytical separations (Jaini, 1979, p. 97). In order to provide support for his viewpoint, Siddhasena relies on scripture (*śruti*), which highlights the significance of canonical texts such as the *Tattvārthasūtra*. These texts describe substances as inherently possessing qualities and modifications, without the need for a distinct category for *guna* (Soni, 1991, p. 83; Tatia, 1994, p. 126).

Upadhye presents a critical examination of Siddhasena's stance, contending that it may lead to a conflation of the Jaina perspective with that of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, which asserts that qualities can exist independently from substances (Soni, 1991, p. 84). He articulates a defence of Kundakunda's *bhedavāda*, emphasising that attributes such as colour in matter endure even at the atomic level, while *pariyāya* (for instance, specific colours like blue or red) represent ephemeral modifications (*Bhagavatīsūtra* 4.315, cited in Soni, 1991, p. 85). Upadhye posits that the lack of a specific framework in scriptures does not undermine the differentiation, as qualities are inherent in substances and therefore do not demand an independent viewpoint, in contrast to transformations, which require a distinct approach to understand their variability (Soni, 1991, p. 85; Upadhye, 1984, p. 65).

Implications of the Debate:

The dispute between *bhedavāda* and *abhedavāda* brings to light the Jaina commitment to *anekāntavāda*, since both positions are legitimate within their own standpoints. *Bhedavāda* provides a meticulous framework, vital for differentiating the inherent attributes of the soul from its karmic alterations, which is fundamental to the Jaina journey towards liberation (Jaini, 1979, p. 142). *Abhedavāda*, on the other hand, underscores the comprehensive unity of a substance, resonating with the Jaina perspective that reality is intricate and defies simplistic classifications (*Padmarajah*, 1986, p. 47). The discourse reveals divergent perspectives, as *Digambaras* advocate for *bhedavāda* due to its precision in metaphysical examination, while *Śvetāmbaras* prefer *abhedavāda* for its straightforwardness and adherence to scripture (Jaini, 1979, p. 97).

The discourse carries more profound implications for our understanding of existence and thought. *Bhedavāda* presents a systematic framework that embraces the duality of permanence and change, echoing the Jaina triadic principles of *utpāda*, *vyaya*, and *dhrauvya*. *Abhedavāda*, in contrast, resonates with a non-absolutist perspective, highlighting the interconnectedness of all elements within a substance. As Matilal observes, this adaptability enables *Jainas* to traverse the delicate balance between being and becoming, presenting a harmonious alternative to the substantialism of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and the impermanence of Buddhism (Matilal, 1977, p. 101). The discussion highlights the significance of *nayavāda* in addressing seemingly conflicting viewpoints, as both *bhedavāda* and *abhedavāda* hold validity from distinct angles (Dixit, 1971, p. 45).

Conclusion:

From the above discussion it is evident that the Jaina theory of substance finds itself in a balanced position, bridging the perspectives of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and Buddhist ontologies. The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* school underscores the notion of independent substances characterised by distinct qualities and actions. In contrast, the *Jain* perspective posits that qualities are intrinsic and inseparable from the substance, dismissing the notion that a substance could exist devoid of qualities, even for an instant. For example, attributes such as sound, regarded as *guna* in *Vaiśeṣika*, are simply manifestations of matter (*pudgala*) in Jainism. In contrast, adherents of Buddhism, especially those from the *Sautrāntika* tradition, propose a continuous flow of transient phenomena (*dharmas*) devoid of any enduring foundation. *Jainas* argue that the concept of change inherently relies on the existence of a constant essence, asserting that “there cannot be any change, any fluctuation, for it is only the permanent that can change” (Matilal, 1977, p. 101). This resonates with the Jaina perspective that substance encompasses creation, annihilation, and constancy (*Pañcastikāya* 10, cited in Soni, 1991, p. 87), a notion reflected in the *Anuyogadvāra-sūtra*, which articulates that substances embody both everlasting and fleeting characteristics.

Furthermore, the Jaina theory of substance, as articulated in various ancient texts, presents a nuanced understanding that primarily emphasises the interplay between permanence and change through the categories of *dravya*, *guna*, and *paryāya*. The framework presented by Kundakunda, further strengthened by *nayavāda*, highlights the interconnectedness and individuality of these categories, allowing for a deeper understanding of existence. The discourse surrounding *bhedavāda* and *abhedavāda* reveals intricate layers within Jaina thought, particularly through Kundakunda’s differentiation between *guna* and *paryāya*, which serves as a compelling counterargument to the separable qualities posited by *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and the anti-substantialist stance of Buddhism. This theory differentiates Jainism within Indian philosophy and offers a robust framework for tackling the universal issue of existence and transformation, as shown by its alignment with both traditional Jaina literature and contemporary philosophical analyses. Thus, Jaina theory of substance reconciles the tension between permanence and change, reminiscent of the debates in the Western tradition between Heraclitus and Parmenides. By asserting that entities intrinsically embody both persistent characteristics and mutable forms, *Jainas* navigate the polarities of eternalism and annihilationism.

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Role of Political Parties in the Democratic Movement of 2006 in Nepal

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Abstract

The 2006 democratic movement in Nepal marked a pivotal shift in the nation's political landscape, culminating in the dissolution of monarchical rule and the establishment of a federal democratic republic. Political parties played a central role in organizing, mobilizing, and sustaining this movement through strategic alliances and grassroots engagement. This article explores the roles played by key political parties during the 2006 movement, drawing upon qualitative research based on in-depth interviews with academicians, activists, and civil society members. The analysis situates these findings within the broader context of Nepal's democratic history and the theoretical frameworks of democratic transition and political mobilization. It argues that while public pressure was decisive, the coordinated actions and ideological shifts within mainstream political parties were essential in achieving systemic change. The study contributes to understanding how party politics interface with popular movements in transitional democracies.

Keywords: Political Parties- democratic movement- maoist- seven party alliance- monarchy

1. Introduction:

1.1 Contextual Background:

The democratic movement of 2006 in Nepal marked a decisive rupture in the country's political history. Triggered by King Gyanendra's direct rule in February 2005, when he assumed absolute authority by dissolving the multiparty system and sidelining the constitution, the movement represented a culmination of widespread dissatisfaction with monarchical autocracy and aspirations for a more inclusive democratic order. Unlike previous struggles, the 2006 movement witnessed the convergence of various political forces, most notably the mainstream political parties and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which had waged a decade-long insurgency (1996–2006). The combination of armed insurgency and peaceful protest created a unique form of political momentum capable of challenging entrenched royal authority (Hachhethu, 2007).

This mass uprising was not merely a response to autocratic rule but a manifestation of long-standing grievances regarding exclusion, inequality, and lack of representation. Ethnic minorities, women, and marginalized communities joined forces with the urban middle class, trade unions, student federations and political activists to demand a radical transformation in the political structure. As Mishra (2010) notes, the movement emerged as

a polyphonic force, articulating diverse political aspirations within a single, anti-monarchical framework.

Scholarship on the 2006 movement has emphasized various dimensions: civil resistance (Ogura, 2008), the monarchy's decline (Thapa & Sharma, 2009), and the role of external actors like India (Jha, 2014). However, few studies have systematically analyzed the role of political parties using empirical, interview-based research. Most existing analyses treat parties as monolithic institutions rather than dynamic actors operating under internal and external pressures. Despite broad scholarly acknowledgment of the 2006 movement as a turning point in Nepal's democratic transition, the strategic, organizational, and ideological roles played by political parties in orchestrating the movement, negotiating alliances, and guiding the transition to a republic remain underexplored in empirical literature. There is a need to examine these roles with analytical precision, especially through the lens of the actors themselves.

Hachhethu (2007) argues that the consolidation of public discontent into a coherent movement was only possible because political parties regained their position as credible agents of change. Lawoti and Pahari (2010) point out that despite ideological divergence, political necessity compelled parties to cooperate with former adversaries, including the Maoists. In contrast, Ogura (2008) highlights the skepticism and ambivalence among ordinary citizens toward all political actors, pointing to the need for deeper reform. Baral (2012) suggests that the 2006 movement helped restore public faith in party politics but also imposed expectations of transparency and post-conflict reconciliation. These studies, while informative, often lack grounded, first-hand testimony from political actors and organizers. This study attempts to bridge this gap by relying on primary interview data.

Understanding the contribution of political parties to democratic movements is crucial for assessing the viability of democratic consolidation in transitional societies. Nepal's case is particularly instructive, as the mainstream parties had suffered legitimacy crises prior to 2006 and were under intense scrutiny from both domestic and international observers. Their ability to re-engage the public, form strategic alliances, and facilitate regime change offers important lessons on party-led democratic transformations. Moreover, the post 2006 period has shown that democratic struggles do not end with regime change; rather, they require sustained institutional development, often driven by those same political actors. Hence, this study not only addresses a historical moment but also contributes to ongoing debates about party legitimacy, reform, and democratic resilience. It also raises questions about the institutional maturity of political parties and their capacity to maintain democratic norms in the long run, as well as the limitations of their approach to coalition-building and public accountability (Baral, 2012). In the South Asian context, where many democracies face the challenge of reconciling elite political negotiations with grassroots expectations, Nepal's 2006 movement provides a unique case for comparative analysis. It highlights the tensions between short-term political pragmatism and long-term democratic values, and the critical role of parties in mediating that tension (Subedi, 2014).

This study is situated at the intersection of political sociology and democratization studies. It interrogates how party structures adapted to shifting political contexts, how they negotiated coalitions across ideological divides, and how they reconciled competing visions of democracy in the heat of a national crisis. The research focuses on both strategic decisions

and the ideological transformations that accompanied them. To address these objectives, the study asks the following key questions:

- I. What roles did political parties play in organizing the 2006 democratic movement, and how did they manage ideological differences to form coalitions?
- II. What are the long-term impacts of their involvement on Nepal's democratic development?

By addressing these questions, this article aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the role of political parties in democratic transitions, using Nepal's 2006 movement as a critical case.

2. Method and Methodology:

2.1 Research Design:

This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on thematic analysis of primary data collected through semi-structured interviews. The choice of a qualitative approach is grounded in the need to understand subjective experiences, political strategies, and the dynamic interactions between political actors during the 2006 movement. This method is particularly suitable for exploring political behavior in transitional contexts, where formal documentation may not capture the full scope of actors' motives and perceptions.

2.2 Data Collection:

Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 12 participants, including:

- Leaders from major political parties (Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, and Maoist representatives)
- Mid-level party organizers and activists involved in street mobilizations
- Members of civil society who were in close contact with political leadership during the movement

Interviews were conducted in-person and via secure digital platforms over a span of three months (April to June 2025). Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted in Nepali, later transcribed and translated into English for analysis. Interview protocols were designed to explore key themes related to political strategy, alliance-building, public mobilization, and inter-party trust.

Note: All personal communications cited in the study refer to anonymized interviews conducted by the author between April and June 2025. Due to confidentiality agreements and ethical considerations, participants' names and affiliations have been withheld. These interviews are cited as (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025) throughout the article, in accordance with APA 7th edition guidelines.

2.3 Sampling Strategy:

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation of multiple perspectives from within and outside formal political party structures. Selection criteria included:

- Active involvement in the 2006 movement
- Willingness to provide detailed, reflective accounts
- Political affiliation or documented contribution to democratic activism

This approach enabled the researcher to gain deep insights into the practical and ideological decisions made during the movement. Snowball sampling was also used to identify additional informants based on referrals from key participants.

2.4 Data Analysis:

The transcribed interviews were analyzed thematically. Codes were developed inductively, and themes were refined through iterative review. Key themes included:

- Strategic alliance formation
- Street mobilization and grassroots engagement
- Negotiation with Maoists
- Public trust and legitimacy
- Influence of external actors (e.g., India and international organizations)

Coding was conducted using manual coding and comparison of themes across different political affiliations. Triangulation was used to validate findings through comparison with secondary sources and media coverage of the events.

2.5 Ethical Considerations:

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used, and identifiable information has been removed. Interviews were securely stored in encrypted formats, and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

3. Discussion:

3.1 Political Parties as Strategic Agents in Democratic Transition:

According to O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), the Seven Party Alliance and Maoist convergence represented a “pacted” route to regime change in which erstwhile adversaries banded together to reduce uncertainty and curtail bloodshed. By providing the Maoists with a negotiated path into competitive politics and the Seven Party Alliance, a statewide mobilizational reach they alone lacked, the alliance recalculated the benefits of collaboration rather than a simply instrumental ceasefire (Przeworski, 1991; Lawoti & Pahari, 2010). In contrast to repression or civil war impasse, players embrace procedural democracy when it optimizes expected benefits, as highlighted by interviewees' emphasis on survival and relevance (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025). This coalition also fits a broader regional pattern where constitutional openings hinge on elite bargains that redefine veto points and guarantee post-transition contestation within rules rather than through arms (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2006).

3.2 Mobilization and Grassroots Engagement:

As meso-level “mobilizing structures” that convert macropolitical prospects into street-level action, parties mobilized dense organizational infrastructures, such as professional organizations, women's wings, and student unions (Tarrow, 2011). Resource-mobilization tales of effective high-risk protest under repression are reflected in interviewees' statements of locally performed but centrally planned logistics (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025). Importantly, parties were acknowledged by civil society actors for offering a cohesive interpretative framework that merged various grievances: constitutionalism versus authoritarianism (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025). This frame alignment allowed for prolonged protests in spite of curfews and police presence by reducing coordination issues between unions, non-governmental organizations, and community organizations (Hachhethu, 2007).

3.3 Internal Party Transformation and Democratic Legitimacy:

Although revisions were inconsistent and frequently rhetorical, interviews indicate a tentative incorporation of youth and underrepresented voices (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025). This is consistent with research on “instrumental internal democratization,” which holds that when office or favors are at risk, parties revert to hierarchical practices after indicating openness during the transition (Hachhethu, 2007; Whelpton, 2005). A legitimacy paradox is indicated by mid-level activists’ observations of entrenched leaderships and factional bargaining: parties that facilitate democratic openness may later impede deepening when organizational incentives favor clientelism and leader-centric control. The first democratic impetus runs the danger of evaporating into elite circulation rather than renewal in the absence of formalized intra-party elections, transparent finance, and merit-based advancement (ICG, 2006; Lawoti & Pahari, 2010).

3.4 Role of External Actors:

Interview accounts of discreet Indian facilitation align with documented regional diplomacy that sought to end the insurgency and restore pluralism while limiting instability along the open border (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025; ICG, 2005). Such involvement illustrates the “neighborhood effect” in South Asian transitions, where proximate powers shape bargaining space, sanctions credibility, and security assurances. The ambivalence voiced by civil society – appreciating leverage yet fearing sovereignty dilution captures a common tension: external guarantees can lower transaction costs for settlements, but they risk domestic contestation if perceived as overreach (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025).

3.5 Implications for Democratic Consolidation:

Interviewees correctly worry that factionalism, clientelism, and weak internal democracy continue to tax performance legitimacy. Comparative evidence shows that post-conflict polities consolidate when parties institutionalize programmatic competition, deliver core public goods, and maintain credible commitment to constitutional rules (Przeworski, 1991). In Nepal, periodic governmental instability and coalition churn reflect unresolved incentive problems within and across parties. As some party insiders noted, reform agendas stalled when short-term electoral calculus trumped organizational renewal (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025). Consolidation therefore depends on three linked reforms: (1) routinized intra-party democracy (candidate selection, finance transparency), (2) civic-party linkages that keep movement-born accountability alive between elections, and (3) continued integration of former insurgents through rule-bound competition and security-sector oversight (Hachhethu, 2007; ICG, 2006; Lawoti & Pahari, 2010). Absent such steps, the trust accrued in 2006 may erode, narrowing the system’s capacity to mediate conflict nonviolently (Interviewee, personal communication, 2025).

4. Conclusion:

The 2006 movement illustrates how democratic openings in post-conflict settings are rarely spontaneous; they are engineered by political parties that recalibrate interests, reframe contestation, and construct organizational bridges between elite bargains and mass participation. The Seven party Alliance–Maoist pact converted a mutually hurting stalemate into a bounded pathway for regime change, channeling insurgent energies into constitutional politics while expanding the opposition’s reach beyond Kathmandu. Parties

then activated meso-level infrastructures- student unions, women's and professional fronts, PAPAD to sustain disruptive but disciplined protest under repression. This combination of elite coordination and grassroots capacity explains why mobilization was broad-based, persistent, and ultimately successful in compelling monarchical retreat.

Yet the very organizations that midwived transition have struggled to consolidate it. Interviews and secondary scholarship converge on a core paradox: parties embraced democratic rhetoric and occasionally opened internal deliberation, but leadership centralization, factional bargaining, and clientelistic distribution remained resilient. These legacies weaken programmatic competition, shorten governing time horizons, and risk reducing coalition politics to transactional arithmetic. The resulting instability—frequent government turnover, policy drift, and public disillusionment—erodes the performance legitimacy that young democracies depend on after a breakthrough.

Moving from transition to consolidation therefore requires institutional repair inside parties and credible delivery outside them. Internally, routine leadership turnover, transparent finance, rule-bound candidate selection, and meaningful roles for youth, women, Madhesi, Janajati, and Dalit cadres are not cosmetic reforms but preconditions for durable legitimacy. Externally, parties must recommit to constitutionalism not only in moments of crisis but in everyday governance: protecting civil liberties, stewarding security-sector oversight, and prioritizing public goods—employment, infrastructure, education, and local service delivery—over patronage. The integration of former insurgents should remain anchored in competitive rules and accountability mechanisms rather than ad hoc bargains, preserving the movement's original promise of politics without arms.

The role of external actors—particularly Indian facilitation—was consequential in lowering transaction costs during the transition, but democratic durability cannot be outsourced. Sovereign legitimacy ultimately rests on whether Nepali parties can translate the moral capital of 2006 into institutional reliability. The central lesson is thus double-edged: parties are indispensable agents of democratization, but without self-binding reforms they can become its principal constraint. For scholars, this case underscores the importance of studying parties as organizations—how incentives, rules, and networks shape post-conflict trajectories. For practitioners, it points to a practical agenda: invest in intra-party democracy, build stable coalition procedures, and hardwire citizen accountability between elections. Only by institutionalizing these routines can Nepal convert a historic popular victory into an ordinary, sustainable democratic normal.

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Role of Manipuri Women in the Socio- economic life of the State

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Abstract

In Manipur society, women hold a significant role in socio-economic life, contributing both traditionally and in contemporary settings to the social, cultural, and economic aspect of the community. The women of Manipur have been known for their courage, bravery, patience and hard-working qualities. The traditional religious books and literature of the early period of Manipur bear ample testimony to their exceptional qualities and the role they played in the process of the formation and consolidation of the society. From this fact, it can be said that right from the very early period of time the womenfolk of Manipur have been enjoying a high status and playing a very important role in the society. They have a certain degree of economic independence as they played a vital role in the economic life of the society. They are actively engaged in traditional crafts, including weaving, which is an important source of livelihood and cultural identity. This craftsmanship is passed down to generations and has enable Manipuri women to contribute to the state's economy. The "Ima Keithel", or "Mother's Market," is a prominent example where Manipuri women manage, own, and operate stalls, symbolizing both their economic agency and social authority. This space serves not only as an economic centre but also as a gathering place where women build solidarity and support each other, reinforcing social bonds within the community. Along with it, they have always played a significant role in other social and economic affairs of the state. This article examines the role women played in every sphere of social and economic life of the state.

Keywords: Traditional Crafts, Ima Keithel, Mythology, Symbolizing, Kang Sanaba

Introduction:

Manipur is a unique state because the women of this land is unique. Women have all the elegance, beauty and grace and they been known for their courage, and hard-working nature. Manipuri women have always been ready to fight for justice and for the welfare of the people. They always took a pivotal role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the society. In the mythology, one cannot ignore the role played by Leimarel Shidabi as a kingmaker and that of Nongthangleima in time of creating then universe. From this fact, it

can be said that right from the very early period of time the womenfolk of Manipur have been playing a very important role in the society. The study is carried out with the hypothesis that the women of Manipur have never been lagging behind the men when it comes to that of facing challenges thrown up by socio-economic problems of the society.

Methodology:

The study employed a descriptive, exploratory and analytical methods to examine the socio-economic status of Manipuri women during the earlier time as well as in contemporary settings. Data from documents and records available, newspapers, relevant books and magazines etc. have been collected to carry out this study.

Women and social life of the community:

Manipuri women are always engaged in domestic work irrespective of their age and status. In earlier times even the queens were engaged in domestic works. Even the daughter of the king did fishing either for sports or as a part of their social life. Almost all Manipuri women including those belonging to the well to do families were expert weavers. It is said that a girl cannot be married unless she knows weaving and she carries her loom to her husband's house after marriage. Most of the girls and women learn to dance, for in Manipur dancing skill is a must for them. There were a number of traditional games and sports, where women participated. Kang- Sannaba was one of the popular traditional games which were played by young women and girls during the spring season. The reputation of Manipuri women in contemporary games and sports is also formidable. They have won many laurels both at national and international levels. Women like Kunjrani, Surjalata, Sanamacha Chanu, Brajeswori, Merry Kom, Sarita, Mirabai Chanu, Sanjita Chanu, Sushila Chanu, Kalpana Devi, Bombayla Devi Laishram have played at national as well as at international levels and brought glory not only to the state but also to the entire nation. In games like cycling, Judo, Hockey, weight lifting and archery, Manipuri women have shown their mettle well. In agricultural works also almost all the works except tilling is done mainly by women. Village women below 50 years of age are engaged in some work or the other in the paddy fields.

Apart from their heavy domestic works women of Manipur have always played an important role in the social life. There are lots of evidences where the women played a vital role in the growth and evolution of the society. Women used to attend social gatherings, religious ceremonies and festival throughout the year. In addition to their household responsibilities and upbringing of children, it has become compulsory for every Manipuri woman to participate in social functions and festivals of their locality. It has been in these social gatherings and festivals that women exchanged their ideas relating to social, political and economic matters of the society.

Women and Cultural Life of the society:

Manipuri women have made remarkable contributions in the field of culture. Culture includes dance, drama, literature and other traditional religious function and festivals. Some of the important cultural functions where women actively participated are Lai-Haraoba, Ras Lila, Nupi Pala, Holi pala etc. Literally Lai Haraoba means "Rejoicing of the Gods". It is observed in honour of God and Goddesses locally known as the Umang Lai (Umang means forest; Lai means deity). Participation of women is evident from the role of Maibis (Priestesses) during the Lai Haraoba festival. The participation of Maibis is considered to be compulsory in the observation of this religious festival. Ras Lila is a form of dance based on

religion depicting the divine play between Krishna and Radha. In this dance women took the role of both Krishna and Radha. Again, many women in Manipur form Nupi Pala (a group of women singers) and participate in the religious festivals like Holi, Rath Yatra, Durga Puja, Jhulon, etc. These groups of women singers participate in every religious and cultural function of their communities throughout the year. There is no bar for women to participate in these religious functions in Manipur. Their participation in the cultural and religious ceremonies and festivals is always considered as essential and compulsory. In the field of literature also many women have made a great contribution by writing poems, novels, short stories, etc. Notable among them are T. Thoibi, Kh. Pramodini, Nee Devi, Ningombam Surma, Kshetrimayum Subdani, Binalakshmi Nepram and M.K Binodini who won Sahitya Academy Awards. Therefore, one can say that there is no aspect of cultural life where there is no participation of women.

Women and Economic Life of the Society:

Manipuri women have always been playing a pivotal role in the economic life of the society. They play a very significant role in the economy of their family as well as that of the state. Earlier, they hold a high and free since all the internal trade and exchange of products were managed by women. Their activities were not confined to the four walls of their domestic life. They moved freely for the purpose of internal trade and commerce. This economic contribution of women could be traced back to the early period of Manipur. Women not only did all the works of buying and selling in public and carrying to and fro of the articles to be sold and at home also they were engaged in weaving and spinning to earn money and be economically independent. Handloom industry is the backbone of the Manipuri women's economy as it is the main source of their income as well as that of the state. Women produce varieties of cloths and their knowledge and skill of weaving is considered as special qualification of them. Almost every housewife used to provide cloths essential for the family. In addition to weaving, women embroidery work and earn money to supplement the family income. Handloom industry, in fact, has become the most important source of income for women and it is almost exclusively in the hands of Manipuri women. These products are sold in the local market as well as exported to other parts of the country. Thus, women play a vital role in the economic life of the society. Their contribution to the economic life of the family as well as that of the society at large has been aptly described in a popular saying in Manipur. It says: They enjoy a certain degree of the economic independence which enable them to involve in any activities directly or indirectly connected with the social and economic problems of the state. This high status accorded to the womenfolk was regarded as one of the Sana Keithel or Khwairamband Bazar is a living symbol of the involvement of Manipuri women in the economic life of the society. It is at the centre of Imphal is now popularly known as Ima Keithel or Women Market a major market place managed by women in which selling and buying of essential commodities are done. Beside this they discuss and interact with one another about social and political affair of the state in the market place. This makes them aware of the socio-political problems of the state.

Women in the Mythology of Manipur:

In the opinion of Alan Dundes,

“A Myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in the present forms”

and mythology is the collective study of myths. There were many prominent women in the mythology of Manipur like Leimarel Shidabi, Nongthang Leima, Emoinu, Panthoibi, Phouibi, Yumjao Leimarenbi etc. to mention just a few. These women are believed to have played a very important role in various stages of Manipur mythology. The stories of these women also bear ample testimony to the fact that women of Manipur have always played a significant role in the socio- economic life of the society and were accorded a very high status. Some of the Manipuri women in the mythology are being discussed below:

Leimarel Shidabi: In Meitei mythology Atiya Guru Shidaba is believed to be the creator of the Universe. It is also believed that he created Khoyum Shidaba (God) and Leimarel Shidabi (Goddess). Later two sons, Sanamahi and Pakhangba were born to them. When the time came for selecting the successor, Khoyum Shidaba decided to test the ability and strength of his two sons. So, he asked his sons to go round the Universe seven times from the feet of his throne and the one who returns first would be his successor. Sanamahi was strong and healthy and Pakhangba was weak and young. So, their mother Leimarel Shidabi got more concerned about her younger son Pakhangba and advised him to go around his father's throne seven times as it will be the same as going round the universe seven times. While Sanamahi was going round the universe, Pakhangba already completed going seven times round his father's throne and he was appointed as a king. In this way Leimarel Shidabi succeeded in her attempt to appoint his younger son as successor. Thus, Leimarel Shidabi symbolizes the role played by women in family as well as in the making of a king. This is very significant symbolic episode of not only the role of women play in political affairs of the state but also of their role as a kingmaker.

Nongthang Leima: According to the advice of the Atiya Guru Shidaba, Ashiba tried to create the universe but his younger son Harapa always thwarted his efforts to do so. So, Guru Shidaba created Nongthang Leima and asked her to divert the attention of Harapa. Nongthang Leima, by dancing in front of Harapa charmed him and diverted his attention from destroying the creation of the Universe. In the meantime, Ashiba completed the creation of the universe. Thus, the role of Nongthang Leima indicates the role of women in making the universe. Without the help of Nongthang Leima, Ashiba might not have been able to create the universe. The role of Nongthang Leima shows the importance of women in the creation of the universe.

Thus, the different roles and characters of women in the mythology of Manipur reveal that women were bold and courageous. The story of these women influences the women of present-day Manipur in their social, political and economic life and also shows that women played a significant role in various aspects of life in the society.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that women of Manipur have a long tradition of participation in the socio-economic affairs of the state. They have their own special qualities inherited from their past history. They always took an important role in the socio- economic development of the society. In the mythology, one cannot ignore the role played by Leimarel Shidabi as a kingmaker and also that of Nongthang Leima in time of creating the Universe. It may also be noted that the nature of women's role where the people raised all the while were not directly related with the question of the status of women but related with the question of promoting and safeguarding the socio- economic interest of the people and for the

maintenance of peace and harmony in the society at large. Hence, the involvement of Manipuri women in the socio-economic affairs of the state is to protect and safeguard the interest of the people of the state but not for their own interests.

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Dharmaśāstra: Its Role in Regulating Social Order

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Abstract

Dhṛ-dhātu man Pratya the dharma-śabda is perfected. √Dhṛ dhātu means holding, nurturing, maintaining, supporting etc. Religion concept. That is, that which holds is religion. Religion is what holds the individual, society and the world or what the individual, society holds or observes. This form of religion is expressed in the *Mahabharata* -

‘धारणाद्धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मेण विधृताः प्रजाः।

यः स्याद्धारणसंयुक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥ (*Mahā*12.109.11)

That is, the religion that holds, the religion holds all the people. That by which retention and sustenance is accomplished is religion.

The dictionary meaning of the word dharma is precept, code of conduct, duty, virtue, justice, good deeds, ceremony, disposition, character trait, conduct, non-violence etc. Noteworthy, the meaning of religion has changed according to scriptures and context. In various mantras of the Vedas, words like ṛta, satya, vrata, kratu or yajña, punya, karma etc. are found as synonyms of religion or religion. In the *Brahmaṇṇas*—dharma—the word vidhi or niyama, i.e. yagagnadi—is used to mean a precept of action or duty—yāgādireva dharma.' Dharma in the *Upanishads* refers to the realization of truth, or the search for truth. In Śrīmad Bhagavadgīā (6.1.40) it is said that the Vedas are Dharma. And what is forbidden in the Vedas is adharma- वेदप्रणिहितो धर्मो ह्यधर्मस्तद्विपर्ययः।

Keywords: ṛta, satya non-violence, *Dharmaśāstra*, *Manusamhita* Śrautasūtras etc

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Just as the forms of the deities are described through the Veda mantras, their glorification and adoration are done (cognitive), so the method or process of offering those mantras to the deities is prescribed in the Brahmanas of the Vedas (procedural). In *Dharmaśāstra* also all things which are vedavihita (cognitive processes) are called dharma- वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलम् (*Manu.2.6*) And since the subjects of the Vedas are also the subject of memory, that which is manifested by śruti-smṛti is called Dharma.

Śruti-. 'श्रुति- स्मृत्युदितं धर्ममनुतिष्ठन् मानवः। (*Manu. 2.9*) Here Anutisthana- this term refers to the observance of individual conduct in different situations of life. In a word, religion is a form of people stabilization, through which people from all walks of life are guided in a certain direction from doing their duty. Spiritual, social, political and cultural values of people are developed. Where blind obedience or religious dogma has no value. The essence and ultimate goal of all religions is the same. In the *Mahabharata* (3.206.74) it is said - 'Benevolence in all, friendship is the eternal religion. Nonviolence is the ultimate religion. This non-violence is based on truth. 'Nonviolence is the supreme religion: established in truth.'

अहिंसा परमो धर्मः स च सत्ये प्रतिष्ठितः।

In the *Yajñabalkyasamhitā*, the giving of materials in a suitable person is called Dharma, judging by the country-time-method. However, introspection is indicated as *Paramadharmā* by yoga among Ijya-āchara-dāna-svādhyāyakarma. Here ātmandarshana means the realization of Brahman or liberation. According to Kullukvatta, the commentator of *Manusamhitā*, the meaning of dharma-sabda is duty, but it is dualistic as *drishtārtha* and *adrishtārtha*. *Drishtārtha* is the *Śāraguṇyādi*, *adrishtārtha* is the *Agnihotra*. In the *Manusamhitā*, there are two types of religion, namely *prbarṭta* and *nibrṭta*, the result of *prbrṭtakarma* is sukho abhyudayādi (pleasure) and the result of *nibrṭtakarma* is mokṣalāva (naishareyasik). (*Manu. 12.88*) This view of *Mahamati Manu* is consistent with the dharmalakshana known as *Vaiśeṣikadarśana* - यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः 'Jato bhyudayanisreyassiddhi Sa dharma.' Here 'Abhyudaya' refers to self-improvement or prosperity due to enemy conquest, 'Nishreyas' means liberation or salvation. In short, by which all kinds of spiritual and supernatural aspirations are achieved, that is religion.

In the *Gautamadharmasutra* (1.1) and the *Manusamhita* (2.6) the Vedas are referred to as the root of all religions - 'vedo'khilo dharmamulam.' Vedas to religious scholars. This is the best evidence. Vedas are the combination of *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa*. Mantrarāji is - Gāṇakaṇḍa. Brāhman is process or karmakāṇḍa. Therefore, the Brahmins are also one of the sources of the Vedic sacrifice. Properly knowing the Ṛṣi, Chanda, Deity, method of application, clear pronunciation and time of the mantra is necessary for proper performance of Vedic Yajna. Books that help in understanding Vedic knowledge and activities are called *Vedāṅgas*. As the *Vedāṅgas* are helpful in understanding the meaning and process of the Vedas, there is also a

religious element embedded in them. In particular, there are four types of scriptures in the *Kalpabhāga*.

In Śrautasūtras- mainly Śruti or Vedas provide a comprehensive account of Yāgayājñā. *Dharmasutras* contain spiritual, social, political teachings. And in the *Gṛhya Sūtra*, the details of the householder's behavioral and ritual activities are presented in brief. In *Śulvasūtra*- the dimensions of the sacrificial altar are specified. The scattered and extremely complex religious and secular subjects of the Vedas are mainly consolidated in *Dharmasutras* and *Gṛhyasūtras*. The subjects enunciated in the *Dharmasūtras* and *Grihyasutras* are considered to be the initial stage of *Dharmaśāstra*. But in the terminology, *Dharmaśāstra* refers to the scriptures. Another name for Vedas is Shruti. And what is composed by remembering *Vedartha* is Smṛti. (Manu. 2, 10) Dharma itself is revealed by hearing and memory. That is, as

श्रुतिस्तु वेदो विज्ञेयो धर्मशास्त्रन्तु वै स्मृतिः।
ते सर्वार्थेष्वमीमांस्ये ताभ्यं धर्मो हि निर्वभौ।

Vedas are regarded as the source and evidence of religion, if Vedavacana is not available, Vedānuga Smṛtivacana is also the evidence of religion. That is, hearing and memory are both the roots of religion. There is no room for debate about that. But where both Vedas and Smritis are scarce, there is religion as a polite practice. That is, morality is the proof of religion there. Morality is the uncondemned conduct of the scriptures. *Gautamadharmasūtra* points to the Vedas as the root of religion, then Smṛti, Vedas are supposed to know religion from the rituals. - वेदो धर्ममूलम्। तद्विदां च स्मृतिशीले। (*Gau.Dh.Sū.1.1.1-2*)

In the *Manusamhitā*, the Vedas, Smṛti, Sadācār and actions that satisfy ātmatuṣṭi (conscience)- these four are said to be signs or proofs of religion.

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः।

एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम्। (*Manu 2.12*)

Veda here means mantra-Brahmanic vocabulary, and what is composed by memorizing the meaning or *Vedartha* is Smṛiti. Virtue is the ritual followed or celebrated by Vedavidas or saints. And the actions by which the mind of a saint is pleased or self-satisfied- these four things are indicated as Dharma. Signs of a similar religion are found in the *Yajñabalkyasamhiā* (1.7) –

श्रुतिः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः।

सम्यक्संल्पजः कामो धर्ममूलमिदं स्मृतम्।

That is, hearing, memory, good conduct, the actions of the saints that please one's own heart, i.e. self-satisfaction and right determination, these are the roots of religion. The root or source of religion is, however, indicated in the *Mitākṣrātikā* as the proof of religion. From the above discussion, it is clear that among the evidences of this religion, the former evidence is stronger than the later evidence. That is, first of all the Vedas, memory in the absence of it, rituals in the absence of hearing-memory or the self-satisfaction of saints and nobles are also considered as evidence of religion.

Five categories of religion are mentioned in the *Gautam Dharmasūtra*- they are *Varṇadharmā*, *Āśramadharmā*, *Varṇāśramadharmā*, *Guṇadharmā*, *Nimittadharmā*. *Medhatithi*, the commentator of *Manusamhiā*, also talks about these five types of religion. The meaning of

the word religion is duty. The above five types of religion are mentioned in the Mitakshara Commentary of Yajnavalkyasamhita (1.1) with reference to common religion. The six types of smart religion indicated by the word dharma are Varnadharmā, Āśramadharmā, Varnasramadharmā, Gunadharmā, Nimittadharmā, Sandhadharmā.

Varṇadharmā- *Varṇadharmā* is a religion which is defined by only caste but does not differentiate for age etc. For example, a Brahmin should always abstain from alcohol.

Āśramadharmā *Āśramadharmā* is a religion which is practiced only around ashrams. For example, fire in brahmacharyasram, collection of fuel, begging etc.

Varnāśramadharmā- *Varṇāśramadharmā* is a religion that is specific to caste and ashrama. For example, in the state of celibacy, in celibate ashram, palās danda is held in case of Brahmins, *vilva danda* in case of Kṣatriyas and *Aśvatta danda* in the case of Vaiśya etc.

Gunadharmā- The religion that harbors gunas is *Gunadharmā*. For example, the supreme dharma is the worship of a Kshatriya king with abhishekadi qualities.

Nimittadharmā - the practice of religion or duty for a particular purpose or purpos. Either that religion is purposeful religion. Jātyeshti homa for the birth of a son, penance for sins. Referring to the five types of smārtadharmā, finally an example of common dharma is given - non-violence. Common Religion- This religion has been advised for people from all walks of life irrespective of caste and caste. According to Vaiśiṣṭha - non-violence, truth, non-anger and charity can be practiced by all. Kautilya's Arthaśāstra also mentions non-violence, truth, chastity, non-violence, non-violence and forgiveness as common religions of all castes and ashrams.

In the *Manusamhitā* (10.63) it is said about the common religion of the Four Varnas -

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः।

एतं सामासिकं धर्मं चातुर्वर्ण्येऽब्रवीन्मनुः॥¹

Non-violence to other animals, except those animals that are specifically slaughtered for livelihood. Truthfulness, Asteya i.e. non-stealing, Saucha i.e. bodily cleanliness, speech, chastity, restraint of senses - these four religions are common to all people, i.e. universal. Manu pointed out that it is auspicious.

For every person in the Brahmacharya *Chaturashram*, Manu mentions the ten dharmas to be practiced: *Dhriti*, *Kshama*, *Dama*, *Asteya*, *Shaucha*, *Indriyasanyam*, *Dhi*, *Vidya*, *Satya*, *Angerina* -

धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः।

धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्मलक्षणम्॥ (Manu 6.92)

Dhriti (satisfaction or patience), *Kshama* (doing no harm to one who does harm, tolerating another's wrongdoing despite having strength), *Dama* (not being arrogant), *Asteya* (not stealing), *Shaucha* (purity in food-speech-manners), *Indriyanigraha* (control of senses from lust), *Dhi* (knowledge), *Vidya* (Self-Knowledge/Spiritual Knowledge), *Sathya* and *Akrodha* (Non-Wrath)-These are the Ten Signs of Dharma. By possessing or practicing the moral virtues emphasized in Manukta, one's sense of humanity is awakened and one is driven towards good deeds, never straying from the right path. The overall welfare of the society is achieved from the individual level to the collective by individuals with the rise of good will.

Human-to-human relationships develop. Forgetting jealousy and hatred, one jumps at the other's danger. As a result, peace and order prevails in the society.

Smriti Shastra mentions religions such as *Desdharma*, *Jatidharma*, *Kuladharmā*, *Pashandadharmā*, *Ganadharmā*, *Lokdharmā*, *Paramdharmā* etc. According to *Maharshi Gautama-Desdharmā*, *Jatidharma*, *Kuladharmā* etc are not found in the original Vedas but if they are held constantly and are opposed to the Vedas then they will be considered as proof of religion. In that case, *Yajñabandya's* opinion is that even if it is approved by *sruti-smriti*, it is not the pursuit of heaven and it is improper to behave like a *lokagarhi*. *Desdharmā* is the religion practiced in a particular country or region. For example, while *matulkanya* marriage is prohibited among the northern sages, it is considered religious and ritualistic in the Deccan. Caste religion is the ritualistic religion of Brahmanical castes. *Swadharmā* is another name for *Jatidharma*. E.g. Study for Brahmins, *Adhyapanadi*, Battle of *Kshatriyas*, *Prajapalnadi Karma*.

Kuladharmā- The religion prevalent in the famous clan, the conduct held by the fathers and grandfathers is *Kuladharmā*. For example, it has been said in the context of the religion of *Raghuvansh*- men of *Raghuvansh* who adopt education in childhood, *darparigraha* for children, enjoyment of affairs in youth and *Munivritti* in old age. Superstitions- practices without auspicious rituals, such as *Kaulinya* practices prevalent in tribal societies.

Ganadharmā- The religion or system of guilds of merchants, artists, herders etc. For example, carrying out bridge works.

Loka-dharma- Apart from *Varnashram Dharma*, people from all walks of life observe various auspicious or religious ceremonies on various auspicious occasions, *Nakshatra*, *Shubhodin* or *Shubbar* etc. These ceremonies are known as *Lokdharmā*. Behind all these folk religions lies some ancient reformation, traditional thought, religious philosophy, or some secular reformation.

Paramadharmā- Different types of *Dharma* are given in *Smriti Shastra*. Among these religions, the one which is given special importance is called *Paramdharmā*. Differences in form of *Paramdharmā* are observed depending on the scriptures and purpose. In the *Manusamhita* (1.108) mentioned in the *sruti-smriti*, the ancient ritual practice is called *paramdharmā*. Irregular Brahmins cannot fully reap the fruits of Vedic rites. Rituals are considered to be the cause of all austerities as the fruits of religion are obtained through rituals. In politics, the welfare of the people is the king's supreme religion. *Maharshi* commented that self-realization i.e. liberation or salvation through the combination of *Yajñabandhya-Ijya*, ritual, non-violence, charity, study is *Paramdharmā* or *Shresthadharma*. (*Yajna*, 1.8)

Dharmaśāstra is the first published sociology in books, where all aspects of the daily life of social people get a legal form as this triple system of behavior-atonement. All kinds of people in the society are determined by the justice policy, the duties of people, the order of food and drink, the determination of ablution, marriage, the selection of a marriage partner, the production of children, the inheritance of property, justice and injustice (law), the judicial system (court), governance, the determination of guilt and innocence, punishment and atonement.

The role of *Dharmaśāstras* is essential in the history of ancient Indian civilization culture. Because, the ancient Indian social system and social institutions were managed based on the

precepts of sruti-smṛiti. But not only in ancient India, but even today, all matters of social policy, economy, state policy and religion continue to follow the path shown by Dharmaśāstras.

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Envisioning Human Rights Through Literary Texts (Selected) of Mulk Raj Anand and Munshi Premchand

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Abstract

Rights are inherent to human beings irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, race, class, caste and gender. All human beings are equally entitled to rights without any discrimination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948 to prevent atrocities in various spheres. All human beings do not enjoy basic rights. They are discriminated on various grounds.

The violation of human rights has been reflected in literature from various angles. When India was not established as an independent entity and UDHR was yet to be adopted, people were deprived of their rights in different ways. Since culture of human rights exists in multiple forms, it is important to examine the texts written during pre-independence. The aim is to locate the culture of human rights during that time, the way contemporary writers envisioned it through literary representations and how that could contribute to the critique of the violation of human rights. It could work as a pretext to unpack the post-independent human rights narratives as well.

Indian writing in English has focused on the violation of human rights through various means of discrimination among which class- caste hierarchy is a crucial one. It has been an ever- present theme in literary texts. Untouchability is one of the crucial aspects of the violation of human rights. The present paper attempts to examine the envisioning of human rights through a qualitative evaluation of the literary texts by Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004) and Munshi Premchand (1880-1936). Both the writers were writing at a time when India was under the colonial rule. The paper attempts to focus on Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) and some of the selected short stories of Premchand to examine human rights from the lens of Indian literary community.

Keywords: Human Rights, Literature, Religion, Race, Class, Caste, Gender, Pre-Independence, Novels, Short Stories.

The relation between human rights and literature, first formulated by Jean Paul Sartre, in his book *What is Literature?* conceptualizes the double function of literature- to act as a mirror to the society and a mode of inspiration and guiding manual for the oppressed. Following the ideas of Sartre, literature should serve as a means to focus on the oppression of the minority

groups, to help them gain recognition by engaging the elites to address such issues with a purpose. The purpose, the greatest good for the greatest number, could be achieved through the literary resolutions. Directly or indirectly, in the pre-independence and post-independence era, literature deals with human rights and guides the readers to understand and protect such rights. Instead of writing only for artistic and aesthetic purposes, the writers are committed to the society to include social crises, geopolitical changes to expand the readers' horizon to engage them in the thought process to solve various issues.

Envisioning human rights from a pre-independent literary perspective engages volumes of writing which unpack the hidden stories of oppression of the human beings, not less hostile than the post-independent narratives. The narratives of suffering, as viewed from the lens of human rights, continue to be, according to Goldberg and Moore

...the dominant discourse for addressing issues of social justice more broadly, scholars working at the intersection of human rights and literature, each galvanized perhaps by his or her own political moment and geographical locations, are developing new and more effective tools for understanding the ethical, literary and political implications for their shared intellectual foundations. (Goldberg and Moore, 2)

Domna C. Stanton, in her Foreword to the special issue of PMLA, "The Humanities in Human Rights: Critique, Language, Politics", has aptly noted that human rights and humanities have a long shared history. She also notes that "the proliferation of literary and cultural texts telling the stories of past and current human rights violations clearly necessitate an understanding of human rights philosophies and frameworks; less obvious, perhaps, is the extent to which the critical insights gained through literary readings in the past fifty years might be brought to bear in human rights contexts- in the field and the legal, activist and scholarly sites - to open the foundations of shared rights norms to new interpretations". (Stanton, 1519)

Wayne C. Booth's observation is also important to note in this context

"What is essential about that self is not found primarily in its differences from others, but in its freedom to pursue a story line, a life plot, a drama carved out of all the possibilities every society provides." (Booth, 89)

The present paper attempts to envision human rights in the Indian context through selected literary texts. The texts belong to pre-independence era. Therefore, it would be an attempt to assess the idea of human rights not only as a political theory or juridico-legal discourse, but as the culture of human rights. According to Pramod K. Nayar,

...a culture of Human rights emerges and is visible through the circulation of discourses of victimage, oppression, and suffering, in the form of autobiography, memoirs, reportage and media coverage, documentaries and creative works. The cultural apparatus of Human Rights is the set of social and cultural factors, texts and responses to those texts through which a society or a nation comes to awareness and activism about human rights... (Nayar: 2012, ix)

It is under this thought process, to follow Nayar, the texts written before independence raises the human rights issue not only as a theory but also the exercise to look at human beings from certain parametres. Such intervention also refers to the narrative interventions (victims), contexts (casteism, racism), economies (suffering) into popular and public

discourses of the nation, India- to produce a rights imaginary and a rights literary . To further elaborate on Nayar to contextualize, the purpose is to show 'how the extreme, where rights are constantly violated, sits adjacent to the everyday in contemporary Indian public culture. It is true that a public culture of human rights play a constituent role to revitalize civil society.

There are certain international and indigenous interpretations of human rights. Albert Einstein's view on human rights is significant to note

The existence and validity of human rights are not written in the stars. The ideals concerning the conduct of men towards each other and the desirable structure of the community have been conceived and taught by the enlightened individuals in the course of history. Those ideals and convictions which resulted from historical experience, from the craving for beauty and harmony have been readily accepted in theory by man- and at all times, have been trampled upon the same people under the pressure of their animal instincts. A large part of history is therefore replete with the struggle for those human rights, an eternal struggle in which a final victory can never be won. (Einstein, 35)

On an indigenous level, Mahatma Gandhi had a life- long struggle to ensure the human rights of people belonging to different caste, class, ethnic groups. His philosophy of *Satyagraha* and *Ahimsa* is widened across the globe. His approach to human rights includes the rights which should be enjoyed by everyone- no matter if someone is a Harijan or a Dalit. The paper attempts to examine human rights through the literary representations of Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Coolie* (1935) and *Untouchable* (1936) and some of the short stories of Munshi Premchand. According to Paul Gready

Human rights work has two primary points of reference, the law and what we are calling here the story – you could define human rights practice as the craft of bringing together legal norms and human stories in the service of justice. Law provides the mechanisms for rendering power accountable, particularly state power, but also increasingly the power of non-state actors. Human stories provide a no less essential resource- attempting to spark the law into life, transcend cultural and political difference and cement the solidarity of strangers. (Gready, 179)

The history of human rights from Indian perspective would act as a pre-requisite to the analysis of the texts mentioned above. Considering the enactment of Charter Act of 1813 as a starting point to prioritize the well-being of the Indian citizens, the next steps were proved to be quite significant. The demand of fundamental rights was claimed in 1885, with the birth of the Indian National Congress and through several steps of progression, the Indian Constitution was framed by the Constituent Assembly of India which met for the first time on December 9, 1946 and the Constitution of India gave primary importance to human rights. The necessity of the declaration of the fundamental human rights arose from certain aspects-

- Lack of civil liberty in India under the British Rule
- Deplorable social conditions affecting the untouchables and women
- Existence of different religious, linguistic, ethnic groups encouraged and exploited by the colonizers

- Exploitation of the tenants by the landlords

It is evident that people belonging to untouchable communities have been deprived of their rights from time immemorial. The basic amenities like drinking water, proper accommodation, education is still beyond the reach of such people. They were denied in public gatherings, they could not enter into the temples, they were only employed in the jobs of cleaning garbage. The picture has not yet much changed.

Therefore, the narratives of the marginalized beings, deprived of the rights (in pre-independent India) need to be examined. Such narratives could work as significant testimonies to further elaborate the idea in the present context. A developing nation like India has multiple narratives of oppression of the underprivileged. Harsh Mander's words could justify this idea

Especially in poverty and development studies, apart from a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods, listening to the stories from the heart of people – through which they reconstruct their own lived experiences, and analysis, knowledge and aspirations – makes them partners in this research, democratize knowledge and is of significant epistemological validity and value. (Mander, 255)

Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie* (1935) and *Untouchable* (1936) are the literary manifestations of the pre-independence period. These novels were written at a time when people from the lower rung of the society were experiencing different layers of exploitation and insult which is still a recurring issue. From the ancient times the caste division in the Indian society has created some of the worst consequences. Brahman, Kshatriya, Baishya, Shudra- such classification made the upper caste brahmins more powerful and the rest absolutely powerless. The social condition was deplorable enough for the lower caste people and women have always faced double oppression. Anand has tried to deal with the plight of lower caste people of India at a time when they were facing humiliation at its highest degree and in need of justice. He intended to ensure that they should be treated as human beings to live with dignity. He envisioned an idea of humanity in marginal social beings, who, in the present times, are the characters in need of social and human rights protection. Anand, through his close analysis, attempts to humanize certain characters who were not even considered human by the society at that time.

His close proximity to the lives of those people enabled him to write novels like *Untouchable* and *Coolie* and many such pieces which capture the crises of humanity in various ways. Anand has tried to present the ground reality of the hell like situation where the people belonging to the lower caste led the life worth of an animal, or it can be said that animals might sometimes get better treatment from human beings. It is the greatest paradox that those who clean the dirt are considered 'dirty'. E. M Forster's Foreword to *Untouchable* aptly reminds us of the relevance of the issue pointed out by Anand in his works

The remarkable novel describes a day in the life of a sweeper in an Indian city with every realistic circumstance. Is it a clean book or a dirty one? ... *Untouchable* could only have been written by an Indian and by an Indian who observed from the outside. No European, however sympathetic, could have created the character of Bakha, because he would not have known enough about his troubles. And no untouchable could have written the book, because he would have been involved in indignation and self-pity. Mr.

Anand stands in the ideal position. By caste he is kshatriya, and he might have been expected to inherit the pollution complex. But as a child he played with the children of the sweepers attached to an Indian regiment, he grew to be fond of them, and to understand a tragedy which he did not share. He has just the right mixture of insight and detachment and the fact that he has come to fiction through philosophy has given him depth. It might have given him vagueness- that curse of the generalizing mind- but his hero is no suffering abstraction. (Forster, 10)

The word 'untouchable' very consciously violates the basic rights of human beings. The Constitution guarantees the right to live a dignified life to every individual. When someone is addressed through such a term, he/she is automatically distinguished from the others, here the distinction is from the point of marginality. Individual freedom is not a privilege someone enjoys, it is the basic requirement of life. Anand's works addresses this problem. Manipulation against such issues violates one's human rights. But the same thing happens through generations. An individual's social and political rights are not given by any individual, it is guaranteed by the state, as directed by the Constitution. Regarding the crudeness of caste-system Dr. Radha Krishnan's observation is significant

The institution of caste illustrates the spirit of comprehensive synthesis characteristic of Hindu mind with its faith in the collaboration of races and the cooperation of cultures. Paradoxically, as it may seem, the system of caste, is the outcome of tolerance and trust. Though it has now degenerated into an oppression and intolerance, though it tends to perpetuate inequality, and develop the spirit of exclusiveness these unfortunate effects are not the central motives of the system. (Radhakrishnan, 54)

Mulk Raj Anand handled this issue with precision. In a country like India, caste system has its roots when the society was divided in different categories. Anand began his literary career writing about caste issues which stems from a tragic incident in his family. His aunt committed suicide for the excommunication from her society as she shared a meal with a Muslim woman. Such incidents moved Anand to write about caste issues. His protest in Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919 and close observation of the evils of caste discrimination motivated him to raise such issues in his works.

In *Untouchable*, Bakha's profession is to sweep. One could identify him with the pot tied to his neck. He has to alarm everyone while passing through the road. If anyone accidentally happens to pass through his shadow, the person needs to get purified. Bakha, as described by E.M Forster, is

a real individual, lovable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak and thoroughly Indian. Even his physique is distinctive; we can recognize his broad intelligent face, graceful torso and heavy buttocks, as he does his nasty jobs, or stumps out in artillery boots in hopes of a pleasant walk through the city with a paper of cheap sweets in his hand. (Forster, 10)

Envisioning Bakha's situation from a human rights perspective one could be reminded of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. A person's life, under no circumstances, can be endangered. The worth of a sweeper's life is known to all. To value the life of any individual, whether it may be Bakha in *Untouchable* or a coolie like Munoo in *Coolie*, one should not discriminate between an upper caste and a lower caste; but truly adverse is the case in most

of the civilized societies. The interpretation of life as explained by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is worthy to mention here

“The right to live with human dignity and the same does not connote continued drudgery. It takes within its fold some of the fine graces of civilization which makes life worth living and that the expanded concept of life would mean the tradition, culture and heritage of the person concerned.”

(Radhakrishnan, 308)

Anand, at the very outset of *Untouchable*, sketched a clear line of demarcation between the upper-caste Hindus and the untouchable community and such a distinctive understanding takes the readers to the ground reality. He describes the outcastes' colony as a gathering place of discarded human beings with their “mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside their boundary and separate from them” (Anand: *Untouchable*, 13). Scavengers, leather-workers, washermen and other outcasts live in that particular colony. The sweeper's colony was the dirtiest place. All the waste products lied in their living place- making it closely resembled like hell. These downtrodden people have no dreams- to be treated like a human being, not animals, is the most valuable yet unfulfilled dream in their lives.

Since Anand had first-hand experience of playing with the boys like Bakha, he has a double-edged sword to expose the naked truth- the hell like condition in which Bakha lived and his means to empower Bakha. He introduces Bakha as “a young man of eighteen, strong and able-bodied, the son of Lakha - the Jemadar of all the sweepers in the town and the cantonment, and officially in charge of the three rows of public latrines which lined the extreme end of the colony, by the brook side” (Anand: *Untouchable*, 14). Bakha considered it a privilege to work in the barracks of a British regiment for some years on probation and their way of treating him as a human being. Through such means he thought himself superior than his fellow outcasts. The cold wind in the nights of Bulandshahr stung his skin but Bakha, the ‘child of modern India’ preferred to get chilled only using the thin blanket given by the white men, ‘Tommies’, as he used to call them. He was always humiliated and hated by his upper-caste employers. The white men and the Muslim people's non-hatred and sympathy towards him, the Tommies' giving him ‘baksish’ spared Bakha some scope to think to get rid of the arbitrary nature of the upper caste people. He disliked the ‘formlessness of the Indian quilt’, he preferred the Sahib's blanket, if that would give him some sense of warmth and solace.

Bakha loves to play with his companion Chota, but sincere enough to his work in spite of all the abusive words received as reinforcement: ‘With him duty came first’ (Anand: *Untouchable*, 55). They also dream. They play hockey like the ‘babu's sons’ and they have also managed to gather hockey sticks from them. Bakha and other boys from his community have to depend on the discarded food of the upper caste masters because thinking of fresh food on a regular basis is like dreaming to touch the moon. They could not afford a meagre amount of food for the entire family. Regarding the hockey match of the untouchable boys of the sweeper colony, Anand never forgets to mention that even their hockey sticks are the ‘loans’, the discarded ones of the ‘sons of the babu’ (Anand: *Untouchable*, 55). Their entire life is lived on remnants, disposals and torn rags of the upper caste men. Those who do not have the access to food can hardly avail education. But the thought of going to school made Bakha's face radiant

“The anxiety of going to school! How beautiful it felt! How nice it must be to be able to read and write! One would read the papers after having been to school. One would talk to the sahibs. One wouldn't have to run to the scribe every time a letter came. And one wouldn't have to pay him to have one's letters written”. (Anand: *Untouchable*, 57)

This is mere dream for boys of Bakha's status. His father has hammered in his brain that schools 'were meant for the babus not for the bhangis' (Anand: *Untouchable*, 57). Bakha was fascinated to go to the 'Tommies' barracks' since he was moved by their 'Englishness'. There he realized that

He was a sweeper's son and could never be a babu. Later still he realized that there was no school which would admit him because the parents of the other children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of the low-caste man's sons... He had begun to work at the latrine at the age of six and resigned himself to the hereditary life of the craft but he dreamed of becoming a sahib. (Anand: *Untouchable*, 58)

Bakha was repulsive towards his fellow outcasts since his own father, a victim of hatred and frustration, called him in abusive names. 'You son of a pig', 'You, the lover of your mother' (Anand: *Untouchable*, 58) - this is how Lakha addressed him. When upper-caste people abused him through such words he could feel the insult but his own father's address could bound him thinking of the helplessness of his own people- the people who were humiliated, denied the status of human beings and above all, disenfranchised. Beginning from the inhuman struggle to access drinking water, Bakha and people like him in the untouchable community relentlessly struggled- it is a struggle for survival.

Gulabo, the washer woman; Waziro, the weaver's wife and Sohini, Bakha's sister had arguments for water. While Sohini remained calm, Gulabo was continuously abusing her. Her vulgar words could pierce anyone's heart. These people hardly have any idea of rights, their priority is just to get treated as human beings- that is how the characters imply. Pundit Ji, the lustful priest, always proud of being a Brahmin, carrying a sacred thread in his body attempts to get an access over Sohini, the untouchable girl through his looks and manners, and perhaps through something else. People like Pundit Ji thinks of purifying an untouchable girl through indirect flirtation. But that is the ultimate pollution, as evident from Anand's words.

“And he looked long at her, rather embarrassed, his rigid respectability fighting against the waves of amorousness that had begun to flow in his blood.” (Anand: *Untouchable*, 44)

Anand attempts to focus on the dissatisfaction, disappointment of Lakha for not being served with refreshments from time to time. The dull, dingy atmosphere of the sweeper's colony and limitless humiliation transformed him into an insensible being towards his family members. He was only eager to get food, not really interested to know about the source of the food. Lakha's memory of the “big piles of cooked food” could only create a little satisfaction.

Bakha's attempt to set himself free from his own world is nothing but a dream- never to be true. Anand catches him at the crucial moment

He didn't like his home, his street, his town, because he had been to work at the Tommies' barrack, and obtained glimpses of another world, strange and

beautiful; he had grown out of his native shoes into the ammunition boots that he had secured as a gift. And with this and other strange and exotic items of dress, he had built up a new world, which was commendable, if for nothing else because it represented a change from the old ossified order and the stagnating conventions of the life to which he was born. (Anand: *Untouchable*, 116)

Bakha's inability to walk in the street is also the violation of human rights. The upper caste people forbade him to do so. He had to produce sound while walking- this is how untouchable people communicate. Mahatma Gandhi had to intervene into the scenario to define untouchability as the greatest blot to Hinduism. But, following E.M Forster and others' interpretations about the human rights it is absolutely logical not to think of Gandhi or any messiah to solve this problem. Instead of God's intervention or self-sacrifice, the Indian flush system should be restored. Introducing water-closets and main drainage throughout India would be the stepping stone.

The poor and the downtrodden were always Anand's preoccupation and *Coolie* is the study of the abuse of a boy's childhood. Munoo, the poor orphan boy was destined to work from the early age and his life was exhausted before he could feel the slightest of its essence. Poverty, illiteracy, huge economic and social gap between the classes make the situation worse.

It is important to note that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was implemented much later when Anand had already written down two of his above- mentioned novels. The United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights was first articulated on 10th December, 1948. The reason for this articulation was to provide human beings their basic rights to live a dignified life, especially after the horrors of the Second World War. It is to ensure the freedom and justice of the people across the globe.

Anand is talking of a time when children like Munoo faced the worst consequences of life. At the very beginning of *Coolie*, Anand exposes the kind of abuse Munoo got from his known ones. His slightest lapse in work could make anyone around him furious

"Munoo, oh Munoo oh Mundu! Where have you died? Where have you drifted? You of the evil star?... Where have you died? Where have you gone, you ominous orphan?" (Anand: *Coolie*, 11)

Munoo, merely a child, loved to enjoy in the surroundings. For him it was a dream. These instincts came to him spontaneously- grazing kettle on the banks of Beas, playing with the buffaloes and cows charged under him. At the age of only fourteen the orphaned Munoo was in custody of his aunt who wanted him to earn money. His parents died as penniless beggars and his plight was to work wherever he was dropped. The idea of going to the town Sham Nagar may have worked on him but the harsh reality took a heavy toll. His dream of the 'wonderful things' (Anand: *Coolie*, 14) at town mounted Munoo's excitement which would soon shatter.

The way to the town brought enough misery for Munoo. He was to nurse his bare feet since he was not habituated to a prolonged walk in the sun. His blistered feet could only provoke self-pity, his uncle was in no ways sympathetic to him. The poor child walking barefoot would not provoke Daya Ram to afford a cart ride- he assured Munoo to buy a pair of shoes only from his salary in the next month. The view of 'tiers of sweets', 'cool ice', 'a speaking machine', the 'toy seller'- all such spectacular sights excited him since it was his

first time in a town. Everything seemed beautiful to him- 'the narrow streets congested with rows of shops', the passing of a man 'clad in a silk tunic and dhoti and gold embroidered shoes', women 'swinging their elbows and flourishing their green, pink or purple silk veils'. His boyish imagination extended the view further- it seemed as if everything was so beautiful to him.

His employer, Babu Nathoo Mal had every comfort at his house which was an absolute déjà vu for Munoo. His first meeting with Bibiji, the mistress of the house and Nathoo's wife, soon brought fatal consequences for him. He could soon feel the absolute falsity of the words of his uncle Daya Ram: "You will be looked after here. You will get plenty to eat in this home" (Anand: *Coolie*, 27). Anand has magnificently described a child maid's comfort at the house of his master

"Overnight Munoo had lain huddled up in the corner of a kitchen of Babu Nathoo Ram's house... His tunic has become sodden with sweat. The mosquitoes had whined in his ears all night and beaten him several times. A swarm of flies had buzzed around noisily and irritated him by settling on his face continually".(Anand: *Coolie*, 27)

Munoo was destined to have stale pancakes as his food from the mistress of the house. A boy like him, without knowing the manners of the people of a town, faced much harassment. In the eyes of people like Nathoo Ram, Munoo was just a creature. Unable to resist his necessity to go to the bathroom resulted abuse from his mistress

"Vay, you eater of your masters! Vay, you shameless brute! You pig! You dog! ...you shameless, shameless, vulgar stupid hill boy! May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you die! May you fade away! May you burn!" (Anand: *Coolie*, 30)

Child labour is an everlasting social problem which might take another hundred years to disappear. Munoo's limitless suffering in the places he worked was enough for him to escape from one place to another. His first workplace was at Sham Nagar but for extreme oppression he escaped to Daulatpur where he was working at a pickle factory. His life took a different turn as soon as his employer met with huge loss in his business and this took Munoo to Bombay, his third escape route. He was leading the life of a coolie in Bombay. Anand has caught him at the most crucial phases of his life. While his initial days at Bombay, Munoo wished to have soda water. On his demand of soda water, the way other people stared at him made him feel like a leper. The harsh words and ill treatment of the stall owner spoiled the taste of his drink. Anand describes it in the following words

The sharp, cool, sweetish taste of the soda water tingled in Munoo's mouth and brought tears of acid into his eyes. He would have liked to have sipped it slowly and enjoyed the full flavour of the drink in comfort. But he was nervous and feeling extremely guilty for having intruded into the rich man's world. So, he gulped the water down as fast as he could. (Anand: *Coolie*, 192)

While talking about child labour and untouchability, Anand has referred to All India Trade Union Federation and the strikes made by the labours to claim their rights for work. The environment of work, hours of working were the issues needed to be resolved. Such changes were gradually happening in the society. The upper- class rich masters were referred as "robbers, thieves, brigands- the brigands who live in palatial bungalows"(Anand: *Coolie*,

282). In contrast to this, the life of the coolies, as has been considered by Sauda Sahib takes the following form

“You are the coolies, black men who relieve yourselves on the ground, you are the miserable devils who live twenty in a room in broken straw huts and stinking tenements. Your bones have no flesh, your souls have no life, you are clothed in tattered rags.” (Anand: *Coolie*, 283)

Munoo's life ends with tuberculosis while he worked as a rickshaw puller in Shimla. He was mostly hated wherever he went, except Daulatpur. Anand has focused on the human rights violation from the perspective of child labour in *Coolie*. It is paradoxical that after so many years of the enactment of Child Labour Act (1986) and its Prohibition and Regulation Amendment Act in 2016, children are still under the threat of losing their childhood. This is one of the biggest threats of humanity Anand has shown here.

In addition to caste issues, difference between the classes also deprive human beings of their rights. There are stories of endless oppression for class differences. Class determination mostly roots from the economic status of a person. If an individual is of lower economic status, he/she often receives maltreatment from the upper classes. Munshi Premchand's stories focus on the communities who are from the lower caste and therefore disenfranchised. He has extensively written novels and short stories. He has exposed caste hierarchy in many of his works. He wrote in Hindi and Urdu. Premchand's works have been extensively translated. The stories taken up in this paper include 'Thakur Ka Kuan' (translated as 'The Village Well'), 'Catastrophe' ('Vidhwans') and 'The Shroud' ('Kafan'). Throughout his life, Premchand has depicted the inhuman condition of the poor, downtrodden, lower caste people who relentlessly face the atrocities of the upper castes. Through these texts, unlike his other memorable creations, Munshi Premchand had attempted to humanize his characters.

Munshi Premchand (originally Dhanpat Rai Srivastava), in almost all of his works, represented the brutality of the upper castes and how the lower caste human beings are maltreated by them. In his short story 'The Village Well', Premchand presents the harsh reality of the life of the lower caste people- their struggle to get drinking water. Jokhu and Gangi, the husband and the wife were deprived of drinking water. Neither Thakur nor Sahu's well could provide them the access of water. Jokhu's thirst mounted Gangi's desperation. While she intended to go to Thakur's well, Jokhu's words speak of the hard core reality

Don't be rash. The Brahmins will curse you. The Thakur will beat you with long staff. And Sahu will increase your debt fivefold. You will have your bones broken to bits. Who understands the pain of the poor? Even when we are dying nobody peeps into our house to enquire how we are faring. Could then such people let you have water from their wells? (Premchand, 28)

Gangi's one simple question could raise the readers' concern

“The whole village draws water from this well; why should we, the only unfortunates, be denied this privilege?” (Premchand, 28)

Gangi and her husband could not be counted among the 'whole village', they are unfortunate enough to be born as marginalized beings. Therefore they are denied the 'privilege' to get drinking water. It is not a privilege at all, it is one's basic need. Gangi's inability to get water from Thakur's well resulted in Jhogru's consumption of stinking water.

This is how the disenfranchised lower caste people live. Therefore, humanizing the lower caste identities is a conscious attempt of writers like Premchand and Anand.

'Catastrophe' states the plight of Bhungi, a Gond woman residing in Bira, a village in Banaras. A parching oven being her only asset, Bhungi did not even have a place to live. Her sleeping corner, the same little shack that sheltered the oven, was her resting place. Parching the grain of the villagers was her only means to earn a meagre living. She lived in the village of Pandit Udaybhan Pandey who belonged to the upper caste. When she had to parch grain for Pandey, she could not do anything else. She could only afford a meal through a whole day's work. Sometimes's Bhungi could not breathe for workload. Festivals and celebrations were beyond imagination in her life.

Once unable to finish Pandit Udaybhan's work in time, his men broke Bhungi's oven. This had an effect on all the villagers and they requested Panditji to rebuild the oven on their demand. She was not allowed to do any other work except Udaybhan's, lest she would be deprived of her sleeping corner. Udaybhan's indifference... caused a sense of desperation on Bhungi. Being left with no other alternative, she rebuilt the oven and it did not escape Pandit Udaybhan's attention. He kicked the oven. Bhungi ran in front of the oven, took the kick on her side. Rubbing her ribs with pain, Bhungi's words to Udaybhan could not only be seen as the destitute's last attempt of survival but also a form of protest which made Udaybhan more ruthless to her

"Maharaj, you're not afraid of anybody but you ought to fear God. What good does it do you to ruin me like this! Do you think gold is going to grow out of this small piece of land! For your own good, I'm telling you, don't torment poor people, don't be the death of me". (Premchand, 8)

In the course of their conversation, Udaybhan asked Bhungi to leave the village where she had been staying for more than fifty years. Her reply made Udaybhan even more surprised.

"How can I? I've grown old in this hut. My in-laws and their grandparents lived in this same hut. Except for Yama, king of death, nobody is going to force me out of it now". (Premchand, 8)

Udaybhan took Bhungi's words as sign of arrogance. While he ordered his men to break the oven and put it in fire, Bhungi's last hope of survival collapsed. While the oven was in conflagration, Bhungi hurled herself in the fire since she had lost all hope to survive without her oven and the living place. This is how Premchand attempts to humanize characters like Bhungi who had to bear the burden of her identity of a Gond woman.

The concluding part of the story leaves some hope for the human beings to note the catastrophic consequences, also justifying the title. While Bhungi's living place was burning, she hurled herself in the fire. The wind rose with a gust. Udaybhan's barn was in its path and his splendid mansion was also swallowed by the fire.

'The Shroud' is the narrative of Gheesu, his son Madhav and Budhia, Madhav's wife. In this story, he depicted the life of the Chamars, those who belong to the lower caste. What made Gheesu and Madhav remarkable is their idle nature. Until they starve for four or five days, they hardly go out to work. Premchand mostly spoke of the indifferent life of those who are hardly counted among the human beings. Their worldly wealth consists of, as Premchand describes, 'a few earthen pots and some ragged clothes.' (120) They were burdened with debts but hardly made any attempt to repay that. Premchand catches them at a critical moment. While Budhia was suffering from labour pain, Gheesu and Madhav

were busy peeling and eating potatoes. They hardly thought to take any initiative for her care. While Gheesu asked Madhav to go into the hut and check Budhia's condition, Madhav was more interested to finish his share of potato first. At that moment Madhav was preoccupied with the memory of the sumptuous wedding banquets in the past.

Premchand exposes the height of inhumanity in Gheesu and Madhav. The following morning they found Budhia dead with a still-born child. They did not have money to buy a shroud for Budhia. On request, the landlord and the villagers contributed for her shroud and Premchand takes the story to its climatic point. In spite of their reluctance, both the landlord and the villagers showed the sign of humanity through their financial help. Instead of buying a shroud to cover Budhia's body, Gheesu and Madhav found every excuse to dislike the shrouds available in the market. They decided not to buy a shroud at all, because it is useless. Rather, they thought it wise to enter into a public house to have ale and other edibles to satisfy their stomach. Poverty, ignorance, hatred made them so indifferent that they decided to spend the money on their feast than covering Budhia's body with the shroud. Their eating and drinking continued with long philosophical dialogues. Even for the first time in life, Madhav offered some food to a beggar, the food they bought with the money kept for the shroud. According to them, this would pave Budhia's way to heaven, she will reign there like a queen. Gheesu's words justify this idea

...she shall surely go to heaven, for, while she lived, she never harassed any one. Even in her death we have had one of our life's great desires fulfilled, to wit, this fine food and fill. If she is not admitted into heaven, then, do you think those pot-bellied people who fleece the poor and who, to expiate their sins, go to the Ganges and offer ablutions in the temple will go there? (Premchand, 128)

Her suffering could bring no effect in Madhav and Gheesu to offer her a decent cremation. Their movements were instinctive only for food, one of the means of their survival. Under the influence of liquor they danced, attempted to get up but dropped down on the road. Therefore, as concluding remarks, it might be said that the literary resolution adopted by the pre-independence writers like Mulk Raj Anand and Premchand, attempted to show the perception of humanity on various levels. Humanizing the characters requires the restructuring of the society and that is clearly reflected in the texts analyzed. Such texts would create a section which helps claim rights for the marginalized once they become citizens of an independent nation. The rights given to all citizens in independent India are foreshadowed through these writer's visions.

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A Study on The Common Problems of Adolescent Students Pertaining to Their Physical, Social and Emotional Health

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to study some common problems of adolescent students with respect to their physical, social, and emotional health. Adolescence period is a critical juncture in human life; a period of confusion and chaos associated with numerous adjustment problems. It is a period of self-discovery. Hence, proper understanding of an adolescent is incredibly obligatory to nurture his or her character. This study analyses the common problems faced by an adolescent normally in their day-to-day life. To conduct the study 400 students (200 male and 200 female) from Class XI were selected from 20 institutions of Dibrugarh District in North-East India offering Higher Secondary course (+2 level) under Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC). A Questionnaire for students had been developed by the researcher herself consisting of 22 items both of open and closed types for assessing the three domains of an adolescent's health, i.e., physical, social, and emotional health and collected data were analysed through percentage.

Keywords: Adolescent, adjustment, problem, physical, social, emotion

Introduction:

Human beings grow up through different stages of development. At every stage of development, a person is attributed with distinct traits which determine his or her personality. The adolescence period is also such a stage of development. During this period the person enters puberty. He or she identifies his or her role in the society. He or she finds himself or herself in a constant contrast between dream and actuality, contemplation, and accomplishment, forecast and realism, assumption and understanding, anticipation and obligation. And suddenly, when the person discovers himself or herself surrounded by loads of problems, he or she feels maladjusted in the surrounding social set-up. The adolescent seems to face severe emotional adjustment problem in the context of their grooming as social beings. These problems of adolescent can be categorized broadly under three heads, e.g., i) Substance abuse, ii) Internalizing disorders, iii) Externalizing disorders. Substance abuse includes such problems as drug addiction and sex scandals; Internalizing disorders include problems of depression and anxiety; and Externalizing disorders refers to the problems of delinquency, anti-social aggression, truancy, and other academic or peer problems. The present study was undertaken to study some common problems of

adolescent students of Class XI in Dibrugarh District, Assam with respect to their physical, social, and emotional health. Health refers to a comprehensive fitness at physical, mental, and social level and not simply the lack of disease or infirmity (WHO). Dibrugarh district is a part of the eastern terrains of Assam in North-East India. With a heart-throbbing beautiful green landscape and mighty river Brahmaputra flowing through it, the district is a tourist hub for people who enjoy the serenity of nature. Geographically, the district extends from 27° 5' 38" N to 27° 42' 30" N latitude and 94° 33' 46" E to 95° 29' 8" E longitude. The district extends in an area of 3381 km². The population of the district is estimated approximately 1.5 million in 2025.

Objective: The main objective of the study is to assess some common problems of adolescent students of Higher Secondary institutions of Dibrugarh district, Assam regarding their physical, social and emotional health.

Methodology: The total sample of the study comprised of 400 adolescent students (200 Male and 200 Female) of the age group of 16/17 to 18/19 years studying in Higher Secondary institutions in Dibrugarh District, Assam. *Purposive sampling technique* was used for selection of 20 institutions (H. S. school and college) and *incidental sampling technique* was used to select the students' sample. The tool used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire constructed and standardized by researcher herself, consisting of 22 items both of open and closed types for assessing the three domains of adolescent's health, i.e. physical, social and emotional level. Collected data were analysed through percentage.

Questionnaire: The questionnaire, used in the present study contains a series of questions dealing with some psychological, social, and educational traits of a group of adolescents who were selected as the student sample, with the objective of obtaining data about specific problems encountered by them. To make assessment of the problems of adolescents studying in higher secondary courses a Questionnaire was developed by the researcher herself for assessing the three domains of adolescence's health, i.e. physical, social, and emotional level.

Key terms used in the questionnaire:

- **Adolescence-** Adolescence is a period of great transition and transformation. During this period a child learns to identify himself or herself with his or her surrounding environment and tries to adjust with much more complex patterns of social methods and norms. Chronologically, the adolescence period comes roughly in between the years from 12 to 20. In this questionnaire adolescents mean those students who are going through adolescence period and studying in H.S. 1st year class. They belong to an age group of 17 to 19 years.
- **Social health-** Social health refers to a healthy and peaceful state of mutual understanding and cooperation for societies and the individuals who live and participate in them. The concept of social health assesses how people interact with each other within a framework which meets the moral, logical and communal rules and regulations that a society determines and designs. In the questionnaire social health refers to those aspects which help the adolescent students to maintain a balance in personality as a social being.
- **Physical health-** Physical health underscores the state of wellbeing of all internal and external body parts, organs, tissues, and cell functioning at their supposed capabilities. Physical health is an essential part of overall health of an individual. In

this questionnaire physical health deals with different matter to maintain a good physic of adolescent students and their consciousness regarding these matters.

- **Emotional health-** Emotion is a complex feeling and state of mind accompanied with psychological arousal and overt behaviour. Emotional health indicates the level to which one's emotional security is granted. It is the important component of mental health. In this questionnaire emotional health refers the mental set up of the adolescent students in different situations.

Construction of questionnaire:

(a) Construction of first draft:

❖ Planning

- The problems of adolescents studying in higher secondary courses were tested through the questionnaire.
- Different aspects included in the questionnaire were:

Under the domain of *Emotional Health*, the following types of questions were framed to test the same:

- Open type- feelings during interaction with strangers, reasons of get exited easily, feelings towards opposite sex, involvement of parents and others in personal life, feelings on seeing others in trouble, activities in sad mood, anger provoked activities.

Under *Social Health*, the questions included the following areas-

- Open type- family and relatives' attitudes towards an adolescent, the task of making friends, preferred lifestyle, views regarding impact of electronic media in value degradation of adolescents, impact of classroom in student's academic achievement, observation on elders' assumption of the new generation.

Under *Physical Health*-

- Open type- perception of good health, preference to physical exercise for maintaining health, physical problems during exam, awareness regarding food habits to maintain good health, conceptual level of chronic illness.

Others-

- Open type- activities during leisure time, response to parent's suggestion on career and future life, about aim of life, satisfaction on pocket money.

The significance that was given to the different items of the Questionnaire is shown below:

Table no. 1: Significance (in %) of the different Domains of the Questionnaire:

Sl. No	Aspects	Significance in % (approximate)	No. of items
1	Emotional Health	36%	08
2	Social Health	27%	06
3	Physical Health	23%	05
4	Others	14%	03
	Total	100%	22

❖ **Writing items**

- A set of 22 questions was developed in two languages, (both English & Assamese), which included open-ended questions. Most of the questions consists of some options which will be helpful for the respondent to get hints for expressing own feelings. The investigator examined relevance, symmetry, clarity, and simplicity of the language etc.

(b) Construction of the final draft:

- After editing and scrutiny of the spellings, space for responses, writing guidelines and inclusion of space for self-introduction for respondents, the final draft was prepared.

1. Qualitative analysis of the questionnaire responses:

- Interaction with unknown people is a difficult task for adolescents. Hence the researcher tried to find out the adolescents' attitude in this regard and the study reveals that 8% female and 11% male of the adolescent feel fear during interaction with strangers. 13.5% male and 18.5% female of the adolescent sense eagerness while 49% adolescent female and 26% adolescent male experience nervousness. 29.5% female and 44.5% male of the adolescent feel normal during interacting with the strangers.
- Adolescents are not capable of controlling their temper. Very trivial matter may excite them. The researcher finds that 11.5% female adolescents and 18.5% male adolescents get excited easily. The reasons of their excitement are primarily misunderstanding and insult interesting to note that 88.5% female and 81.5% male of the adolescent think that they don't get excited easily.
- The attitude of the adolescents towards opposite sex is diverse. Whereas 87.5% female adolescent feel normal and friendly towards opposite sex, 3.5% feel more intimate than friends and 9% avoid interaction with male counterpart. On the other hand, 79% male adolescent feel normal and friendly towards the female; 17% sense more intimacy than friendliness and only 4% avoid interaction with the female.
- Sometimes the adolescents complain that their parents interfere in their life excessively and 52.5% female adolescent and 42.5% male adolescents believe that their parents' interference in their lifestyle is unnecessary. On the area of interference 35.23% female adolescents feel that it is friendship, 39% feels that it is travelling, 16.19% feels that it is career and 9.52% feels interference in all spheres of their life. Nobody senses any interference in the expression of opinion. In case of the male adolescents 35.29% of them feel interference in their relationship of friendship, 25.88% feels it in travelling, and 38.82% feel it in the process of choosing a career. None of the male adolescents seem to find any interference in expression of opinion and all spheres.
- The attitude of the family turns out to be a decisive factor in the formation of an adolescents' personality. The adolescents are greatly moved by the response they receive from their family members. Hence, 100% female respondent declares that the attitude of the family and relatives matters for them. 36.5% female respondent finds their family and relative friendly, 46% finds trustworthy and 17.5% thinks that it is normal. In the same way 92% male respondent admits that the attitude of the family and relatives matters for them while 8% respondent doesn't have any clear notion in this regard. 12.2% male finds the attitude friendly, 51.67% finds trustworthy and 29.44% thinks that it is normal. However, 6.6% male respondents expressed uncertainty about the attitude of the family.

- Friendship is a delicate relationship for the adolescents. The adolescents' attitude towards friendship varies distinctly. 79.5% female adolescent responses that they can make friendship easily and 20.5% female adolescent feels that they can't make friendship easily. 61% male adolescent thinks that they can make friendship easily and 39% female adolescent says that friendship is not an easy task for them. Regarding the criteria of a good friend most of the respondents assert that they must be simple, sympathetic, trustworthy, helpful etc.
- The researcher finds it interesting to note that like most of the people adolescents are also sensitive to other people's misery. 96% female adolescents claim that they are hurt seeing other's in trouble and try to help them. 4% female refrains from giving any response. Of the male adolescents' 92% says that they are moved by other people's distress and 8% remains silent.
- Adolescence period is a time of fancy. They often visualize different lifestyles and dreams of attaining those. Of the female adolescent 25% supports simple lifestyle, 66.5% favours moderate lifestyle and only 8.5% speaks about luxurious lifestyle. Of the male adolescent 36% prefers simple lifestyle, 49% desires moderate lifestyle and 15% fancies luxurious lifestyle.
- Now-a-days electronic media influence all spheres of human life. The electronic devices have made life faster and easier. Despite the huge negative impact of the misuse of these devices, none can ignore the utility of the gadgets. In this context 45% adolescent female says that electronic media is responsible for value degradation of adolescents. However, 54.5% adolescent female thinks in the opposite way. Out of the 45% female adolescent 6.59% points out T.V., 45% blames mobile, and 48.35% considers all, i.e., T.V., mobile, computer responsible for value degradation of the adolescents. Of the male adolescents 63.5% thinks electronic media is accountable for the degradation of adolescent and 26.5% thinks in the opposite way. 18.11% male adolescent blames T.V., 59% blames mobile, 14.96% points out computer and 7.87% considers all the gadgets responsible for this degradation.
- School is a miniature society and classrooms are the workshop to develop the human resources. 86.5% female adolescent and 86% male adolescent support that regular attendance and study in the classrooms help students to enhance their academic achievement. 7.5% female adolescents and 5.5% male adolescents refrain from making any comment and 6% female adolescent and 8.5% male adolescent disagree the above stated notion.
- Health is wealth. It is important for everyone to be health conscious from early age. Good habits from childhood onward make a person physically sound and strong. Most of the adolescent respondents, i.e., 93% feels that good health means a physical condition unaffected by illness. However, 7% female and 10% male respondents refrain from giving any response.
- Leisure is essential for proper mental nourishment. Everyone has individual way of spending leisure. Of the female adolescents 30% spends their leisure in reading books, 9% spends in travelling, 46.5% spends in socializing with friends and 14.5% spends in other activities such as listening to music, watching movies, playing games in computer, cutting and knitting, cooking etc. Of the male adolescents 26% prefers reading, 38%

prefers travelling, 31% prefers socializing with friends, and 24% prefers other activities such as playing games, drawing, or handicraft.

- Physical exercise is key to good health. People maintain different types of physical activities to keep good health. In this context, 22.5% female adolescent prefers games and sports, 3% prefers going to gymnasium, 69.5% prefers household activities and 5% prefers other activities. Of the male adolescents 49.5% prefers games and sports, 16.5% prefers going to gymnasium, 31% prefers household activities, and 3% prefers other activities.

- Examination is the way of evaluation of people's academic achievement. But it is seen that the adolescents feel the pressure of examination excessively. Sometimes the pressure makes them ill. 23.5% female adolescent responses that they feel problem during examination. 21.27% female adolescent claims that they suffer from fever, 61.7% claims that they suffer from headache, and 17.02% female adolescent claims that they suffer from lack of appetite. However, 76.5% female adolescent does not have any trouble regarding examination. Of the male adolescents 28% claims that they are affected by the pressure of examination and 72% feels no trouble during examination.

- Healthy and hygienic food habit is essential to maintain a life free of disease. However different people have different food habits, and everyone is not concerned about the hygienic quality of their food habits. 47.5% female adolescent claims to develop a food habit consciously and 52.5% female adolescent appears casual about the food habit. Among the female respondents 10.52% likes ethnic food, 76.82% opts for homemade food, 7.36% likes fast food and 5.26% craves for restaurant food. Of the male respondents 55% appears concerned about their food habit and 45% seems careless in this regard. 6.36% male adolescent likes ethnic foods, 84.54% likes homemade foods, 5.45% prefers fast food and only 3.63% likes restaurant food.

- Aimless life is like a boat without oar. Everyone should set an aim in their life at an early age and should strive to reach that goal. Obviously, the adolescent period is the most crucial time to set an aim for future. In this study, 87.5% female admits that they have already set an aim. Most of the female respondents want to be a teacher while singer, writer, lawyer, nurse, air hostage, model are the alternative choices. Some of the respondents want to be just a good citizen. Only 12.5% female respondents give no answer to this question.

- On the other hand, 94% male respondents unveil their aim. The primary choice is again teacher, whereas some of them want to be good citizen, singer, poet, writer, politician, administrative officer, policeman, soldier and a few students want to be ideal farmer. 6% male respondents remain silent in this context.

- Modern day to day life is money centred. Economic aspect is related to all sphere of human life. Every individual needs money to fulfil their necessities. As a college going student adolescents also ask their parents for money. Among the respondents 80% female are satisfied with the pocket money, 10% unsatisfied and 10% gives no response to this query; whereas 72.5% male says that they are satisfied with the pocket money, 22% expresses dissatisfaction and 5.5% gives no response.

- It is natural and necessary for the parents to help their children in taking decisions about their future and career. But the adolescents sometimes show displeasure in such interference. 66% female respondents admit that parents give suggestions regarding

their career and future life and 34% says that they are not given any such suggestion. In case of male, 67% respondents admit that they are given suggestions whereas 33% answers in negative.

- Everything in this world changes with time. Societies also beckon to this law of change. These changes sometimes create a gap between old and young generation. This generation gap creates misunderstanding among the people of the society. In this context 19% female respondents assert that elders misunderstand the young generation while 54% thinks on the contrary and 27% says that it appears sometimes that the elders misunderstand the youth. On the other hand, 20% male respondents claim that the elders do not understand the young generation while 38% do not see any misunderstanding and 42% says that it occurs sometimes.

- Some children suffer from chronic illness. Sometimes it removes as they grow up. Regarding this question of chronic illness, 15.5% female respondents admit that they have chronic ailment. Among them 70.96% suffers from headache, 12.9% suffers from fever and 16.12% suffers from other illness. However, 84% female respondents claim that they have no chronic illness. Of the male respondents 20% admits that they are suffering from illness and 80% says that they are utterly in good health. Out of the 20%, 12.5% suffers from dyspepsia, 30% suffers from headache, 25% suffers from fever and 32.5% suffers from other illness.

- Sorrow is an inevitable emotion. People have their own way of reacting to the emotion of sorrow. They do different thing to come out of their sadness. The researcher finds in this study that 20% female prefer to talk to others to come out from sadness, 18% female prefer to go for outing when they feel sad, 19% watch movies and 43% prefer to listen to music when they feel sad. In case of male, 21.5% prefer to talk to others, 23.5% go for outing, 11.5% watch movies and 38.5% prefer to listen to music when they feel sad.

- Anger is a basic instinct that every individual carries. Someone can control the anger and other has not. Generally, in anger individual intend to do different activities. Among the female respondents 2.5% intend to beat someone, 13% stay calm and quiet, 67.5% try to understand the situation and 17% are uncertain in the time of anger. In case of male, 5% intend to beat someone, 14% stay calm and quiet, 57.5% try to understand the situation and 28.5% are uncertain when they are in anger.

2. Findings:

On analysis of the Questionnaire constructed by the researcher to find out some common problems of adolescence period, it was found that male adolescent students were more aggressive and get excited more easily than their counterparts. On health-related issues both male and female adolescents are equally conscious. However, slight differences can be traced between male and female respondents in their approach to health-related matters. Same result was found by **Sumbali (1981)** that adolescent boys were more aggressive than girls. Female adolescent students faced more problems than male in social, school, and personal psychological areas. **Gupta (1981)** conducted a study on the problems of urban adolescent girls and the result revealed that adolescent girls had the greatest number of problems in the society or the school, in personal life or in emotional sphere. They face lesser difficulties in the sphere of courtship, sex, and marriage. In another study **Das (1982)** has made an elaborate observation of the root causes of behavioural problems of the

adolescents. His research reveals several issues, such as dissatisfying home conditions, lack of parental understanding, poor adjustment in schools, awkwardness in school environment, awkwardness with the teachers as well as the students, feelings of insecurity and inferiority, frustration of fragmented expectations or lack of recognition, the breach between dream and realism, are the contributory determinants for behaviour problems. **Geckil & Yildiz (2006)** conducted the study on adolescent health behaviours and problems on 610 students in Malatya High School and finding was that adolescent had problems with the future and psychological problems. It was also noticed that boys had more problems than girls' nutrition, social adaptation, physiological and sexual matters. **Pathak, Sharma, Pravan, Gupta, Ojha & Goel (2011)** conducted the study on 1150 students of age group 12-18 years and found that alarming no of adolescents suffer from emotional and behavioural problems which have their root in the family environment. **Ruiz, Diaz, Ferrer & Ochoa (2012)** conducted a study on 580 school student and 669 college students and found 46% school students and 41% college students feels anxiety and stress. **Sharma & Saini (2013)**, in their study, finding was that girls' health and social adjustment level is better than their emotional adjustment while the boys are socially more adjusted than health and emotional areas. Another cross-sectional study was conducted by **Bista, Thapa, Sapkata, Singh & Pokharel (2016)** on 787 students and found that 17.03% adolescent students suffered with psychological dysfunction. Male students were more affected (9.50%) than female students (7.80%). One important cross-sectional study was done on 2350 Turkish students in the age group 18-25 years of Public and Private Universities of Istanbul on Internet Addiction (I.A.) fatigue and sleep problems among university students by **Bener, Yildirin, Tarun, Catan, Bolay, Alie, Akyel & Griffiths (2019)**. The findings revealed that Internet Addiction was associated with poor dietary habits, sleep problems and fatigue symptoms.

3. Policy Implication:

Indian adolescents form a very significant group of the demographic dividend that Indian politicians eulogize about so frequently. Hence, the issues of adolescents must be addressed in a most sensitive and premeditated manner. Hence, methodical study to find out the problems of the adolescents with specific elucidations is extremely exigent and momentous. It is hoped that the findings of the present study would obviously help to accelerate the efforts of the policymakers, educationists, and other researchers to sort out the concerns of the adolescents in the sphere of adjustment. The contextual impact of this study can be outlined in the following way:

- The findings of the present study would also help the teachers Secondary and Higher Secondary institutions to get an insider's view of the adolescents' psychology enabling him/her to appreciate his/her students more intimately. Subsequently, he/she would be more adroit in his/her role of friend, philosopher, mentor, and collaborator in fostering the prospects of his/her students.
- The findings of this study also provide a conspicuous picture of the adolescent period to the elder guardian, by allowing them to have a comprehensive realization of the negativity of the general adult common sarcasm on the psychological health of young adolescents, which consequently complicates social and emotional adjustment of the upcoming generation. Thus, the findings of the study, it is hoped, would help in bridging of generation and communication gap between these two ends by highlighting

the need to establish a more trusting and reliable relationship between the adult and young generation.

- Adolescence is a problematic and complex period of human life. To overcome the complexities of the period one should have an idea of the changes that occur within an individual during adolescence. Adjustment and other interrelated problems are often triggered by a lack of awareness of these changes during this important stage of development. The findings of the study would endorse self-awareness among students and provide the Government, NGOs, and other social institutions resources to run awareness campaigns on Adolescence Education, Development Psychology, etc.
- Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) is a significant Government initiative launched to solve the adjustment and other problems of adolescents. The findings of the study would help the policy makers and the AEP trainers to undertake positive, proactive, and deliberate action plan in this regard.
- Participation in co-curricular activities helps the adolescent to be a better and more socially and emotionally adjustable individual. The findings of the study reinforce the importance of co-curricular activities in educational institutions.
- Community-centric and activity-centred curriculum would heighten adjustment process of adolescent. These findings would assist the curriculum designer or educational policy makers in framing effective curriculum for the adolescents. At the same time, the teacher-training programmes also need to include improved and more paid centric teaching-learning process to be more effective.
- The findings would further encourage the need of adolescent students to develop self-confidence, self-discipline, self-respect and motivate others to inculcate positive socialization processes for better adjustment. For this inclusion of Life Skill Education in the curriculum at this level, would be a wise decision as evident from the benefits of its inclusion in the curriculum at the educationally developed countries.
- The outcome of the study stresses the need and understanding by the adolescent students of creating equal, sympathetic, and reliable attitudes for the balanced and harmonious development of their personalities.
- The study outcomes will also be very much helpful in accelerating the need for adolescent students' welfare schemes of the Government.
- Social scientists would also find this study useful to acquire some significant information about students' turmoil in the adolescent period.

4. Recommendations for Further Research:

Research opens the doors for new thoughts and investigations. Hence, one research work leads to multiple works of further investigation into a particular subject matter from different perspectives and levels. In this context, the following suggestions have been made for further investigation into the present topic based on the researcher's own experiences of a lack of information and empirical evidence in this area of knowledge.

- Elaborate studies on the present topic can be carried out in different parts of the country with larger samples.
- In this study, only adolescents' social and emotional adjustment were taken up for investigation. However, other dimensions like school adjustment, home adjustment, sexual adjustment, etc., can be included for further study in assessing their impact on an adolescent's life.

- The study qualitatively focuses only on three common problem areas of adolescents: social, emotional, and physical health. So, in future studies, other problem areas of adolescents, such as academic problems, career-related problems, etc., can be explored and investigated qualitatively and quantitatively.
- Comparative studies may also be taken to study the relationship between social and emotional adjustment of working and non-working mothers, adolescent students of private and public schools, etc. Moreover, studies may be carried out on the adjustment of adolescents of different socioeconomic statuses, adolescents of nuclear and joint families, etc.
- The relativity between social or emotional adjustment with the academic outcome has been studied in this study. In future studies, social and emotional adjustment of adolescents and its relation to self-concept, anxiety level of aspiration, emotional intelligence, and other aspects of personality can be included.
- In future investigations, the effect of socioeconomic status, political, cultural milieu, etc., on adolescents' social and emotional adjustment can also be included.
- Social and emotional adjustment problems and their relation to the causes of juvenile delinquency, criminal offenses, etc., also need to be further studied, especially in the context of the present state of our society, where violence and vandalism are very rampant amongst our youth.

5. Conclusion:

Crow and Crow (1965) mention four significant problem zones for adolescents. He has observed that adolescents have problems related to their sexual maturity, shift in temperament in approaching things, family and social environment, and age-related transition. Talukdar & Talukdar (2008) reinforce the same argument while discussing the factors influencing adolescent behaviour. Parental conflict often produces a tense home environment, an under-educated mother, a faulty upbringing, a lack of monitoring of the siblings by the parents, extreme attachment to mobiles, televisions, and social media, the pampering of unrealistic dreams or improbable aspirations, amity with spoiled peers, a sense of social inferiority or superiority, etc. are some of the significant issues contributing to the rise of problem behaviour in adolescents. Behavioural problems in adolescents lead to overall adjustment problems. It might cause many serious issues like aggravation, stubbornness, hostility, impulsiveness, criminal delinquency, etc. Hence, a proper understanding and approach to adolescents' problems must be carefully carried out. It would open the door to resolving the adolescents' issues in a scientific way. The adolescents' neurotic problems can be addressed fairly and mentored to act responsibly in society. The nation needs a healthy generation to bear the torch of its progress. Adolescents are the base of that generation. Their problems, as this study has highlighted, can be confronted. The educationists and the policymakers might take note of the fact that adolescents, irrespective of their gender and their locality, don't face similar challenges. They have different approaches to their lives, leading to different dilemmas. These dilemmas cannot be allowed to grow up to be regretted or repulsed. This study is a genuine effort to delve into the dilemmas of adolescents. The researcher strongly feels that a more elaborate and precise study should be carried out to identify adolescents' problems in different socio-economic environments.

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An appraisal of contrasting working condition of own account workers and casual wage labours as a part of urban informal economy in Siliguri Municipal Corporation, West Bengal

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Abstract

The urban informal workers are the neglected and underserved economic group in any urban setup like Siliguri Municipal Corporation. The informal workers constitute a major part of the economy of any region or urban area but the facilities they get in return is very insufficient. Workers from different occupational groups are included in urban informal economy. The working condition of the informal workers are very much hazardous and associated with very much deteriorated condition. The informal workers due to their little bargain power and lack of awareness about their specific rights often has to work in those bad working condition. But the informal workers according to their nature of employment can be divided in different types like own account workers or the self-employed, casual wage labours, domestic workers etc. Their working condition also differs according to their control over work environment or surrounding. The own account workers usually are the self-employed workers like vegetable shop owners, fish & meat sellers, street vendors, auto & toto drivers, on the other hand the wage earners are the group where the workers are paid for their physical job or services like construction workers, porter, rickshaw pullers etc. The own account workers usually have the control over their working condition as they are the authority of their shop or workplace and are more associated with trading and business for their livelihood but the wage earners have to depend on the superior for their wage and the overall workplace is controlled by the authority or the superior. Hence the present paper is the humble attempt to understand the contrasting difference of working condition between the own account workers and casual wage labours as informal workers in Siliguri Municipal Corporation.

Keywords: Informal workers, Own Account Workers, Casual Wage Labourers, Working Condition, Informal Economy, Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC)

Introduction:

The informal workers are the major working sector of any economy but they are underserved as the role they play. The workers perform various complementary services in place of informal workers and play the role of distributor of various services in urban

economy. The major chunk of the urban economy is constituted by the informal workers (Papola, 1980) and largely they are the rural migrant from the countryside who have moved to the urban areas in search of job (Cherunilam, 1981; Bhattacharya, 1998). The concept of informal income opportunities was first initiated by K. Hart (1971) as a social group in his work of Ghana, where he analysed the distinction between informal and formal income generating opportunities and also discussed the terms like self-employed and the casual wage labourers. After that phase the different disciplines of social science become more concerned about the informal workers and the academic world shifted its focus to the studies regarding the betterment of informal economy. The concept of informal economy basically includes the works and the workers in informal sector and the informal employments outside the informal sector. Informal workers are not only present in the informal sector enterprises but also present in the formal sector jobs with different roles and less social security. Different international and national bodies like International Labour Organization (ILO), International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) have defined informal economy and informal workers from different point of views.

According to the 17th ICLS (2003) informal workers are the own account workers who are employed in their own informal establishments and the paid workers employed by any household. While, NSSO 66th round (2012) defines informal workers as the own account workers who work as a self-employed, owner, helper in household enterprises and the casual wage labourers as the workers who are getting paid in daily basis for the physical work they perform.

Literature Review:

Kashyap and Singh (1987) mentioned that the informal workers are the exploited sector of the society and the employers are use them to the fullest. While Kundu (1999) reported about the low wage and poor working condition of the urban informal workers. Waite (2001) mentioned about the effects hazardous working condition on the wellbeing of the informal workers and the different labour associations play a vital role in developing the working condition of the workers. Marjit and Bhattacharya (2006) showed how the condition of informal workers is deteriorating day by day in SMC, they have made temporal research to assess the overall living and working condition of informal workers. Das (2012) emphasized the absence of social security and the low wage problem among the informal workers. Chatterjee (2016) identified the harassment related problems among the informal workers in different regions. Basu and Thomas (2009) also expressed their concern about the underdeveloped working condition of informal workers in this era of Globalization where every sector is flooding with advanced technology but the informal workers are still doomed from the perspective of overall working condition.

Hence after reviewing all the literatures the basic problem that can be emphasized and needs further attention is the problematic working condition of the urban informal workers. So, the present study has been undertaken to assess the overall working condition of the urban informal workers in the SMC jurisdiction. The study will present a synoptic view as well as the contrasting underlying working condition of the two informal occupational groups.

Study Area:

The Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) has been chosen for the present study, which is the sole metropolitan region of situated in the northern part of West Bengal. The location of SMC is approximately 26°40'44"N to 26°46'09"N and 88°23'51"E to 88°27'26"E and the city is situated in middle of dense forest in northern and eastern side, while encircled by River Mahananda and Balasan in west and south. SMC has a total population of 513264 as per 2011 Census and has a projected population of 749000 as per Census of India. Siliguri is referred as the 'Gateway of North-east India' and is a major centre for tourism and commercial activities. The region generates huge pull force for the rural to urban migrants of the surrounding states and districts. So, with time the population of SMC is betting larger. Administratively SMC covers 41.9. sq km. area with 47 wards, of which wards 1 to 30 and 45 to 47 falls under Darjeeling District and 31 to 44 falls under Jalpaiguri district administration. The city is situated in the terai foothill region of Darjeeling Himalaya and poses great scenic beauty with pleasant climate throughout the year. NH 31, NH12A, AH2, New Jalpaiguri railway station and Bagdogra airport connect this city with other part of the state and country.

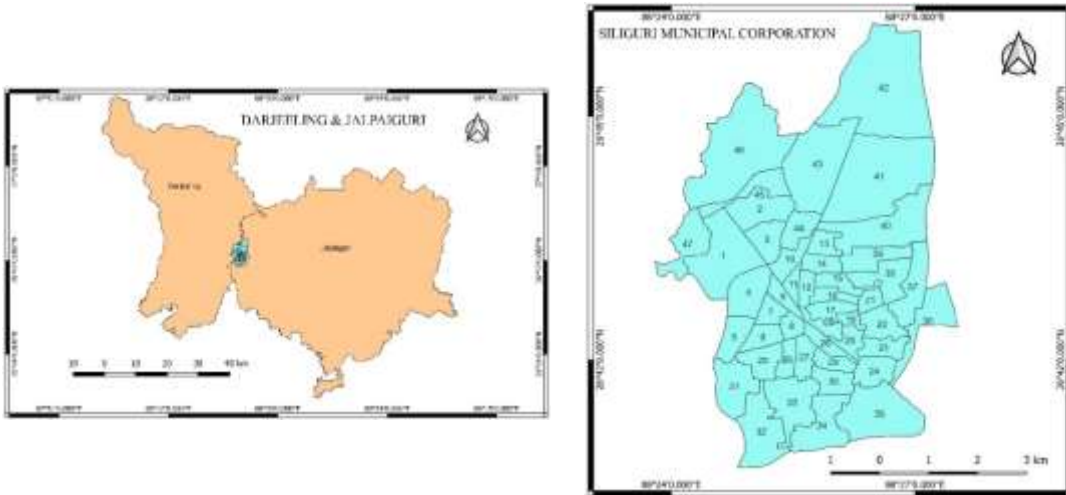


Figure 1: Location of Siliguri Municipal Corporation.

Methodology:

The study is heavily based on primary data collected from SMC jurisdiction area, during the year 2022-23. The respondents are chosen by stratified random sampling method where the total informal workers are divided in to 2 strata i.e., own account workers and the casual wage labourers. These 2 major informal workers strata have been further divided in to 2 sub-strata i.e., own account workers have been divided into vegetable shop owners and fish & meat sellers' occupational groups while the casual wage labourers are divided into 2 sub-strata like construction workers and porters. Then the samples have been drawn using random sampling method. The working condition related data of 5 parameters has been collected like workplace hygiene, verbal harassment, physical harassment, mental harassment and the feeling of exploitation. All the data is binary in nature, and clustering analysis has been done to identify the working condition groups across all informal workers.

	Nature of work	Occupation	Number of Samples	Total Sample
Informal workers	Own Account Workers	Vegetable shop owners	42	91
		Fish & Meat Sellers	49	
	Casual Wage Earners	Construction workers	54	94
		Porters	40	

Source: Primary Survey, 2022-23

The collected data has been analysed using the chi-square test of independence to check the equal distribution of sample across all working condition, Cramer's V to check the strength of association and the K-means clustering analysis has been done to identify the workers having different working conditions.

Working Condition of the informal workers:

To assess the working condition of the own account workers and the casual wage labourers working group the 5 parameters related to the working condition has been analysed like:

Workplace hygiene: The term refers to the periodic cleaning and the waste disposal from the workplace which can probably impact the working environment of the informal workers. unhygienic working condition can lead to different health issues among the informal workers.

Verbal Harassment: This adverse working condition is related with use of foul language or the abusive tone or slangs towards the informal workers. The continuous use of verbal harassment can make the worker unwilling to perform their job.

Physical Harassment: This condition refers to the any kind of physical attack by using any object or simply pushing and hitting with hand, slapping, kicking or sexual harassment like unwanted touching or any intimate physical act without the consent of the workers.

Mental Harassment: This condition refers to the isolation of the workers during job, continuously questioning the ability of the workers or demeaning and insulting the workers unwantedly. This condition can impact the overall mental health of the workers.

Feeling of Exploitation: This workplace condition refers to the mental dissatisfaction arising due to overtime work, asking extra demand or favour by the customer or employer, asking for extra effort without proper payment etc. The feeling of exploitation sometimes makes workers unwilling to perform their job.

Workplace Hygiene Condition:

Among the workers 45% have responded that they have workplace hygiene and 55% have responded that they don't have workplace hygiene. Among the type of workers 24% own account workers and 22% casual wage labourers have reported that they have workplace hygiene. Among the others 25% own account workers have reported that they don't have workplace hygiene and 29% casual wage labourers have reported that they don't have the

parameter. So, the respondents are more or less equally distributed among the workplace hygiene conditions.

Workers		Yes %	No %	Total %
Type of workers	Own Account Workers %	24	25	49
	Casual Wage Labourers %	22	29	51
Total		45	55	100
Tests		Test Value		Sig.
Chi Square Test		0.627		0.428
Df		1		-
Cramer's V		0.058		0.428
Source: Calculated by Researcher from Primary Data				

The chi-square test is showing an insignificant test value for calculated p value. Thus, the null hypothesis stating 'the workplace condition does not varies according to the workers group' can be accepted, and the alternative hypothesis can be rejected. Cramer's V value is also very much low for a meaningful association between the two variables like workplace hygiene and the type of workers. So, it can be inferred that the workplace condition does not vary according to the type of workers and the own account workers like vegetable shop owners and fish and meat sellers and casual wage labourers like construction workers and porters have problems of workplace hygiene.

Verbal Harassment Condition:

Among the surveyed workers 45% workers have reported that they are facing verbal harassment and 55% workers have stated that they don't face verbal harassment. Highest 28% among the casual wage labourers are facing the verbal harassment at workplace on the other hand the 17% of the own account workers are facing verbal harassment. Rest of the workers from two informal workers groups are not facing any kind of harassment problem.

Workers		Yes %	No %	Total %
Type of workers	Own Account Workers %	17	32	49
	Casual Wage Labourers %	28	23	51
Total		45	55	100
Tests		Test Value		Sig.
Chi Square Test		6.812		0.009
Df		1		-
Cramer's V		0.192		0.009
Source: Calculated by Researcher from Primary Data				

The chi-square test is indicating that there is a significant variation of verbal harassment among the own account workers and the casual labourers. So, the null hypothesis can be rejected and the alternative hypothesis stating the variation of verbal harassment can be accepted. The Cramer' V result is indicating that there is a relatively weak association between two parameters.

Physical Harassment Condition:

Physical harassment is a serious workplace problem as there are many victims of that can be found, but the problem is that everyone is not willing to talk about that problem. very few shares of workers are 9% among all have reported about physical harassment. Among them 7% belongs to the casual wage labourers and 2% belong to the own account workers; however, the share of workers facing verbal harassment on casual wage labourers' group is more than triple as compared to the own account workers group.

Workers		Yes %	No %	Total %
Type of workers	Own Account Workers %	2	48	49
	Casual Wage Labourers %	7	44	51
Total		9	91	100
Tests		Test Value		Sig.
Chi Square Test		6.793		0.011
Df		1		-
Cramer's V		0.187		0.011
Source: Calculated by Researcher from Primary Data				

The chi-square test value is small yet indicating a significant variation in the verbal harassment scenario. The null hypothesis can be rejected and the alternative hypothesis can be accepted for this test which indicate a significant variation in physical harassment scenario. The Cramer's V value is also suggesting a relatively weak association between informal workers types and the physical harassment scenario. The test result may be small but the significant variation indicating a variable workplace condition.

Mental Harassment Condition:

The mental harassment is a serious issue which impact the mental wellbeing of the workers and 61% of the informal workers have responded that they are facing mental harassment and 39% are indicating they are not facing mental harassment. According to the workers group 42% of the casual wage labourers are facing mental harassment and 19% own account workers are facing mental harassment, rest of the respondents does not face any kind of harassment problems from both the informal occupation groups.

Workers		Yes %	No %	Total %
Type of workers	Own Account Workers %	19	30	49
	Casual Wage Labourers %	42	9	51
Total		61	39	100
Tests		Test Value		Sig.
Chi Square Test		34.892		0.000
Df		1		-
Cramer's V		0.434		0.000
Source: Calculated by Researcher from Primary Data				

The chi-square test is indicating a variable workplace condition among the informal workers types and the chi-square value is large enough to indicate a meaningful difference among the workers. So, the null hypothesis can be rejected and the alternative hypothesis can be accepted that the mental harassment condition is variable among informal workers types. The Cramer's V value is also suggesting a relatively strong association among the informal workers type and the mental harassment scenario. Hence, the mental harassment also differs according to the workers types in SMC.

Feeling of Exploitation:

The feeling of exploitation also makes the worker unwilling to work at any workplace and most importantly hamper the mental condition of the workers. Among the workers 54% of the workers have responded that they feel exploited at workplace and 46% workers reported that they don't feel exploited at workplace. Among the workers fee exploited the share of workers are high in casual labourers' group i.e., 35% and low in own account workers group. rest of the workers from other groups don't feel exploited at their workplace.

Workers		Yes %	No %	Total %
Type of workers	Own Account Workers %	19	30	49
	Casual Wage Labourers %	35	16	51
Total		54	46	100
Tests		Test Value		Sig.
Chi Square Test		15.148		0.000
Df		1		
Cramer's V		0.286		0.000
Source: Calculated by Researcher from Primary Data				

The Chi-square value 15.148 is indicating an association between the exploitation and worker type. The significance value of less than 0.05 is indicating a significant variation in exploitation condition among the worker’s type. So, the null hypothesis of no association can be rejected and the alternative hypothesis stating the variation in exploitation feeling can be accepted. The casual wage labourers feel more exploited in their workplace. The Cramer’s V result also indicating a relationship of moderate association among the exploitation feeling and the worker’s type.

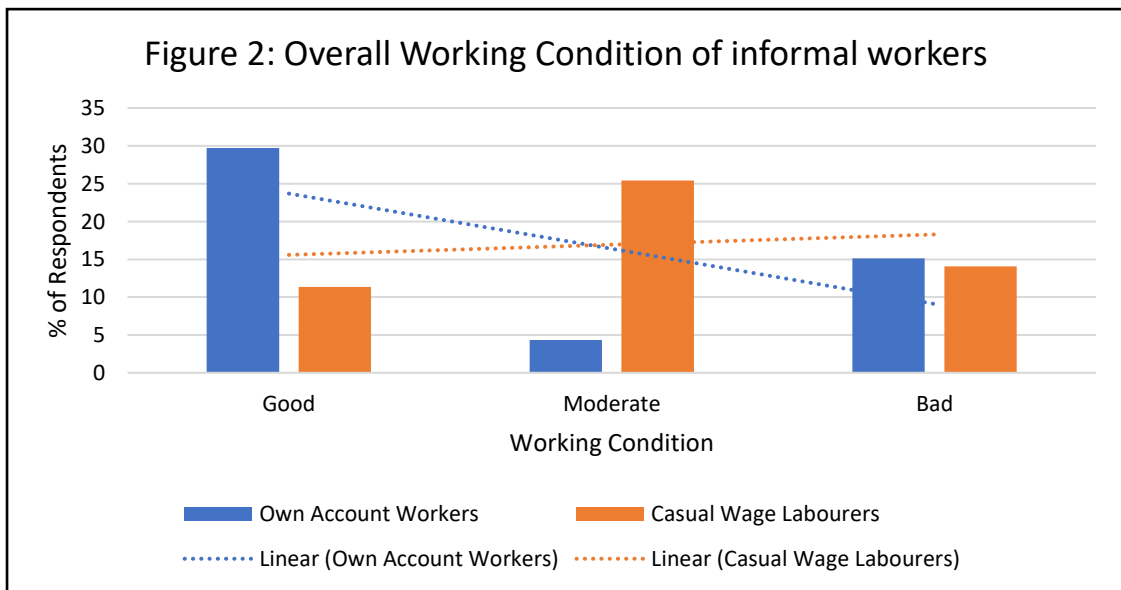
Assessment of overall working condition:

An attempt has been made to analyse the overall working condition of the informal workers. K means clustering analysis has been done using SPSS software using the composite score of each workplace parameters. The composite score has been formed based on positivity and the positive responses are marked as ‘1’ and the negative responses are marked as ‘0’. And all the parameters are given scores and the composite value of 5 parameters have been used for clustering analysis. So, the higher composite score indicates better working condition and the lower composite scores indicate bad working condition. Based on clusters formed the three working conditions marked as ‘Good’, ‘Moderate’, ‘Bad’ has been formed.

Table 7: ANOVA for effectivity of composite score						
	Cluster		Error		F	Sig.
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
Composite Score	230.958	2	.193	182	1197.919	.000
The F tests should be used only for descriptive purposes because the clusters have been chosen to maximize the differences among cases in different clusters. The observed significance levels are not corrected for this and thus cannot be interpreted as tests of the hypothesis that the cluster means are equal.						
Source: Calculated by Researcher from Primary Data						

The ANOVA table is showing that the composite score is effectively indicating the variations in the working condition. The significance value of 0.000 is also indicating the effectivity of the clustering analysis.

Table 8: Assessment of Overall working condition					
Workers		Good%	Moderate%	Bad%	Total %
Type of workers	Own Account Workers %	30	4	15	49
	Casual Wage Labourers %	11	25	14	51
Total		41	30	29	100
Tests		Test Value			Sig.
Chi Square Test		42.902			0.000
Df		2			-
Cramer’s V		0.482			0.000
Source: Calculated by Researcher from Primary Data					



Most of the own account workers have good working condition i.e., 30% and most of the casual wage labourers have moderate working condition. The other categories of working condition are also variable. So, the broad picture suggests the own account workers mostly have good to moderate working condition but the casual wage labourers on the other hand have moderate to bad working condition. The trend line in the above figure is also suggesting the same trend among the worker's type. The chi square result of overall working condition is also suggesting that it is variable among the occupational groups. the Cramer's V also suggesting a relatively strong relationship among the variables.

Conclusion:

The above discussion regarding the working condition of the own account workers and casual wage labourers is showing that they are highly variable accept the workplace hygiene in Siliguri Municipal Corporation. The vegetable, fish and meat sellers have to operate from the market are which is generally not hygienic and periodic cleaning is absent on the other hand the porter and construction workers also has to work in construction sites or transportation which are also nit very hygienic. But according to the other criteria the workplace conditions are variable but as the own account workers have more control over their shop so they have the less workplace problems than the casual wage labourers. Hence from the workplace condition perspective the casual wage labourers are more sufferers than the own account workers as they have to rely on outside condition at their workplace. So better policy formation, mass awareness generation are important for the betterment of workplace condition of the informal workers. The labour unions can also play important roles to improve the overall workplace condition of the informal workers especially casual wage labourers in SMC.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare they do not have any conflict of interest.

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From silence to articulation: A postmemorial reading of Rohan Chhetri's *Lost, Hurt, or in Transit Beautiful*

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Abstract

Rohan Chhetri's *Lost, Hurt, or in Transit Beautiful* captures the dilemma of being an Indian-Nepali diasporic writer who oscillates between historical amnesia and the burden of unresolved legacies. The volume is replete with images of suffering, mortality, bereavement, recollection, and ancestral trauma, reconstructing the memories of those who lived through the failed revolution. Using Marianne Hirsch's theory of Postmemory, this paper investigates how the second generation, like Chhetri, recalls traumatic experiences that they did not directly experience but that are passed down through stories, images, and behavior. As Hirsch writes, postmemory 'describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before' (Hirsch, 2012, p. 5). The paper closely examines the memories of the ancestral figures like his father and grandfather, whose physical absence nonetheless profoundly impacts the speaker's identity and emotional landscape. This allows Chhetri to evoke a past intertwined with communal violence, broken promises, betrayals, and the disillusionment of separate statehood demands, shared by many like his grandfather, juxtaposed with a present that is equally dystopian and devoid of redemption.

Keywords: postmemory, trauma, ancestral memories, grandfather figure, failed revolution, identity

Introduction:

Rohan Chhetri's *Lost, Hurt, or in Transit Beautiful* captures the dilemma of being an Indian-Nepali diasporic writer who oscillates between historical amnesia and the burden of unresolved legacies. The volume is replete with images of suffering, mortality, bereavement, recollection, and ancestral trauma, reconstructing the memories of those who lived through the failed revolution. Using Marianne Hirsch's theory of Postmemory, this paper investigates how the second generation, like Chhetri, recalls traumatic experiences that they did not directly experience but that are passed down through stories, images, and behavior. As Hirsch writes, postmemory 'describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before' (Hirsch, 2012, p. 5). In the poem *Father, Further: 1986*, the poet admits, "I don't exist yet... (pp 22)," yet long before his birth, the narrative of unjust politics stripping the Hill people of their aspirations

for separate statehood is already inscribed. Born into a family with a revolutionary grandfather who is force-fed soil by baton-wielding officers for demanding autonomy and land, “Feed him the land, that is what they’re fighting for” (Chhetri, 2021, p. 22), the speaker inherits the emotional weight of history that the powerful strive to erase. Underlining the politics of remembrance, Rohan Chhetri, in one of his interviews, remarks,

“I draw a lot from postmemory, familial history, and sometimes local legends retelling the various iterations of the Gorkhaland revolution, a 100-year-old movement demanding self-determination and a separate state for the Nepali-speaking population from the Indian state of West Bengal. My grandfather was involved in arguably the bloodiest iteration of the movement in the 80s. I used some of these details and the history and politics of the border town to frame something of an epic narrative which mixes the fabular and the personal and the historical, taking minor characters and recasting them in a mythical space.” (Darling, 2022)

This concise volume can be viewed as a site of historical reclamation and carries the imprint of an intergenerational voice of resistance. Although Chhetri now resides abroad, and we learn that he travelled a long way from his hometown to New Delhi and then to Los Angeles, his poetry nevertheless makes many allusions to his hometown. To quote him,

“Prospect of home washed in the retch/Of anxiety. My history of nausea in the cold half-/ Light of childhood, where did it come from?” (Chhetri, 2021, p. 6).

By closely examining the four primary sections of the collection, we can say that Chhetri not only recounts but also performs inherited pain, exemplifying what Hirsch refers to as “affiliative acts of memory” that rewrite histories suppressed within aesthetic frameworks. Chhetri’s poetic structure is unique, freely transitioning among prose poems, couplets, tercets, and open forms, indicating a failure to stabilize and encapsulate the trauma. The first section, *Katabasis*, is structured as a descent, a rejection of transcendence, and a voyage into the ruins of memory that concludes in echo rather than epiphany: Chhetri deviates from confessional poetics with his concept of listening. In contrast to narrating, the poet presents himself as a witness, translator, and mourner. He lets the poetry be shaped by the stillness surrounding ancestral trauma in the form of grotesque images like the “two severed heads of the Liberation Front leaders hung from a branch of a guava tree” (Chhetri, p. 20) or the smell of “kerosene & ragsmoke” (Chhetri, p. 20) or the women marching in “gunmetal silence” (Chhetri, p. 20).

In her book *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, Hirsch contends that the emotional burden of trauma is passed on to successive generations, and that the second generation often inherits a kind of memory.

“It is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike posttraumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove” (Hirsch, 2012, p. 6).

The second generation of trauma survivors have memories that are indirect, but they hold traces of the trauma in the form of stories, representations, and the affective atmosphere transmitted to them by the first generation. The concept of postmemory has since been used extensively in literary studies, the history of art and cultural history, reflecting in particular the latter on the Shoah, migration and colonial history. As Hirsch writes, postmemory

“describes the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before” (2012, p. 5). Post-memory is memories of things that have not been experienced but are passed down through narratives, representations (images, etc), and cultural practices of those who have experienced them. The children and grandchildren of survivors, Hirsch argues, are not only imbued with a knowledge of the events but also a memory, one formed by the emotional and psychological legacy of those events. These memories are shaped to a large extent by family stories and shared cultural representations. ‘Ancestors become “giants walking the earth” and ordinary people and their lives are shot through with a mythic resonance. This singing of “the tale of the tribe” is a singing back to the history of colonization, immigration, and finally, against neocolonialism and the cultural claim that the state of Bengal exerts on the land and its ecology. The retelling is important because they also become placeholders of remembrance like songs and elegies of witness. On a fundamental level, it is also written in a hope against erasure from the national imagination.’ (Darling, 2022)

Through the lens of postmemory as a literary analytical tool, we can read Rohan Chhetri’s portrayal of the ramifications of trauma not only on the victims themselves, but also on the generations that come after. In this sense, Chhetri’s poetry serves as a site where the dialectic of memory and trauma works through the emotional inheritances of displacement and historical violence. One cannot help but notice the sharp poignancy in Chhetri’s work, “In the night fragrant with the tea gardens’ first flush/ we heard the pain-astonished men thrashing upside down/ as a baton tore welts into their calves” (Chhetri, 2021, p. 19). Here, we see how trauma is passed on, as the poet himself admits that “...I am not there yet” (pp 24), but the painful memories sculpt the identity of the later generation as the cultural legacies still inflect the personal. Hirsch interrogates, “How is trauma transmitted across generations... How is it remembered by those who did not live it or know it in their own bodies?” (2012, p. 11) and asserts that “postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation” (2012, p. 5). The emotive environment for inherited memory is created by Chhetri’s poetic style, which includes repetition, form, lyric voice, and the use of somatic imagery. *Katabasis*, the first section of the collection, foreshadows a descent that is both epic and intimate. The opening poem, *King’s Feedery*, invokes blood, bloodshed, and historical wreckage at the outset:

“One by one, they scrubbed/ blood off their fingers & faces & sat down to devour/ a feast of rice & goat served by the villagers” (Chhetri, 2021, p. 3).

This statement, seemingly straightforward, encapsulates the triviality of inherited violence. Despite not being a direct witness, the speaker participates through poetic reconstruction. This corresponds with Hirsch’s claim that postmemory pertains not to the re-experiencing of trauma but to its “remembrance” through the language, rituals, and silences transmitted across generations, “with its singular desire to bring to surface/ every lost map of your grandfather’s revolution” (Chhetri, 2021, p. 31). Throughout the poems, the spectral presence of the Gorkhaland movement is apparent, even if it is not explicitly mentioned. The images of fragmentation and surveillance are encoded with the language of revolt, disappearance, and siege:

“—long summer of bullets
One July morning a caesura in the terror a lull
in the pelting A man woke in the shape of a crosshair

assimilates the collective sorrow of his ancestors. This emotional legacy is not just a reflection of the traumatic past but a way that shapes the speaker's understanding of identity and belonging. Interestingly, the grandfather figure is both rooted in history and removed by time. Hirsch argues that instead of using a linear narrative, postmemory reflects "an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture" (2012, p. 6). In his poem *Lamentation for a Failed Revolution*, Chhetri deftly employs this approach to draw attention to the inhumanity associated with police atrocities. The poem is replete with horrifying account of a young man hastening to the drugstore, fatally shot at point-blank range, while on another afternoon a fifteen-year-old youngster struck with a pellet gun and hospitalized "alive in the elongated horror" (Chhetri, 2021, p. 9), while husbands are beaten by the same troops sustained by their wives, and a shirtless man self-immolates for the cause of the land. Interestingly, these brutal images of "bodies falling" are juxtaposed with the news of "two baby red pandas...born in captivity on the twenty-ninth day of the curfew" (2021, p.11). Despite death, violence, and hatred, this serves as a reminder that love, peace, and the creation of new life are still possible. The title of the poetry book, *Lost, Hurt, or in Transit Beautiful*, suggests that death and violence result in significant loss, while the twice-failed revolution has caused pain among the populace; nonetheless, there remains hope for renewal, as indicated by the phrase "in transit," which is beautiful.

Hirsch argues that postmemory is not a passive remembering of the past but is instead a living, breathing, active presence that leaves indelible marks on the emotional and psychological lives of those who carry it. In the prose-poem *Dasai*, the poet fondly recollects the memories of his great-grandparents, "alive, giants walking the earth still" (Chhetri, 2021, p. 32), his great-grandfather busy preparing for the festival of *Dasai*, which holds great cultural significance in a Nepali household. The poem awakens our olfactory and tactile senses with the "smell of new clothes and small bills still cool from the bank vault," and "foreheads itchy and fragrant in a pink crust of vermilion, yogurt, rice beads" (2021, p.32). The depiction of "nine goats fattened all summer were slaughtered one by one for the feast" and the mutton curry "simmering in a cinnamon gravy" that can be smelled "from the bend of the old school six houses away" (2021, p. 32) evoke a strong sense of nostalgia, as *Dasai* is a festival of homecoming within the Nepali cultural framework. Every Nepali in the diaspora can resonate with the cherished memories of parents, grandparents, and loved ones anticipating reunions on this festival, as "we see them once a year on this day" (2021, p. 32). The poet's trip to his ancestral place during *Dasai* resonates profoundly with all Nepalis. The poet reminiscing about his grandfather's final moments in *Towards Some Dark*, who perceives the "yellow mosquito net" as a white "shroud" (2021, p. 47), is poignant and resonates with every grandchild recalling their beloved grandparents experiencing similar distressing delirium in their last days. Here, the grandfather doesn't appear in his usual heroic self, but as a heartbroken, delirious old man, on whom the failed revolution has taken a toll on his health. Tiffany Troy notices a shift in the portrayal of the grandfather in the third section *Erato* where suddenly "the grandfather transforms from this epic hero and revolutionary to an old man who dies too embarrassed to pass on his tin box of money to his children" (Darling, 2022). Tiffany enquired on the reasoning for such a shift, to which Rohan Chhetri responded., "What happens, I suppose, is that the lyric movement beginning in 'Erato' unshackles the grandfather figure from that of a revolutionary and a pioneer and from the epic mode itself, exploring the very late aftermath of torture, trauma and

oppression. In a way, the epic mode exhausts itself around this section gradually. By the time we come to the third section, the collective voice has fallen off and the lyrical 'I' has emerged fully. 'Toward Some Dark,' the last poem in the section, is clearly set in America. The lyrical voice takes stock of the arc of the grandfather's particular story and gives it a possible movement toward closure." (Darling, 2022).

Conclusion:

Rohan Chhetri's poetry collection, *Lost, Hurt, or in Transit Beautiful*, possesses profound emotional depth and examines the intricacies of human life. The title itself evokes a continuous emotional and physical journey, encapsulating the subtleties of personal growth, transformation, and struggle. This poetic collection does not aim to reconcile the conflict between memory and history; instead, it embraces that conflict, creating significance via embodiment, intimacy, and formal innovation. Chhetri does this through a witnessing ethic that is both gentle and rigorous. "Chhetri's poems are an act of courage, a baring of the soul, written from the depth of his experiences, some as enigmatic as the title of the book itself" (Agrawal, 2021). His writing is notable in the context of modern South Asian poetics, not only for its artistic ability but also for its commitment to memory as a form of justice. Poetry becomes a space where grief is not only carried but also shared, as Chhetri confirms by giving voice to what was lost or silenced. The second-generation characters in his poems contend with memories that do not belong to them, of pasts that have shaped their identities without their having directly experienced these horrors. From a post-memory perspective, a key to understanding Chhetri's poetry is through an "inter-and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience" (Hirsch, 2012, p. 6).

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The Prequels of Detective Stories: Ancient to Medieval Lights on the Past

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Abstract

Detective stories are not a modern literary genre that was born overnight. Rather they are the product of a long historical process that has taken a rich form in the quest of mankind and its yearning for justice. In the second-third century BC, the Bible's 'Bel and the Dragon' shows Daniel's keen observation and analytical skills, which proves the main characteristics of detective stories- identifying problems, searching and solving them. Similarly, the story of Kukkuri Sarma found in the tenth mandala of the Rigveda or the images of crime, deception and the intense struggle to save life in 'Aitareya Brahmana' and 'Taittiriya Aranyaka'. In Sanskrit literature, as in the Ramayana-Mahabharata the imprint of detective stories can be seen in medieval Bengali literature as well. Hanuman's search for Sita in the Ramayana, Vidura's warning in the Mahabharata, the conflict between the thief and the protector in the Charyagana and the intrigue in the 'Manasamangala' Kavya- all are examples of the sharp intellect and analytical skills of the detective. In ancient and medieval literature, the detective character is depicted not only as a crime solver but also as a symbol of social and moral awareness. Bharatchandra's Kotal character or Mukundaram's Bharudautta proves that the main power of the detective is to uncover the truth through observation, analysis and logic. Therefore, although the modern form of the detective story was established in the 18th-19th centuries, its foundation has been formed from the streams of ancient Vedic, Biblical, Sanskrit and medieval Bengali literature.

Keywords: Detective Literature, Analytical Skills, Ancient Texts, Sanskrit and Bengali Literature, Justice and Morality

Detective stories or novels are creations of modern times, that is, the first half of the nineteenth century. Detective stories began to be written in France and England in the third decade of the nineteenth century after the establishment of the police system. But much before that, the seeds of detective stories began to germinate in our country and elsewhere. The oldest detective story in the world is found about five hundred years after the oldest story in Vedic literature. The story of Daniel, found in the Old Testament of the Bible in the second-third century BC, is considered to be the oldest detective story in the world. The name of the story is 'Bel and the Dragon'. In the story, it is seen that the priest of Babylon is a more influential person than the king of the country. The priest preaches that the god himself comes and accepts the offerings offered to the god in the temple every day. Because the offerings offered to the god were no longer available after the temple doors were opened

the next day. The formless monotheist Daniel wants to verify the truth of the information preached by the priest. Daniel sprinkles powdered lime on the floor of the temple. The next day, it is seen that although the dish is empty, two footprints are clearly visible on the floor. Daniel uses these footprints to find a secret tunnel in the temple, which leads directly to the inner chamber of the high priest. This proves that the priest himself eats the offerings in the name of the god. Daniel's keen observation, investigation and analysis reveal the real truth. Daniel follows the footprints inside the temple and identifies the culprit. Daniel proves that it is not the god, but the priest who eats all the offerings. Various written works and documents of ancient times show that theft was a social crime. And the main features of a detective story- problems, keen observation and direct solution- are directly seen in this story.

Like the Bible, the Vedas also contain traces of crime stories. The CVIII Sukta of the X Mandal of the Rigveda contains the imprint of an ancient detective story. The CVIII Sukta of the X Mandal of the Rigveda mentions the detective 'Kukkuri Sarma'. At that time, cows were the most valuable asset, and a group of foreign robbers called 'Pani' stole the cows of the gods. The gods appointed Kukkuri Sarma as a detective to search for the lost cows. Kukkuri Sarma skillfully followed the robbers 'Pani' to their secret hideout, ignored their temptations and told the gods all the information. And with the help of Sarma, the gods were able to rescue their cows. A noteworthy thing in the story is the appointment of dogs as detectives. In the present day, that is, in modern times, the practice of using dogs to identify criminals in detective work is particularly common. This is a modern practice, which comes from the hunting tradition of Britain. However, even during the Rig Vedic period, nomadic and pastoral people kept dogs, which were used to protect the herders.

Like the Rigveda, crime stories have also been found in the Vedic literature of our country. Vedic prose texts were written after the Rigveda. The first story of the oldest Vedic prose text is found in the 'Aitareya Brahmana'. The composition of the story is estimated to be around DCCC BC. The story is about King Harishchandra's breaking of a promise and an attempt to kill a child, or it can be said about the breaking of a human promise against a god and an attempt to kill a human. The sonless king Harishchandra of the Ikshvaku dynasty begets a son by the boon of the god Varun. The condition was that the prince Rohit would be surrendered for the purpose of the Varun god's sacrifice. But every time Varun wanted the sacrifice, the king kept postponing it on some pretext or the other. After the prince Rohit became eligible to wear the Kshatriya armor, King Harishchandra told Rohit about the promise. But Rohit fled to the forest in fear without fulfilling the condition. On the other hand, due to the curse of Varun, King Harishchandra was afflicted with a stomach disease. When Rohit was ready to return to the village after hearing this news, he had to wander in the forest for another six years by the trick of Indradev. After wandering in the forest for six years, Rohit returned to the village. Seeing the sage Ajigarta in a hungry state, he bought the middle son of the sage's three sons, Sunashepa, for one hundred animals. Rohit organized a yagna to save his own life by sacrificing Sunashepa. At the moment of sacrificing Sunashepa, Sunashepa's father Ajigarta tried to kill Rohit, but Rohit begged the gods for mercy. And after praising various gods, his bonds were broken and his father Harishchandra was also cured of the disease. In this story, the hero is Indra. Indra shows Rohit and his father the way to be saved from Varun's wrath. In this story, a crime was about to be committed, but in the end, it did not happen. But within it, crime, deceit, and the intense struggle to save a

life emerge. Therefore, it can be said that an exceptional crime story can be found in 'Aitareya Brahmana', written almost two and a half thousand years ago. A short but excellent crime story is found in the 'Taittiriya Aranyaka', written about four hundred years after the 'Aitareya Brahmana'. Agni's three elder brothers died while carrying sacrifices for the gods. Therefore, Agni fearing that his fate would be the same, hid in the water. When the gods hired a fish to find him, the fish informed the gods about Agni. The story of Agni and his three brothers, described in the 'Taittiriya Aranyaka', is a fine example of hiring a detective to find a lost person. According to Sukumar Sen, this story in the 'Taittiriya Aranyaka' is-

"Very short, very concise. Written entirely in a spoken style. An almost perfect detective story of a crime story."¹

In India, after Vedic literature, detective stories are found in Sanskrit literature. However, since the writers of Sanskrit literature are more interested in painting pictures of human happiness and sorrow, crime stories are almost non-existent in Sanskrit. However, traces of it can be found in some Sanskrit literature. If we look at the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata, we can find incidents related to detective stories there too. In Ramayana, the abduction of Sita by Ravana is undoubtedly a social crime, and the investigation that Ramachandra shows in finding the destination of the criminal by finding the ornaments of Sita's body to punish Ravana is comparable to the investigation of the clue of the crime by a detective. In 'Aranyakanda', at the stage of 'relinquishing ornaments as a sign of knowledge', Sita seems to have left that clue-

"Rishyamuk parbat odhik ucchotar.
Chari patra loiya tathay ache Sugreeb banor.
Sugreeber shonge dekhe kopi charijon.
Dak diya bolen Sita korun bochon.
Janaki bolen shun panch mohajan.
Sobar thanji thuiya jai gayer abhoron.
Abhoron karīya dila Sita dibya uttori.
Abhoron felaiya dila oti binoy kori.
Shri Ramer shonge jodi hoy dorshan.
Prabhure kohiba Sita horil Raban."²

In the 'Sundar Kanda' of the Ramayana in the 'Ravaner Bhavan' section, Hanuman's role in searching for Sita was like that of a complete detective. While searching for Sita in Ravana's palace, he repeatedly changed his appearance. At one point, Hanuman saw the golden-skinned Mandodari in Ravana's inner palace and mistook her for Sita. But soon Hanuman reached the solution with his sharp logic. Hanuman thought-

"Then Hanuman calmed down and thought, in the absence of Rama, Sita could not be lying in such a state of intoxication, she must be someone else."³

There is a clear picture of Hanuman in the role of a searcher in the Ramayana- "He saw a golden-hued Shimshapa tree, beneath which there was a golden altar. Climbing the tree and concealing himself within the foliage, he began to observe everything all around."⁴

Not only in the Ramayana but also in the Mahabharata many crime story drafts are found. The intellectual conflict between the Kuru and the Pandavas centered on the Jatugriha in the Mahabharata can be considered as a competition of intelligence between the criminal and the detective in the crime stories of the time. Duryodhana had been conspiring to kill the

sons of the Pandu from the very beginning. They got that opportunity during the festival of the Shaivite community in the city of Baranavat on the banks of the Ganges. The sons of Dhritarashtra hatched a plot to kill their son Kunti at this event. Under their arrangement, a beautiful residence was built for the Pandavas to stay in Baranavat. The house was built of thatched roofs. But it looked like a brick house. When the Pandavas went to sleep in the house at night, the sons of Dhritarashtra planned to set fire to it and kill everyone. Duryodhana was busy with that conspiracy with the minister Purochana-

“Uttam dekhia sthal koriba aloy.
Agnigriho birachiba jeno byakta na hoy.
Stambha nirmi garbh tar ghrite puraibe.
Shon ar jau diya prachir rachibe.
Modhye modhye dibe bash ghrite purno kori.
Jei mate agni dile nibaite nari.”⁵

The plot of brutal murder was almost brought to the final stage by building a dwelling made entirely of straw. But the sharp-witted and prudent Kurukrta Vidura had known about the incident. Seeing that the situation was not favorable, Vidura warned Yudhishtira in advance in sign language-

“Baranabate yah panch sahodor.
Sabdhane thakiba, achhoye tahe dor.
Yahe janme tahe bhokhye shital binashe.
Ihar achhoye bhoy jai sei deshe.”⁶

Here detective is Vidura. Due to his intelligence, the five Pandavas including Kunti survived. According to Sukumar Sen, the incident of burning the Pandavas in the Lakshagriha in Baranavat in the Mahabharata is characteristic of crime stories. In this context, he says-

“There are many old stories in the Mahabharata. I found an excellent crime story in it. The subject of the story does not match any other Indian story. It is a brutal plan of murder. ... The story should have been in an Arabic novel. However, there is no doubt that this ancient story comes very close to the modern British crime story.”⁷

A realistic picture of the police system under the supervision of the king in the early first century AD is found in Kalidasa's play 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam' (at the beginning of the sixth act). According to the plot of the play, King Dushmanta marries Shakuntala in the hermitage of Kanva in the Gandharva manner and gives her a ring engraved with his name and returns to the capital. But after reaching the capital, King Dushmanta forgets Shakuntala. Kalidasa shows in his play that when Shakuntala went to Dushmanta and claimed the status of his wife, Dushmanta could not recognize her. Shakuntala could not show her the ring given by the king either. Because, in a twist of fate, Shakuntala had also lost the ring that symbolized knowledge. Finally, King Dushmanta's ring carrying knowledge was found with a fisherman. Two guards came to catch the fishermen for stealing the king's ring. The matter becomes clear from a conversation between the fisherman and the guards-

“The guards: O thief, tell me where you got this jeweled ring with the great shining name of the king.

Fisherman: I earn my living by catching fish with a net and a spear.
One day I caught a red fish, then when I cut it into pieces, I found this
brilliant jewel in its belly; then I took it and brought it to sell, but as soon as
I was caught by the gentlemen,"⁸

Sukumar Sen says in describing the two guards- "I can say that the description of these two guards almost reflects the behavior of our police constables here. The names of the two guards are also quite significant. The name of one of them is Induk (meaning needle i.e. Spy or Agent). Let me know the name of another person (meaning Informer or Investigator)."⁹ According to the fisherman, they found the ring from the stomach of the fish and in the end, the fisherman's words were proven to be true by the smell of fish found in the ring.

Like Sanskrit, the imprint of crime stories can be found in ancient and medieval Bengali literature. The image of crimes or vices committed in society is also reflected in ancient Bengali literature. Just as the ancient Charyagan, the oldest example of Bengali literature, reflects the society of that time behind the secret mantras of the Sahajiya Buddhists, similarly, the crimes of the society were not left out. In two songs of Charyagan, it is said-

"Angan Gharpan Sun Bho Biati.
Kanet Chauri Nil Adharati
Susura Nindaia Bahuri Jagao.
Kanet Chore Nil Ka Goi Magao."¹⁰

The earrings of the housewife are being stolen at night. The father-in-law is sleeping but the daughter-in-law does not know who to ask for help. From this, it can be inferred that crimes like theft were common in ancient Bengali society as well. In 33 songs of Charyagan, Dhendhanpad writes-

"Jo So Budhi Sou Nibudhi.
Jo so chaur so dushadhi."¹¹

This song says that the intelligent person is the one who is the fool, the thief is the one who is caught. That is, the protector is the one who is the one who eats. The one who protects the law is the one who is involved in crime. Here the word 'dushadhi' is used in the sense of a kotal. The word comes from the Sanskrit 'dauhsadhik'. Which means one who does difficult work, i.e. a skilled person or a detective, according to Sukumar Sen.

Mangalkavya is an important chapter in medieval literature after the Charyapadas. Worshipping gods and goddesses was the main theme in Mangalkavya. However, it is not that good crime stories were not written in medieval literature at all. The goddesses of Mangalkavya have broken the concept of divinity. Despite possessing infinite power, they seem to have human qualities. They conspire against people. In the poem 'Manasamangal', Manasa not getting worship from Chandsadagar, engages in one wrong act after another. Chand sinks Chandsadagar's seven-legged boat. She even gets involved in the murder of his friend Shankar Gabari along with Chand's children. Such a conspiracy comes up in Manasa's conversation with Tarapati-

"Ek kone chhidra rakhah tvarit.
Putrer karone more nana mand koy.
Aaj ratri tahar bansh korib khoy.
Shimul tula diya achhadio mukhe.

Shotekbar chahile jeno chand nahi dekhe.
Lohar ghore chhidra rakh kahilam tomar thani.
Ami tusto hoile tomar yamer bhoy nai."¹²

In the poem *Manasamangal*, the detailed plan of the conspiracy is revealed through the conversation between the goddess Manasa and the blacksmith Tarapati. In this poem, not only the plan, but also the strategy to implement that conspiracy with great precision is skillfully shown. In detective stories, thieves, robbers or murderers often resort to disguise for their criminal acts, due to which their identity remains hidden. In the poem 'Manasamangal', a similar hint is caught in a line -

"Chirakaler nagini karye jane bhaw.
Pother gatik bujhiya chhoto kail gao."¹³

The first evidence of detective stories in Bengali literature is found in the story of Kalketu in the XVI century Bengali poet Mukundaram's 'Chandimangal'. During the war between Kalketu and Kalketu, Kalketu hid in a granary on the advice of Fullara. Bharudautta tried to find out the truth from Fullara by strategizing. Bharudautta's keen observational skills are captured in paragraph CVI of the poem 'Chandimangal-

"Thoker madhur bani ekchitte Rama shuni
Dhanaghara kail bilokon
Suchatur Bharudautta bujhila karyer tattwa
Birachil Shrikabikankan."¹⁴

While talking to Fullara, Bhandudatta took a glimpse of his granary as a 'clue' and found Kalketu. A glimpse of a skilled detective in Bengali detective literature can be found in Bharudautta.

In medieval literature, the detective's vision is found in the character of Kotal in Bharatchandra's story 'Vidyasundar'. In Bharatchandra's character of Kotal, all the perfect observations, extraordinary analysis and ingenious solutions like the characters of modern detective stories are found. Kotal's observational power is revealed in-

"Kotal bidyar ghore surakh sandhan kore
Kon pothe ase jay chor
Ghorer bhitor giya shayya fele tan diya
Dashdikhe dekhe nirakhia."¹⁵

The best detective character in medieval literature is undoubtedly the character of Kotal. Speaking about the character of Kotal, Sukumar Sen says-

"The character of Kotal, portrayed by Bharat Chandra, has at least two suitable moves for a detective in a modern Western detective story- one is to go to the house of a washerman and examine the dirty clothes and collect 'clues' of the criminal from them. The other is to identify Sundar, who is disguised as a woman, by looking at the way she walks."¹⁶

Despite being disguised as a woman, Kotal identifies Sundar as a man by looking at the way she walks. In the lines titled 'Streebesh' by Kotalgan-

"Se bote bosonchora
Tahare dhorib mora

Peet dhora loib kadiya.
Sada fire banka hoye"¹⁷

Apart from medieval literature, some good short detective stories from the XVIII century are found in William Carey's 'Itihasmala'. In story number XI of 'Itihasmala', the judge is like a foreign ancestor of English detective stories like Monsieur Dupyar and Sherlock Holmes. The detective of the story, the judge can understand the mentality of a thief by sitting at home with his intelligence. In the story, it is seen that a Brahmin loses his money bag while bathing at the ghat and complains to the judge. The judge thinks that stupid criminals usually roam near the crime scene and they want to show that they are not criminals. In this story, the criminal himself falls into a trap while trying to trick others. In story number XCVIII of 'Itihasmala', a naive criminal is caught by his awakened sense of guilt. The king seizes the thief with a novel trick for stealing jackfruit from a childless woman. The system of lining up suspects with the general public to identify the criminal, as seen in the story is a special type of current police system. The story shows that this psychological technique has been used to identify criminals since ancient times. It proves that intelligence is the real power.

Apart from 'Itihasmala', there are two stories in Arabic novels that are similar to detective stories. The first story is about King Yunan and the doctor Duban. Duban cures King Yunan, who is suffering from leprosy, through a drugless technique. As a result, Duban gradually becomes the king's favorite. But the king's ministers unable to tolerate Duban, send a beautiful girl to the king. The girl keeps on breaking the king's ear against Duban and one day, the king impressed by her words, sentences Duban to death. Before his death, Duban gives the king a poisoned book and a ladle, telling him that if he reads this book his severed head will speak. The king dies of poisoning while frequently turning the pages with his tongue to read the book. The specialty of the story is that the person whom the king sentenced to death is not guilty. He is an extraordinarily intelligent and prudent person. Therefore, he had prepared a strategy in advance to avenge his own murder twice. The second story is 'Alibaba and the Forty Thieves'. In this story, an ordinary maid plays the role of the main detective against the bandits. When forty bandits come to take revenge on Alibaba, the maid defeats them all single-handedly through her intelligence. This story is a wonderful example of the emergence of the first female detective in detective literature.

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Invisible Labour, Visible Care: Grandparents and Child Rearing in India

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Abstract

Family as an institution has always remained an epitome of importance in India. The collectivist culture has nurtured the concept of joint family for a long time, which embodies bond, interdependence, care and harmony. In this family structure, elders, especially the grandparents, have played a pivotal role in child rearing with unconditional love and care. With the passing of time, the family structure has undergone significant changes, witnessing the rising number of nuclear and double-income families. With this altered scenario, the role and responsibilities of grandparents have elevated from mere care to serious child care on a daily basis, ranging from accompanying the child in various activities to preparing food for them. The matter of great surprise is that the untiring efforts of grandparents are seldom recognised by the family and State, leaving them in a zone of obligatory duty and unpaid labour.

It is time to revive and reassess the situation. This study aims to examine the matter from both theoretical and practical viewpoints to reveal its true nature. It will explore the mental, moral, ethical, and legal aspects of this valuable care, which often lacks formal recognition, even from the State. The study will investigate what measures the State is taking to recognise the contribution of grandparents. Although it is not appropriate to compensate their care with money, it is equally important to acknowledge that their efforts should not remain unappreciated. If the fundamental right to care at home is not secured, senior citizens' schemes will lose their significance, and exploitation in the form of invisible labour will continue. Striking a balance is the greatest challenge this study seeks to address.

Keywords: Invisible labour, grandparents, child rearing, care work, gender, ageing, India, social policy

Introduction:

Child rearing has always been a matter of shared responsibility in India, and especially nowadays, parents are not regarded as the sole persons responsible for this vital task. Multiple factors have contributed to this shift in outlook, including the rise of the nuclear family and the increasing number of dual-earner households. Dependence on grandparents is increasing day by day. Beyond unconditional love and care, grandparents also perform various routine responsibilities for the children, such as accompanying them to school, preparing meals, helping with homework, taking them to the doctor when needed, and, most importantly, creating a supportive emotional atmosphere. In spite of all this, a paradox

revolves around grandparental care. While on one hand, this care is treated and considered as a blessing, strengthening family bonds across generations, on the other hand, there is a dearth of recognition for such pious care. People consider this a natural duty of the grandparents, but this oversight raises multiple questions. Instead, they are often seen as voluntary and inevitable tasks, remaining invisible in family discussions and policy debates. This lack of recognition raises many questions - why does society view this untiring effort from the angle of natural love and care only? Why has the invisible and unpaid labour never caught the attention of policymakers? Why even the family members, do not feel the need to appreciate and recognize the service rendered by these elderly citizens? How to take a proper approach which will create a balance between the care provided by grandparents and at the same time recognise their effort with respect?

The study will try to explore the reality by thoroughly examining the issue of childcare, the politics and policies revolving around it, from the spectacle of the grandparents' care in India. The unrecognized work of care cannot simply be explained in terms of economy only as it involves a greater perspective. The matter of care is often seen as a matter of affection, love and joy by many grandparents; they themselves find mental peace through spending time with their grandchildren, and it nurtures their mental health in a positive way. Therefore, the debate between love, care, versus unpaid, invisible labour becomes difficult to situate. (Bhattacharya, 2017). The study tries to view the issue of unpaid labour from feminist and sociological angles too (Federici, 2012; Fraser, 2016). In order to understand the practise of grandparental care in India it is necessary to focus on the historical and cultural background, which the study has carefully done. The study focuses on the existing legal and policy frameworks on grandparental care. Finally, it exhibits the dilemma of grandparents who are not ready to make their care be treated as a commodity and get paid for the same which makes tracking the balanced policy even more difficult.

Invisible Labour and Care Work:

To understand the dichotomy of grandparental care, a detailed theoretical understanding is essential. Debates on invisible labour and care work might be helpful in revealing why grandparents' care is always considered an act of love and care and seldom gets recognized as labour. A theoretical perspective can be framed from these debates through which the part of grandparents in India can be scrutinized.

Feminists have used the term "invisible labour" to define the unpaid, unrecognised work that takes place in the home and society (Hochschild, 1983; Federici, 2012). Scholars like Arlie Hochschild and Silvia Federici have shown that most domestic work, like cooking, cleaning, or childcare, has habitually been considered as the sole responsibility of women, which is at the same time compulsory. Astonishingly the patriarchal structure of society has blatantly imposed all the burden on women without recognizing their effort and paying them the logical remuneration. Grandparental care, though not falling under this category, often follows a similar pattern of negligence and carelessness from the family and state whenever the matter of recognition of their labour comes into the scene.

In a broader sense, care work encompasses activities that sustain and support life, such as caring for children, looking after the elderly, attending to the sick, and managing households. Feminist political economists argue that care work is vital to capitalism's functioning, yet it remains largely unrecognised and unpaid. Nancy Fraser describes this as the "crisis of care," where societies increasingly depend on unpaid labour while devaluing

it. India's care economy is mostly feminised and privatised within families. When both parents work, daily childcare duties often fall to grandparents. This shifts social reproduction costs from the State and market onto the unpaid labour of older family members (Hochschild, 1983; Federici, 2012). Subsequently, grandparents play a vital role in social reproduction, yet they lack recognition or support from public institutions.

Grandparental care also has a connection with ageing and gender. Although both grandmothers and grandfathers contribute, it has been observed that grandmothers bear most of the load in terms of accompanying grandchildren in various activities and caring for them. This made them caged, as even after a lifetime of service in rearing their own children and maintaining all the family's responsibilities, they now, in old age, had to look after their grandchildren, forgetting about their own desires. Meanwhile, the idea that older adults – especially women – should be available for caregiving is rooted in deeply ingrained cultural norms in India. The concept of *seva* (service) and the moral obligation of duty reinforce the assumption that grandparents will naturally assume this role. However, when this moral expectation becomes compulsory, it can weaken grandparents' autonomy, clouding the line between voluntary love and forced labour.

Although feminist theories of invisible labour provide a helpful perspective, grandparents' care cannot be seen as unpaid domestic work. It has unique features needing recognition. To many grandparents, the act of looking after their grandchildren and taking their daily care is a matter of immense joy and satisfaction. They are not ready to treat other household chores with this care work at present. Often, the relationship between two different age groups is emotionally and mentally beneficial for both. While the younger generation receives uninterrupted attention and company, learning moral and ethical values from the elders, the seniors enjoy the bliss of remaining attached to their third generation, which creates a new meaning, value, and notion of belonging in their lives that would otherwise be lonely or inactive in many situations. Thus, it is critical to problematize the issue; if considered from the standpoint of love and duty, the non-acknowledgement and exploitation are ignored, while if seen from the spectacle of labour, keeping aside the affection, then it becomes voluntary. In the case of India, the situation becomes more complex. The absence of a proper *creche*, lack of initiative from the government, makes it troublesome for working parents of nuclear families to keep their children in appropriate custody. At this time, the grandparents appear as saviours and act as safe hands that can hold the needs of childhood with extreme care. The State does not leave a little chance to praise the act as heavenly to veil its failure to provide the necessary infrastructure for child care.

Historical and Cultural Background of Grandparental Care in India:

India's socio-cultural background plays a significant role in understanding how grandparental care of grandchildren is treated in society and family. Culture, tradition, and family equation all determine the notion of grandparents' care in India. Over the years, how grandparents have devoted their time in rearing their grandchildren will be helpful in understanding why the debate is spinning around between love, care and unpaid and invisible labour. Since time immemorial, grandparents have played the key role in grandchildren's care within the structure of the joint family, where this care was viewed as normal and natural by other family members. It was kind of an implied thought that affection will flow downward from elders to children, while obedience and respect will flow

upward to make the position of elders strong in the family. In between, the notion of invisible labour or unpaid labour got covered under the cloud of morality, as hardly anyone has thought of recognizing the habitual practise something to be treated with additional attention. With the growth of urbanization and migration the scenario changed, as grandparents became the central support system in the nuclear families. Therefore, their role also shifted from one of the major caregivers in the family to the prime caregiver to the grandchildren and they became responsible for ensuring the overall development them. Earlier, to some extent, the care was a matter of choice, but in the shifting situation, this work has become a compulsion. Sometimes the grandparents have to leave their own ancestral house and stay with their children where they reside for a job or other purposes, and to provide all essential support to the grandchildren. This situation augments the debate between love and work, as grandparents have to sacrifice their comfort for the benefit of other family members.

In this unseen and non-recognized work patten, gender has always played an interesting role. Elderly female members, the grandparents always take up the role of prime caregiver, ensuring proper food, nutrition, and comfort to the children, while the grandfathers love to perform the role of authoritative patriarch, dictating matters and issuing moral verdicts to teach the children discipline. Though exceptions are definitely there in the 21st century with grandfathers sharing load of household chores, but the overall scenario is yet to be brightened up.

Empirical Dimensions: Practices and Experiences:

The historical and cultural traditions mentioned above have shown that grandparents' care is a common practise throughout India. Their care and contribution shape the family life in numerous ways. In order to understand the various sides of unseen labour, we have to know how grandparents work, how they perceive caregiving and how their role changes in different situations.

As we have already discussed, grandparents are involved in multiple activities of the grandchildren daily, which sometimes makes them tired, but they seldom express their problems to their children to ensure an uninterrupted flow of family life. Children also often forget to ask their parents whether they are enjoying the care work or if it is becoming taxing on them. Grandparents' roles vary across social classes, also. In a middle-class family, the main task of grandparents is to teach morals to the children, assisting them in their education, while in low-earning families, the duty is to ensure basic needs like preparing food and supervising the children when their parents are away from home for work. Despite variation in roles, two factors remain persistent: non-recognition and unpaid labour. Grandparents' role cannot be defined in a unilinear way; rather, it is a mutual one. Unlike professional caregivers, they provide care from love and, in return, sense a stronger family tie. Parallely, like other voluntary work, their duty is not actually optional, but somewhat obligatory on a daily basis. This complexity of care makes the matter political, obscuring the line between voluntary care and invisible labour.

Socio-Political Implications of Invisible Labour in the Context of Grandparents' Role:

Historically, the Indian welfare state has depended on family networks to assume caregiving responsibilities (Sekher & Hatti, 2010). Childcare, elderly care, and women's employment policies inherently presume that families serve as the primary safety net. In practice, this has

resulted in grandparents becoming an unseen layer of welfare provision, diminishing the state's direct involvement in childcare infrastructure. For example, while ICDS and Anganwadis offer early childhood education, the daily demands of care—such as feeding, supervising, and emotional nurturing—are borne by families, with grandparents often stepping in to fill this role. This situation aligns with what feminist scholars refer to as the “outsourcing of state responsibility to households” (Fraser, 2016), which places grandparents at the centre of social reproduction but without recognition or compensation. There is another aspect to consider- intergenerational justice. The assumption that older people will automatically care for their grandchildren often neglects their own needs, aspirations, or health. Many grandparents, who may be struggling with chronic illness or financial insecurity, are usually pushed into caregiving roles without proper discussion. This highlights a structural imbalance in rights: while children and working-age adults benefit from grandparental care, the elderly's right to leisure, autonomy, or state-supported services is often overlooked. As a result, invisible labour not only masks gender inequality but also intergenerational inequality, raising a crucial question: to what extent should elderly citizens be expected to shoulder the burden of reproductive labour when state systems are inadequate?

When examining how grandparental labour indirectly supports capitalist production, the political economy aspect becomes evident. By caring for grandchildren, grandparents enable younger adults, especially women, to participate in the labour market, thus supporting economic productivity. However, the value generated through this unpaid labour remains unrecognised and is not redistributed. Nancy Fraser's (2016) concept of a "crisis of care" is pertinent here: capitalism depends on unacknowledged, unpaid care work to survive, yet it fails to invest in or recognise this sector. In India, the absence of universal childcare policies and the rising costs of private nurseries intensify the reliance on grandparents, effectively exploiting their unpaid contributions as a hidden subsidy to the market economy.

Grandparents' labour often goes unnoticed in policy debates, which significantly affects how they are portrayed. Public narratives around “active ageing” and “family values” usually depict grandparents' involvement as natural, without recognising the hard work, exhaustion, and sometimes coercion involved. For this attitude, there remains a large gap in policy issues.

Grandparents' role differs from that of formal child care workers like Anganwadi staff or domestic workers, as they are not formally enrolled to do this job, which in turn affects their bargaining power. If any grandparent is unwilling to do this job regularly, he or she has no legal platform or forum to discuss the problem, and thus their voice remains suppressed in social policy debates and discussions. Non-recognition leads to a serious political consequence as it avoids the matter of care from the social platform and tries to situate it within the four walls of private life only. This, in turn, creates a sense of hesitation in grandparents as they do not become vocal about their problems and needs and start to believe in destiny rather than seeking justice. Their well-being depends on the charity work or the mood of their family members, especially children, although they are entitled to enjoy all their rights as legal citizens.

Finally, this approach supports neo liberal policies which believe in transferring responsibilities to the community and family by glorifying their roles as the natural welfare providers.

Comparative Perspectives:

The grandparents' care is not unique to India only, as across the globe, in many countries, grandparents play a positive role in the upbringing of their grandchildren. However, according to culture and political situation, the matter of recognition, both social and economic and institutional support varies. In India's position can be compared in the global context, then the likenesses and variances will help to frame a better innovative policy.

In Western welfare states like Sweden, Germany, and the UK, grandparents are often recognised in social policy, though indirectly. Some countries offer financial allowances or tax credits for grandparents providing significant childcare when parents cannot. In Germany, grandparents can access state-funded parental leave if they are primary carers. In the UK, "grandparental childcare credits" help boost pension entitlements when they care for grandchildren. Despite these policies, caregiving roles remain gendered: grandmothers tend to provide more emotional and physical support, while grandfathers engage more in leisure care (Attias-Donfut & Arber, 2000). Thus, Western models partially acknowledge grandparents' contributions, but gender inequalities in care persist, similar to India's patriarchal divisions of labour, though in different contexts.

Across East Asia, especially in countries like China, South Korea, and Japan, place grandparents at the core of childcare. In rural and migrant Chinese households, grandparents often serve as primary caregivers while parents work in cities. This 'left-behind childcare' highlights how economic modernisation relies on intergenerational care transfers. Asia, unlike the West, focuses on a culture that naturally treats grandparents as worthy of respect, and their contributions are considered extremely important for the welfare of the family. Legal frameworks are vital too, but they come behind societal and cultural norms, which in turn result in the implementation of formal policies like pensions or healthcare linked to caregiving. India is also trapped in this condition.

In many African and Latin American countries, grandparental care is also found due to migration, work of parents or outbreaks of HIV/ Aids epidemics. Reliability on family covers the dearth of infrastructure to be provided at the institutional level. In Brazil, grandparents support mothers who work in the informal sector by taking care of their children. Absence of recognition of work and the instability of the informal sector make the life of both grandparents and mothers difficult, indicating the deficiency of a strong institutional policy.

The overall situation indicates that in spite of cultural, social, economic and political differences, grandparents' care work is mostly unacknowledged and invisible all over the world. Even when gratitude is acknowledged, it is very partial or secondary in nature, like tax credits or pension adjustments. Keeping in tune with Asian countries, India's picture shows that cultural obedience over legal framework in terms of grandparents' care is not very fruitful, as mere respect cannot ensure economic and social protection. India must maintain equilibrium between culture and legal-institutional support to do justice to grandparents' untiring work.

Policy Gaps and Legal Dimensions:

India's delayed approach to implementing policy measures for grandparents' care creates an uncomfortable state. Despite a strong cultural belief and practice in delegating the responsibility of child care to the elderly members of the family with the expectation that

grandparents will do best for their grandchildren, there is hardly any legal effort to acknowledge the contribution of these persons. This proves the disinclination of the state to implement appropriate measures in this regard.

In Indian law, both statutory and constitutional, an unintended and incoherent approach to caregiving is visible. The Directive Principles of State Policy mention protecting children, ensuring their education, and safeguarding the elderly (Article 41), but do not connect these two in policy issues. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007) offers care for the elderly but does not acknowledge their role as caregivers. Consequently, grandparents are often seen as dependents despite their hard contributions to society. Moreover, the Guardians and Wards Act (1890) and personal laws seldom recognise the involvement of grandparents in child care, instead seeing them as substitutes in the absence of parents. This omission displays those Indian legal frameworks function with a narrow and adult-centric ambience of family, which disregards the intergenerational support. Welfare programmes like Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) or the POSHAN Abhiyaan (Government of India, 2017, 2023), highlight nutrition, early childhood education, and maternal health. These programmes assume the mother as the prime caregiver to the children and do not take into account the role of others. Therefore, Grandparents remain ignored and excluded in these policy-related programmes also.

Towards Recognition and Reform:

The exclusion of grandparents from policy issues and legal frameworks puts their role under the scanner. It is essential to recognize and reform their effort and labour to create an inclusive policy and construct our socio-political scenario responsive to the needs of the all strata of society. It is essential to rethink the Indian society beyond the perspective of duty and care and realizing that every care and duty is associated with a broader spectrum called labour, service and contribution. It never asks to keep aside the emotions, love and care present within the family structure, but to understand that the efforts of elders are related to economic survival and gender issues. The outlook is changing relating to domestic work, which was once considered as unpaid and invisible; similarly, a new regulation is required where hours, intensity and opportunity costs of childcare given by the grandparents should be measured. Collection of such data might enable the government to exhibit the actual labour delivered by the grandparents as part of the national economy, enabling discussions on Universal Basic Income, social pensions, or matters related to family benefits.

Once reforms are in place, they can be implemented through welfare systems. For instance, in India, pensions for the elderly under schemes like the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) often fall short, failing to cover even basic living costs. If grandparents are the primary caregivers for children, the pension system needs to be restructured. A tiered pension system, indexed not only to age and poverty but also to care responsibilities, could lead to a fairer distribution. One area for reform is childcare credits. Countries such as Germany and Sweden have introduced pension credits for parents, mainly women, who take time off work for childcare. A similar approach in India could offer pension credits to grandparents who step in for parental labour, which would acknowledge invisible labour as part of conventional wellbeing assistance.

Any drastic change through reform may seem implausible, but once it is legally acknowledged, it may bring an everlasting impact on the mindset of family and society together. The state alone will not be able to bring this change unless the attitude of people

changes. Civil society, media, and literature all have a significant role to play. Awareness programmes in cities and villages are highly required in the presence of the grandparents, because they need to realize also what exact role and responsibilities they are supposed to perform and in turn what treatment and legal support they are entitled to get. Grandparents must not play passive roles; rather, they should be active participants in constructing intergenerational solidarity.

Roads ahead:

The discussion on various aspects and levels of grandparental care in India reveals that the issue needs to be viewed from a wider spectrum. Crossing the boundary line of love, care, unconditional support, the society must appreciate and acknowledge their contribution to economy and nation building. Standing together firmly to take this oath of acknowledging the tireless works of care may make our society empathetic and sensitive to the hands that once raised us. Love and care never get overshadowed by explicit recognition; alternatively, the acknowledgement and gratitude fill the grandparents' hearts with joy and contentment. The State has a massive role to play by ensuring the establishment of a just ambience, bringing necessary changes in policy matters and legal frameworks to repair the loopholes in the law. The world is focusing on integrity, cohesion, and gender equality in search of a better future. India has joined this bandwagon of justice and transformation; therefore, the journey must embrace the efforts of the Grandparents who are busy building the character of future generations who will carry the movement forward in the coming days.

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Institutional Reforms and Cultural Transformations: A Sociological Study of the Satras of Assam

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Abstract

This paper explores the institutional and cultural transitions of the Satras of Assam, historically rooted in the Neo-Vaishnavite tradition. It examines how modernity, political shifts, and socio-economic pressures have reshaped these spiritual institutions. The study highlights transformations in leadership, gender dynamics, caste-based discrimination, and the adaptation of monastic norms. Qualitative methods, including field interviews and observations from Majuli's five villages and Satras, inform this analysis. The findings suggest that despite visible modernization, entrenched social hierarchies and traditional customs continue to challenge inclusivity and reform.

Keywords: Satras, Neo-Vaishnavism, Institutional Reform, Assam, Gender Equality, Caste Hierarchy, Social Change

Introduction:

Every community or Institution has different ideologies and beliefs where it bound up with different ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of society. The concept of culture has been accepted as a different meanings or definition that has a diverse-roots or distinct features of society. Culture has uprooted in institutional sphere as an instrumental force or societal relation towards society. **According to Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)** believed that "Culture is a key site of social reproduction and symbolic power". The study of culture has placed a certain input where material or non-material aspect of society has a wider relation through symbolic and non-symbolic relation of society. The various forms where culture has articulated our religion has been given special place that has a specific shape or relativity of society. **According to Talcott Parson**, "Culture is an ordered symbolic system that acts as a primary force binding together the elements of a social system, essentially consisting of shared values, norms, and beliefs that guide individual actions and shape social interactions within a society". Thus, the process of interaction that convey meaning with society and individual had provide a different framework, that has formed several actions with various function or role which has been transformed as a special place towards our social landscape. The present study has brought a multiple thought or landscape where Institution has shape as a cultural horizon that reflect the origin of the state of Assam. The reform of Vaisnavite and Neo-Vaisnavite tradition of Assam, a period

of centuries played an important role in shaping cultural history from 12th century A.D. After a period of history, Sankardeva as a greatest socio-religious reformer of Assam started the transformation of Neo-Vaisnavite tradition in Assam in the later part of 15th century. The socio-economic and cultural dynamics brought divine power through customary laws, cultural belief and class struggle towards hindrance of upper- and lower-class society as well as through colonial rules of society. (**Akhil Chandra Borah (2020)**). According to "**Jayanta Bora**" of **Garmur Satra** "Culture became a assets of material," which became a complex political economy of every particular groups of the society". As well as British rule continued through their rule of the state mostly in North-Eastern frontier countries, where from Ahom to Government rule compiled through rule of law as well as through modern equip of knowledge. (**S.N Sarma 2016**) According to **Debajit Kalita of Dakhinpaat Satra**

"Earlier we have a believe and to exist through God help in Satra, but everything now has been controlled by Government order of Satra premises".

Political, social and cultural division of society had brought chaos towards gender disparity, discrimination of diverse cultures, caste and class as well as for one community to another. (**S. N Sarma 2016**). According to **Biju Das of Kamalabari Satra** of Moritong Village "Caste discrimination has led us to hold in old tradition, no change has been brought". Reforms of Hindu society that played a major role during the cultural trends and movement in Vedic period, has become a limited period of its history. Great reform of **Vaisnava** movement had form an inspiration towards the religious trends of different parts of India and spread all over the Brahmaputra valley and adjacent areas. Whereas Satras as a most influential socio-cultural organizations of the land as well as members from non -Hindus and tribal families were given livelihood life through cultivated form of Vaisnavite or Neo-Vaisnavite monasteries of Assam. The root -of social transformation and cultural heritage of Satra, has been marked by social importance and various chronicles of devotional practices. The closing decades of 15th century and range from 16th century to the beginning of 19th century of Christian era, the word "Satra" has been derived or it has been corrupted from Sanskrit word "Satra" that lead to two dimensions as a uniform order of religious policy and religious cult of ancient times. From different decades of thirteenth century to sixteenth century which revolve as a path of medieval period to modern period, took a change in the whole revolution in the end of seventeenth century. The word "Satra" that has been revolve has been scripted as a part of several dimension that led to described as revival of various religious affairs of Assam. The whole privileged form of Satra culture has been derived from Bhagawata Purana and assembled as a different part of sages, and it took a long way to gathered in Nimisa kshetra (in the forest of Nimisa). The charitable alms and scarified of human beings have been flourished towards the movement of Vaisnavism to later part of Neo-Vaisnavite movement in Assam. The origin of Satriya culture has been derived as a sense of sankrit word which has been defined as:

"ekanta vaisnava yot nibasakarai"

"Jibako saran diye,taksatrarakarai"

It means where the single minded Vaisnavas reside, where they offer (shelter) to the souls, that place is called Satra. (www//blogsot.com/srisri-iswarhatiSatrasualkutchi.html).

The Satras are the place of education and hub of learning, where it is headed by the Satradhikar as well as devotees who hold some post in the Satra or lead their life as a celibate within the Satra are called Bhakat or Disciples. The life as a monk that they maintain distance from other norms and values of society, continue to have an important role in the religious life and live like a Sannyasa that they follow mostly the prayers of Madhavdeva, who is a guru of Udasin Bhakat. As well as they live their life without any liberty and freedom to their soul. In purely monastic Satras where celibacy is strictly observed the number of such Bhakats or celibate are more numerous than of the semi-monastic or non-monastic Satras. The formation of celibacy (unmarried life) who live their life as a devotee are popularly known as *Kevaliya Bhakat*. (where the word Kevaliya is derived from Sanskrit word *Kevala*, (i.e alone or unattached from other religious sects of the cult...) These lay devotees of a Satra are called sisyas. The function of the monastic Satras is divided into two fractions they are: primary functions and secondary functions have been defined through articulation of Satra culture which is defined as:

In primary function the propagation of Vaisnavism is always based on monotheistic principle to initiate disciples of the Satra and to provide ethico-devotional codes and rules to conduct for the neophytes, and to hold religious festivals and different functions or festivals as well as occasions. The secondary functions is to bring faith in good relationship between the villagers and to develop and maintain the spirit of co-operation to dispense justice which is notion of discrimination of ancient learning on all social and religious controversies. (by **Sarma Nath Satyendra 2016**).

During Vaisnava faith role of women have been influenced as an individual and spiritual formation of society where they were regarded as "*Bhogi*" (sacrifice of God as a savism) in early history of India. Sankardeva has brought equal status towards the role of women and status of the society. The whole section of society has been divided into devotion of "*Girhastha Satra*" and Ashrami Satra that it led to transform as a pure and impure form of society, that has been divided into three types of devotional society which is named as: monastic, semi-monastic and non-monastic Satras of society. The firm footing of Vaisnavism has been influenced by doctrine of mantra and yantra in the form of magic in all forms and innumerable spells and rites of Tantric practices. Eminent scholar **Dr. S. N. Sharmā** has mentioned

"We find that a religious setting or association where the Bhāgavata-purāna was recited or explained was designated as a satra, at the initial stage of the vaishnavite movement."

The Satra resemble to a certain extent of Vaisnavite mathas and akharas of the other parts of India. Each Satra consists of the three principal parties or categories of persons intimately connected with the welfare and management of the Satra as well as the connotation of Satra has been named through Satraadhikar, Bhakats and Sisyas that led to reside within four walls of Satra campus, while the last party live in scattered villages leading the ordinary life of a householder. **According to Dr. B. Kakati**,

"Vaisnavism of Assam preached by Sankardeva and that of the South speak adequately of the influences imbibed during his pilgrimage".

The head of the Satra is popularly known as Adhikar, where his position is similar to that of the mohunt of the matha institution or about of the Christian monasteries. In purely monastic Satras where celibacy is strictly observed the number of such Bhakats or

Celibates are more numerous than of the semi-monastic or non-monastic Satras. Such celibate devotees are popularly called as Kevaliya Bhakat. The word "Kevaliya" is derived from Sanskrit word Kevela i.e "alone or unattached". Thus, the predominance of Satra Institution has led a rift to various religious affairs in Assam that led to various doctrine as a holy place of dominant cult that led to change from one period to another period in the transition of years. The tremendous revolution as Sankari or pilgrimage of religious rites of Assam as well as it gave another scripture of culture that choose another path of revolution during Momaria Rebellion. The link with magical skill of Mahanta people that they take both division Satra culture and make one as an illusion to diverse people towards their religion.

Thus, the whole movement became a battle during the revolt of class-struggle of paik system, that take place during Ahom Monarchy and gave a birth to a new revolution. Gradually the revolution change their mind and thought which became a "blind in culture and tradition of Vaisnavite and Neo-Vaisnavite movement in Assam. Where it propagated an innovative mode of religious conduct based on indigenous elements of the region present at those times in history, when the society in Assam was in turmoil, fragmented into many small parts, always at horns with each other. The Satras have evolved over longer period of time and re-divine over the period that bring political stability and chaotic condition in whole sphere of change, where it became a friction of diverse shades and grades of culture and has become a complexity of centuries. The begin of traditional sphere of various inscription of worship, adherence of Sankardeva faith and beliefs have brought unity of religion in one field, but due to acceptability of global form the change in every cult and section of gaining material benefits has become a way forward in resisting exploitative force of political order of recent times. Thus it led to conflict in the battle of public and diverse the whole culture in various parts of equality and inequality of society. The formation whole acknowledge has been gain through several happenings, incidents and complex web of relationship, that it mundane with vernacular voices and marks a unique of composed structure of religiosity. **According to Louis Dumont (1966) in his book 'Homo Hierarchicus'**

"Purity is responsible for inherent quality of traditional Indian society which is ideological rule behind the caste system where it develops a change during the development of the State in the whole era of higher caste authority in India which shares an organic relationship with gender identity that develop a legitimate system in India that have been control by gender violation in India that develop a tradition in exploitative nature of society."

Thus, the rise of Vaisnavite and Neo-Vaisnavite tradition in Assam has been demarcates the same line where it includes a complete logic of interdependence between spiritual and material existence that hold in one key although it creates several diverse waves in social and religious reformation of society. **According to Neog (2011)**

"Sankardeva's appraisal to establish a strand of thought, as a structure of tradition that combines the diverse religious and material existence of inhabitants in region reflects the substantial organic linkage in the existential reality of the world."

Which it led to change in its whole vernacular tradition and increased its change in whole global arena of society. The whole process turns down where it led to bring light of

Sankardeva where he never questions about social justice, participation, equality and egalitarianism. This goes beyond about the rigidity of this political arena that holds symbolic power and explore a historical as well as socio-cultural surroundings of society. However the whole tragic of Sankardeva popularized the cult of Krishna form of Vishnu worship in a different form with the simplest way of devotion called Bhakti, as well as NeoVaishnavite movement reformed the religious life of the people and it worked as an instrument in building the socio, economic, cultural and political life of the people. In this way a change in whole development could be seen where teaching of vaisnavite and neo-vaisnavite culture has led to change as a depict of various tradition, and it change its spirituality which goes beyond in its societal rules of society.

Methodology:

- This research follows a qualitative approach, integrating both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through unstructured interviews and in-depth observation using convenient sampling across four Satras—Bengana Ati, Natun Kamalabari, Dakhinpaat, and Garmur and Auniati—in the Majuli district. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, newspapers, government reports, and academic theses, offering a contextual and historical framework to assess institutional changes.

Legacy Of Social Change and Diverse Cultures:

The impact of British period and changes in its development have become one of the obstacles in religious tradition, which has witnessed a shift in various dimension of society. It has become most significant in the whole era of transition during transitional period and legacy of phases. Where it led to diverse segment between tradition and religion, and as a process of socio-cultural formation of Institution, which it derives through power play of caste and class hierarchy of society emphasized a complex understanding of diverse culture that evolve through a control of political and economic elements. Moral traditions and foundations which reframe our medieval society has lost in its soul, where they have undergone with the contradiction of spiritual and material assets of society that they have shared each and every resource about the changes that could be seen and observe in every possibility of their views and queries about their social problems as they faced off from the Institution and management. Change in democratic rules and regulation, social change in leadership as well as the dictatorship rules around the corner of their present society, one of them is Bengana Ati Satra and Natun Kamalabari Satra and Dakhinpaat Satra and Garmur Satra, where the whole unity as well as divine of complexity of present structure of culture has been run through one spokesmen as well as all the villagers has reform their views, although the head of leadership has been changed with modern application but the tactics of conflict could be seen within the boundary of Institution. The equality and inequality have touched the feet of Institution where we are allowed to enter inside the Satra, but still the untouchability and indigenious practice could be seen regarding food habits, support from Satra and domination from the caste-based hierarchy of the society. Thus, it brought a diverse formation in the whole era for the present tradition where it emphasized a rational outlook for all caste and class dimension of society where one of them is Sumaimari village (A Missing village) which indicates that many people are below poverty line, and state that “We are living our life under misery”. The whole transition has been still prevailed through caste hierarchy, even if there is social change but they were

treated as marginalized people of society, which refined as a part of “**you are from another caste you cannot hold your position here**”, state that to live a social life they have to follow the instruction where they were given a position in the land of Satras, but the legacy they want to continue within one caste which they spoke about We all believe in God existence where our deeds to give our prayers and salvation for God. We are not control to give our blessings by Satraadhikar (head of the Institution) but with our own soul, as well as they state that when they speak something within their language or give their own views, they have been told to keep a margin within the institution. Thus, the glory of heterogeneity which welcomes and adheres to wide range of space in faiths and worship within itself. Whereas the people of that villages always look themselves through resilience of separation as well as exclusion took place to build a separate provision of worship that they began to preach Christianity by building churches.

“We want to live with one religion that we never one to bring another religion as a part of society, but we are forced by one-self to have a separate community which is by society and institutional forms”.

According to Emile Durkheim(2001) Religion is something eminently social, providing social cohesion, control and purpose for people as well as allowing individual to interact and reaffirm social norms”, where it brought light one of the view of Garmur Satra that; “Jugal Bhuyan” (a principal of Garmur High school states that: The equality and inequality has touch the feet of Institution where we are allowed to enter inside the Satra but still the untouchability and indigenous practice could be seen regarding food habits, support from Satra and domination from the caste based hierarchy of the society.(Jugal Bhuyan 20 october, 2024) **According to E.A Blunt** “No relation between a caste’s social position and the severity of its cooking taboo”. The interplay of caste, class, creates a complex web of interactions that influence individual experiences within the Satra institutions has brought a resilience of separation as well as exclusion from whole society. Thus, the whole idea has been changed with the critique of change in whole tradition that left us a mark of questions which has not been utilized as a proper sect of belief or freedom in religion among gender equivalence of society. Exclusion could be seen where it led to local dispute that have been played through break down of peace and unity among people where it takes advantages of diverse religion and it couldn’t brought empirical light and wisdom through the ladder of stratified society, which it has become a barrier in every legs or they want to make own way of alienation or revolve through cultural and structural renaissance in Assam.

According to M.N Srinivas (1971)

“Social Change in Modern India, defined Sanskritization as a process where a lower caste or tribe emulates the customs, rituals, ideology, and way of life of a higher, often twice-born, caste.”

Thus, the abstract of leading position has been changed to bring light for tribal caste and other lower caste by giving “saran” and give them an opportunity to take a leading role in the customs and manners of higher caste authority of the society. Where a binary opposite of the caste of Hindu society and their identity has become a challenging position of cultural and religious practices that has been dominated towards the new change which they couldn’t have a look or they unable to express their feelings, that it became a complex understanding of alienated society or as a product of society. Concept of Alienation is historically a specific concept that has been subjugated through the product of labor

(subject) and means of production (object) (object of labor and instrument of labor) (by, **Karl Marx 1844-1978**). Thus, the consequent and subsequent position has led to change in various moral and spiritual formation that it began to process as a part of elites and the question of social and economic disparities in their subjugation of rationality and reason of conversion has become an orthodox of Vedic rituals and guidance of morality.

Gender Equity and Patriarchal Structures:

The whole phrase of equality and inequality has brought a drastic change in the context of every rationality, where not only it stands for classification of individualism or secularism of religion. Every form of corrupted society that left a significant mark in our body language, which our ideology doesn't want to bring comfort of social change in some part of era and still have a legacy to make a judgment with the corner of respective forms of society. Margins of social, cultural, political as well as economic field has affected through gender disparity of society, that looks like an empty pot which couldn't feel the pore of heavy water. Gradually it led us towards the hegemony of segmental society, in which it couldn't maintain the trace of rigorous caste-based societal inequalities of society that based on human rights violation and protest against the provision of gender equality concept. The violation of human rights and discrimination against women which is not actually mandated by religion, but by culture practice of social views against women that mitigate a clash between human rights and violation of cultural practice of religion.

According to Kalpana Kannabiran "Religion is not a given, it is a negotiated reality," Kalpana Kannabiran, a Hindu woman and director of the Council for Social Development in Hyderabad, said in her keynote address. (Sal Danha Virginia (2016). Thus the report which has been carried out in Majuli, where it brought a transition of phrase in several incidents or a part of several views in some hegemonic relationship under the frame of patriarchy. One of the incident took place in Kumar village of Majuli nearby Dakhinpaat Satra, whose name is Shuva Kalita (A school teacher) she state that under several social problems she has lived here and never get any help from Satra or from any organization. Whereas she state about his son who has got a job in a school that is in the year 2016 and that job has been given by Satraadhikar of Dakhinpat Satra of which the Satraadhikar has taken Rs 50,000 as a donation and that person has been assured to give a job, but that particular job has been given to another person from their village. When the lady asks to return the money with hue and cry the satraadhikar doesn't even return. So, she states that "We think and believe Satra of Adhikar as God but they led us in a miserable, as we are from another caste or they are taking more money from another person."

The social problem or legacy of those power of caste tactics has been going on as a corrupted society in which they were pay off. According to **Transparency International** "Without strong watchdog institutions impunity becomes the very foundation upon which system of corruption are built" (**Rigoberta Menchu Tum Nobel prize Laureate**). In this way the system of liability has began to form a backdrop of tradition that became a complex web of Interdependence. The orthodox of religion has led to conflict through colonial administration of the society that the turning point of every society had to face several problems that couldn't show but they were influence with modern applicability as well as new politics, which built a rappo within their boundaries. Although change of new rules has been hang out in some Institution, that led every society to bring socio-economic

differences. In which the inequality had led to bring chaos in every form of whistle blow, which it break down all forms of liability and gave us a discriminated rules. Throughout the report of Majuli one of the lady who is a entrepreneur Juri Kalita who lives in Majuli along with her family near by Bengana Ati Satra, that she has taken a small initiative to make (mask or idols of God) in which she has been ask by some villagers or basically from society and from different Satras ask to stop her work and state that " **You are women why you need to do this work stay at home.** "Through the statement she replied that she will still work and make an ignorance towards a particular behaviour or arrogance of society. Thus, the whole platform has some social indulgence or even as a corrupted politics could be seen where they think they could rule the society, but in name of religion they have brought fragmented rules towards the society. As women activist and **Executive Director of North East Network, Dr. Monisha Behal** puts it, "The entry of women into a Satra never entered any kind of discourse or debate during Sankardeb or Madhabdeb's times. As far as my research work in the late 70's on this subject goes, Sankardev laid down the principles of heterodoxy and acceptability of all caste/creed/gender groups in reciting the Dharma and karma of deeds." Thus, after the incident of **Sabrimala temple case** the whole judgement has led to new diary, that it had made a statement by supreme court that all Hindu pilgrims regardless of gender could enter into the temple, where the constitution bench of supreme court held that "any exception placed on women because of biological differences violates the Constitution." Specifically, the court held that the ban violated the right to equality under article 14 and the right to freedom of religion under article 25, which it enforces to bring change in whole equity that one should hold the position in accordance of changing rules or it could have an empowerment which is used as gendered process". The fight against the culture of tradition that has been organize with the caste ridden society of one's position which bring destruction to our individual life, families and communities of society. Thus, the whole termination of caste-based termination of general to Satra life and culture of its own has been held by Assamese novelist " **Mamoni Raisom Goswami** "who talks about the women's role in the Sattra culture and state that s "Satras of Assam is a plight of widow whose spirit is humiliated by the patriarchal world views who embrace to death because of feudal economic order that prevalent society that life of house holder system of societal life that brings well-being of Satra life."

Through the purpose of economic growth, the whole Institution as well as the present society has brought a drastic change in the form of religious life as a notion of Assamese Vaisnavite community. The indulgence of social order that bring division in the notion of egalitarian and social order of society, has spread lot of change in tradition itself but it couldn't acknowledge the form of stereotype that has been preserve in the Satra society. Socio-cultural role of patriarchy and equity of discrimination has led to change in irrespective of caste, creed and influence of gender poverty of society, that brought light in the marginalized section of the society as well as through various taboos and indigeneous practice of communities.

Conclusion:

The history of tradition of religion, culture, social and political change always play a role in our society, but due to rise of Bhakti tradition in Assam as well as the growth of neo-Vaisnavite movement many aspects have change. Where it led to question that how caste

has led to change as a part of religion and gender formation of society? According to 'Edward Gait' "The persecution of Gurus and destruction of Satras was done primarily at the instigation of Brahmins" (Gait, 2008: 121); Saharia 2021) which means the Brahmins try to raise the destruction of Vaisnava movement where separation took place when it instigates by Tantricism and Saivism of society. In which academic community still try to continue the minorities that it led to shed as a distinction of democratic leadership who will become supreme in their own position. Thus we can observe the every cockfight begins with one honor, where killings take place with all power play of tactics which couldn't stop to bring one as a lie down process, that the history repeats who is a bread winner as a corrupted part of society. The overall perception want to bring their legacy where they begin to blame one another that lead towards a colonial rule or invasion of various movement, which took place before independence. Although it has been years where Caste identity has become an important determinant of life where it stand for its opportunity as a fifth of the world's population, which is not given the same significance in global development policy debates as gender, race, age, religion or other identity characteristics while the addressing caste-based inequality and discrimination feature in intergovernmental commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as it has been define through socio-economic outfits. Taking India as its focus, it finds that caste has been treated as an archaic system and source of historical disadvantage due compensation through affirmative action in ways that overlook its continuing importance as a structure of advantage and of discrimination in the modern economy, especially post-liberalization from the 1990s. A body of recent literature from anthropology, economics, history and political science is used to explore the modern life of caste in society, economy and development. Questions are asked about caste as social hierarchy, the role of caste in post-liberalization rural inequality, and threat to untouchability, that effect of policies of affirmative action in public-sector education, employment, social and religious field that brought a revolution and lost its earlier meaning though the process of equality. Genealogy of religion and culture has lost its formation where they want to change the past and present society with Neo-Vaisnavite but still they are holding the patriarchy, which originally referred to rule of the father or a male dominated household and it bring social indulgence where tactics of politics has been kept hidden through the surroundings of Vaisnavite culture in centuries as a role of "never change development " as pure and impure of region" where it influenced the components of culture that reflect in their identity as a leading role of society.

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