

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN POLITY AND ECONOMY

Chief Editor

Dr Ashwani Mahajan

Economist

(Associate Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi)

DARPAN PUBLICATIONS

M-451, Guru Harkishan Nagar, New Delhi-110087
Phone: 011-25254090, 09212209090.

Volume 18, Issue 4, October-December, 2025

Journal Of Contemporary Indian Polity And Economy

HONY. ADVISORY EDITORIAL BOARD

Prof. Vaidyanathan
Eminent Economist
(Professor, IIM, Bangalore)

Prof. B.P. Sharma
(Pro Vice Chancellor, Pacific University, Udaipur)

Prof. Kanagasabhpati
(Director, Tamilnadu Institute
of Management)

EDITORS

Dr. S. Linga Murthy
Martyrs Memorial Research Institute (MMRI) Hyderabad

Rajneesh Mahajan
Formerly Associate Professor,
Apeejay School of Management

Published by:
Darpan Mahajan on behalf of **Darpan Publications**
M-451, Guru Harkishan Nagar, New Delhi-110087
Phone: 011-25254090, 09212209090.

Editorial and Circulation Contact:
EDITORIAL INDIA
(A Unit of Permanence Education Services Pvt. Ltd.)
An ISO 9001-2008 Certified Company
448, Pocket V, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi-110091
Phone: 011-22753916, 40564514
Cell: 9810050610, 9910050610
E-Mail: editorialindia@gmail.com

From Editor's Desk

MGNREGA or the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a rights-based rural employment scheme. Enacted in 2005 and implemented from February 2006, it grants every rural household in India a legal right to demand paid work from the state. Under the Act, any adult member of a rural household aged 18 years or above can apply for work. And the government is legally bound to provide up to 100 days of unskilled manual work per household in each financial year. If work is not provided within 15 days of a written or oral demand, the state must pay an unemployment allowance. MGNREGA is not merely a welfare scheme but a legally enforceable right. An employment rights programme of such vast coverage and legal framework doesn't exist anywhere else in the world. The scheme covers crores of rural citizens and grants them employment as a statutory right. During economic shocks such as droughts, agrarian distress, and even during the Covid-19 pandemic, it served as an economic safety net when millions of migrant workers returned to their villages. Proposing major changes to this scheme, the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin), 2025 (VB-GRAMG) was introduced in Parliament on 16 December. If passed, it will replace MGNREGA. While the government is presenting the new Bill as a reform aligned with the vision of a developed India, the Opposition is strongly against it.

Opposition parties argue that the government is deliberately indulging in politics by removing MK Gandhi's name from the law. Further, since the abbreviated name of the Bill would become VB-GRAMG, or colloquially "Viksit Bharat G Ram G", the Opposition finds it objectionable. The debate around the Bill has taken the form of a verbal battle, while the real provisions in the Bill are barely being discussed. We need a detailed understanding of the Bill—what its provisions actually are and what benefits or drawbacks it may bring for the country and its rural population.

The idea behind MGNREGA was to protect people in rural areas from poverty caused by unemployment. It guaranteed them income while also facilitating rural development works such as water conservation projects, irrigation canals, roads, flood control structures, and land development activities. It must be understood that the scheme is demand-driven. According to government data, although wage rates under the scheme have been increased over the years, there has been a decline in the number of days for which people are registering to work. This implies that rural people are now finding alternate sources of employment that are more attractive than MGNREGA. Since 2005, the economic condition of rural populations has improved. And the resolve to become part of the developed India story is strengthening every day. So, the government believes that fundamental changes in the MGNREGA law are also necessary. Although the Bill proposes an increase in guaranteed employment from 100 days to 125 days, and up to 150 days in tribal areas, its financing will no longer be the sole responsibility of the central government. State governments will also play a role.

JOCIPE

It is noteworthy that in 2005, the states' share in central revenue was only 32 per cent. This was later increased to 42 per cent by the 14th Finance Commission for the 2015-2020 period. The states' share was increased so they could bear the burden of welfare schemes. Since the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted earlier, the burden could not be imposed on the states at the time.

Although the NREGA was passed in 2005 and implemented in 2006, it was renamed the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act by the UPA government in 2009. Now that a new avatar of the scheme has been proposed by Parliament in the context of the nation's resolve to become Viksit Bharat, a change in the name was obvious. Coincidentally, the new name resembles that of Ram, a deity revered by many in the country. It is this aspect that the Opposition is objecting to.

The objective of MGNREGA was to provide income security during periods of unemployment. However, during the sowing and harvesting seasons, workers often remained attracted to MGNREGA, leading to a shortage of labour in farms. This shortage increased wage costs and reduced the competitiveness of agriculture.

The new Bill addresses this issue by providing that the employment guarantee programme will be suspended for 60 days of agricultural activities. Additionally, the nature of works under the programme has also been updated in line with present needs, including water security, rural and livelihood-related infrastructure, and mitigation of extreme weather events. These works have also been linked with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

The biggest flaw of MGNREGA was that, despite numerous efforts, corruption could not be fully contained. Widespread corruption at the gram panchayat and block levels led to large-scale misuse of public funds. Often, projects existed only on paper. The new Bill provides for the use of technology such as biometric authentication for transactions, geospatial technology for planning and monitoring, mobile application-based dashboards for real-time monitoring, and a weekly public disclosure system. The use of technology in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana has already placed checks on corruption. It can do the same for the employment guarantee programme. For a long time, analysts in the country have opposed MGNREGA from a long-term perspective, arguing that it leads to labour shortages in agriculture and industry. While the new Act has attempted to address labour shortages in agriculture, it does not account for shortages in the industrial sector and allied agricultural activities. Instead of fixating on the scheme's name, had the Opposition engaged in a substantive debate to incorporate such useful provisions, more improvements could have been made to MGNREGA's new avatar. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

Dr Ashwani Mahajan

Chief Editor

Contents

Pressure Groups in Indian Politics—Dr. Rama Kant Pandey	1
Policy Making in India-Past and Present—Prof. Anuradha Jaiswal	12
Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behaviour —Dr. Sukhpreet Kaur Chawla	18
The Political Economy of Globalization: Disparities, Rights, and the Future of Global Justice—Dr. Anjani Kumar; Dr. Ashish Kumar Thakur	21
Transformation of the Chieftaincy System among the Wancho Tribe: Tradition to Modern Governance—Dr. Wangjaw Wangsu	30
Absence of Higher Education and Employment Opportunity as the Push Factor of Rural Migration in Arunachal Pradesh—Dr. Parvoti Boli	37
India will not Compromise on its Strategic Autonomy Policy —Sewak Singh	46
Balancing Work and Life: Problems Faced By Working Women in the Globalized Era—Neeraj Kumar; Shreya Saini	53
The Contribution of Women to Rural Economic Development in Bihar: Focus on Agriculture, Small Businesses, and Household Incomes —Dr. Jayendra Kumar Monu	61
Dairy Cooperatives: A Pathway to Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment in Bihar—Prof. (Dr.) Rajeshwar Prasad Shrivastava; Mr. Ramesh Kumar	69
WTO Trade Policies and India’s Reservations—Sonalika Garg	87
The Transnational Bridge: Remittances, Soft Power, and the Construction of India’s Global Identity—Vinod Malik	94
A Study of Indian Election’s Survey Methods—Dr. Virpal Singh	107
A Study on the Economic Conditions of Workers in the Wood Industry: A Case Analysis of Jairampur (Arunachal Pradesh)—Nehukoh Simai	111
Challenges Faced by Election Analysts During Survey and Report Writing—Dr. Daljeet Kaur	120
Role of Ambedkar in Making of Indian Constitution —Ramplejeet Singh	124
Fintech and Digital Banking in the Development of E-Commerce in Indian Rural Areas with Special Reference to Bihar state —Neelam Kumari	131
October-December 2025	(v)

JOCIPE

Artificial Intelligence and Law Enforcement: Striking a Balance between Security and Human Rights in International Perspectives—Kabari Das	140
BRICS, De-dollarization and Global Power Shifts: An Overview—Dr. Shammi Kumari	153
Child Labour and the Right to Education: A Socio-legal Conflict In Contemporary India—Dr. Bhoma Ram; Bhawna Chaudhary	166
Bank, Finance and Rural Development in Bihar—Santosh Kumar*; Dr. Raj Kumar Prasad**	180
Poverty and Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Rural Bihar—Sweety Kumari*; Dr. Raj Kumar Prasad**	186
Rethinking Positive Discrimination in India: Navigating the Debate Between Social Justice and Meritocracy—Keshav Kumar Mishra	195
Navigating the Indo-Pacific: An Exhaustive Analysis of ASEAN-India Maritime Cooperation, Geopolitical Economy, and Regional Security—Moupriya Biswas	201
Integral Yoga and the Evolution of Consciousness: The Transformative Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo—Sanjib Ruidas	214
The Role of Government Schemes in the Social Development of Tribal Children and Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study of Tribal-Dominated Districts in West Bengal—Dr. Prasanta Sarkar	223
Ambedkar and the Upliftment of the Dalit in India: Revisiting the Constitution of India—Tapasi Pal	236
The Nature of Meaning: A Philosophical Exploration of Semantics in Frege and Wittgenstein—Jibon Ankure	245
Strategic Realignment and Competitive Coexistence: A Longitudinal Analysis of India-China Relations (2014–2025)—Dr. Ila	257
Changing Nature of Centre-state Relations During Coalition Era—Dr. Sandeep Kaur	263
Empowering Women through Microfinance: A Catalyst for Socio-Economic Transformation—Neha Rani	274

Pressure Groups in Indian Politics

Dr. Rama Kant Pandey

Abstract

Modern society is a trap of groups and institutions. By these groups, individual runs their activities, determines their limitations. In every society a lot of structure and functional group by which system gets their motion. In modern time man cannot live without the help of institutions or functional groups, for example political parties and pressure groups.

Pressure groups mobilize public opinion in their favour. They also put pressure on the members of parliament and legislation to make law in their favour. Pressure groups do several works and apply several techniques to influence the ministers. Some pressure groups establish relations with political parties or try to establish strong relations with bureaucracy. They also try to help in running the administration.

The co-operative life of society has been becoming the regulatory nature of a system. Modern political study has been centralizing around a new political man that is groups. Modern life of human being is based on groups principle. The number of pressure groups are increasing continuously. Hence the role of pressure groups are also increasing in political activity. In modern politics, the output of any system has determined by the demand of pressure groups.

Pressure groups are called life partner of democracy. Pressure groups give oxygen to the system to function their work in the interest of public. Truman, in his book *The Governmental Process*, describes pressure groups as a security guard of democratic institutions.

Key Words:

1. Lobbying
2. Pressure groups
3. Interest groups
4. Democracy

Assistant Professor(Pol. Sc), S.R.A.P COLLEGE CHAKIYA

October-December, 2025

(1)

JOCIPE

5. System
6. Institutions
7. Opinion of public

Introduction

The term '*pressure group*' originated in the U.S.A. A pressure group is a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their common interest. It is so called as it attempts to bring a change in the public policy by exerting pressure on the government. It acts as a liaison between the government and its members.

The pressure groups are also called interest groups or vested groups. They are different from the political parties in that they neither contest election nor try to capture political power. They are concerned with specific programmes and issues and their activities are confined to the protection and promotion of the interests of their members by influencing the government. The pressure groups influence the policy-making and policy implementation in the government through legal and legitimate methods like lobbying, correspondence, publicity, propagandising, petitioning, public debating maintaining contacts with their legislators and so forth. However, some times they resort to illegitimate and illegal methods like strikes, violent activities and corruption which damages public interest and administrative integrity. According to Odegard, pressure groups resort to three different Techniques in Securing their Purposes

First, they can try to place in public office persons who are favourably disposed towards the interests they seek to promote. This technique may be labelled electioneering.

Second, they can try to persuade public officers, whether they are initially favourably disposed toward them or not, to adopt and enforce the policies that they think will prove most beneficial to their interests. This technique may be labelled lobbying.

Third, they can try to influence public opinion and thereby gain an indirect influence over government, since the government in a democracy is substantially affected by public opinion. This technique may be labelled propagandising.

Importance of Pressure Groups

Interest groups acting as pressure groups have become increasingly important as a means by which individuals can attempt to influence governments regarding their particular requirements.

Although individuals within a representative democracy possess rights allowing them to lobby parliamentarians and governments concerning pertinent issues, a collective approach can often exert more powerful pressure on decision-makers, as well as consolidating a range of similar ideas and opinions into a cohesive format.

There are difficulties in defining the many types of pressure groups. For example, political parties are sometimes included. However, a common definition excludes political parties, concentrating on those groups wishing to influence government policies and activities, whilst remaining apart from government.

There are two types of pressure groups:

1. Sectional
2. Promotional

Sectional Lobby Groups

This includes self-interest groups such as trade unions, business and farming associations, churches, ethnic associations, pensioner groups and returned service personnel.

Promotional Lobby Groups

This category promotes particular causes, beliefs or values such as conservation, women's issues, Aboriginal, civil or moral rights.

Pressure groups vary in size and organisational structure, which may not necessarily represent the amount of influence exerted upon a government's policies. It is obvious that trade unions, business organisations and professional associations can exert considerable pressure upon governments. On the other hand, a small ad hoc committee, established because of a local issue, may rally sufficient supports for mass demonstrations or marches, and thus pressure a government into quickly altering its policies. The anti-Vietnam War marches of the 1970's organised by small groups quickly mushroomed into large mass demonstrations which eventually culminated in a newly elected federal government acting on an election promise and withdrawing the remaining troops.

Pressure groups are a vital link between the government and the governed. They keep governments more responsive to the wishes of the community, especially in between elections. Pressure groups are able to express the views of minority groups in the community who might not otherwise receive a hearing. Pressure groups are able to use their expertise to provide the government with important information.

JOCIPE

This has often been the argument in relation to motoring organisations such as the RACB. It is also applicable to issues such as Indigenous reconciliation. Pressure groups offer an alternative source of advice to the government, separate from that coming from the public service. Pressure groups generally promote opportunities for political participation for citizens, without the need to join a political party. Moreover, they allow for the democratic rights of freedom of speech assembly and association to be upheld.

Pressure groups may represent a powerful minority force in society and exert political influence to the detriment of the majority of society. This is an argument often leveled at trade unions and business groups. Some pressure groups exert influence because their financial position, membership, or organisation. This influence may be out of proportion to their position in society. The use of direct action by pressure groups (e.g., strikes by unions, demonstrations, blockades, or pickets) can cause hardship to the community in general. Some pressure groups are not democratic in themselves; some have powerful but unrepresentative leaders who may not be representative of anyone but themselves. Some leaders do not reflect the opinions of their organisation's members.

In India, political parties and pressure groups together play a big role in the struggle of power. In India, the pressure groups arose even during the colonial period. All India Trade Union Congress was the first countrywide pressure group of the working class. India is a developing country, having a scarcity of resources and acute poverty, resulting in the significant role of the pressure group. The aim of this pressure group is to secure economic and political concessions themselves.

The capacity of pressure groups is determined by leadership.

Pressure Groups in India

A large number of pressure groups exist in India. But they are not developed to the same extent as in the US or the Western countries like Britain, France, Germany and so on. The pressure groups in India can be broadly classified into the following categories:

Business Groups

The business groups include a large number of industrial and commercial bodies. They are the most sophisticated, the most powerful and the largest of all pressure groups in India. They include:

- (i) Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI): Major constituents are the Indian Merchants Chamber

(4)

October-December, 2025

of Bombay, Indian Merchants Chamber of Calcutta and South Indian Chamber of Commerce of Madras. It broadly represents major industrial and trading interests.

- (ii) Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM): Major constituents are the Bengal Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta and Central Commercial Organisation of Delhi. ASSOCHAM represents foreign British capital.
- (iii) Federation of All India Foodgrain Dealers Association (FAIFEDA): FAIFEDA is the sole representative of the grain dealers.
- (iv) All India Manufacturers Organisation (AIMO)
AIMO raises the concerns of the medium-sized industry.

Trade Unions

The trade unions voice the demands of the industrial workers. They are also known as labour groups. A peculiar feature of trade unions in India is that they are associated either directly or indirectly with different political parties. They include:

- (i) All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC): Affiliated to CPI.
- (ii) Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC): Affiliated to the Congress (I).
- (iii) Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS): Affiliated to the Socialists.
- (iv) Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU): Affiliated to the CPM.
- (v) Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS): Affiliated to the BJP.
- (vi) All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU): Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) Liberation.
- (vii) All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC): Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist).
- (viii) New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI): Independent from political parties.
- (ix) Labour Progressive Federation (LPF): Dravida Mun netra Kazhagam
- (x) Trade Union Co-ordination Committee: (All India Forward Bloc)
- (xi) United Trade Union Congress: (Revolutionary Socialist Party)
- (xii) All India Centre of Trade Unions: (Marxist Communist Party of India United)
- (xiii) Anna Thozhil Sangam Peravai: (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam)
- (xiv) Bhartiya Kamgar Sena: (Shiv Sena)

JOCIPE

- (xv) Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat: (Janata Dal United)
- (xvi) Indian Federation of Trade Unions: (Communist Party of India Marxist–Leninist New Democracy)
- (xvii) Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress: (All India Trinamool Congress)
- (xviii) Pattali Trade Union (Pattali Makkal Katchi)
- (xix) Swan Swatantra Thozhilali Union: (Indian Union Muslim League)
- (xx) Telugu Nadu Trade Union Council: (Telugu Desam Party)

First Trade Union in India:

The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was founded in 1920 with Lala Lajpat Rai as its first president. Upto 1945, Congressmen, Socialists and Communists worked in the AITUC which was the central trade union organisation of workers of India. Subsequently, the trade union movement got split on political lines.

Agrarian Groups

The agrarian groups represent the farmers and the agricultural labour class. They include:

- (i) Bhartiya Kisan Union (Under the leadership of Mahendra Singh Tikait, in the wheat belt of North India)
- (ii) All India Kisan Sabha (The oldest and the largest agrarian group)
- (iii) Revolutionary Peasants Convention (Organised by the CPM in 1967 which gave birth to the Naxalbari Movement)
- (iv) Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (Gujarat)
- (v) R.V. Sangham (Led by C.N. Naidu in Tamil Nadu)
- (vi) Shetkari Sanghatana (Led by Sharad Joshi in Maharashtra)
- (vii) Hind Kisan Panchayat (Controlled by the Socialists)
- (viii) All India Kisan Sammelan (Led by Raj Narayan)
- (ix) United Kisan Sabha (Controlled by the CPM)

Professional Associations

These are associations that raise the concerns and demands of doctors, lawyers, journalists and

Teachers: Despite various restrictions, these associations pressurise the government by various methods including agitations for the improvement of their service conditions.

They include:

- (i) Indian Medical Association (IMA)
- (ii) Bar Council of India (BCI)
- (iii) Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ)
- (iv) All India Federation of University and College Teachers (AIFUCT)

Student Organisations

Various unions have been formed to represent the student community. However, these unions, like the trade unions, are also affiliated to various political parties. These are:

- (i) Akhila Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) – Affiliated to BJP
- (ii) All India Students Federation (AISF) – Affiliated to CPI
- (iii) National Students Union of India (NSUI) – Affiliated to Congress (I)
- (iv) Progressive Students Union (PSU) – Affiliated to CPI(M)

Religious Organisations

The organisation based on religion have come to play an important role in Indian politics. They represent the narrow communal interest they include.

Religious Organisations

The organisation based on religion have come to play an important role in Indian politics. They represent the narrow communal interest. They include:

- (i) Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS)
- (ii) Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)
- (iii) Jammāt-e-Islami
- (iv) Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen
- (v) Anglo-Indian Association
- (vi) Associations of the Roman Catholics
- (vii) All-India Conference of Indian Christians
- (viii) Parsi Central Association
- (ix) Shiromani Akali Dal

The Shiromani Akali Dal should be regarded as more of a religious pressure group rather than a political party in view of the fact that it has been concerned more with the mission of saving the Sikh community

JOCIPE

from being absorbed into the ocean of Hindu society than with fighting for the cause of a Sikh homeland.

Caste Groups

Like religion, caste has been an important factor in Indian politics. The competitive politics in many states of the Indian union is in fact the politics of caste rivalries.

Brahmin versus non-Brahmin (in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra), Rajput versus Jat in

Rajasthan, Kamma vs. Reddy in Andhra, Ahir versus Jat in Haryana, Baniya,

Brahmin versus Patidar in Gujarat, Kayastha versus Rajput in Bihar, Nair versus Ezhava in Kerala and Lingayat versus Okkaliga in Karnataka. Some of the caste-based organisations are:

- (i) Nadar Caste Association in Tamil Nadu
- (ii) Marwari Association
- (iii) Harijan Sevak Sangh
- (iv) Kshatriya Maha Sabha in Gujarat
- (v) Vanniyakula Kshatriya Sangam
- (vi) Kayastha Sabha

Tribal Organisations

The tribal organisations are active in M.P., Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and the North Eastern states, i.e. Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and so on. Their demands range from reforms to that of secession from India, and some of them are involved in insurgency activities. The tribal organisations include:

- (i) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)
- (ii) Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) in Tripura
- (iii) People's Liberation Army in Manipur
- (iv) All India Jharkhand Party
- (v) Tribal Sangha of Assam
- (vi) United Mizo Federal Organisation

Linguistic Groups

Language has been so important factor in Indian politics that it became the main basis for the re-organisation of states. The language along with caste, religion and tribe have been responsible for the emergence of political parties as well as pressure groups. Some of the linguistic groups are:

- (i) Tamil Sangham
- (ii) Anjuman Tarraki-e-Urdu
- (iii) Andhra Mahasabha
- (iv) Hindi Sahitya Sammelan
- (v) Nagari Pracharani Sabha
- (vi) Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha

Ideology Based Groups

In more recent times, the pressure groups are formed to pursue a particular ideology, i.e. a cause, a principle or a programme. These groups include:

- (i) Environmental protection groups like Narmada Bachao Andolan and Chipko Movement
- (ii) Democratic Rights Organisation
- (iii) Civil Liberties Association
- (iv) Gandhi Peace Foundation
- (v) Women's Rights Organisation

Anomic Groups

Almond and Powell observed: "By anomic pressure groups we mean more or less a spontaneous break-through into the political system from the society such as riots, demonstrations, assassinations, and the like. The Indian Government and bureaucratic elite, overwhelmed by the problem of economic development and scarcity of resources available to them inevitably acquires a technocratic and anti-political frame of mind. Particularistic demands of whatever kinds are denied legitimacy. As a consequence interest groups are alienated from the political system.

Some of the anomic pressure groups are:

- (i) All-India Sikh Students' Federation
- (ii) Nava Nirman Samiti of Gujarat
- (iii) Naxalite Groups
- (iv) Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)
- (v) All Assam Students' Union
- (vi) United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)
- (vii) Dal Khalsa

Conclusion

Pressure groups are the wheels of democracy. It is the soul of democracy. We can say that without the acts of pressure groups

JOCIPE

democracy cannot get their motion. So, pressure groups are fuels of the democracy. Modern society is dependent on the groups and institutions. To get energy from pressure groups individuals run their political activities.

The absence of any real and active involvement of the masses has diluted public discourse over the years, undermining the quality of our democratic institutions. But the recent protests in Delhi, as seen here at Jantar Mantar, are a step in the right direction. It is not that we did not know about protest or don't have a history of it. After all, Gandhiji unleashed his brilliantly conceived concepts of Satyagraha, non-cooperation and civil disobedience right here to great strategic success. Over the years, though, these ideas have been so thoroughly usurped and exploited by political parties that they have ceased to mean anything or move anybody. Protest as a tool—in the shape of dharnas, rail rokos, and bandhs—has been completely owned by the politicians. Now, that could finally be changing.

Business has always played a big role in political life of the nation. It controls economy and also maintains life line of the nation. It can bring fame as well as defame to the government and under certain circumstances can even dislodge political party from position of power. Business groups play their role irrespective of the Consideration whether it is bi-party or a multi-party system or whether form of government is democracy or totalitarian. Business as a pressure group is not to be seen only in few countries, but all over the world.

But its role differs from situation to situation. It can be different in dictatorship than what it can be in a democracy. Similarly, business plays a different role in a developing society than what it can in a developed society. It is because in developed societies these are more organised than what these are in a developing society. In India there are no political associations of business interests but business interests in India have developed in almost all political parties and pressure groups in the country. These try to infiltrate in the pressure groups by giving them donations so that the parties can perform their activities and contest elections.

The business contributes maximum financial assistance to the political party in power, in case its programme is not anti to business houses or private business.

The pressure group is the interest groups which work to secure certain interest by influencing the public policy. They are non-aligned with any political party and work as an indirect yet powerful group to

influence the decision. For this article, the focus is paid on nature, types, roles and functions of pressure groups in India. The role of pressure groups is indirect, ordinarily, prominently invisible and intermittent, yet very important part of the administrative system.

The emergence of trusts and monopolies and the struggle over tariffs led to the formation of a pressure group. The pressure group is a living public behind the parties. Pressure group's role is as vital as that of political party existing in any country.

Pinner has characterised pressure groups as an anonymous empire. Richard D. Lambert views it as an unofficial government. Key has defined pressure (as) a private association formed to influence public policy. Pressure groups exist outside political party organs, and there is a vast difference between the two.

In India political parties and pressure groups together play a big role in the struggle of power. In India, the pressure group arose even during the colonial period. All India Trade Union Congress was the first countrywide pressure group of the working class. India is a developing country having a scarcity of resources and acute poverty, promoting the significant role of the pressure group. The aim of this pressure group was to secure economic and political concessions for themselves, providing crucial component of the structural equilibrium i.e. maintenance function.

References:

- (i) The Politics of the Developing Areas – Almond and Coleman
- (ii) Indian Government and politics – Finer, Fynham
- (iii) Caste in India: Since Independence – Rajni Kothari
- (iv) Comparative Politics – Almond and Powell
- (v) The Hindu (Journal)
- (vi) The Out look (Journal)
- (vii) India today (Journal)
- (viii) comparative politics - By J.C. Jauhari”

Policy Making in India-Past and Present

Prof. Anuradha Jaiswal

Abstract

Our country has struggled a great deal with the problem of effective national policy making and implementation. From the early post-independence period, when policies focused on industrialization and self-reliance, to the economic liberalization in 1991 that ushered in market-driven reforms, India has continually adapted its policy framework to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The rise of populist politics in recent decades has reshaped the priorities of public policy. Issues such as corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and political interference can undermine the effectiveness of public policies. Moreover, India's vast and diverse population presents a challenge in ensuring that policies reach all segments of society equitably. India's federal system of governance also presents a challenge in terms of coordination between the central and state governments. Thus policy makers of today and tomorrow have to grapple with this diversity, rapid change, global shocks, and continuously evolving technology to do their job well.

Keywords- Policy, Federalism, Governance, Innovation, Economy, Transparency, Bureaucracy.

Policy refers to a rule- a guide to decision making. Hence any rule that affects the public at large, or people or all members of a community, is the subject matter of public policy¹. In a way or another, each of us has the task of helping our government to determine its goals and objectives. As we do this, we try to develop policies which may be described as purposive courses of action taken in pursuit of the country's goals. Over the past thirty to thirty five years, our country has struggled a great deal with the problem of effective national policy-making and implementation.

During the Nehru era, there were scholarly policy inputs from intellectuals from various disciplines-P.C.Mahalanobis, Homi Bhaba, and V.K.R.V.Rao are few examples. The Planning Commission that Mahalanobis helped set up was focused on economic matters. Post Nehru, policy ideation was gradually monopolized by bureaucracy. The

business of administration and ideating for policymaking was largely left to the bureaucracy, which in turn, grew increasingly insular to external inputs². The situation began to change somewhat with liberalization. Ironically as the stifling grip of the government on the economy loosened, the need for public policy education and research began to be felt. For many sectors such as infrastructure and natural-resource dependent industries like mining, things have not changed drastically even in the quarter century of liberalization.

Our lives in the country are vitally affected by what we are able to achieve in the policy making field over the past four decades, our country has struggled a great deal with the problem of effective national policy making and implementation³. The election manifesto of the political party in power, interest groups, political parties, the administrative and judicial courts, the NITI Aayog, the Goods and Services Tax Council, a system of centre-state consultations, international bodies and many other institutions and factors may, and frequently do, exercise, a profound influence on government policy. Such decision or policy makers comprise those who hold office within the formal or constitutional system of rules which assign formal powers to various positions within the government⁴.

Policy making in a federal country like ours is a difficult effort. The constitutional order is itself a great restraint on policy making process. It asserts that policy making should be deliberative. It is important to note that the slow pace of policy making is intentionally built into Indian Constitution. Post Nehru, policy ideation was gradually monopolized by the bureaucracy. For several decades, the politico-bureaucratic combine had an interesting sharing of roles where the political class focused more on winning power. The situation began to change somewhat with liberalization. It is hardly a secret that the key to business success in independent India traditionally lay in management the as government well. During the days of the permit/license raj, government officials had power of life and death over private business⁵.

Indian constitution originally did not contain any provisions relating to the policy-planning machinery, such as the Planning Commission (established in 1950) and a National Development Council (established in 1952). The Planning Commission (abolished since August 2014) seen as an extra-constitutional and non-statutory body was set up by a resolution on 15 March 1950 of the Union Cabinet by Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru with himself as its first Chairman, to formulate an integrated Five Year Plan for economic and social development within the framework of a federal state, a parliamentary democracy,

JOCIPE

and a welfare state. Experiences by several State governments had shown that the Planning Commission and the Union Government exercised great control over the formulation of policy in the state sphere than the Constitution warranted. After much deliberations by the Union Government, Planning commission was finally scrapped by on 13 august 2014 by a Union Cabinet decision and it was replaced by a new body called the NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India). Although the states had no planning commissions of similar status, they had special departments and boards (advisory boards) to do the planning work.

The National Institution of Transforming India (NITI Aayog) was created through a Union Cabinet resolution on 1 January 2015 in place of Planning Commission. The NITI Aayog is tasked to serve as a policy “think tank” of the government as a “directional and policy dynamo” and would provide the governments at the centre and in states with strategic and technical advice on key policy matters including economic issues of national and international importance⁶. The thrust behind the setting up of NITI Aayog is to coordinate States for identifying specific problems and devising mechanisms to resolve them through the spirit of cooperative federalism. Considering that NITI Aayog plays an effective role in intergovernmental policy-making and conflict resolution among and between union and State governments, it is important for the Union Government to ensure that this institution is insulated from partisan pressure. Policy making and policy action are a difficult exercise in a federal polity like India. Constitutional bodies and executive –created institutions have a big role to play in achieving specific policy goals. However it is observed that the development of a political culture of cooperation, mutual respect and trust is much more important to effective intergovernmental relations than the establishment of formal structures and legal procedures. In this way danger of monopoly to the policy making in a federalism can be warded off. It is very much true that “Federalism fosters policy innovation”.

Management of relationships with government remains critically important today, even though the nature of the industry-government relationship may have changed over time. Deregulation and opening up to foreign direct investment (FDI) have increased the number of domestic players as well as major global businesses in several sectors. Consequently, a need has arisen in the private sector in India for people who are not only trained in traditional management but also have an understanding of the practices and priorities of government officials,

in order to develop mutually beneficial relationship with the corporates. The recent emergence of non-government players in the public policy space signify a welcome trend for India—the reduction in the degree of government monopoly over public policy thoughts⁷.

The rise of populist politics in recent decades has reshaped the priorities of public policy. While electoral competition has spurred innovation in welfare schemes, it has also led to short-termism and fiscal populism. States often compete on the basis of offering direct cash transfers, subsidies, or free services, sometimes at the cost of investing in long-term developmental infrastructure. At the same time, federalism has produced both opportunities and tensions. High-performing states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have demonstrated policy innovation, especially in health and education, while low capacity states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar struggle with basic service delivery. The fiscal and administrative asymmetry between the Union and states often results in policy mismatches and uneven developmental outcomes. Digital governance initiatives—such as Aadhaar-linked services, Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), and e-governance platforms—have streamlined welfare delivery but also created new forms of exclusion for those lacking digital literacy or access⁸. Yet, in practice, policies have often fallen short in achieving distributive justice. Affirmative action in education and employment for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) has expanded opportunities, but deep disparities remain. Marginalized communities continue to face systemic barriers in accessing quality healthcare, housing, sanitation, and employment. Women, in particular, remain underrepresented in decision-making roles and are disproportionately affected by policies that fail to account for gendered experiences.

India has also placed significant emphasis on the development of its education system. The Right to Education Act, passed in 2009, made education a fundamental right for children aged 6 to 14. This policy has played a crucial role in expanding access to primary education, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, the government's focus on improving higher education has led to the establishment of higher institutions in the country that have contributed significantly to India's human capital development, producing skilled professionals who contribute to various sectors of the economy. The National Youth Policy 2014 seeks to improve and enhance the status of the youth and identifies key areas in which action is required, where not enough is done, to enable youth development and to provide a

JOCIPE

framework for action for all stakeholders⁹. The policy is intended to serve as a guiding document, and states that the policy be reviewed in 5 years, so that government may refocus on priorities for youth development.

India's new national policies are an overarching approach towards promoting economic progress, social well-being, and ecological balance. Through policy interventions in critical areas like agriculture, MSMEs, investment, fiscal policy, industrial growth, energy, labor, and finance, the government hopes to create a robust and inclusive economy. These policies are purposely coordinated to drive India towards becoming a developed country by the year 2047, with the growth benefits being shared equally across its people. The rise of populist politics in recent decades has reshaped the priorities of public policy. While electoral competition has spurred innovation in welfare schemes, it has also led to short-termism and fiscal populism. States often compete on the basis of offering direct cash transfers, subsidies, or free services, sometimes at the cost of investing in long-term developmental infrastructure. Equity, a core concern of India's constitutional philosophy, remains unevenly addressed¹⁰.

Digital governance initiatives—such as Aadhaar-linked services, Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), and e-governance platforms—have streamlined welfare delivery but also created new forms of exclusion for those lacking digital literacy or access. For public policy to become more effective, it must shift from a top-down, technocratic model to one rooted in participatory governance. Responsive governments require active citizen participation. Digitized efficiency risks casting citizens as passive recipients of government largesse instead of as active claimants of right. This requires not only administrative reform but also political commitment to transparency, evidence-based planning, and community engagement. For India to truly harness its developmental potential, public policy must be reimagined—not as a tool of state control or political patronage—but as a participatory process of societal transformation¹¹. However, India's journey with public policies has been marked by ongoing challenges such as implementation inefficiencies, corruption, and coordination issues between state and central governments. Thus policy makers of today and tomorrow have to grapple with the diversity of the nation. Despite these challenges, the evolution of India's public policies demonstrates a commitment to achieving sustainable development that balances economic growth with social and environmental responsibility¹².

References

1. Chakrabarti Rajesh & Sanyal Kaushiki, 'Public Policy in India', p-3, Oxford University Press', 2017, New Delhi.
2. Ayyar, R.V.V, 'Public Policy Making in India', p-24-36, Person Longman, 2009, New Delhi.
3. Sapru R.K.& Sapru. Y, 'Public Policy, Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation', p-113-114, Sterling, 1994, New Delhi.
4. Ibid, p-114-115.
5. Agarwal U.C, ' Civil service in India: competence and capacity Building' Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol 58, No 3, July-September 2012, pp.331-341.
6. Rao M Govinda, "Getting Niti Aayog to work", The Financial Express (Chandigarh), 21 July 2015.
7. Cherukuri Vinod Kumar & Shailaja Punya, 'Public Policy & Governance in India, Impact and Development', Nitya Publications Bhopal.
8. Mathur Kuldeep, 'Public Policy and Politics in India', Oxford University Press, 2015.
9. Muralidharan Karthik, 'Accelerating India's Development', Penguin Viking, 2024.
10. Chakraborty Bidyut & Kandapal Prakash Chand, 'Public Policy in India', Taylor & Francis, 2024.
11. Ibid, p114-115.
12. Chakrabarti Rajesh & Sanyal Kaushiki, 'Public Policy in India', p-141-142, Oxford University Press', 2017, New Delhi.

Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

Dr. Sukhpreet Kaur Chawla

Abstract :-

Marketing is the most important tool of every businesses which aims to satisfy the consumer and to win in the competitive market. Digital marketing is the revolutionized way of marketing which also aims to reach the targeted audience through the use of digital channels. Government initiatives like Digital India and open network for digital commerce are providing oppourtunities for adoption of digital platform. India is set to become the world's second biggest online market with over 900 million active internet user by 2025, as per a report published in business standard. Repaid growth in digital marketing leads to change in consumer behavior, reshapes economic growth and societal changes.

Key words :- Digital marketing, consumer behaviour, online market, buying decisions, e-commerce

Introduction :-

Digital marketing is the new concept of marketing goods and services through the use of digital channels to promote products and services to the targeted consumers. Digital marketing is growing speedily due to more use of tablets, phones and computers by the people. It is a worldwide term and reach to global audience at lower cost. Digital marketing includes content marketing, E-mail marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), affiliate marketing, pay per click (PPC), social media marketing, influencer marketing and mobile marketing. Digital marketing campaign aims to increase brand awareness, drive sales and promote goods and services. A large number of consumers turn to the internet to gather information about product they intend to buy. Technological advancement has transformed passive consumers to active consumers and creates 24/7 content ecosystem that encourages consumers to buy anytime. It provides consumer greater convenience and choices which

Asst. Professor, Durga Mahavidyalaya, Rapipur (C.G.)

are not available in physical store marketing. Now consumers seek information about products and services online before making purchase and they do research on digital platform. Social media and online reviews directly attract consumers and enable firms to create favorable brand images, increasing brand awareness and building brand loyalty. Online review is now becomes most trusted point before making buying decisions and this reviews whether positive or negative have much impact on their businesses.

Steps of digital marketing :-

- Research and strategy – in digital marketing, first goals are set then customer details are collected based on demographics, details are, collected based on demographics, behaviour and pain points. The goal should be clear, specific and measurable which must aim to generate more sales and enhance brand awareness. Other important thing is to analyze the competitor's websites and communication channels and messages they are using. They study rival's online strategy, strength, weakness and also work for creating their brand unique and valuable.
- Planning and setup – In this, they choose platform where their audience spends time such as SEO, PPC, Social media or E-mail. After this they allocate resources and create user friendly website. Content is the backbone of any digital marketing effort. Content creation needs complete information of the preference and behavior of their audience. Content should be created in such a way that appeal most of the target audience.
- Analysis and optimization – Regular access of campaign is required which can be done through using tools like Google analytics and social media insight. This helps to adjust strategy and achieve better result over time.

Benefits of digital marketing :-

- Digital marketing is an affordable way for small businesses to reach large audience without having to spend a large amount.
- It provides direct interaction with customer while they are engaged in their mobile or laptop.
- It helps businesses to track campaign with the use of tools like Google analytics and social media metrics to evaluate performance and adjust strategy.
- It provides immediate feedback from their audience through comments, surveys or direct social media interaction and can align their strategies with consumer preferences.

JOCIPE

- Artificial intelligence is a game changer which provides personalized content and recommendation.

Conclusion :-

Digital platform provides reviews, price comparison and product information which make easy buying decision before making actual purchase. It provides tailoring messages and advertising according to customer needs and builds brand loyalty through emotional connections. Consumers of today's era is more mobile friendly, so this digital platform provides them best opportunities and information about various products and services not in India level but also globally. Government also supports online market, e-businesses for overall economic growth and expansion. It provides two-way communication in which consumers now actively interact with brands online, influencing marketing strategies with their feedback. Digital marketing provides opportunities equally to both businesses and consumers. Through this, businesses realize their goals by giving consumers more choices and information to make better decisions.

Reference :-

Books :-

- Kumar Dr. Amit, Rao Dr. B.Jagdish, marketing management, Sahitya Bhawan publication Agra
- Mishra Dr. N., Principles of marketing, SBPD Publishing house, 2017

Website :-

- The – impact- of – digital – marketing – on – consumer – behavior

DSIMS <http://dsims.org.in>

- The meteoric rise of Digital Marketing in India key insights

IBEF- <http://www.ibef.org>

- Understanding Digital Marketing : key types, channels and examples investopedia
<http://www.investopedia.com>
- What is digital marketing? Strategy, simplilearn.com
<http://www.simplilearn.com>

The Political Economy of Globalization: Disparities, Rights, and the Future of Global Justice

Dr. Anjani Kumar¹

Dr. Ashish Kumar Thakur²

Globalization is a process that has gained widespread acceptance, but it hasn't come without its share of pushback. This dynamic has influenced how we adapt and transform across the globe. At its core, globalization connects people, raising awareness of these connections. As a result, we see a growing web of relationships and a heightened sense of consciousness. However, with these connections come both advantages and challenges. Take for instance, the rise of information and communication technologies (ICTs)—while technology has become more accessible, significant inequalities still exist regarding who can access these tools and how effectively they can use them. Globalization has, in many ways, widened the divide between those who have resources and those who do not. Nevertheless, most people have found ways to adapt to the rapid technological changes. It's important to recognize that there isn't a one-size-fits-all model or universal framework to fully capture the complexities of globalization today.

At its essence, globalization is about power dynamics—it's about who holds the influence to shape the norms of our modern world (Schirato and Webb, 2003). The lack of agreement on its origins, meanings, and impacts makes analyzing globalization a complex and sometimes incomplete endeavor. Different countries experience globalization in varied ways. For instance, developed nations like the

¹Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Kalindi College, University of Delhi

²Assistant Professor, Political Science, Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi

United States often feel less of the negative impacts associated with globalization compared to poorer, developing countries. Yet, no one can truly escape the reach of globalization. It permeates our lives, influencing cultural, political, economic, and technological aspects to such an extent that, despite its prevalence, it remains largely unmanageable by global governance systems, which often lack the necessary resources, authority, and scope to regulate globalization effectively for the benefit of humanity.

In delving into the broad definition of globalization, the article tackles the pressing question of whether it's truly an unavoidable phenomenon in today's discussions. Globalization, often portrayed as an unstoppable force that shapes our economies, societies, and political landscapes, faces critical examination—especially when considering the inequalities it brings to light. This raises an important question: is globalization genuinely inevitable, or can we envision alternative ways of global interaction that prioritize human rights and fairness? The argument unfolds in two key ways: first, by challenging the notion of globalization's inevitability, it questions the prevailing political and economic systems that sustain inequality and human rights abuses. Second, the article posits that any discussion of global justice, particularly from a political theory perspective, must explore whether our current understanding of globalization can adapt to tackle the growing global disparities. Ultimately, this exploration invites us to rethink human rights within a global context, suggesting that while globalization may be a powerful force, its path is not predetermined. Instead, it hinges on the political and economic decisions we make, which can guide it toward a more just and equitable future—one where human rights are genuinely universal, and inequalities are not just ignored but actively confronted.

Making Sense of Globalization

There's no agreement in the literature on what globalization really means or where the term comes from. The movement of people and goods isn't a new phenomenon of the 20th century; it's something that has been part of human civilization since its dawn. Throughout history, globalization has involved the exchange and growth of people, money, and materials. (Jin, 2019) It's important to note that globalization isn't a straightforward process.

Globalization has really changed the game when it comes to technology, making it more accessible to everyone and leading to a blending of cultures. It's like the world has turned into a global village,

where distances feel shorter thanks to tech advancements, increased mobility, and the flow of capital and trade. However, some argue that globalization isn't a one-size-fits-all phenomenon. The exchange of knowledge and technology across borders has ramped up significantly due to globalization. From 1995 to 2014, the U.S., Japan, Germany, France, and the U.K. were responsible for about three-quarters of all patented innovations worldwide. But in recent years, countries like China and Korea have stepped up their game, contributing more than ever. This rapid spread of technology has boosted innovation and productivity, particularly in emerging markets. (WEF, IMF) We've also seen a huge increase in international travel and migration thanks to globalization. For example, the number of international tourist arrivals skyrocketed from 25 million in 1950 to a staggering 1.4 billion in 2018, showcasing how much easier it is to get around. On top of that, labor mobility has surged, with millions moving to find better job opportunities, which has created a more vibrant global workforce. When it comes to global trade, the growth has been impressive. The World Trade Organization expects trade growth to pick up to 3% in 2025, up from 2.7% in 2024. This uptick reflects not just rising trade volumes but also a deeper economic integration among countries.

Capital flows have really picked up pace, with global foreign direct investment (FDI) hitting a whopping \$1.54 trillion in 2019—an impressive jump from previous years. This influx of capital has played a crucial role in driving economic growth and creating stronger connections between countries. These figures highlight how globalization has effectively shrunk distances and timeframes, encouraged the exchange of technology and culture, and boosted economic activities through improved mobility and trade.

Since the 1990s, there's been a growing body of research on globalization, yet scholars still find themselves at odds over its meaning, origins, nature, approaches, and outcomes. A review of the literature on globalization reveals some common themes, such as increasing global 'interconnectedness,' 'intense mobility,' 'distant proximities,' and the 'compression of time and space' (Giddens, 1990; Harvey, 1989; Held and McGrew, 2007; Lechner and Boli, 2011).

Guillen points out that globalization is one of the most debated concepts in the social sciences. Beyond the disagreements over definitions and origins, the study of globalization is complicated by the fact that it's not a uniform process. It's fragmented, incomplete, and often contradictory. Its effects differ depending on the time and place.

To truly grasp the complexities of globalization, we need to dive

JOCIPE

into comparative analyses that consider the various factors at play in this process. John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge suggest that globalization has spurred greater economic efficiency and prosperity while also spreading the very ‘idea of liberty’ across the globe. On the other hand, Amartya Sen challenges the notion of globalization as a ‘new Western curse,’ although he acknowledges that it has led to inequality in its outcomes. For Sen, the key question is how we can achieve a more equitable form of globalization.

In “Borderless World,” Kenichi Ohmae paints a picture of globalization as a force for endless prosperity. But not everyone is on board with that view; many scholars have raised alarms about the darker side of globalization.

Economist Dani Rodrik has taken a critical look at how far we’ve gone with globalization, suggesting that we might have jumped in too deep without the right tools to handle its complexities. In his 1997 book, “Has Globalization Gone Too Far?”, Rodrik dives into the challenges that come with rapid economic integration. Here are some key concerns that Rodrik highlights:

1. **Labor Market Disruptions in Developed Countries:** The surge in trade with low-wage nations, especially China, has led to a significant drop in manufacturing jobs in developed countries. This shift has caused job losses and stagnant wages for many workers.
2. **Financial Instability in Developing Countries:** Opening up capital accounts has made developing economies vulnerable to unpredictable capital flows, which can lead to financial crises. Rodrik argues that the risks tied to open capital markets often overshadow any potential benefits.
3. **Erosion of Policy Autonomy:** Institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) set rules that can restrict national policy options. Rodrik believes this limits countries’ abilities to create policies that fit their specific economic and social needs.

Empirical Evidence Supporting Rodrik’s Concerns:

1. **Decline in Manufacturing Employment:** From 1990 to 2007, the U.S. manufacturing sector lost around 6 million jobs, a trend that can be partly linked to the rise in imports from countries like China.
2. **Financial Crises:** The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 really shine a light on the risks

tied to unregulated capital flows, impacting both emerging and developed markets alike.

3. **Policy Constraints:** Research indicates that countries following IMF structural adjustment programs often find their fiscal space shrinking, which limits their ability to roll out social welfare initiatives.

Rodrik’s insights emphasize the need for a balanced approach to globalization—one that protects national sovereignty and meets domestic social needs while still engaging in the global economy. He champions policies that shield vulnerable sectors and ensure that the benefits of globalization are shared more widely.

In *The Globalization Reader*, Frank J. Lechner and John Boli (2015) state that “Globalization is likely to remain the dominant concern of the 21st century.” Critics have raised alarms about the potential fallout from profit-driven capitalists. The increasing economic and political interdependence is often viewed as destructive, leading to a concentration of resources in the hands of a few. Critics highlight the stark imbalances in power and resource distribution that globalization has created. Skeptics argue that the global economy isn’t as inclusive as it should be. For instance, sub-Saharan Africa remains far less integrated compared to countries in East Asia, Europe, and North America (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). In 2020, the disruption caused by COVID-19 pushed the global extreme poverty rate up to 9.3 percent, a rise from 8.4 percent in 2019.

1. **Global Wealth Disparity:** Research has shown that as of 2000, the wealthiest 1% of adults owned a staggering 40% of global assets, while the top 10% held 85% of the world’s wealth. By 2014, Oxfam revealed that the wealth of the 85 richest individuals was equivalent to that of the bottom half of the global population, which is around 3.5 billion people.
2. **Uneven Economic Growth: Income Gains Disparity:** From 1988 to 2008, the wealth of the top 1% globally skyrocketed by about 60%. Meanwhile, the middle classes in emerging economies like China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and Egypt enjoyed even more impressive gains, ranging from 70% to 80%. In stark contrast, those in developed countries saw only minimal increases in their real incomes during the same timeframe.
3. **Trade Imbalances and Economic Anxiety: Trade Dynamics:** According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the era of hyperglobalization has not brought about the widespread structural changes needed in

developing nations, which has only widened the gap of global inequality. The soaring profits of leading transnational corporations have played a significant role in diminishing the global income share of labor, further deepening income inequality.

4. **Globalization's Impact on National Sovereignty: Erosion of Policy Autonomy:** The rise of multinational corporations and international institutions due to globalization has started to shape economic policies in ways that often undermine the sovereignty of individual nations. This shift poses challenges to traditional governance and raises important questions about how well countries can manage their own economic affairs.

As we navigate through the twenty-first century, we're confronted with stark power imbalances, chaos, and intricate security challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified these issues, introducing new factors that call for a united global effort to tackle the shifting landscape of threats and opportunities. These insights highlight the criticisms of globalization, stressing the urgent need for policies that bridge these gaps and foster a more inclusive global economy.

1. **Growing Power Asymmetry: Economic Disparities:** The pandemic has really shone a light on global inequality. Between 2020 and 2021, the wealth of billionaires around the world surged by a staggering \$4.4 trillion, while over 100 million people slipped below the poverty line. **Influence of Major Powers:** Countries like China have been using their economic clout to broaden their global influence. Yet, they face hurdles, especially with strained ties to the West, highlighted by conflicts in places like Gaza and Ukraine, which complicate their ambitions.
2. **Disorder and Multidimensional Security Challenges:** **Cybersecurity Threats:** The shift to digital platforms during the pandemic has led to a jaw-dropping 600% increase in malicious emails, with cyberattacks happening on average every 39 seconds. Healthcare organizations and critical infrastructure have found themselves in the crosshairs.
3. **Conflict Risks:** The pandemic has also raised the stakes for civil conflicts, especially in African nations. The heightened risk of conflict can have serious global economic consequences, with international trade losses estimated at nearly \$5.5 billion.
4. **Food Security Concerns:** COVID-19 has nearly doubled the number of people facing acute hunger, pushing the total to 265 million by the end of 2020 and worsening global food insecurity.

The interconnected challenges we face today are far too complex for any single nation to tackle alone. Any discussion about globalization needs to embrace a broad, multidimensional understanding to truly grasp its implications. Globalization is an ongoing phenomenon that significantly shapes International Relations. (Jin, 2019) It's become crucial to manage globalization in a way that emphasizes values, norms, and rules.

Globalization is a mixed bag—flawed yet appealing. It's largely a Western initiative, dressed up as a noble cause aimed at boosting peace, prosperity, progress, and democracy to make it more palatable. While it has certainly served the interests of powerful nations, for many in the developing world, it's been more of a mirage—full of unfulfilled promises, complexities, and inequalities that have made life tougher for countless individuals. Even those in developed countries have found themselves caught in its grasp, as this colossal force (Globalization) seems to be consuming its own creators.

Looking Ahead

Globalization is a process that has gained widespread acceptance but has also faced significant pushback, influencing how societies adapt and evolve globally. There's a general consensus that it brings people together, raising awareness of these connections. With globalization, we see a surge in interactions and a growing consciousness. However, these connections come with both advantages and challenges. For example, while advancements in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have democratized access to tech, they've also highlighted stark inequalities regarding who can access these tools and how effectively. Globalization has widened the divide between the wealthy and the less fortunate, even as many have embraced new technologies. There's no one-size-fits-all model or universal framework to fully capture the complexities of globalization today. It has indeed spread economic growth, democratic ideals, technological advancements, and cultural exchanges, but it has also ushered in a wave of crises. Is retreating to the past an option? Absolutely not. Countries like the US, along with officials from various international organizations, recognize the significant damage globalization can inflict or has already caused, yet they still support its continuation—albeit with a bit more caution.

Globalization is often viewed as something we can't resist or avoid—it's seen as both desirable and inevitable. The world is now seeking a more human-centered and sustainable approach to globalization, one

that promotes fairness and equity. But is that really achievable? At the Asian Forum in 2018, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres remarked, “Globalization is irresistible... It has brought many benefits, yet it has also left many people behind, contributing to growing systemic inequality. Therefore, our goal must be a fair globalization that ensures no one is left behind, paving the way for peace and sustainable development.” This calls for multilateral solutions to tackle global challenges. The article suggests that there are various forms of globalization. To truly grasp the intricacies of globalization, we need to dive into a comparative analysis that examines the interplay of the many factors at play in this complex process.

References

- Atalay, G. R. (2010). *Readings in Globalization: Key Concepts and Major Debates*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Boli, F. J. (2015). *The Globalization Reader*. Wiley Blackwell.
- David Held, A. M. (1999). Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture. In C. P. Tormey, *Politics at the Edge* (pp. 14-28). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Factiva*. (2023). Retrieved June 21, 2023, from Stanford University: <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/9264178>
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*.
- Jin, X. (2019). Globalization: The Inevitable Route for Human Development. *China Today*.
- Paul Hirst, G. T. (2009). *Globalization in Question*. Wiley.
- Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, J. (2000). Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?). *Foreign Policy*, 104-119.
- Rodrik, D. (1997). *Has globalization gone too far?* Institute for International Economics.
- Rosenau, J. N. (2003). *Distant Proximities: Dynamics beyond Globalization*. Princeton University Press.
- Scholte, J. A. (1999, May). Global Civil Society: Changing the World? United-Kingdom: Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSGR).
- Skonieczny, A. (2010). *Interrupting Inevitability: Globalization and Resistance*. Sage.
- Thakur, A. (2022). “Mapping the Multilateral Engagements: United Nations, G20, and the East Asia Summit”. In S. Roy Choudhury, S. Thankachan, and P. Bakshi, *India-Japan Relations @ 70*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

- Thompson, P. H. (2002). The Future of Globalization. *Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, 247-265.
- Vanham, P. (2019). Retrieved June 20, 2023, from World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/how-globalization-4-0-fits-into-the-history-of-globalization/>
- Wade, R. (1996). Globalization and Its Limits. In S. B. Boyer, *National Diversity and Global Capitalism* (pp. 60-88). Cornell University Press.
- Webb, T. S. (2003). *Understanding Globalization*. Sage.
- WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard*. (2023). Retrieved June 20, 2023, from World Health Organization: <https://covid19.who.int/>
- Yun, Z. (2018, April 10). *UN News*. Retrieved June 20, 2023, from United Nations: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/04/1006951>

Transformation of the Chieftaincy System among the Wancho Tribe: Tradition to Modern Governance

Dr. Wangjaw Wangsu

Abstract

The present study attempts to bring traditional chieftaincy system and their present status of Wancho tribe in Longding district, Arunachal Pradesh. The community is known for their rigid and hereditary village council system known as Ngo-Wang. This system has now undergone significant change over time. This paper try to present this change through mainly primary source of information collected from sample observation covering whole of Longding district. The information was collected for three different periods. The qualitative interaction with the people was instrumental to understand the exactness of the change. Through this paper it is observed that a rigid and hereditary council witnessed substantial change from 1960s to 2020. The shift from absolute control on village affair to the consultative and inclusive way of governing village affair has been depicted the computation of information collected through field survey. At present, Ngo-Wang shares power, either openly or informally, with emerging forces like Gram Panchayat, Student Union, women's groups, and educated leaders. However, the importance of Ngo-Wang remains significant in matters related to culture and customs.

Introduction

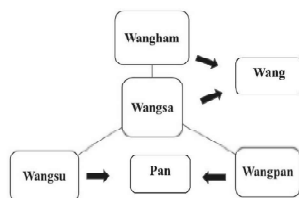
The paper is in effort to comprehend and understand the traditional chieftaincy system and their present status of the Wancho community of the Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh. The Wancho belongs to the Tibeto-Burma family of the Mongoloid race (Wangsa, 2018). The ethnic Wancho are indigenous to the northern part of the Purvanchal ranges, basically in and around Patkai Bum. They are presently spread over different administrative units, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, and North-western Myanmar. Each village of Wancho tribe is governed independently by a hereditary chief, locally known as the *Wangham*, who holds sovereign authority over their

respective village. The village chief along with others hereditary leaders of the village form village council known as Ngo-Wang. This council headed by Wangham plays central role in maintaining social order, organizing festivals, settling disputes and regulating community resources. However, with the introduction of modern democratic institutions like PRI, education, and government administration, the traditional chieftaincy system has witnessed gradually evolution over time.

Traditional Chieftaincy

The *Wangham* (chiefs) form the highest class in Wancho society and enjoy special privileges and high social status. The *Wangsa* born from intermarriages between *Wangham* and *Wangpan* occupy second status in the society. The *Wangham* and *Wangsa* formed a group of *Wang*. This *Wang* assisted by certain person of the village whose task was assigned by its culture usually form council, locally known as *Ngo-Wang*. The descendant of *Wangsa* does not retain same status or title rather they become *Wangsu* from next generation. *Wangsu* and *Wangpan* constitute higher share of population holds third and fourth rank respectively in the society, are commonly term as *Wangpan* or *Pan*, which means commoner. Social status is hereditary and fixed by birth. Children of chief families remain *Wangham* (men) and *Wangcha* (women). We cannot say how far this division of classes resembles the caste system of the Hindus, but perhaps we notice here something like a nascent state of caste distinction” (Choudhury, 1973).

Figure 1.1: Social Stratification of Wancho



Traditionally Wancho political system centre on chieftaincy. Each village has an autonomous, hereditary village council called *Ngo-Wang*, headed by the chief (*Wangham*), which manages all affairs of village life. There is no pan-Wancho governing body; each council governs only its own village, though it may handle inter-village disputes involving their village or subordinate village known as *Noksa*. The council includes subordinate chiefs that are colony chief called as *Hamsa/ Zong-Wangham*, *Wangsa*, *Ngopa* (announcer), elders, and messengers, and is exclusively male. While elders and members of *Ngo-Wang* advise, the *Wangham* has the final authority.

JOCIPE

Chieftainship is hereditary, passing to the eldest son born of a *Wangcha* mother. The chief enjoys special privileges, including royalty shares in hunting and fishing, communal labour support, ceremonial precedence, and collective mourning at deaths in his family. He serves as the supreme arbiter and protector of the village and is believed to hold divinely sanctioned authority. Executive power is shared mainly with *Wangsa*, though ultimate control rests with the principal chief family (*Wanghamnu/Hamnu-Wangham*).

Methodology

Study area

The present study is confined to the Wancho tribe that inhabited the area of the Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh (Figure 1.2). The district is located between 26° 39'31" N and 27°06'19" N latitude and 95°11'07" E and 95°30'55" E Longitude forming the south easternmost district of the state. It has a total geographical area of 1192 Km². The total population of the district stands at 52719 as per the 2011 Census.

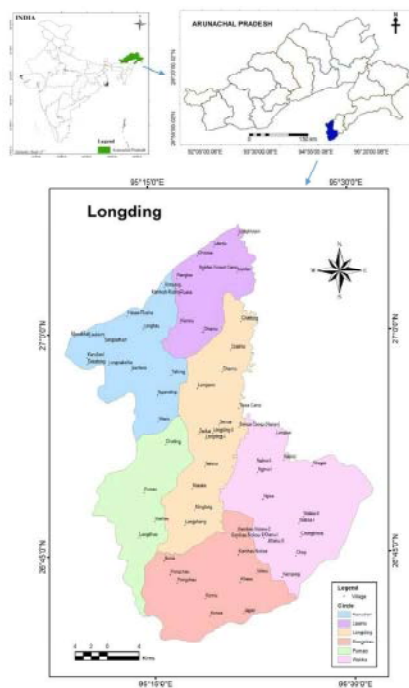


Figure 1.2: Location Map of Study Area

Source: Generated from the Administrative map of Arunachal Pradesh (Census, 2011)

Survey and Sampling

The study adopted a three-stage purposive sampling method. First, all six administrative circles were included. Second, 17 original villages were selected, ensuring not less than 25% villages from each administrative circle. Third, 25% of households from each selected village were sampled, resulting in 579 households from a total of 2,308. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interviews for the status of village administration in 1960s, 1990s and 2020. Supplementary qualitative information on traditional history and social change was obtained from elders, village leaders, and specific social groups to contextualize findings.

Results and Discussion

The data collected from the field survey were computed to understand overall shift in village governance of the Wancho villages.

Table 1.1: Showing the Trend of Acceptance of Village Governing Body

Year	Total Households	Type of village council			
		(Ngo-Wang)		Modern way	
		Numbers	%	Numbers	%
1960s	579	579	100	0	0
1990s	579	579	100	0	0
2020	579	58	10	521	90

Source: Field Survey, 2020

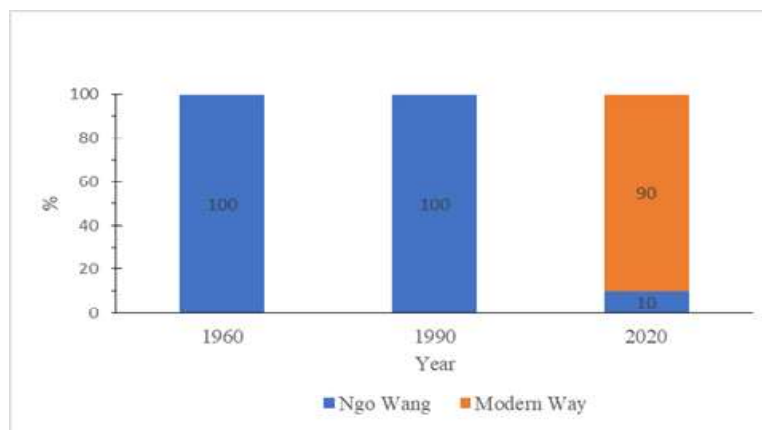


Figure 1.3: The Village Governing Body

Source: Field Survey, 2020

JOCIPE

Modern way of administration here implies the consideration of the perspectives of the Panchayat, traditional Ngo-Wang, religious leaders, Gaon-Bura, educated individuals, and the Student Union in managing their village affair. All respondents in 1960 expressed that Ngo-Wang held absolute control over the village matter. This percentage remained more or less same for the 1990s. However, this time alternative force in the form of student union, and Christianity start to influence their life. 2020 has seen a significant deviation from the 1960s and 1990s. Nearly 90% of respondents said that the new class that emerged from education, those who were financially successful, and religious leaders nominated by the churches had a major impact on their village's new management style. The introduction of Panchayati raj has significantly modified the village governance in Wancho community (Table 1.1 and Figure 1.3).

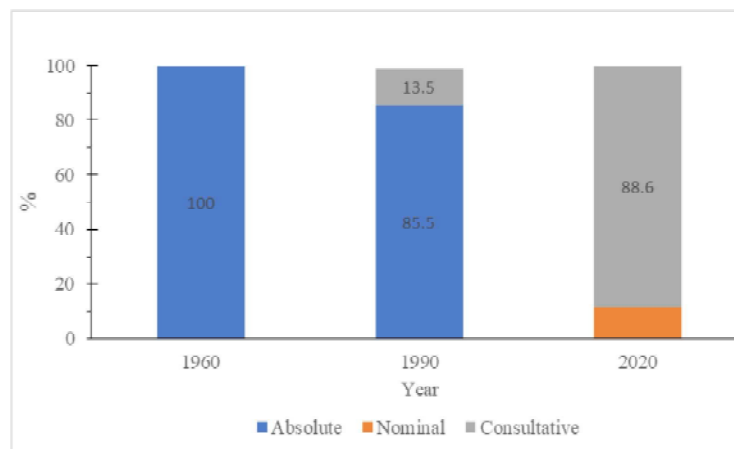


Figure 1.4: Nature of Power of Wangham

Source: *Field Survey*

Figure 1.4 shows that in 1960 all respondents believed Ngo-Wang and Wangham held absolute authority, which declined to 86.6% in the 1990s and disappeared entirely by 2020. At present every village function through consultative manner whereby all stakeholder were given due share. Unlike the past even Women are increasingly taking part in village meetings and conferences, supported by the growing presence of women's organizations that advocate for their interests.

The governance structure of Wancho villages has undergone a significant transformation from the 1960s to the present. Traditionally, the men centric *Ngo-Wang* council headed by *Wangham* held absolute

authority, and women having no participation. Over the time, the governance system has shifted from this exclusive model to a more consultative and inclusive structure, integrating Panchayat members, Gaon-Buras, religious leaders, student unions, and educated individuals. While traditional leaders retain symbolic and hereditary importance, decision-making now emphasizes consensus among multiple stakeholders.

The influence of Gaon-Buras, educated leaders, and student representatives has expanded, creating multiple centres of authority that work collaboratively under the guidance of traditional institutions. Similarly the role of women has gradually increased, with active participation in Panchayat, church, self-help groups, and village associations. Education and institutional positions have empowered women, challenging long-standing patriarchal norms.

Conclusion

Overall, Wancho village governance today reflects a blend of tradition and modernity. While traditional leadership remains respected, its absolute power has diminished, making way for inclusive, participatory, and culturally adaptive governance. The evolution highlights broader societal changes, including modernization, education, and gender inclusion. The main driver of the change in their overall lifestyle ascribe to education, government administration and the adoption of Christianity.

References

- Chaudhuri S.K., '*Christianity and Culture Change among the Wanchos of Arunachal Pradesh*'. In T.B. Subba et al., (Eds.), *Christianity and Change in Northeast India* (pp. 244-256). Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 249-250.
- Choudhury, S. D. (1980). "*Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers: Tirap District*".
- Das, P., (1988). "*Wancho through History*" Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, NEHU, Shillong.
- Dutta, P.C. (1990). "The Wanchos". The Director of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Elwin Verrier, *Democracy in NEFA*, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, Reprinted: 2007.
- Konyak L.M., *The Socio-cultural and Political Significance of the Monarchical System of the Konyaks Nagas*, ISPCK, Delhi, 2003.

JOCIPE

- Ralongham, M., (2009). Indigenous Knowledge system of Wancho and its role in the sustainability of the Environment. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Itanagar. Source: RGU Library.
- Sebastian, F., (2015). “*Governing System of The Yimchunger Nagas*”. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Nagaland University, Lumami.
- Sarkar, J., (2005). *Christianity and Culture Change among Wanchos of Arunachal Pradesh*. In T. B. Subba & S. Som(eds) “Between Ethnography and Fiction. Varrier
- Elwin and the Tribal Question in India. New Delhi, Orient Longman, pp 173-184.
- Wangsa, N. (2018). “*The Nyinu Massacre*”. Macmillan Publishers.
- Wangsu, C. (2012). “*The Impact of Christianity in the Wancho; Historical perspective from 1977-2009*”. WBCA Mission Centre Niaunu.

Absence of Higher Education and Employment Opportunity as the Push Factor of Rural Migration in Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Parvoti Boli

Abstract

The present study focuses on the rural out migration and the consequent depopulation in the rural districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The study highlights the factors responsible for rural migration and build a linkage between absence of educational and employment opportunities and rural migration. The present study has been conducted by using both primary data and secondary data, where primary data have been collected through household survey and the secondary data have been collected from published journals, websites, government reports etc. Education and employment have been found to be the prime driving force of rural out migration. Villages having lesser social amenities are facing higher rate of rural out migration than the villages with better infrastructures. This uncontrolled rural out migration, if not curb with certain government interventions, will put the village economy as well as socio-cultural aspects in grave danger.

Keywords: Rural migration, depopulation, Education, Employment, Infrastructure, Arunachal Pradesh.

Introduction

Depopulation of rural areas has become a global problem related to social, economic and demographic aspects faced by the society. Most of the studies on depopulation depict that rural depopulation generally occurs in the developed countries of the world. However, based on some

Guest lecturer, Rang Frah Govt. College, Changlang, Arunachal Pradesh.

October-December, 2025

(37)

JOCIPE

of the recent studies, it has been witnessed that rural depopulation is not only common phenomena of developed region but also of developing countries. As a result, though the concept of rural depopulation is at an initial stage in Indian context, the trend has started in India as well. A report of the Rural Development and Migration Commission, Uttrakhand, revealed that migration from development-starved villages of Uttrakhand of nearly 16,500 villages, as many as 734, mostly in the hilly areas are totally depopulated.

This is because rural areas are emptying out as a response to the growing urbanization around the world. The response comes in the form of rural-urban migration especially of young people, who migrate in search of better employment opportunities and for better education. Therefore, depopulation in general may be viewed as a specific case of the rural exodus caused by modern economic growth; because, during the period of industrialization and the subsequent economic growth, cities expanded rapidly, concentrating the location of industry first and then services, which required the recruitment of a large labor force drawn mainly from rural areas, where the increasing substitution of farm machinery for muscle power further encouraged significant rural to urban migration (Pinilla, Ayuda and Saez, 2008).

The present study has been carried out in two districts of Arunachal Pradesh viz. Upper Siang and East Siang district. Being parts of Eastern Himalaya, both the districts are located between 94° E - 95° 35' E longitude and 27° 30' N - 29° 20' N latitude. The northern part is covered by the Upper Siang district, while the East Siang district is located in Southern part of the Region.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the factors responsible for rural out migration.
2. To find out linkage between educational and employment opportunities and rural migration.

Hypothesis: Absence of higher education and employment opportunity act as a push factor for the migration of people from rural areas.

Methodology

Database: The study was conducted by using both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected during the household survey

of the sampled villages with the help of structured questionnaires. While secondary data have been collected from various websites, government reports, published research journal, etc.

Methods: Stratified random sampling methods were employed where distance of villages from their respective urban centres have been taken as parameters for the selection of villages. 11 administrative circles each from both the districts (total 22 circles) have been selected, from which 2 villages each (total 44) were covered from each circle.

Sample size: Out of total 248 inhabited villages (2011 Census) in the study area, total numbers of 44 sampled villages have been selected covering approximately 18 % samples. Household studies were carried out in these selected villages using household schedules and covering about 30 % samples of the total households of each village. As a result, total numbers of 789 sampled households have been covered from the 44 selected villages.

Result and Analysis

Reasons for Rural Out Migration in the Study Area

Migration is a complex phenomena, not only do the factors controlling migration vary from place to place but also the significance of the same factor varies from person to person. Distinctions can be made between push factors and pull factors. In the areas of out migration, push factors force the people to move to other places. Meanwhile, in the areas of in migration pull factors allure the people to move to these areas. However, it is not necessary that only push or only pull factors should operate in an area. In fact, both push and pull factors can operate simultaneously in the same area.

The impacts of modernization and urbanization of the modern world can be felt in every corner of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. These impacts come in a form of rural-out migration, which is a common phenomenon even in the remote districts of Upper Siang and East Siang. Migration of any form at any place takes place owing to number of reasons, such as employment, education, business, marriage and many other reasons.

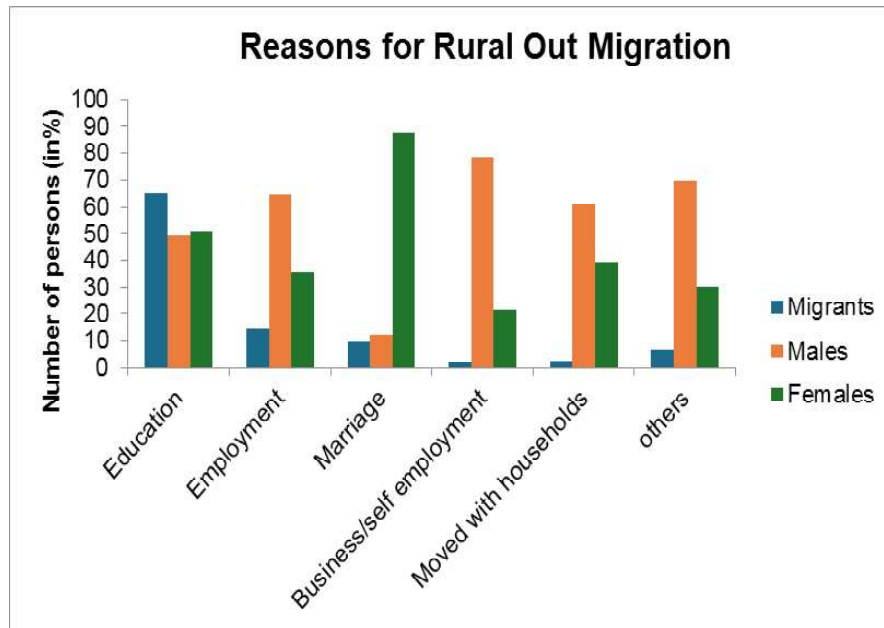
Table 1: Reasons for Rural Out Migration

Reasons for Migration	Migrants	Males	Females	Percentage		
				Persons	Males	Females
Education	1424	704	720	65.3	49.4	50.6
Employment	311	201	110	14.2	64.6	35.4
Marriage	211	26	185	9.7	12.3	87.7
Business/ Self employment	42	33	9	1.9	78.6	21.4
Moved with households	51	31	20	2.3	60.8	39.2
Others	143	100	43	6.6	69.9	30.1
Total	2182	1095	1087			

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the given Table that education constitutes the largest number with regard to reasons for rural out migration in the region, comprising 65.3 per cent of the total migrants. Among the classified reasons, employment constitutes second largest with 14.2 per cent of migrants, followed by marriage with 9.7 per cent and moved with households 2.3 per cent. People engaged in business or self employment constitutes the lowest number with 1.9 per cent and the rest is comprised of several unclassified reasons. When we consider the proportion of gender distribution, males constitute larger numbers than females in the majority of categories, except in the education and marriage. Among the migrants who have migrated from their respective villages for the purpose of education, females constitute 50.6 per cent against males at 49.4 per cent. In case of other categories like employment, business/self employment, moved with households and others, huge differences of numbers between males and females can be observed, where males' numbers are higher than the females' at 64.6 per cent, 78.6 per cent, 60.8 per cent and 69.9 per cent respectively. Therefore, it is evident from the given Table that women engaged in formal job are lesser than males and very few women are self employed. Also, females' number is higher than males among the migrants of marriage purpose comprising 87.7 per cent, which obviously is a result of patriarchal system of the society.

Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Reasons for Rural Out Migration in Percentage.



Source: Field Survey

Hypotheses: Absence of higher education and employment opportunity act as push factor for migration of people from rural areas.

An attempt has been made to find out whether the absence of higher education and employment opportunity are the driving force of rural out migration in the area. In order to understand the above cited link between migration and availability of opportunities, scoring of villages on the basis of availability of educational institutions and social overhead capital has been incorporated. In case of nearness to urban centres, villages located under 30 kilometres distance from the urban centres have been scored 1, while the villages located beyond 30 kilometres distance have been scored 0. Then the scores of each village have been summed up as shown in the column total score in the Table number 2.

JOCIPE

Table 2: Scoring of the Villages on the Basis of Availability of Educational Institutions and Social Overhead Capital.

Villages	Availability of educational institutions				Nearness to urban centers			Total Score	Rate of Migration
	P.S	M.S	H.S	CL.	P.O	H.C	NH/SH		
Vill. 1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	63.6
Vill. 2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	42
Vill. 3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	55
Vill. 4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	55.8
Vill. 5	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	35.9
Vill. 6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	69.1
Vill. 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43.5
Vill. 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
Vill. 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	72.7
Vill. 10	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	40.6
Vill. 11	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	39.2
Vill. 12	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	23.9
Vill. 13	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	42.2
Vill. 14	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	53.4
Vill. 15	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	34.9
Vill. 16	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	13.3
Vill. 17	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	51.3
Vill. 18	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	52.7
Vill. 19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	37
Vill. 20	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24.5
Vill. 21	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	14.7
Vill. 22	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	50.6
Vill. 23	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	44.9
Vill. 24	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	38.3
Vill. 25	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	43.9
Vill. 26	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	56.8
Vill. 27	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	55.9
Vill. 28	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	42.9
Vill. 29	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	52.9
Vill. 30	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	44.9
Vill. 31	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	42.4
Vill. 32	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	47.7
Vill. 33	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	55.6
Vill. 34	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	32.4
Vill. 35	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	45.7
Vill. 36	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	48.8
Vill. 37	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	52.4
Vill. 38	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	51.9
Vill. 39	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	53.1
Vill. 40	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	47.5
Vill. 41	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	45.5
Vill. 42	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	65.5
Vill. 43	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	38.3
Vill. 44	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	48.4

Source: Field Survey

Note: P.S = Primary School, M.S = Middle School, H.S = Secondary/Higher Secondary School, CL. = College, P.O = Post Office, H.C = Health Center, NH/SH = National/State Highway

After summing up the scores of villages as shown in Table number 2, villages have been categorized into different classes depending upon their individual scores. This categorization has been done as follows:

- Very Low, which are scores between 0 to 1
- Low, which includes scores of 2 to 3
- Medium, which includes scores of 4 and above

Further, the rate of rural out migration of the villages falling under above mentioned each category has been calculated. Then the rate of migration has also been divided into two categories such as:

1. Villages having 50 per cent or less rate of rural out migration.
2. Villages having more than 50 per cent rate of rural out migration, as depicted in the Table number 3.

Table 3: Categorization of Villages on the Basis of their Individual Scores and their Rate of Rural Out Migration.

Category based on total score	No. of villages	Rate of Migration	No. of villages (with percentage)
Very Low (0-1)	12	50 % or less	5 (42 %)
		Above 50 %	7 (58 %)
Low (2-3)	17	50% or less	12 (71 %)
		Above 50%	5 (29 %)
Medium (4 and above)	15	50% or less	10 (67 %)
		Above 50%	5 (33 %)

Source: Field Survey

By observing the given table, one can clearly understand that among the villages falling under very low category of scores based on the availability of educational institutions and social capitals, numbers of villages having more than 50 per cent rate of rural out migration is more, which constitute 58 per cent. On the other hand, in the Low and medium category, numbers of villages having less than 50 per cent rate of rural out migration are higher than villages having more than 50 per cent rate of rural out migration. It comprises 71 per cent of total numbers of villages under the low class and 67 per cent in the medium class respectively. Hence, we can say that the results we are seeking whether there is a link between the rate of rural out migration and the absence of educational and employment opportunities are proved. Therefore, the present hypothesis stating absence of higher education and employment opportunities acts as a push factor for the migration of people from rural areas is accepted.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to Chandna (1986), all migrations in the modern context are borne out of growing process of industrialization, technological advancements and other changes that are taking place in the social and economic spheres. In addition, wars, political events, regional disparities in natural increase, in employment opportunities, in wages and in availability of agricultural land are other stimuli for population movements. Numerous studies have revealed that out of four types of migration, such as rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural, rural-urban migration is predominant. As such, voluntary rural-urban migration is caused by various factors like urban job opportunities, better living conditions, availability of resources, rural landholdings, rural social structures, cultural settings, poverty, etc.

Due to growing globalization and modernization, people tend to seek higher standard of living which is absent in most of the rural areas and thus migrate to urban areas where they can access to the better amenities, better livelihood activities and in the hope of getting a better condition of living. Regional inequalities, poverty, political insecurities, unequal distribution of resources and various socio-economic factors are some of the important factors responsible for rural out migration. Hence, people out-migrate from development starved remote villages to more economically attractive urban areas with a hope of improving their standard of living.

In the present study, education and employment have been found to be the main reasons for rural out migration in the villages of two concern districts of Arunachal Pradesh. It has also been found that villages having lesser infrastructural facilities are facing higher rate of rural out migration than the villages with relatively better social amenities. Therefore, Development of higher educational institution, infrastructural development like better road connectivity, healthcare facilities, availability of electricity etc. may be an important device to curb the rate of rural out migration in the study area.

References

1. Chandna, R.C, (2014), *Geography of Population: Concepts, Determinants and Pattern*. New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers.
2. British Medical Journal, (1899). Rural Depopulation. *British Medical Journal*. Vol. 1, No. 2003, 1231-1232.
3. Marini, M.B., and Mooney, P.H, (2006). Rural Economies. *Handbook of Rural Studies*, 91-103.

4. Johnson, K. M., and Lichter, D T, (2019). Rural Depopulation: Growth and Decline Processes over the Past Century. *Rural Sociology*. Vol. 84, No.1, 3-27.
5. Pinilla, V., Ayuda, M.I., and Saez, L.A, (2006). Rural Depopulation in Mediterranean Western Europe: A Case Study of Aragon. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 3(2008), 1-22.
6. Census of India, (2001). *District Census Handbook of Upper Siang*. Arunachal Pradesh.
7. Census of India, (2011). *District Census Handbook of Upper Siang*. Arunachal Pradesh.
8. Cantrell, R., (2005). Rural Depopulation: A closer look at Nebraska's Counties and Communities. *Rural Initiative Publications and reports*, Paper 13.
9. Mandal, R.K, (2020). Urbanization and Migration in Arunachal Pradesh : A Introspective Study. *Journal of Global Economy*. Vol.16, No.3, 49-61.
10. Sati, V. P, (2021). Out-Migration in Uttarakhand Himalaya: its types, reasons, and consequences. *Migration letters*. Volume:18, No:3, 281-295.

India will not Compromise on its Strategic Autonomy Policy

Sewak Singh

Abstract:

The statement “India will not compromise on its strategic autonomy” reflects the fundamental principle of India’s foreign policy. This term reflects the independence of India’s foreign policy. India will not compromise on its strategic autonomy policy as it is considered an important, vital, irreversible principle for safeguarding national strategic interests, ensuring sovereignty and progressing in a polarised, multi-polar world. This means that India is independent in its foreign relations. It means that India will not compromise on its sovereignty and vital national strategic interests, such as energy security and defense. Presently French President Macron has also stated that India cannot become anyone’s vassal and will not compromise its strategic autonomy. It means that India will decide independent foreign policy which is based on its national interests, without any external pressure, whether it is in favour of peace or alliance with any foreign country. This research paper shows how India maintains its strategic autonomy in international affairs despite heavy foreign pressure.

Key Words: India, Strategic, Autonomy, Interest.

Introduction:

The strategic autonomy is an international relations term. Strategic autonomy does not push for non-engagement strategy. Rather, leverage can be best gained by purposeful engagement. Strategic autonomy enables deterrence in international politics. As such, it strives to create an intricate patchwork of dependencies: mutual, inward and outward dependencies. At its essence, strategic autonomy works best when one has leverage. India’s strategic autonomy is often seen in the context of Nehru’s Non-alignment policy. Renowned expert Amitav Acharya, in

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Govt. Brijindra College, Faridkot (Punjab)

his book “East of India and South of China,” writes that this non-alignment policy renders the country irrelevant in times of crisis. India currently faces a world order that is becoming increasingly polarised, leaving limited room for countries to find a middle ground. International affairs expert and analyst Nirupama Subramanian says that India’s silence on every arbitrariness of American President Donald Trump is not due to its strategic autonomy but due to extreme fear. The Trump administration has also threatened India on the Iran issue. The Trump administration has also pressured India to reduce oil supplies from Iran. Under Trump Administration pressure, India has also reduced its oil supplies from Iran and now India has withdrawn from the Chabhar Port Development Project, so all these developments reflect concerns about India’s commitment to its strategic autonomy policy. The Trump administration has challenged India’s policy of strategic autonomy. President Trump has viewed India as a follower rather than an independent strategic partner.

India follows strategic autonomy policy, which means it takes decisions independently based on its national strategic interests, without being tied to any one power bloc, and this is not isolationism but flexibility and multi-alignment in a current multi-polar world. This allows India to take independent decisions and select partners based on issues rather than being bound by rigid military alliances. This approach protects vital relationships with various powers, including the US, Russia, and China, and prevents dependence on any single power. As it is evident from the statements of India’s External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and India’s foreign policy decisions. It reflects India’s sovereignty, self-reliance and willingness to engage on the global stage on its own terms, evolving from non-alignment to becoming a regional ‘decision-maker’. In today’s era of shifting power equations and fracturing alliances, India’s pursuit of strategic autonomy has shifted from an intellectual concept to a practical strategic imperative. This strategic approach enables India to establish bilateral relationships according to its own rules with major powers like the United States, China, and Russia, while preserving its sovereign decision-making power. It is neither subservience nor equilibrium, but a policy of principled engagement, where national strategic interests are prioritised over rigid alliances. Beyond isolationism, it reflects India’s multi-polar vision, a conflict-ridden strategy that prioritises independence over dependence and autonomy over alliances.

A country strategic autonomy becomes even more difficult when economic and security interests are intertwined with rival power blocs.

JOCIPE

The Ukraine conflict and regional tensions in the Indo-Pacific region further exacerbate this strategic dilemma. Despite India-USA growing strategic partnership, Washington has pressured India to reduce oil imports from Russia and curb defense ties. China's aggression at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) coexists with its status as India's second largest trading partner, further deepening the dilemma of dependence. India's pursuit of strategic autonomy does not mean remaining isolated, but rather engaging with the world countries while remaining assertive on its own terms. It reflects a balance between sovereignty and global integration, flexibility and cooperation. By setting rules, building strategic partnerships and protecting national strategic interests, India is paving a confident path in the current multi-polar global order.

India's foreign policy objectives are clear. Presently, India wants to maintain balance with the superpowers by pursuing its multi-alignment policy and as well as want to maintain its strategic autonomy policy. The Indian Prime Minister's Modi decision to rely on Russia for nuclear submarines and civilian nuclear cooperation shows that India is strengthening its ties with Moscow in the area of crucial high technological cooperation, despite Western countries criticism. Ultimately, strategic autonomy is neither a heady fantasy nor an outdated doctrine for India. It is an imperfect, constantly renegotiated compromise that has benefited India far more than the available alternatives. The task is not to worship it or abandon it, but to use it with the realistic approach that India has always needed and that India, at its best, has always displayed.

Why will India not Compromise on its Strategic Autonomy?

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi thought that India will benefit a lot from the coming of his friend Trump's government in America, but exactly the opposite happened. Rather, American President Trump has forced India to accept America's point of view on many issues related to India's national interests. Ever since the Trump government came to power in America, US President Donald Trump has been threatening India in various ways, whether it is the matter of imposing taxes on trade products or the matter of illegal immigration of Indians in America, It seems as if the Trump government is not favourable to India in any way. President Trump has become dogmatic and is ready to go to any extent to get his point across in the name of American interests.

Trump government is making India uncomfortable by constantly putting pressure on India. Trump's policy of making America great again does not match India's national interests. Trump's foreign policy is different and opposite to that of all US presidents till date. Even Trump does not want to give any concessions to America's friendly countries and strategic partners. Donald Trump wants to talk to all countries on an equal basis. Trump says that all countries impose very high taxes on American products, so America will not give any concessions to any country. Trump says that India imposes very high tariffs on American products, due to which American exporters suffer huge economic losses in India. Therefore, the Trump administration wants to impose new tariffs on India because the Trump government believes that India's average tariff rate is 17%. Whereas America's tariff rate is only 3.3%, so it is necessary for America to impose retaliatory tariffs on India. India should criticise Trump's reciprocal tariff policy as it does not comply with WTO provisions.

In America, the Department of Government Efficiency led by Elon Musk has recommended shutting-down the USAID agency. The Trump administration has recently decided to cut foreign aid and funding. This financial cut is related to the financial assistance given by the USAID agency to other needy countries of the world. The United States Agency for International Development is the US agency responsible for funding global humanitarian development assistance. USAID provides funds for health care, food aid, and disaster relief around the world. President Trump's stance on USAID will definitely impact the poor and refugees. This decision of Trump has created a stir across the world. India will also not remain untouched by this as India has always been receiving huge sums of money from the USAID agency. Many organizations in India receive financial aid from the USAID agency of America for human development, which includes universities, hospitals and government programmes.

India's foreign policy has always been independent. India has never bowed-down to any country. Till date, no country has been able to force India on foreign policy issues, but the Trump government is trying to put maximum pressure on India, especially in the name of imposing sanctions on Iran's Chabahar port, America actually wants to balance Iran in the Middle East under the pressure of Israel and Saudi Arabia. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia want to stop Iran's nuclear program with the help of President Trump. Last time (2017-21) during Trump's presidency, India had minimized the export of crude oil from Iran while Iran had allowed India to pay for the oil in rupees. At that time, Iran

JOCIPE

had asked India to buy oil without coming under the pressure of US sanctions. At that time too, the Trump administration was continuously pressuring India to cut-down oil exports from Iran. President Donald Trump wants to break Iran's back by putting a full stop to India's development of Chabahar port in Iran by withdrawing the exemption given to New Delhi for providing assistance to Afghanistan. Despite heavy pressure from Donald Trump, India cannot lose its heavily invested economic and strategic interests in the Iranian Chabahar port. India needs to develop relations with Iran without thinking about US pressure. Chabahar port is India's long-term strategic project, so India cannot lose it due to the attitude of the Trump administration. India started building Chabahar port to balance China's Gwadar port of Pakistan by bypassing Pakistan.

India has always found itself in a strategic dilemma as it had to maintain its bilateral defence ties with Russia as well as its growing strategic partnership with the the US and Western countries who are supporting Ukraine. If Putin does not consider Trump's Ukraine peace initiative, then the Trump administration may increase pressure on India to boycott Russia on the global stage. The Russia-Ukraine war has brought increasing western pressure on India to distance itself from Moscow. New Delhi has so far resisted that political pressure, citing its strategic-defense needs with Russia. Thus, Trump Administration is continuously attacking India's strategic autonomy on various national and international issues. But India has to maintain its strategic autonomy despite extreme US pressure. The Indian government needs not to spoil its relations with other countries like North Korea, China, Russia and Iran to please Trump, otherwise India's strategic autonomy will be weakened.

However, in response to the challenges posed by the Trump Administration's arbitrary policies, India must assert and maintain its 'strategic autonomy' in foreign policy and India's Modi government should clearly communicate India's compulsions and strategic priorities to the Trump administration. India's strategic partners in the world should also understand that New Delhi wants the International system to be more democratic, representative and in line with global geopolitical realities. Under Modi's leadership, India seeks to befriend the new Trump administration without sacrificing its strategic autonomy, which will be in India's national interest. Only then will Prime Minister Modi's dream of "Making India Great Again" be realized.

Conclusion:

There is not denying the fact that India's self-proclaimed "strategic autonomy" policy aims to maintain the freedom to choose allies without any conditions. However, countries around the world view this as an anomaly rather than a strength. In the last five years, India has presented itself on the global stage as an emerging global power. Today India stands for non-alignment, strategic autonomy and regional leadership. It can be said that India's foreign policy mistakes are not limited to military or moral areas; they also have economic consequences. In short, India considers strategic autonomy essential to advance in a complex world, enabling it to act as a significant, independent player rather than a follower. In fact, strategic autonomy for India does not mean isolation, but maintaining the "firmness" to act independently, ensuring that its foreign policy remains flexible and focused on its development as a global power.

Bibliography:

- Mohan, C. Raja. "India: Between" Strategic Autonomy" and" Geopolitical Opportunity"." *Asia Policy*, 15.1, (2013): 21-25.
- Monsonis, Guillem. "India's Strategic Autonomy and Rapprochement with the US." *Strategic Analysis*, 34.4, (2010): 611-624.
- Vinodan, C., and Anju Lis Kurian. "Strategic Autonomy and India's Hedging Policies in the Indo-Pacific." *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 11.4, (2024): 475-495.
- Muraviev, Alexey D., Dalbir Ahlawat, and Lindsay Hughes. "India's security dilemma: Engaging big powers while retaining strategic autonomy." *International Politics (The Hague)*, 59.6, (2021): 1119.
- Abraham, Josukutty C., and Uma Purushothaman. "Limits of India-US Relations: Balancing Through Strategic Autonomy and Multi-alignment." *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 11.4, (2024): 496-514.
- Shafeeq, Maheen. "India's Strategic Autonomy and the US-India Strategic Partnership: Implications on Pakistan." *Journal of Security & Strategic Analyses*, 11.1, (2025).5-6.
- Vu, Hoang Le Thai, Lan Di Ngo, and Thanh Tien Nguyen. "A spectrum of autonomy: Towards a theoretical framework of strategic autonomy." *International Journal*, 79.2, (2024): 230-249.

JOCIPE

Lenin Kumar, V. "India's strategic autonomy in South Asia: implications for the Indo-Pacific region." *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, (2024): 1-16.

Pattanshetty, Sanjay, et al. "From strategic autonomy to strategic partnership: EU-India relations in health diplomacy." *Global Policy*, 15.5, (2024): 901-914.

Khurshid, Imran. "Navigating strategic waters: India-US foundational defence agreements and the quest for strategic autonomy." *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, (2024): 1-19.

Balancing Work and Life: Problems Faced By Working Women in the Globalized Era

Neeraj Kumar¹

Shreya Saini²

Abstract

This sociological study examines the problems faced by the working women in India, in the present globalized era. The increase in the female labor force participation in India, in recent decades, has played a major role in their emancipation. But the advent of new challenges associated with work life balance, dual role burden, social and cultural constraints and mental health issues among the working women, have acted as the roadblock in their emancipation. The paper discusses these problems and provides remedial measures in the form of needed policy interventions and changing the prevalent societal norms. It concludes with the idea that the struggle to balance requires holistic and intersectional support from all the stake holders is required to alleviate role conflict and promote equality, so that the women can realize their full potential and capacity.

Keywords- Working Women, Work-Life Balance, Dual Role Burden, Role Conflict, Gender Inequality, Mental Health.

Introduction

In recent decades, factors like Globalization have caused a transformation in the way economies function world-wide. The way the countries trade with each other, exchange ideas and goods and services and the labor force participation has significantly changed.

1. Assistant Professor (School of Sociology), MSU

2. Research Scholar, MA. (Sociology), MSU

The labor markets of the countries have gone through a major shift. This paper focuses on a particular segment of this labor force that is the women. The female labor force participation rate of the nations has seen a major jump since the time Globalization has entered their boundaries. In developing countries like India, this rate has become a significant contributor in the growth of the economy.

Post 1991 economic reforms, India witnessed a significant boost in women's participation in labor force. In the past few years this boost itself increased many folds. Globalization, boosted Information technology enabled services (ITES) like call center, software sector which acted as the emancipator for working women creating more avenues¹. Also, Women stepped into different roles across sectors-technology, healthcare, teaching, manufacturing, bringing in transformative shift in

India's economic growth powered by inclusivity and opportunity². This shows that women in India have started working and exploring new avenues and sources of income for their self and family.

But for working women in India, not everything has turned out to be favorable. The idea of working women has come with multitude of challenges. These challenges include gender discrimination at work, lower wages than men, and majorly the struggle to balance the professional and domestic sphere etc. While studying the conditions of the working women in India, one can see the manifestation or exemplification of many sociological ideas like the Role Conflict theory³ of Robert Merton or feminist ideas like intersectionality⁴ given by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw or the feminist methodology like the Standpoint theory⁵ of Sandra Harding and Nancy Hartsock.

These challenges faced by the working women has taken a significant toll on the mental health of the women which has impacted their professional and personal lives to the extent that at times they have to choose either one of them. This paper uses the literature review approach to analyze the working women's experiences in India and how the imbalance in their personal and professional lives created because of them being a working-women has impacted their mental health and their way of balancing it. This paper tries to study these problems of the working women and the possible solutions that can be used to help such women to handle these problems.

Problems Faced By The Working Women

The progressive social and economic policies and the change in mindset have helped women to get education and make themselves

capable of earning on their own but this has not acted as a panacea for their emancipation. Rather, the working women has a new set of problems. These problems have been discussed in detail here.

Dual Role Burden and the Role Conflict

The working women has dual role to play at home and at work, especially if she is married. She has to manage both, the paid work and the unpaid domestic responsibilities. At times, it has been referred to as the woman returns to work from work. This condition of dual role comes as a role conflict before the working women. When she has so many roles to play as an employee, as a mother, as a wife and as a daughter in law, it becomes difficult to satisfy all the expectations associated with each role. This incompatibility act as a conflict for the women and decision making becomes difficult. It is seen that when the roles as workers clash with the roles as mothers, women often experience stress, guilt and diminished well-being. Performing multiple roles, sometimes at a single point of time for example we all have seen any of our female teacher bringing her child in school may be for a day or for many days. This is seen as a normal phenomenon and is taken very casually but it is the real manifestation of the struggle to balance the dual role. This struggle to balance is sometimes intertwined with the role conflict and the working women, due to their inter and intra personal role conflict, are constantly fighting an internal battle to balance the two roles and the associated expectations.

The work-life balance is the hotly discussed topic in the present scenario. Working women are not untouched from it, but the dual role burden and the related role conflict has made the work-life balance an unachievable target for them. We know the professional and personal life are interpenetrating and have a significant impact on each other and has an interference in each other's functioning. The personal life is more interfered with by the work life and is more impacted because of the work associated commitments.⁶ Moreover, it is assumed that when the women go out for work, her tasks at home can be shared by the husbands but this hardly happens and husbands are unable to play the greater role in sharing the homemaking duties with the women and the women has to bear the double burden. Therefore, the idea that increase in female labor force participation rate will bring in more freedom and power for women, is very far from reality.⁷

Social Pathologies

India is dominantly having a patriarchal society, women that too working women has to face the consequential pathologies. The gender

discrimination faced by the working women at workplace is a common phenomenon. This discrimination can take place in multiple forms like sexual harassment, wage disparities between the two sexes, and gender inequality. These social pathologies arise depending upon how the gender socialization has been done by the parents and how the person look at the division of housework and their perspectives about the other sexes. Older beliefs of seeing women as a typical maternal wall, ideal worker, and ideal homemaker and the attached stereotypes has led to the discriminatory behavior against women seeing them as the persons with low potential and low capability for leadership roles.⁸ Also, the social structure of Indian society has been such that half of the population is always seen as the dependent and to be protected, therefore women came out of the houses to work and earn to prove themselves to the society in terms of various aspects such as fulfill the economic needs of the family, social recognition, passion and enjoy the social freedom from the traditional society.⁹ But their emancipation is suffocated when they has to face social pathologies like sexual harassment at workplace, or safety issues while travelling, having no control over their earning or their work not getting the same respect that the men's work receive at home.

Mental Health Issues Among Working Women

The double burden of paid work and unpaid household work has significantly contributed to the increased level of stress, anxiety, burnout and hopelessness among working women.¹⁰ This duality of burden causes both physical and emotional exhaustion among the working women. The women balance both the household chores, caring for the family and children, wife duties and the professional work, and all these activities make up her whole day causing exhaustion and irritation because of lack of rest and leisure. The stress and anxiety have a significant impact on the behavioral pattern of the working women both at the work and at home and it affects their performance.¹¹ Working women due to this tiring and prolonged working, face the situation of burnout and are constantly in the state of severe physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. There exists a significant and positive relationship of work–life conflict with burnout, and work–life conflict has a negative association with both family support and organizational support.¹² Therefore, these burnouts and exhaustion create problems for the working women in the smooth functioning of their work and life, but they hardly pay any attention to it. Moreover, these mental health problems are easily neglected or not taken care of by the working women because of the work load or due to family pressure.¹³

Self-identity Crisis and Compromised Self-care

In the process of balancing the work and life simultaneously, and under the burden of domestic responsibilities and professional commitments, working women gradually, forgets who they supposed to be, what were their own likes and dislikes, what was their own passion and desires and they face a loss of self-identity. They easily neglect taking care of themselves. Their own personal aspirations and interests are overshadowed by the multiple role expectations and they just maintain a personality needed at their work which may not match with their own self-identity.

Although the traditional role expectations remain more or less same for the women in India but with their entry in professional life, the idea of “New Indian Women” has emerged in contemporary writings. Aspiring new Indian women perform cultural balancing acts to defend ever greater levels of personal autonomy, while maintaining their place within their families.¹⁴ And in fulfilling the desire to maintain an image of new independent Indian women, working women neglect their self-identity and compromise their own way of living their lives without even giving a second thought.

Remedial Measures For Working Women’s Problems

Policy Interventions And Institutional Support System: Despite these challenges, women themselves employ various coping mechanism like outsourcing tasks through house helps, relying on family members, working from home etc. But there are areas to be focused upon, like the policy intervention is needed in development of care infrastructure like affordable childcare, eldercare and parental leave should be easily accessible. The International Labor Organization highlighted that the care policies are central to gender equality.¹⁵ If women are given proper care infrastructure then they can easily balance their work and life. Here, the role of family and especially of husbands become even more crucial. Sharing the “second shift”¹⁶, by both the partners can significantly reduce the burden on the working women.

Strict Law Enforcement: To address the social pathologies, the workplace atmosphere is very crucial, it must be friendly and family like and flexible. Enforcement of anti-discrimination and equal pay laws is important to realize the idea that women are significant contributor to the economic growth of the nation. Cultural and social norms have to change, the stereotyping attached with the working women needs to be addressed through gender sensitive socialization and awareness. Sexual harassment at workplace and safety concerns

for the women need strict law enforcement mechanism. For women to exercise their legal rights, they must have the awareness about their rights and entitlements and in present times, for this digital literacy has become a crucial tool, in enhancing their personal safety and empowerment.¹⁷

Focusing On Self-care: The issue of burnout and self-identity crisis needs special attention because this area is mostly ignored by the woman herself. For the working women, time for leisure and self-care is a must. This can be done by creating such an atmosphere at work where the work is not seen as the burden. India can learn, from other nations like European countries who always rank high in supporting work life balance and employee friendly working environment. For example, in countries like Denmark, Netherlands, work life balance is always appreciable because of their national policies focusing on hours of work, health etc.,¹⁸and this is the reason these countries also have higher standard of living. India specific tailor-made solutions can be formulated, in this area.

Conclusion

The study's review of secondary literature shows that the struggle of working women is the reality that every such woman faces on daily basis. And this struggle has significant impact on the working women's mental and physical health which needs the special attention. Despite the increase in participation in labor force, deeply rooted patriarchal norms and inadequate institutional support systems continue to place a disproportionate burden on them.

These challenges can even lead to the identity crises among women if they do not get the time and space to rekindle their idea of their self-identity. Further, achieving gender equality in roles requires systematic change through policies that can redistribute the care responsibilities among the two sexes. Addressing these problems requires not only policy level interventions but also a transformation in societal attitudes towards gender roles. Moreover, there has to be the presence of women's voice in the decision-making process so that reforms reflect their needs. Empowering working women through equal opportunities, shared responsibilities and supportive environments is essential for achieving both gender equality and sustainable social development.

In conclusion, women's challenges have to be addressed holistically and with contributions from all directions (Family, Government, Employers, civil society). Only then a "balance" in society can be created without any burden on one but only through support of all.

REFERENCES

1. Darshrathbhai K Patel: (2014), “Impact of Globalization on Women Workforce participation in India”, *International Journal of Research in humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.2, Issue:5
2. Press Information Bureau: (2024, June 26). India’s workforce transformation: A rising tide of female participation. Government of India, Ministry of Labor and Employment.
3. Merton, R. K.: (1957). *Social theory and social structure*.
4. Crenshaw, K.: (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167
5. Harding, S. : (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from women’s lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
6. Hartsock, N. C. M. : (1998). *The feminist standpoint revisited and other essays*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press
7. Shabir S, Khan OF, Gani A : (2022), “Work-life interference: a perpetual struggle for women employees”. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol. 30 No. 2 pp. 181–196.
8. Tyagi, N., Jha, R. S., Chaudhary, A., & Batar, S.: (2021). Women in dual role: A sociological perspective. *Ýlködretim Online*, 20(1), 1766–1772
9. Prakash J, Dhamija S, Chaudhury S, Srivastava K.: (2024) Women and the workplace, *Ind Psychiatry J*. 2024 Jul-Dec;33(2):201207. doi: 10.4103/ipj.ipj_365_24. Epub 2024 Dec 17. PMID: 39898098; PMCID: PMC11784698.
10. Vettriselvan, R., Rengamani, J., James, F. A., Srinivasan, R., & Poongavanam, S. : (2019). Issues and challenges of women employees in Indian technical industries. *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology*, 8(2S2).
11. Adarsh Thakur, Sunil Goyal: (2025) “The Intersection of Paid Employment and Unpaid Household Work: Review of Literature on the Impact of Double Burden on Women’s Mental Health.” *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2025;16(1):13-8. doi: 10.52711/2321-5828.2025.00003.
12. Sharma, M., & Kapur, S. : (2022). Mental health linked with work life balance of working women. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S4), 1887–1899.

12. Gupta, P., & Srivastava, S. :(2020). Work–life conflict and burnout among working women: A mediated moderated model of support and resilience. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*.
13. Pandey, S., & Soni, M. :(2023). Navigating the dual burden: Social and mental health challenges among educated working women. *International Advance Journal of Engineering, Science and Management*
14. Lau, L. :(2010). Literary Representations of the ‘New Indian Woman’: The Single, Working, Urban, Middle Class Indian Woman Seeking Personal Autonomy: The Single, Working, Urban, Middle Class Indian Woman Seeking Personal Autonomy. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 5(2), 271-292
15. Addati, L., Cattaneo, U., & Pozzan, E. :(2022) Care at Work: Investing in care leave and services for a more gender-equal world of work. *International Labor Organization*
16. Hochschild, A. R., & Machung, A. :(1989). *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. Viking.
17. Shetty, C. :(2025). Empowering women in a digital world: Overcoming barriers to digital literacy in India. In D. Padma & C. Radha Priya (Eds.), *Financial empowerment: The role of women in shaping contemporary economic paradigms* (pp. –). Shanlax Publications. <https://doi.org/10.34293/9789361634925.ch.006>
18. Fernández-Crehuet, J. M., Giménez-Nadal, J. I., & Reyes Recio, L. E. : (2016). The National Work–Life Balance Index©: The European case. *Social Indicators Research*, 128(1), 341–359.

The Contribution of Women to Rural Economic Development in Bihar: Focus on Agriculture, Small Businesses, and Household Incomes

Dr. Jaynendra Kumar Monu

Abstract

Women constitute almost half of the world's population and their participation in economic and social development is crucial for sustainable growth. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in women's workforce participation globally, however, certain regions like Bihar still face barriers to achieving gender equality in this aspect. This study aims to analyze the current employment scenario of rural women in Bihar and explore how their contribution impacts the state's economic and social development.

The state of Bihar, located in Eastern India, is known for its rich cultural heritage but also faces numerous challenges such as poverty, low literacy rates especially among women, inadequate access to education and healthcare facilities. The patriarchal society and deeply entrenched gender norms have further restricted opportunities for women to participate in the workforce. As a result, their potential remains untapped leading to underutilization of human resources which hampers overall development. Through this study, we aim to highlight the critical role played by women workers in various sectors such as agriculture, industry including handicrafts and services that contribute significantly towards Bihar's economy.

Assistant professor, Department of Economics, Vanijya Mahavidyalaya,
Patna University

October-December, 2025

(61)

Key Words: Women workers, employment, gender equality, population, economic and social development

Introduction

Bihar, a state situated in the eastern part of India, has long been known for its rich cultural heritage and vast agricultural resources. However, it is also a state that has faced several challenges in terms of economic development and gender equality. Women have traditionally played a crucial role in the social fabric of Bihar, but their contribution to the economic growth of the state has often been overlooked or undervalued. Therefore, there is a need for a thorough study on the impact and potential of women workforce in driving forward Bihar's economy and social development. The issue of women's participation in economic activities is one that not only affects individual empowerment but also has far-reaching implications for societal progress. In recent times, there has been an increased awareness about women's rights and their crucial role as agents of change. The Government of Bihar has taken significant steps towards empowering women by implementing various policies such as reserving 50% seats for them at local levels of government and providing financial assistance for education and entrepreneurship.¹

Women in rural Bihar are indispensable to the agrarian economy, with approximately 35.94% participation in farming operations, particularly in harvesting and sowing. They manage agriculture amidst high male migration, drive growth through Self-Help Groups (SHGs/Jeevika), and engage in livestock, dairying, and small-scale entrepreneurship.

As of 2025, over 20 lakh women in Bihar have achieved the milestone of "Lakhpati Didis" (earning over ¹ 1 lakh annually), driven by self-help groups (SHGs) that promote micro-entrepreneurship and improved agricultural practices. Despite these advancements, they face significant challenges, including a 4.6% to 7% gender wage gap, limited land ownership (approx. 13%), and high burdens of unpaid domestic work.²

Contribution to Agriculture and Allied Activities

Women constitute approximately 40% of the agricultural labor force in Bihar. Farming and animal husbandry capture almost all the activities undertaken by rural women in Bihar the state has attained self-sufficiency in food grain production.

Be leveraged to push overall agriculture wage rates for women as they remain a primary source of learning for millions of women in the Bihar; village level factors influence wages (eg. Overall availability of labour, introduction of new crops which require new types of labour, introduction of new crops which require new type of labour activities potatoes require more weeding for which women are preferred, the MGNREGA wage rate in the area.) and wages also tend to be paid in cash, the government on its part can initiate a study of existing wage rates paid to women and aim MGNREGA at areas where agricultural employment is scarce or where wages paid are very low. Women's share of overall work provided under MGNREGA is still low.³

Moreover, MGNREGA work has declined in recent years. The scheme could be leveraged to push overall agriculture wage rates of women, as they remain a primary source of earning for millions of women engaged in agriculture in rural Bihar.

Their participation is crucial, particularly in labor-intensive operations:

- **Key Operations:** Women are heavily involved in harvesting (14.56%), sowing (11.36%), transplanting, weeding, and post-harvest operations like drying and storage.
- **Allied Sectors:** Women dominate in livestock management, specifically fodder collection, feeding, and milking.
- **Empowerment through Mechanization:** Participation in SHGs has allowed women to access better tools and technologies, reducing reliance on manual drudgery.
- **Women Farmer Producer Companies (WFPCs):** Initiatives like Aranyak Agri Producer Company Ltd. in Purnea are shifting women from laborers to business owners in agricultural marketing.

Women farmers in Bihar are emerging as leaders in the state's rural value chains, a new study has found. The seven-year Personal Transformation Index (PTI) study tracked over 1,200 rural women in northern Bihar.⁴

Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship

Women entrepreneurs in Bihar are crucial drivers of inclusive growth, particularly within micro and small enterprises (MSMEs) like handicrafts, food processing, and, increasingly, agriculture, fostering rural industrialization and, as shown by recent data, driving a surge in female labor force participation from 22.4% to 30.5% between 2022 and 2024. Driven by Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under initiatives like

JOCIPE

JEEViKA, which has mobilized over ¹ 10,000 crore in credit, these women are transitioning from traditional roles to active economic agents, overcoming socio-cultural barriers to improve household income and decision-making power.⁵

The Jeevika project has facilitated the transition of rural women from savings groups to entrepreneurs in diverse sectors.

- **Key Sectors:** Popular small businesses include mushroom cultivation, goat rearing, dairy farming, poultry, and tailoring.
- **Value Addition:** Women are increasingly involved in agro-processing, such as producing mustard oil, pickles, papad, and spice processing.
- **Impact of SHGs:** SHGs act as a “one-stop-shop” providing access to microcredit, skill development, and financial literacy, which helps in scaling up micro-enterprises.
- **Digitalization:** Rural women are beginning to use mobile banking and digital platforms to manage finances and connect to markets, although this is still evolving.

In addition to these, the Bihar government has also introduced a 35 percent reservation for women in state government jobs.

Impact on Household Incomes

Women’s income generation directly improves the socioeconomic status of their families.

Rural women in Bihar significantly contribute to household income—over 35% in agriculture and 28% in sericulture—primarily through farming, animal husbandry, and, increasingly, NGO-led initiatives like tailoring (97% engagement). These activities, supported by SHGs and, notably, JEEViKA, boost household savings, food security, and financial resilience, often doubling income in specific micro-enterprises, although they still face gendered wage gaps and limited land access.⁶

- **Increased Income:** Post-SHG participation, there is a significant reduction in households with “no income,” with many women moving into income brackets above ¹ 2000 per month.
- **Asset Accumulation:** Increased income is often reinvested in purchasing livestock (goats, poultry) or productive assets, which are easier for women to own and manage.
- **Improved Livelihoods:** Income earned by women is often spent on better nutrition, education, and healthcare for their children, leading to holistic household development.

- **Financial Autonomy:** Women reported increased confidence to take loans and manage financial needs without relying solely on husbands, reducing dependence on high-interest informal lenders.

Key Challenges and Emerging Trends

The contribution of rural women to income in Bihar is undergoing a significant transformation, characterized by a shift from subsistence-level unpaid labor to active economic participation, driven primarily by Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and government initiatives. According to the Bihar Economic Survey 2024-25, the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) for rural women in Bihar increased to 33.5% in 2023-24, up from 24.8% in 2022-23.⁷

- **Wage Gap:** Despite improvements, a notable gender wage gap exists, though it has decreased to about 4.6% in 2024 from over 17% in 2011.
- **Social & Infrastructure Barriers:** Traditional, patriarchal norms and lack of safety, poor transportation, and limited access to professional education restrict women's mobility and business expansion.
- **Policy Support:** The Bihar government, under the 4th Agriculture Road Map (2023-28) and Jeevika, continues to focus on strengthening women's participation in the rural economy, promoting 35% reservation in jobs, and fostering women-only job fairs.
- **Dominance of Low-Productivity Informal Work:** The majority of working women in Bihar are in the informal sector, primarily as self-employed or unpaid family helpers in agriculture (over 83% in 2023-24), which provides low, unstable income.
- **"Triple Burden" of Work:** Rural women face the, "triple burden" of managing household chores, unpaid agricultural labour, and informal economic activities, limiting their time for gainful employment.
- **Low Education and Skill Deficiencies:** With female literacy in rural Bihar among the lowest in India, many women lack the formal education and technical skills required to move into higher-paying non-farm sectors.
- **Patriarchal Restrictions on Mobility:** Deep-rooted societal norms, gender discrimination, and safety concerns significantly restrict women's ability to travel for work or participate in markets outside their immediate, locality.

JOCIPE

- **Access to Finance and Technology:** While Jeevika has improved access, many rural women still lack formal credit, digital literacy, and technology to manage, scale, or market their small enterprises effectively.

Emerging Trends

- **Rise of the “Jeevika Didi” Ecosystem:** The Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project (Jeevika) has successfully mobilized millions of women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs). This has facilitated a shift from unpaid labor to micro-enterprises such as backyard poultry, goat rearing, and food processing.
- **Diversification Beyond Agriculture:** Women are increasingly engaging in non-farm activities like tailoring, handicrafts, and, more recently, operating, “Didi Ki Rasoi” (community kitchens in hospitals/offices).⁸
- **Technological Empowerment (Namo Drone Didi):** The introduction of drones for agricultural tasks is a nascent trend aimed at boosting efficiency, skills, and status in agricultural roles.
- **Increased Asset Ownership:** Participation in livelihood initiatives has led to a noticeable rise in ownership of productive assets (like livestock, tools, and sewing machines) among rural women.
- **Shift in Role from Participant to Co-Creator:** Longitudinal studies indicate that women are moving from being passive beneficiaries of programs to actively leading, managing, and creating value in, rural, chains.

Future Outlook and Policy Focus

The state government is addressing these challenges through the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana, which provides grants of ¹ 10,000 and up to ¹ 2 lakh in further assistance for women-led enterprises. To further boost income, focus is shifting toward improving digital literacy, establishing safe, secure transportation, and expanding women-friendly workplaces.⁹

Conclusion

Women are transitioning from programme participants to co-creators of rural value chains, leading enterprises, governance structures, and innovation, the study shows.

Among the most important conclusions are that, between 2004–05 and 2011–12, the percentage of women in the workforce decreased in

both Bihar and India. The state governments' emphasis on educational programs like Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojna and Balike Cycle Yojna, which boosted the number of female students enrolled in educational institutions, is the reason for the greater decline in the female WPR. Bihar and India had a discernible shift from self-employment to regular paid or salaried work. In contrast, in India, the proportion of work with a regular wage or salary. Bihar saw a noteworthy increase of 7.7% in regular wage/salary employment compared to 4.5% in India. The Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyami Yojna and Jeevika, two government initiatives in Bihar, have increased the number of working women. The creation of self-help groups (SHGs) and reservations for women in public institutions also had a major impact on this shift. Female WPR in Bihar increased dramatically between 2017–18 and 2022–2023 (PLFS data), rising from 2.6% to 15% in rural areas and 4.3% to 8.3% in urban areas. Despite this gain, Bihar's female WPR is still lower than the national average, underscoring the necessity of further efforts to raise female labour force participation. The percentage of self-employed individuals increased considerably in Bihar and India, rising from 33.9% to 70.9%.

This shift results from economic initiatives like the MGNREGA and Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojna and the financial strain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant contributions of women in driving economic and social development in Bihar. Despite facing numerous challenges such as gender discrimination, lack of education and access to resources, women have been able to play a crucial role in various sectors including agriculture, entrepreneurship, healthcare and education. The findings of this study emphasize the need for recognition and support towards empowering women in order to unleash their full potential.

It is imperative that policies and initiatives are implemented at both government and community levels to promote equal opportunities for women, provide access to education, healthcare facilities and create a supportive environment for their participation in the workforce. By harnessing the untapped potential of its female population, Bihar can truly achieve sustainable growth and inclusive development.

References

1. Banerjee M. Gender equality labour force participation: Mind the gap. *Antyajaa Indian Journal of Women Social Change*, 2019;4(1):113–123. doi:10.1177/2455632719831827

2. Deshpande A, Singh, J. Dropping out, being pushed out or can't get in? Decoding declining labour force participation of Indian women. SSRN Electronic Journal, 2021. doi:10.2139/ssrn.3905074
3. Gupta D, PhD Scholar, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi - 110007, India. Female labour force participation in India: Understanding the nature constraints. Journal of Business Thought, 2019:10:25–38. doi:10.18311/jbt/2019/23597
4. Goldin C. The U-shaped female labor force function in economic development economic history, 1994. doi:10.3386/w4707
5. Klasen S, Pieters J. Push or pull Drivers of female labor force participation during India's economic boom. SSRN Electronic Journal, 2012. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2019447
6. Klasen S, Pieters J. What explains the stagnation of female labor force participation in urban India? The World Bank Economic Review, 2015:29(3):449–478. doi:10.1093/wber/lhv003
7. Mammen K, Paxson C. Women's work economic development. The Journal of Economic Perspectives: A Journal of the American Economic Association, 2000:14(4):141–164. doi:10.1257/jep.14.4.141
8. Sanghi S, Srija A, Vijay SS. Decline in rural female labour force participation in India: A relook into the causes. Vikalpa The Journal for Decision Makers, 2015:40(3):255–268. doi:10.1177/0256090915598264
9. Chatterjee, U., R. Murgai and M. Rama. 2015. Job opportunities along the rural – urban gradation and female labour force participation in India. Policy research working paper no. WPS 7412. Washington, D. C.: World Bank Group.

Dairy Cooperatives: A Pathway to Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment in Bihar

Prof. (Dr.) Rajeshwar Prasad Shrivastava¹

Mr. Ramesh Kumar²

Abstract

Bihar, India's ninth milk producing state, has emerged as a significant player in the country's dairy economy through the cooperative movement. The Bihar State Milk Co-operative Federation Limited (COMFED), established in 1983, operates under the Anand Pattern model and has facilitated the transformation of rural livelihoods through organized dairy farming. This article examines how dairy cooperatives function as catalysts for social inclusion and economic empowerment, particularly among women, marginal farmers, and lower-caste communities in Bihar. Through a comprehensive analysis of cooperative structures, economic benefits, social outcomes, and institutional mechanisms, the article demonstrates that dairy cooperatives offer a sustainable pathway for poverty reduction and inclusive rural development while identifying persistent challenges that require strategic intervention.

Keywords: Dairy Cooperatives, Social Inclusion, Economic Empowerment, Rural Livelihood, Bihar

Introduction

Bihar's predominantly agrarian economy has long been characterized by persistent rural poverty, limited employment

1. Department of Economics, Jai Prakash University, Chapra

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Jai Prakash University, Chapra

diversification, and deep-rooted social exclusion. Despite its strong agricultural base, the state has faced structural constraints in translating agricultural production into sustainable and inclusive rural livelihoods, particularly for small and marginal farmers. In this context, dairy farming has emerged as a critical supplementary economic activity, offering regular income, employment opportunities, and avenues for social inclusion and economic empowerment (Kumar et al. 2018). Reflecting its growing economic significance, milk production in Bihar increased substantially from 7.77 million tons in 2014–15 to approximately 13.39 million tons in 2024–25 (GoI, 2025; *Indian Express*, 2025).

Social inclusion and economic empowerment in Bihar can be understood as institutional processes that integrate marginalized groups—such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Backward Classes (BC), women, and landless labourers—into formal economic systems. Dairy cooperatives facilitate this integration by enabling equitable access to markets, credit, technology, and participatory decision-making, thereby strengthening household income, bargaining power, and individual agency (Farnworth et al., 2023). In the cooperative context, inclusion is operationalized through easy-entry membership norms, caste-neutral milk procurement practices, and the expansion of women-led cooperative societies, which collectively challenge traditional social hierarchies and foster more inclusive social relations (Nath 2022).

Bihar’s dairy cooperatives operate under the “Anand Pattern,” a vertically integrated three-tier cooperative structure that has demonstrated sustained success across India (Kurien, 2007). This model emphasizes farmer ownership and democratic control, supported by professional management and the use of modern technology. Village-level dairy cooperative societies aggregate milk from individual producers, district-level milk unions undertake processing and marketing functions, and state-level federations coordinate inter-district balancing, brand management, and policy implementation (Kumar, 1997). The Bihar State Milk Co-operative Federation (COMFED), established in 1983 as the implementing agency of India’s Operation Flood program, administers this structure through its Sudha Dairy brand (COMFED, 2022; Kurien, 2007).

Through this institutional framework, farmers are transformed from passive suppliers to active stakeholders in cooperative enterprises, leading to a more equitable distribution of value and a reconfiguration of rural economic relationships (Farnworth et al., 2023). The dairy

cooperative movement enables small and marginal producers to aggregate their output, access modern inputs, and integrate with wider markets. Moreover, dairy farming generates year-round income and requires a relatively low initial capital investment, making it particularly accessible to women, landless laborers, and members of marginalized castes (Pandey et al., 2024). In 2024–25, Bihar ranked ninth among Indian states in milk production, contributing approximately 5.41 percent of the national output and recording an annual growth rate of 4.24 percent (GoI, 2025; *Indian Express*, 2025). These trends underscore the strategic importance of dairy cooperatives as instruments of rural development and inclusive economic growth in Bihar’s economy.

Literature Review

The role of dairy cooperatives in fostering both economic empowerment and social inclusion draws theoretical grounding from institutional economics, which explains how collective action can mitigate market failures and enable access to resources that are otherwise beyond the reach of smallholder producers. Within this framework, cooperatives function as institutional mechanisms that reduce transaction costs and information asymmetries in fragmented agricultural markets. By aggregating production and establishing direct linkages to processors, cooperatives allow small-scale farmers to bypass exploitative intermediaries, achieve better price realization, and stabilize income against market volatility (Baltenweck et al., 2022).

Extending beyond economics, scholars argue that cooperative structures also hold significant potential for social emancipation, providing channels for education, credit, and collective resource distribution that foster equality among marginalized groups. In this sense, the concept of social inclusion within dairy cooperatives rests on the idea that collective action can counteract historically entrenched barriers of caste and gender, offering marginalized groups—particularly women and lower-caste farmers—an institutional avenue for participation and empowerment. (Farnworth et al., 2023).

Empirical evidence underscores that cooperative membership substantially enhances smallholder income and household welfare by improving market access and reducing dependency on volatile local markets. By aggregating milk production and achieving economies of scale, cooperatives strengthen the bargaining position of farmers within the value chain, enabling them to retain a higher share of profits (Begimkulov & Darr, 2023). Stable milk payments provide households

with liquidity and security, creating the financial margin to invest in productive assets and smoothen consumption patterns, which in turn supports long-term poverty reduction. Studies across Indian states—including Bihar, Gujarat, and Karnataka—confirm that cooperative members generally earn higher and more stable incomes than independent sellers (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021). In Bihar specifically, where smallholder dairy is the primary livelihood for many rural households, cooperatives serve as critical vehicles for income stabilization and sustainable rural development.

Despite their economic promise, scholars emphasize the centrality of institutional governance. Transparent decision-making, equitable representation, and accountability mechanisms are foundational to ensuring that cooperatives serve all members fairly and avoid elite capture. However, evidence indicates that inclusion cannot be achieved through governance reforms alone; rather, it requires a systemic approach involving targeted interventions for marginalized households. In the context of Bihar, effective governance must confront and reconfigure entrenched social norms that dictate who get to participate and who benefits from collective action.

An intersectional lens—recognizing how caste and gender interact—is crucial for analyzing Bihar’s dairy cooperatives (Farnworth et al., 2023). Caste remains a deeply embedded system of social ordering, shaping both economic opportunities and social interactions in rural cooperatives (Abraham, 2015). Cooperatives provide inclusive and secure spaces that enable women and members of lower castes to collaborate, participate actively, and sustain empowerment.

Taken together, the literature highlights that dairy cooperative in Bihar can act as agents of both economic empowerment and social transformation, but their inclusivity and transformative capacity remain conditional on addressing the underlying power relations that shape participation and resource distribution. Thus, understanding cooperatives not merely as economic institutions but as sites of social negotiation is vital for harnessing their full potential in advancing equitable rural development in Bihar.

Economic Empowerment through Dairy Cooperatives

Economic empowerment through dairy cooperatives in Bihar operates via a set of interlinked mechanisms that combine employment generation, assured market access, transparent pricing, reduced transaction costs, and productivity enhancement through improved

inputs and technologies. For millions of rural households—particularly smallholders, landless labourers, and marginal producers—dairy farming constitutes a vital livelihood pillar and a relatively stable source of cash income. Nearly 70 percent of India’s dairy farmers are smallholders who rely heavily on livestock for both income and household consumption, placing dairy production at the core of rural survival strategies. At the macroeconomic level, the dairy sector contributes over 26 percent of agricultural GDP and about 4 percent of total GDP, while providing employment to nearly 8.9 percent of the population, especially in regions characterised by limited, seasonal, or informal labour opportunities (Government of India, 2025). Beyond income generation, rising milk availability has improved household food security and helped reduce nutritional deficits across social groups.

Dairy cooperatives generate employment across the entire value chain, encompassing milk production, collection, transportation, processing, and marketing. Empirical evidence consistently indicates that cooperative members experience greater employment stability and higher engagement in dairy-related activities than non-members. Importantly, dairy-based employment remains accessible to social categories often excluded from formal labour markets, including women, older individuals, landless households, and persons with limited formal education (Farnworth et al., 2023). Unlike crop agriculture, which is highly seasonal and vulnerable to climatic shocks, dairy farming generates year-round labour demand, thereby reducing seasonal unemployment and income volatility. Regular dairy income supports daily consumption, enables expenditure on health and education, and facilitates gradual asset accumulation, strengthening household resilience and contributing to poverty reduction. As a complementary livelihood activity, dairy farming also serves as a safety net against crop failures and enables risk diversification through the integration of livestock with crop production systems (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021).

A substantial body of quantitative research documents the income advantages associated with dairy cooperative membership. Comparative studies show that cooperative-affiliated households earn, on average, around 30 percent higher annual income from dairy activities than comparable non-member households. These income differentials reflect both higher per-animal milk yields and superior price realisation. Access to improved inputs, technical guidance, veterinary care, and collective marketing enhances production efficiency and stabilises returns. By aggregating supply and negotiating collectively, cooperatives reduce producers’ exposure to monopsonistic

JOCIPE

local traders and exploitative intermediaries, while lowering transaction costs related to search, bargaining, quality verification, and enforcement. Collective procurement of inputs further reduces production costs and improves net margins through better prices for feed and veterinary supplies (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021).

Village-level evidence from Bihar illustrates the magnitude and pathways of income enhancement through cooperative participation. Case studies indicate that integration into well-structured cooperative networks, supported by complementary financial and institutional services, is associated with income gains of approximately 30 percent. These gains are typically accompanied by a transition from fragmented and informal marketing channels to more stable and remunerative formal outlets. Cooperative members also receive, on average, 8–10 percent higher prices for milk compared to farmers selling independently to private traders, reflecting improved price discovery, reduced information asymmetries, and lower risks of underpayment and quality manipulation (Candemir, 2021). Transparent pricing mechanisms established by cooperatives often serve as reference points for local markets, strengthening smallholders' bargaining power (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021).

Cooperative membership further enhances access to institutional credit and public support programmes. Participation in formally registered cooperatives improves members' creditworthiness, simplifies documentation requirements, and lowers transaction costs associated with accessing subsidised loans and grants. Dairy cooperatives function as institutional intermediaries linking producers to agencies such as the National Dairy Development Board. Government initiatives, including the Supporting Dairy Cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organizations (SDCFPO) scheme and the National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD), have expanded cooperative coverage, increased organised milk procurement, and strengthened the integration of small producers into formal value chains (PIB, 2024; PIB, 2025).

Finally, dairy cooperatives serve as critical platforms for technology dissemination and service delivery. District milk unions provide bundled services—such as veterinary healthcare, artificial insemination, balanced cattle feed, and extension training on improved husbandry and milk-handling practices—that would otherwise be prohibitively costly or inaccessible for smallholders. Empirical studies indicate that the adoption of cooperative-led best practices increases milk yields by approximately 15.4 percent, reinforcing productivity,

income stability, and livelihood security (Sharma, 2015; Fiorillo & Amico, 2024; Sarkar & Dutta, 2021). Through these cumulative pathways, dairy cooperatives in Bihar function not merely as economic enterprises but as inclusive institutions that simultaneously promote social inclusion, risk mitigation, and sustained economic empowerment.

Women's Empowerment and Household Dynamics

Women contribute nearly 70 percent of labour in India's dairy sector, yet their formal representation within cooperative governance has historically lagged behind their economic contribution, reflecting persistent gender asymmetries between labour input and institutional authority. In recent years, however, targeted policy interventions and institutional reforms have begun to reshape women's participation in dairy cooperatives. According to National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) estimates, women currently account for around 30 percent of cooperative membership, with an explicit policy objective of increasing this share to 50 percent in the medium term. Nationally, women's cooperative membership expanded nearly fourfold during the recent phase of cooperative growth, signalling a substantive—though incomplete—shift toward gender inclusion within the dairy economy.

These trends are particularly pronounced in Bihar. Women's membership in dairy cooperatives increased from 76,694 in 2010–11 to 323,765 in 2023–24, representing more than a fourfold expansion (GoB, 2014, GoB, 2019, GoB, 2025; NDDB, 2020). This growth has significantly increased women's proportional share in cooperative membership, reflecting the combined effects of gender-sensitive outreach, supportive institutional design, and the growing recognition of women as central economic actors within dairy value chains. The Bihar experience illustrates how cooperative expansion can function as a pathway to social inclusion by institutionalising women's participation in formal economic structures.

Income generation through dairy cooperatives constitutes the primary pathway linking participation to women's empowerment. Regular milk income enables savings and expenditure on education, healthcare, farm inputs, and debt repayment, while enhancing women's influence over household financial decisions (Farnworth et al., 2023). Increasingly, cooperative payment systems channel revenues directly to women producers, bypassing male intermediaries and strengthening women's control over productive earnings, thereby revaluing their economic contribution and reshaping intra-household power relations. However, empowerment outcomes depend on institutional design:

mixed-gender cooperatives expand social networks, whereas women-only cooperatives foster leadership and collective confidence, with sustained participation shifting income control toward women.

Beyond financial autonomy, cooperative participation enhances women's bargaining power across multiple household decision-making domains. Women members consistently report increased authority in decisions related to children's education, healthcare, and farm or enterprise investments, reflecting a shift from executory roles to strategic decision-making positions. Control over cooperative-related payments and membership fees provides women with access to financial resources previously managed by male household heads, facilitating more equitable intra-household resource allocation. Longitudinal evidence suggests that after five to ten years of cooperative engagement, women's social status within households and communities improves, partially reversing entrenched dependency relations in patriarchal rural settings (Rahimi, 2025).

Policy and legal reforms have significantly strengthened women's empowerment within dairy cooperatives by institutionalising gender inclusion. Amendments to cooperative legislation mandating women's representation on governing boards—often exceeded in practice—combined with initiatives promoting female extension workers and local resource persons, have reduced informational, cultural, and mobility constraints, thereby enhancing women's visibility, influence, and agency beyond the household. Women-only dairy cooperatives demonstrate particularly strong empowerment effects by fostering women-centred leadership, cross-caste solidarity, and a reconfiguration of male roles from controllers to facilitators (Dohmwirth & Hanisch, 2017). Nevertheless, empowerment remains uneven, as caste hierarchies continue to shape access to leadership and decision-making at higher governance levels (Farnworth et al., 2023).

Overall, the experience of dairy cooperatives in Bihar demonstrates that women's empowerment is neither automatic nor uniform but is strongly shaped by institutional design, payment mechanisms, and supportive policy frameworks. When effectively structured, dairy cooperatives function as inclusive economic institutions that simultaneously enhance women's income, strengthen household bargaining power, and promote broader social inclusion within rural economies.

Social Inclusion and Caste Dynamics

Dairy cooperatives promote social inclusion through institutional features embedded in their organisational design, particularly at the

village level where cooperative structures are anchored. Entry barriers are typically low and often limited to a commitment to supply milk, enabling participation by landless households and socially marginalised groups that are frequently excluded from formal agricultural institutions (Agarwal, 2010). By procuring milk from all registered members on uniform terms—irrespective of caste, community, or social status—cooperatives foster economic interdependence across entrenched social divisions. These practices partially decouple market participation from local hierarchies and provide historically excluded communities with direct and formalised access to remunerative value chains (Farnworth et al., 2023).

Backward Classes (BC), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST) exhibit disproportionately high participation in the dairy sector relative to other social groups, reflecting both the structural accessibility of dairy production and the enabling role of cooperatives. Dairy farming requires relatively low initial capital, is less dependent on land ownership than crop agriculture, and can be integrated into existing household labour arrangements, making it particularly suitable for smallholders and landless households. For marginalised groups facing agrarian distress and insecure employment, dairy farming provides a regular source of cash income and a comparatively resilient livelihood option, reinforcing its appeal as an inclusive economic activity (Pandey et al., 2024).

Evidence from Bihar highlights the cumulative impact of caste-inclusive cooperative arrangements. Administrative data indicate that SC/ST membership in dairy cooperatives increased from 50,741 in 2010–11 to 130,044 in 2023–24, representing a 2.56-fold rise. During the same period, BC membership expanded from 267,719 to 661,374, consolidating BC households as the largest social category within the cooperative membership base. In contrast, General Category membership increased more modestly, from 138,011 to 269,819 (GoB, 2014; GoB, 2019; GoB, 2025; NDDDB, 2020). These patterns signal a gradual but substantive deepening of social inclusion, with institutional efforts to widen access translating into increased representation and organisational presence for historically marginalised groups.

The simultaneous expansion of women’s membership—particularly among lower and middle castes—indicates that gender-focused initiatives intersect productively with caste-sensitive outreach strategies. This convergence strengthens participation in dairy-related decision-making at both household and community levels and contributes to more inclusive governance spaces within cooperatives.

The continued growth of total membership further reflects the expanding territorial reach and institutional legitimacy of dairy cooperatives among rural producers, pointing to an incremental movement toward more equitable representation.

Everyday cooperative practices in Bihar provide concrete illustrations of how institutional design can challenge entrenched caste norms. The pooling of milk from producers of all castes into a single collection and processing stream normalises caste-integrated production and undermines the symbolic devaluation historically associated with products supplied by SC households (Farnworth et al., 2023). Complementary practices—such as uniform pricing irrespective of caste, mixed-caste seating during training sessions and governance meetings, and the deployment of non-marginalised caste women as extension agents working with SC and ST households—reinforce norms of equality and shared membership. Together, these measures enhance lower-caste producers' access to formal markets, strengthen their bargaining position, and reduce caste-based stigma in routine economic interactions (Agarwal, 2010). The evidences also demonstrate that carefully designed institutional strategies—such as transparent and publicly verifiable pricing systems, timely and traceable payments, reserved or actively facilitated representation of marginalised groups on management boards, and targeted outreach to SC, ST, and BC households—can significantly improve distributive outcomes and strengthen collective agency (Farnworth et al., 2023). When implemented consistently, these mechanisms transform cooperatives from formally inclusive entities into arenas where historically excluded groups can exercise meaningful economic and organisational power.

Dairy cooperatives further advance social inclusion by expanding employment opportunities along the dairy value chain. SC/ST members increasingly access cooperative employment in milk collection, transportation, feed supply, veterinary assistance, and processing—roles traditionally denied to them within caste-segmented rural labour markets (Agarwal, 2010; Birthal & Jha, 2005). In this respect, cooperatives perform a dual inclusion function: they generate economic opportunities for marginalised groups while reducing dependence on exploitative landlord–labour relations. By embedding marginalised producers and workers within formalised, collectively governed market arrangements, dairy cooperatives contribute to economic mobility and the gradual transformation of local power structures (Abdykaliyeva et al., 2025). This process is reinforced by the non-rivalrous and non-excludable nature of cooperative services—such as extension, inputs,

and market access—ensuring that benefits remain accessible to all members irrespective of caste or class (Abraham, 2015).

Government Support and Institutional Framework

Government support has been central to the development of dairy cooperatives in India and their emergence as key instruments of social inclusion and economic empowerment in Bihar, India. The institutional foundation of the cooperative dairy movement was established through Operation Flood, widely regarded as the world's largest rural development programme focused on dairy. Designed to address chronic milk shortages and protect producers from exploitation by private intermediaries, Operation Flood placed farmer-controlled cooperatives at the core of the dairy sector transformation. By the late 1990s, this cooperative-led framework had transformed India into the world's largest milk producer, demonstrating the long-term developmental potential of sustained state support for cooperative institutions. Building on this legacy, the Government of India continues to promote dairy-based development through centrally sponsored schemes, with Bihar emerging as a major beneficiary of these initiatives. The National Dairy Plan, launched to enhance productivity and strengthen infrastructure across the value chain, has further bolstered Bihar's cooperative sector by facilitating the creation of district-level milk unions and village-level producer societies (Sharma, 2015).

Building on this legacy, the Government of India continues to promote dairy-based development through centrally sponsored schemes, with Bihar emerging as a major beneficiary of these schemes. The Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) focuses on the genetic improvement and conservation of indigenous cattle to enhance productivity; under this scheme, Bihar has received ¹ 260.79 crore in central assistance, including allocations for the Gopalganj district. Complementing this, the National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD) aims to improve milk quality, strengthen procurement systems, and expand processing capacity. In Bihar, 29 NPDD projects have been approved with a total outlay of ¹ 380.43 crores, comprising both grant and loan components. Additional support is provided through the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF), which promotes investment in processing and value-added infrastructure; two dairy processing projects with a combined outlay of ¹ 125.40 crore have been sanctioned in the state. The Supporting Dairy Cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organizations (SDC & FPO) scheme further enhances financial viability by offering interest subvention on working

JOCIPE

capital loans, with ¹ 3.22 crores released to participating agencies in Bihar. These initiatives are reinforced by investments undertaken by the Bihar State Milk Cooperative Federation Limited (COMFED), including the approval of a state-of-the-art dairy processing plant with a capacity of one lakh litres per day in Gopalganj under the SIDBI Cluster Development Fund (Government of India, 2025; PIB, 2025).

At the state level, the Government of Bihar has introduced targeted interventions to strengthen the cooperative dairy ecosystem and expand rural livelihood. The Saat Nishchay-2 Yojana prioritizes dairy infrastructure development and aims to organize 7,000 new dairy cooperative societies between 2021 and 2025. Livestock-focused schemes, such as the Desi Gaupalan Protsahan Yojana and Samagra Bhains Palan Yojana, provide graded subsidies for indigenous cattle and high-yielding buffalo rearing, with enhanced support for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Extremely Backward Classes. Similarly, the Samagra Gavy Vikas Yojana promotes small and medium dairy units through differentiated subsidy structures based on unit size and social category (GoB, 2022; GoB, 2025; Government of India, 2025, PIB, 2025).

The cumulative impact of these interventions is reflected in Bihar's rising milk production, which increased from 7.77 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 13.39 million tonnes in 2024-25 (GoI, 2025; *Indian Express*, 2025). The extension of the Kisan Credit Card facility to dairy and animal husbandry farmers has further improved access to working capital, enabling small producers to sustain their operations and participate more effectively in cooperative networks. Collectively, these policy measures have consolidated dairy cooperatives in Bihar as inclusive, growth-oriented institutions capable of fostering rural economic empowerment and social transformation.

Governance Challenges and Institutional Strengthening

Despite their significant role in advancing social inclusion and economic empowerment, dairy cooperatives in Bihar continue to face persistent governance and institutional constraints that limit their developmental impact. Empirical evidence highlights deficiencies in transparency, particularly in financial reporting, access to records, and clarity of leadership roles, alongside limited member participation in decision-making processes. Village-level cooperative members frequently lack formal training in financial management, record keeping, and democratic governance, while ordinary members—

particularly women and socially marginalized groups—remain insufficiently informed about participatory provisions embedded in cooperative legislation. These shortcomings weaken accountability, erode member trust, and undermine the equitable distribution of cooperative benefits.

Addressing these governance and inclusion deficits requires deliberate institutional strengthening and inclusive organizational design. Evidence underscores the importance of reserving leadership positions for women and marginalized groups, implementing targeted awareness and capacity-building programmes, appointing dedicated personnel for member outreach, and institutionalizing transparent grievance-redressal mechanisms (Farnworth et al., 2023). External accountability systems, including regular audits and monitoring by federations and state agencies, further reinforce institutional discipline. Experiences from women-only dairy cooperatives demonstrate that insulating governance structures from gendered constraints can generate stronger empowerment outcomes, although such models may involve trade-offs related to scale and integration. However, even within women-focused institutions, transformative change is not automatic and requires explicit policy support to translate formal inclusion into substantive decision-making power. Strengthened governance thus remains central to ensuring that dairy cooperatives function as inclusive developmental institutions rather than merely market intermediaries.

Structural and Operational Constraints

Beyond governance limitations, dairy cooperatives in Bihar confront several structural and operational constraints that affect their sustainability and growth. Cooperative members frequently experience income instability due to milk price fluctuations driven by broader market dynamics. Although cooperatives reduce transaction costs and mitigate exploitation by intermediaries, they remain partially exposed to price volatility, which discourages long-term investment in dairy activities and heightens household vulnerability (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021). Seasonal variations in milk production further exacerbate these pressures, creating mismatches between supply volumes and processing capacity and compelling cooperatives to dispose of surplus milk at distress prices during peak flush periods. The inability to effectively store or process surplus output undermines cooperative viability and erodes the economic gains associated with collective marketing (Singh et al., 2020). These challenges are compounded by chronic shortages of working capital, which restrict cooperatives' capacity to procure inputs, upgrade infrastructure – including cold chain facilities, milk testing

laboratories, and ensure timely payments to members. Scaling essential services, such as veterinary care, artificial insemination, and extension support, across a geographically dispersed and socially heterogeneous membership base remains resource-intensive. Consequently, the reach and quality of these services vary widely across cooperatives, limiting their ability to function as comprehensive livelihood institutions (Abraham, 2015). These structural deficits underscore the need for coordinated investments in infrastructure, human capital, and institutional systems to ensure long-term sustainability and inclusive growth.

Discussion and Analysis

Dairy cooperatives in Bihar represent a significant pathway to social inclusion and economic empowerment by embedding institutional mechanisms that reduce exclusion and enhance participation among marginalized groups. Low entry barriers facilitate broad-based membership, while democratic governance structures create potential space for representation and voice among socially and economically disadvantaged populations. Collective ownership promotes economic interdependence and encourages more equitable treatment across caste and gender lines, while organizational scale enables access to critical services—such as credit, veterinary care, and extension support—that are often inaccessible to individual producers (Farnworth et al., 2023). Moreover, the collective bargaining power inherent in the cooperative model enables smallholders to secure better prices than those available through informal marketing channels, directly contributing to poverty reduction and asset accumulation (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021).

These inclusive outcomes are most effective when supported by intentional and well-designed strategies. Governance quotas for marginalized groups, targeted mobilization, sustained capacity-building initiatives, and transparent service delivery systems significantly enhance cooperative inclusiveness. Evidence from women-led dairy cooperatives in Bihar demonstrates that inclusion is most sustainable when consciously embedded in institutional design rather than assumed as an automatic outcome of collective marketing (Dohmwirth & Hanisch, 2017). Such strategic alignment ensures that cooperative benefits extend beyond immediate economic returns to foster long-term social mobility and community resilience. The stabilizing role of cooperatives in moderating price volatility further strengthens household resilience by shielding smallholders from the extreme fluctuations characteristic of informal markets (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021).

Empirical studies indicate that cooperative membership has a demonstrably positive impact on income generation and livelihood security, with members experiencing income gains of approximately 30 percent relative to non-members, alongside access to regular, year-round employment (GoB, 2019). Dairy income plays a crucial role in mitigating seasonal unemployment and reducing household exposure to crop failure and price shocks, particularly in economically backward districts of Bihar. By leveraging economies of scale, cooperatives reduce dependence on intermediaries and facilitate more effective market participation for small and landless farmers, who derive the greatest proportional benefits through improved access to fodder, concentrates, and quality inputs (Gaillard & Dervillé, 2021). This support is essential for sustaining animal health and productivity, which directly translates into higher household incomes (Kumari & Malhotra, 2016). However, the durability of these gains ultimately depends on sustained institutional capacity development. Continuous member education, leadership training in governance and financial management, professionalization of cooperative staff, and transparent accounting systems are critical for transforming short-term income improvements into lasting social and economic empowerment. Institutional strength—rather than market participation alone—thus determines the long-term developmental impact of dairy cooperatives on rural livelihoods in Bihar.

Conclusion

Dairy cooperatives in Bihar constitute a robust and empirically validated institutional pathway for promoting economic empowerment and social inclusion in rural areas. These inclusive outcomes are not merely conceptual but are concretely realized through the routine functioning of cooperatives operating under the Anand Pattern and strengthened by the legacy of Operation Flood. By integrating small and marginal producers into organized markets, dairy cooperatives enhance farm incomes, generate employment, and reduce producers' exposure to exploitative market intermediaries. Women and landless labourers, in particular, gain greater economic autonomy and increased participation in household and productive decision-making, while socially marginalized groups secure access to formal economic activities and employment opportunities that were historically limited by entrenched social hierarchies.

In the context of India's development priorities—especially poverty alleviation, gender equity, and inclusive growth—dairy cooperatives

emerge as an evidence-based institutional model capable of translating economic growth into broad-based rural development. Rooted in democratic governance and collective action, the cooperative framework offers replicable lessons for designing rural development strategies that foster both economic empowerment and social inclusion.

References:

1. Abdykaliyeva, Z., Baidybekova, S., Abdykalyk, S., Baitarakova, B., & Kenjassarova, A. (2025). *The role of agricultural cooperatives in economic development: International experience* (p. 305). Routledge.
2. Abraham, M. (2015). *New cooperativism: A study of emerging producer organisations in India*. Copenhagen Business School.
3. Agarwal, B. (2010). *Gender and green governance: The political economy of women's presence within and beyond community forestry*. Oxford University Press.
4. Baltenweck, I., Ouma, E. A., & Nagujja, J. (2022). Gender-inclusive business models in livestock value chains in low- and middle-income countries: What can we learn from the literature? *Frontiers in Sustainability*, 3, Article 958251.
5. Begimkulov, E., & Darr, D. (2023). Scaling strategies and mechanisms in small and medium enterprises in the agri-food sector: A systematic literature review. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 7.
6. Bihar State Milk Cooperative Federation (COMFED). (2022). *Annual report 2021–2022*. COMFED.
7. Birthal, P. S., & Jha, A. (2005). Economic losses due to various constraints in dairy production in India. *Indian Journal of Animal Sciences*, 75, 1470–1475.
8. Candemir, A. (2021). *Farm sustainability and the involvement of economic actors in the agri-food value chain* (Doctoral dissertation). HAL.
9. Dohmwirth, C., & Hanisch, M. (2017). Women and collective action: Lessons from the Indian dairy cooperative sector. *Community Development Journal*.
10. Farnworth, C. R., Bharati, P., & Galiè, A. (2023). Empowering women, challenging caste? The experience of a dairy cooperative in India. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 7, Article 1114405.
11. Fiorillo, V., & Amico, B. M. (2024). Milk quality and economic sustainability in dairy farming: A systematic review of performance indicators. *Dairy*, 5(3), 384–403.

12. Gaillard, C., & Dervillé, M. (2021). Dairy farming, cooperatives and livelihoods: Lessons learned from six Indian villages. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 78, Article 101422.
13. Government of Bihar. (2014). *Bihar economic survey 2013–14*.
14. Government of Bihar. (2019). *Bihar economic survey 2018–19*.
15. Government of Bihar. (2025). *Bihar economic survey 2024–25*.
16. Government of India. (2025). *Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha starred and unstarred questions on the dairy sector*. Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
17. Indian Express. (2025, December 4). *Bihar is producing more milk, eggs and meat than ever before, but per capita availability remains low*.
18. Kumar, N. (1997). *Operation Flood: Literature review and reconciliation* (Occasional Publication No. 13). Institute of Rural Management Anand.
19. Kumari, B., & Malhotra, R. (2016). Impact of women dairy cooperative societies on income and employment of women in Bihar. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 29(2), 313–320.
20. Kurien, V. (2007). *India's milk revolution: Investing in rural producer organizations*. National Dairy Development Board.
21. National Dairy Development Board. (2020). *Dairying in Bihar: A statistical profile 2020*.
22. Nath, P. K. (2022). Collective dairy farming, women empowerment and social inclusion: A village-level study from Bihar, India. *Global Business Review*.
23. Pandey, S., Mishra, S., Jha, A. K., & Pandey, H. O. (2024). Women in Indian dairy farming business. *International Journal of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry*, 9(SP1), 701–708.
24. Press Information Bureau. (2024). *India's cooperative movement: Driving inclusive growth*. Government of India.
25. Press Information Bureau. (2025). *Dairy-based industries*. Government of India.
26. Press Information Bureau. (2025). *Milk processing centres in Bihar*. Government of India.
27. Press Information Bureau. (2025). *National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD): Progress report*. Government of India.
28. Rahimi, M. (2025). Evaluating cooperative membership's impact on rural household empowerment. *Journal of Economics and Business UBS*, 14(5).

29. Sarkar, A., & Dutta, A. (2021). The Milk Producers' Organization and Indian dairy sector. *Veterinarska Stanica*, 53(3), 329.
30. Sharma, V. P. (2015). Determinants of small milk producers' participation in organized dairy value chains in India. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 28(2), 247–261.
31. Singh, K. K., Singh, P., Sinha, N., & Ahmed, N. (2020). An overview of livestock and dairy sector: Strategies for its growth in Eastern Indian state of Bihar. *International Journal of Livestock Research*.

WTO Trade Policies and India's Reservations

Sonalika Garg

Abstract:

India's collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO) trade policies is focused on protecting its agricultural sector, food security and the interests of developing countries, and it often opposes developing countries on subsidy rules. *There are* key objections include methods for calculating agricultural subsidies (aggregate support measurement price), fisheries subsidies affecting local livelihoods, and new non-trade issues such as carbon taxes. It is fact that India's primary concern in the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks is agricultural subsidies. A major point of contention is agricultural subsidies; India strongly defends public stockholding for food security and opposes restrictions that could harm its farmers. This is because a large portion of India's economy and employment depends on agriculture sector. The Indian government knows that farmers are the backbone of the entire Indian economy. *So that*, Indian government wants to protect its farmers interests from the adverse effects of international trade market competition and ensure that developed countries reduce their agricultural subsidies, which distort the all global trade. This research paper reflects India's concerns regarding the trade policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Key Words: WTO, Trade, Policies, India.

Introduction:

As a founding member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), India has traditionally championed a multilateral, rule-based systemic approach to international trade. India has always followed the norms and conditions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) for trade. Since the 1991 economic reforms, India has progressively liberalised its trade regime, participating actively in global commerce and increasing its

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Studies, Punjabi University T.P.D. Malwa College, Rampura Phul (Punjab)

engagement in services and manufacturing. However, as a large developing nation with significant socio-economic disparities, India's relationship with WTO policies is complex, balancing the drive for integration with the need to protect the livelihoods of its vulnerable populations. As a founding member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), India serves as a significant, often contradictory force in global trade. It balances the role of a major developing economy with that of an active interlocutor. India consistently champions the interests of the global South and developing world. It focuses on food security, agricultural subsidies, and special discriminatory treatment. It frequently challenges developed countries on issues such as intellectual property and market access, while also pushing for domestic reforms.¹

While as far as the trade policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is concerned, which focus on reducing tariffs, eliminating non-tariff barriers, and enforcing intellectual property rights (TRIPS). While it aims to promote global trade liberalisation, India has raised significant objections regarding the fairness of this WTO's system. India's main concerns are defensive, focusing on the "developmental" dimension of trade rather than just market access. This introduction sets the stage for how India addresses these contentious issues to protect its national interests while remaining an active participant in global trade governance.

It can be said that India is unhappy with the policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO) primarily because they threaten its food security programmes, especially those related to public storage and new minimum support price for Indian agriculture farmers. India argues that World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and structure, designed primarily for developed countries, limit subsidies for developing countries and force them to open up markets, while allowing developed countries to maintain high subsidies. India has consistently called for a permanent solution to public shareholding and more "special and differential treatment" for developing countries to ensure fairness in international trade. India's primary objection is to the Agreement on Agriculture, especially its stringent provisions on maintaining public reserves for food security. India has consistently sought a permanent solution to prevent the Minimum Support Price programmes from collapsing. India advocates enforceable provisions that provide developing countries with a longer transition period and greater policy freedom to protect domestic industries. It has been argued that developed countries often criticize developing countries for providing them with huge subsidies. India has faced intense scrutiny, and the

most pending questions at the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding its agricultural support programme – most of which are from the US, Canada and Australia.²

Key WTO Policies and India’s Objections:

Since joining as a founding member in 1995, India has maintained a complex relationship with the World Trade Organization (WTO) in which it has maintained a balance between its commitment to global trade liberalization and protecting domestic business and development interests. Embracing multilateralism, India often plays the role of a negotiator and critic, challenging WTO liberal policies that threaten its national sovereignty in agriculture, food security and industrial policy. India’s relationship with the World Trade Organization includes active participation as a founding member, strong advocacy for the interests of developing countries, especially agricultural food security subsidies, and resistance to restrictive investment rules. This also includes engaging in trade negotiations and dispute settlement, balancing our own economic development with global commitments.

India at the WTO meetings

Ministerial conference	Place	Outcome	India’s Role
1	Singapore	ITA agreement signed Trade and investment, competition policy, government procurement and Trade facilitation discussed.	Mere Presence.
2	Geneva	Global e commerce agreement signed.	Mere Presence
3	Seattle	Negotiations failed as developed countries wanted to incorporate environment and labor related issues under WTO.	Was vocal in protesting against developed countries.
4 5 6 7 8	DOHA Cancun Geneva Hong Kong Bali	A new round was launched and concerned of developing countries related to TRIPS and Health issues were listened. Market access issues were also taken. Members could not arrive at common viewpoint regarding Doha development agenda. Countries came forward to create an atmosphere for initiating multilateral negotiations once again. It was considered vital if the four-year-old DDA negotiations were to move forward sufficiently to conclude the round in 2006. In this meeting, countries agreed to phase out all their agricultural export subsidies by the end of 2013, and terminate any cotton export subsidies by the end of 2006. Further concessions to developing countries included an agreement to introduce duty-free, tariff-free access for goods from the Least Developed Countries, following the Everything But Arms initiative of the European Union — but with up to 3% of tariff lines exempted. Other major issues were left for further negotiation to be completed by the end of 2006 Famous for Trade facilitation agreement and Peace clause	Mostly singled out in its protest. However made its presence and position felt for the very first time. Actively protested against EU-USA draft on agriculture with other developing countries. Played a constructive role in the process. Vocal in protesting against developed countries. India argued for settlement of Food stockholding under AMS. Has to settle with Peace clause.

Source: Compiled from WTO website, Ministerial document and other sources.

JOCIPE

WTO Raise concerns over India's Agricultural Subsidies and Food Security Programme: World Trade Organization rules, particularly the Agreement on Agriculture, set a cap on subsidies (based on 1986-88 prices), which India frequently violates. India opposes the WTO's criteria for Aggregate Support Measurement. It was started for measurement of food subsidies set by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1986-88. India opposes WTO's this decision and arguing it is outdated and fails to reflect current market prices. India insists that its Public Stockholding programme for food security is essential and should not be deemed trade-distorting.³ The most contentious issue is the 'Agreement on Agriculture', which restricts public stockholding (PSH) and subsidies, often labeling India's minimum support price (MSP) for domestic farmers as trade-distorting. India provides huge subsidies to farmers to ensure food security for its over 80 million people.⁴ India has consistently demanded a permanent solution to protect its food security programme. India insists that World Trade Organization (WTO) rules cannot undermine the livelihoods of millions of small-scale subsistence farmers, and advocates for greater policy flexibility.⁵ India is under close scrutiny for using the "peace clause" to shield its MSP programmes from legal challenges.⁶

Fisheries Subsidies: India has called for a clear dispute settlement mechanism and sought to protect their traditional, small-scale fishing communities in negotiations to end subsidies for illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: India has criticized the carbon taxes proposed by the European Union, arguing that such environmental measures act as trade protectionists, disproportionately harming developing countries.

Non-Trade Issues: India has expressed concern over the inclusion of issues such as gender, MSMEs and investment facilitation in the World Trade Organization (WTO). It has been argued that these falls under national policy; others are covered by international organizations, and may create indirect non-trade barriers. India generally opposes bringing new, non-trade issues such as e-commerce, environmental standards and investment facilitation to the WTO, as it considers these restrictive to its developing economy.

India's Objections over WTO's Trade Related Intellectual Property (TRIPS) law: India has historically advocated for flexibility in the TRIPS Agreement to ensure availability of affordable medicines and protect traditional knowledge. India has attempted to strike a balance between intellectual property protection and public health needs, particularly

in the pharmaceutical sector, and has pushed for exemptions during health crises.

Inequality in WTO's Rules: India argues that the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and other rules create unfair advantages for developed countries. This forces developing countries to accept restrictive, high-cost policies. India believes that the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework, particularly under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), must be balanced with the needs of public health and development. Furthermore, India has expressed concern over "trade harassment" through repeated anti-dumping investigations by developed partners.

Conclusion:

India is both a rule-abiding country at international platform. India has followed all the rules and regulations of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It has often used the dispute settlement body to challenge US and EU trade measures, such as steel and aluminium import bans and agricultural import restrictions. India has opposed the inclusion of "new issues" such as e-commerce, investment facilitation and environmental standards into the WTO framework, and wants such discussions to take place in more appropriate, inclusive forums. India has actively opposed the indefinite extension of the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions under WTO's framework. *India has* argued that this deprives developing countries of revenue and limits their policy space to develop domestic digital economies. Despite these reservations, India is not a non-performing member of the WTO. It is actively involved in discussions on topics such as domestic regulation of services and finding "permanent solutions" to recent issues related to public shareholding. India's strategy is to push for a more "equitable globalization" that addresses the development imbalances in global trade rules and regulations. In conclusion, it can be said that the relationship between World Trade Organization (WTO) policies and India's trade stance is a complex, evolving dialogue characterized by India's dual role as a champion of developing nations and a growing participant in global commerce. While India has benefited from WTO-driven trade liberalization, its reservations stem from the perceived inequities in global trade rules that often favour developed economies. Ultimately, India's approach is a delicate balance of protecting the livelihoods of its vulnerable farmers and nascent industries while navigating the benefits of a rules-

based global trading system. The future of this relationship will likely depend on the WTO's ability to reform its dispute settlement mechanism and create more flexible, development-centric rules based internal system. India's strategy is to ensure that World Trade Organization (WTO) rules do not hinder the development needs of its large, agriculture-based economy. In short, it can be said that India leverages its significant economic influence and its status as a developing nation to shape the rules of the WTO in favour of its developmental agenda, and often challenges the status quo.

Endnotes:

1. Ray, Amit S., and Sabyasachi Saha. "India at the WTO: evolving priorities, unaltered paradigm." *Brazilian Journal of International Relations*, 2.2, (2013): 244-271.
2. Sharma, Sachin Kumar. "WTO and policy space for agriculture and food security: issues for China and India." *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 31.2, (2018): 207-219.
3. Nandy, Srinibas. "Indian Agriculture in the Perspective of the Provisions of Domestic Subsidies in the Agreement on Agriculture under WTO." *Indian Economy: Reforms and Development: Essays in Honour of Manoj Kumar Sanyal*. Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2019. 47-67.
4. Dhar, Biswajit. "WTO agreement on agriculture: Worsening India's agrarian crisis." *The Indian Economic Journal*, 71.1, (2023): 152-161.
5. Sharma, Sachin Kumar, et al. "WTO negotiations and repurposing agriculture subsidies for a sustainable future." *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, 24.2, (2024): 349-372.
6. Ramasamy, Alagu Perumal, and Indira Ananth. "India and China in the WTO agricultural negotiations: Stakes amidst crisis." *Tailspin*. Routledge, 2021. 191-220.

Bibliography:

- Kasibhatla, R. J. R., Vishal Arun Hegde, and Shantanu Kanade. "India and the WTO: Initiatives Taken at a Glance." *Indian Practice of International Law*. Routledge India, 2024. 243-259.
- Mukherjee, Arpita, and Avantika Kapoor. *Trade Rules in E-commerce: WTO and India*. No. 354. Working Paper, 2018.
- Narlikar, Amrita. "India's foreign economic policy under Modi: negotiations and narratives in the WTO and beyond." *International Politics*, 59.1, (2022): 148-166.

- Khan, Uzma. "The World Trade Organization and International Law: Balancing Trade, Sovereignty, and Global Governance." *Journal of Law, Society and Policy Review*, 1.2, (2024): 1-17.
- Singh, Shamsheer. "Analysis of trade before and after the WTO: a case study of India." *Global Journal of Finance and Management*, 6.8, (2014): 801-808.
- Ray, Amit S., and Sabyasachi Saha. "India at the WTO: evolving priorities, unaltered paradigm." *Brazilian Journal of International Relations*, 2.2, (2013): 244-271.
- Banerjee, Pritam, Zaki Hussain, and Kanika Karwal. *Navigating the Development Divide: The Case for Policy Space in India's Industrial Policy Strategy Amid Rising Global Protectionism*. Centre for WTO Studies, Centre for Research in International Trade, 2025.
- Dubey, Muchkund. "India and the WTO." *Strategic Arena Switching in International Trade Negotiations*. Routledge, 2017. 97-140.
- Kasibhatla, R. J. R., Vishal Arun Hegde, and Shantanu Kanade. "India and the WTO: Initiatives Taken at a Glance." *Indian Practice of International Law*. Routledge India, 2024. 243-259.
- Chishti, Sumitra. "India and the WTO." *Economic and Political Weekly*, (2001): 1246-1248.

The Transnational Bridge: Remittances, Soft Power, and the Construction of India's Global Identity

Vinod Malik

Abstract

The Indian diaspora has become a central pillar of India's soft power, transforming from a source of remittances into a global network that promotes "Brand India" across economics, culture, technology, and diplomacy. With over 30–35 million people of Indian origin spread worldwide and the world's highest remittance flows, this community now shapes how India is perceived, partnered with, and courted on the global stage. The essay below is written in an exam-style, analytical format that you can further expand or adapt as needed.

Introduction: Diaspora and soft power

India's diaspora—comprising Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin/Overseas Citizens of India (PIOs/OCIs)—is today one of the largest transnational communities in the world. From unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the Gulf to doctors, scientists, entrepreneurs, and CEOs in North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific, the Indian diaspora spans social classes, sectors, and regions. At the same time, the idea of soft power, popularised by Joseph Nye, refers to a country's ability to influence others through attraction, values, culture, and policies rather than coercion or payments. In India's case, the diaspora has emerged as a unique soft power asset that links economic flows (remittances, investments) with intangible influence (culture, ideas, networks), thereby turning global Indians into ambassadors for "Brand India".

Historically, Indian migration unfolded in successive waves that laid the foundations for today's soft power role. The 19th- and early

Assistant Professor, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies,
Department of Higher Education, Haryana

20th century movement of indentured labourers to plantation economies such as Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad, and parts of Africa created enduring communities that preserved Indian languages, religions, festivals, and cultural forms over generations, even as they integrated into new national identities. Later waves in the post 1960s era saw large numbers of professionals—doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers—move to the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and other Western countries, where they came to be seen as highly skilled, law abiding, and upwardly mobile minorities, contributing to a positive stereotype of Indians as educated and hardworking. In the post liberalisation era, India's economic reforms and the rise of information technology further transformed the profile and perception of the Indian diaspora. Indian engineers and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley and other innovation hubs emerged as pioneers in the tech industry, founding start ups, leading global corporations, and helping define the digital economy.

In the contemporary international system, power is no longer exercised solely through military capability or economic coercion. The growing significance of ideas, identities, narratives, and networks has foregrounded the role of soft power in shaping global outcomes. For India, a country with a long civilisational history and a rapidly globalising economy, one of the most distinctive sources of soft power lies in its vast and diverse diaspora. Spread across continents, professions, and social classes, the Indian diaspora has evolved from being perceived primarily as a source of foreign exchange to becoming an influential actor in shaping how India is imagined, engaged with, and evaluated on the global stage.

India's overseas population—comprising Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin or Overseas Citizens of India (PIOs/OCIs)—numbers over 30 million people. This community includes construction workers in the Gulf, plantation descendants in the Caribbean and Africa, professionals and entrepreneurs in North America and Europe, and students in universities across the world. Such diversity gives the Indian diaspora a unique capacity to operate simultaneously at economic, cultural, political, and social levels. Through everyday interactions in workplaces, neighbourhoods, media spaces, and political institutions, overseas Indians shape perceptions of India in ways that formal diplomacy alone cannot achieve.

The concept of soft power, popularised by Joseph S. Nye, refers to the ability of a state to influence others through attraction rather than force or inducement. Culture, political values, and foreign policies that

are perceived as legitimate and morally grounded form the foundations of this influence. Diasporas occupy a strategic position within this framework because they act as informal ambassadors, transmitting ideas, practices, and narratives across borders. In India's case, the diaspora's size, visibility, and occupational spread have made it a particularly potent vehicle for soft power, contributing to what is increasingly described as "Brand India".

Media and digital technologies amplify these cultural flows, with the diaspora acting both as an audience and as a creator of narratives about India. Satellite television, streaming platforms, and social media allow overseas Indians to stay connected to Indian news and entertainment while also projecting Indian content into their social circles. Diaspora journalists, comedians, YouTubers, and influencers often address themes of migration, identity, race, and Indian politics, making Indian issues legible and relatable to foreign publics. This circulation of stories complicates stereotypes and can generate empathy or curiosity about India, reinforcing soft power, although it can also highlight internal conflicts and controversies that may challenge a purely positive image.

Politically, the Indian diaspora has become an increasingly visible actor in both host country politics and India's foreign policy. In several advanced democracies, Indian origin politicians hold prominent positions in national and regional governments, bringing perspectives shaped by their heritage into policy debates on immigration, trade, security, and multiculturalism. Diaspora advocacy groups lobby for stronger India-host country ties, support India's positions on issues such as counter terrorism and United Nations reforms, and mobilise opinion during crises or diplomatic disagreements. Their activism can create political space for closer strategic partnerships, thereby complementing state to state diplomacy and enhancing India's reputation as a valued democratic partner.

Recognising this, successive Indian governments have increasingly institutionalised diaspora engagement as a component of foreign policy and public diplomacy. Mechanisms such as PravasiBharatiya Divas, the creation (and later integration) of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs into the Ministry of External Affairs, and the Overseas Citizenship of India scheme reflect a conscious effort to acknowledge the diaspora's contributions and build a durable sense of belonging. High visibility mass events with diaspora audiences during prime ministerial visits have become regular features of India's diplomatic calendar, projecting images of large, enthusiastic crowds that symbolise

both India's reach and its global community of supporters. These spectacles, heavily covered by media, function as soft power theatre, showcasing India as a rising power with global emotional capital.

Despite these challenges, the Indian diaspora remains one of India's most distinctive soft power resources because it fuses tangible and intangible forms of influence. Economic contributions via remittances, investments, and trade linkages intersect with cultural diffusion, political advocacy, and knowledge transfer, creating dense webs of connection between India and the world. Through everyday interactions in workplaces, universities, neighbourhoods, parliaments, and digital platforms, global Indians steadily shape perceptions of India as dynamic, diverse, and globally integrated, even as debates about democracy, development, and identity continue at home. In this sense, the Indian diaspora stands at the heart of the story of "From remittances to Brand India", illustrating how people themselves—rather than only policies or products—can become carriers of national soft power in the 21st century.

Conceptual framework: Soft power and diaspora politics

Soft power represents a departure from traditional realist conceptions of power that prioritise military and economic capabilities. According to Nye, soft power arises when a country's culture, values, and policies are seen as attractive or worthy of emulation. Unlike hard power, which relies on coercion or payment, soft power operates through persuasion, legitimacy, and agenda-setting. In an era of global connectivity, migration, and digital communication, diasporas have emerged as critical intermediaries in this process.

Diasporas influence host societies by embedding cultural practices, shaping professional norms, and participating in political and civic life. They also maintain emotional, economic, and symbolic ties with their countries of origin, creating transnational spaces of interaction. These spaces allow ideas, capital, and identities to circulate in ways that enhance a country's global visibility and credibility. However, diaspora influence is not monolithic or uncontested; it is shaped by internal diversity, host-country politics, and changing global norms.

For India, diaspora-based soft power operates at multiple levels. At the micro level, individual success stories contribute to positive stereotypes about Indian talent and work ethic. At the meso level, community institutions and networks facilitate cultural diffusion and economic linkages. At the macro level, diaspora lobbying and political

participation influence policy debates and bilateral relationships. Together, these processes contribute to a layered and evolving image of India as a global actor.

Historical evolution of the Indian diaspora

- The Indian diaspora has evolved in waves, each with different economic roles and soft power effects. The first major wave in the 19th–early 20th century involved indentured labourers taken to colonies like Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad, and South Africa, whose descendants today anchor strong cultural linkages and political ties with India.
- The second wave (post 1960s) saw professionals—doctors, engineers, managers—migrating to the US, UK, Canada, and other developed economies, shaping India’s image as a reservoir of skilled human capital.
- A parallel labour wave to the Gulf and West Asia created a large community of semi-skilled workers whose remittances became crucial for states like Kerala and for India’s balance of payments.
- Since the 1990s, a new wave of tech entrepreneurs, knowledge workers, and students has further internationalised Indian talent, particularly in Silicon Valley and other innovation hubs, strengthening India’s reputation as a knowledge and IT powerhouse.

Each of these waves has contributed differently: older communities preserve cultural memory and political goodwill, while newer migrants drive investment, technology transfer, and elite networking that reinforce Brand India’s modern, aspirational image.

Remittances: from survival lifeline to strategic asset

Scale and Macro-economic Importance

India has consistently been the world’s largest recipient of remittances for many years, turning diaspora earnings abroad into one of the most stable external financing sources for the Indian economy. Recent estimates show that India received about 129–136 billion US dollars in remittances in 2024–25, marking a double digit year on year increase and cementing its position at the top of global remittance recipients. Remittances now account for a significant share of India’s external current account inflows and help cover a substantial portion—around 47 percent—of the merchandise trade deficit, thus acting as a stabiliser for India’s external finances. In certain states,

such as Kerala, remittances have been estimated to constitute around one fifth of the state's GDP, illustrating how deeply they are woven into regional development.

Developmental and Social Impact

Remittance inflows go beyond macro stability to shape India's social and developmental outcomes. Studies and official data indicate that more than half of remittance income is used by households for essential consumption such as food, education, and healthcare, while the remaining funds are often invested in land, housing, and financial assets. This supports human development indicators, financial inclusion, and local construction booms, particularly in migrant sending districts. Government backed mechanisms like the India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF OI) and state-level diaspora investment schemes further channel diaspora contributions into social projects and infrastructure, turning private remittances into public goods. This fusion of personal ties and national development strengthens emotional bonds with India and enhances the narrative of a caring, upwardly mobile homeland, thereby feeding back into India's soft power.

Beyond remittances: diaspora as economic and innovation capital

Investment, Entrepreneurship, and Trade Linkages

The Indian diaspora increasingly acts as an economic bridge that facilitates trade, investment, and market access between India and key global economies. Diaspora entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and senior executives help Indian companies expand abroad and foreign firms enter the Indian market, using their cultural familiarity, language skills, and networks to lower transaction costs.

Reports highlight that FDI flows linked to diaspora networks are often driven by affinity and trust, not simply by short term profit calculations. Diaspora investors channel capital into Indian start ups, real estate, portfolio investments, and philanthropy, supporting India's transition from a low income to a lower middle and then middle income, innovation driven economy. These economic linkages enhance Brand India as an attractive destination for business and innovation rather than just a cheap labour pool.

Knowledge transfer and technology diffusion

One of the most striking contributions of the contemporary Indian diaspora is in high technology and knowledge sectors. Indian origin

professionals occupy leadership roles in major global technology and pharmaceutical companies, universities, multilateral organisations, and think tanks, giving India soft influence in agenda setting and norm shaping arenas.

Through return migration, visiting faculty programmes, joint research, start up mentoring, and cross border collaborations, diaspora experts transfer skills, best practices, and cutting edge knowledge to Indian institutions. This helps build domestic capabilities in IT, biotechnology, digital services, and advanced manufacturing, reinforcing the image of India as a knowledge economy and aligning Brand India with innovation and brainpower rather than poverty and backwardness.

Cultural diplomacy: projecting “Brand India” abroad

Culture, Religion, and Everyday Soft Power

The Indian diaspora sustains and globalises Indian culture through daily life, festivals, and community institutions. Temples, gurdwaras, mosques, cultural associations, yoga centres, language schools, and Bollywood screenings act as nodes of Indian culture in cities from London and Toronto to Dubai and Durban.

Through visible celebrations of Diwali, Holi, Eid, Onam, and other festivals, diaspora communities bring Indian culture into public spaces, often prompting city administrations to recognise such events officially. Indian cuisine—curries, dosas, biryani, chai—as well as yoga and Ayurveda, have become mainstream in many countries, turning lifestyle practices once considered niche into accepted global trends that carry positive associations with India. This everyday cultural presence steadily enhances India’s soft power by making Indian traditions familiar, attractive, and non threatening.

Cinema, Media, and Digital Narratives

Bollywood and regional Indian cinemas have long relied on diaspora audiences, but diaspora communities themselves now shape and amplify Indian cultural content globally. Overseas Indians are major consumers and promoters of Indian films, OTT content, and music, influencing how India is portrayed in foreign media and how narratives about Indians abroad are constructed.

Social media and digital platforms have allowed diaspora influencers, stand up comics, journalists, and content creators to build large transnational followings, offering nuanced accounts of Indian life,

politics, and culture. This digital public sphere complicates older stereotypes and provides alternative stories of a diverse, democratic, and aspirational India, though it can also spread polarising narratives that sometimes clash with host country sensibilities. Overall, the digital presence of diaspora voices strengthens the visibility and relatability of Brand India among younger, globally connected audiences.

Political Influence and Lobbying: Diaspora as Strategic Constituency

Diaspora as Political Actors in Host Countries

In several democracies, particularly the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, Indian-origin communities have become significant electoral constituencies and political actors. Indian-origin politicians now occupy senior positions in national and regional governments, legislatures, and cabinets in multiple countries, giving India indirect political leverage and visibility.

Diaspora advocacy groups lobby on issues ranging from trade, visas, and educational cooperation to security partnerships and recognition of India's concerns on terrorism. Their efforts have contributed to stronger strategic partnerships, defence agreements, and support for India's aspirations such as a permanent seat on the UN Security Council or membership in export control regimes. While these activities are shaped primarily by host country politics, they often align with India's foreign policy objectives and thereby enhance India's soft power footprint.

Diaspora in India's Own Diplomacy

Indian governments have increasingly recognised the diaspora as a distinct vector of foreign policy. Institutional innovations such as the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (since merged into the Ministry of External Affairs), the PravasiBharatiya Divas (PBD) conventions, and Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) schemes signal deliberate engagement with global Indians.

High profile diaspora events addressed by Indian prime ministers and presidents in cities like New York, Sydney, London, and Dubai are now a staple of summit diplomacy, projecting images of enthusiastic, well integrated Indian communities abroad. These spectacles, amplified by global media, reinforce a narrative of India as a confident, globally connected power whose citizens thrive abroad and remain emotionally and politically tied to their homeland. Such choreographed public diplomacy transforms diaspora gatherings into live advertisements for Brand India.

Crisis management, consular protection, and national image

Diaspora communities also become crucial in times of crisis—wars, pandemics, economic shocks, or natural disasters—testing India’s capacity and willingness to protect its people abroad. India’s large scale evacuation operations from conflict zones and unstable regions, including West Asia and parts of Africa, have showcased the logistical and diplomatic capabilities of the Indian state.

Effective consular support, timely evacuations, and humanitarian assistance not only safeguard Indian lives but also create positive word of mouth among immigrants and host societies. When overseas Indians narrate stories of being rescued or assisted by Indian authorities, they reinforce an image of India as a responsible, caring state that values its citizens and workers, thereby strengthening loyalty within the diaspora and admiration outside it.

The making of “Brand India”

Economic, Cultural, and Normative Dimensions

“Brand India” is not a single slogan but a composite image: a fast growing economy, an information technology hub, a cultural civilisation, and a large, noisy democracy. The diaspora gives this brand credibility by embodying several of these attributes simultaneously: they are seen as hardworking, educated, entrepreneurial, and family oriented, yet also integrated into local societies.

Through success stories in business, academia, science, and the arts, diaspora individuals symbolise the possibilities of Indian talent and upbringing. This creates what some scholars describe as a “demonstration effect”, where the achievements of global Indians improve perceptions of India’s education system, work ethic, and social values. As a result, Brand India is increasingly associated with innovation, diversity, and resilience rather than only poverty or underdevelopment, even though those challenges persist.

Tourism, Education, and People to People Flows

Diaspora networks also encourage tourism, study in India, and people-to-people exchanges. Overseas Indians regularly bring friends, colleagues, and spouses to India, introduce them to Indian destinations, and promote India as a site for medical tourism, yoga retreats, spiritual

exploration, and cultural tourism.

In the education sector, diaspora academics facilitate partnerships between Indian and foreign universities, joint degree programmes, and student exchanges, enhancing India's visibility as an educational and research partner. These flows deepen familiarity with India among foreign publics and elites, nurturing long term goodwill that underpins soft power.

Challenges and Limits of Diaspora-driven Soft Power

Internal Diversity and Political Polarisation

The Indian diaspora is highly diverse along regional, religious, caste, class, and ideological lines. This diversity can enrich India's soft power but also generates internal disagreements and competing narratives about Indian society and politics. Diaspora political mobilisation can become polarised along home country lines, importing domestic conflicts into host country spaces and occasionally provoking social tensions.

Reports from countries like Canada, the US, the UK, and Australia highlight instances where highly visible nationalist demonstrations or clashes between rival groups of Indian origin have worried local authorities and publics. When diaspora activism is perceived as majoritarian, sectarian, or intolerant, it can tarnish India's image and complicate bilateral relations, thus undermining soft power gains.

Host-country Backlash and Immigration Politics

Diaspora communities operate within host country political contexts where immigration, identity, and economic competition are contentious issues. Rising anti immigrant sentiment or racial discrimination can target Indians, as seen in periodic attacks or hate crimes in some Western and Asian countries, which in turn challenge India's efforts to project a smooth narrative of success abroad.

Moreover, if diaspora groups are perceived as acting at the behest of the Indian state or as extensions of its domestic political battles, host governments may push back or impose legal and diplomatic constraints. This reveals a structural limit: while diaspora can be an asset, overt politicisation or instrumentalisation of their identities may trigger suspicion and rollback, reducing the net soft power benefit.

Policy coordination and institutional gaps

Parliamentary committees and policy analyses have underlined that India's diaspora engagement still suffers from coordination issues

between central and state governments, fragmented databases, and limited systematic consultation with diaspora groups. At times, there is minimal or no contact between Indian missions, central ministries, and state-level authorities concerning diaspora issues, limiting the effectiveness of responses to crises or opportunities.

Without robust institutional mechanisms and consistent outreach, the potential of diaspora as partners in development, innovation, and diplomacy remains underutilised. Aligning diaspora initiatives with India's broader foreign policy and development strategies, while respecting their autonomy, is essential to ensure that diaspora engagement strengthens rather than complicates Brand India.

Policy measures to harness diaspora soft power better

To transform the diaspora's latent strengths into sustainable soft power, India needs a more strategic, calibrated approach. Some key measures include:

1. Deepening institutional engagement:
 - Strengthen dedicated diaspora divisions within the Ministry of External Affairs and ensure closer coordination with states, industry bodies, and civil society.
 - Regularly consult diaspora representatives on issues like migration policy, skill development, and investment facilitation to build co ownership rather than top down control.
2. Balancing pride with restraint:
 - Encourage cultural assertion and community organisation abroad while sensitising diaspora groups to local laws, norms, and multicultural frameworks in host societies.
 - Avoid overt partisan mobilisation in foreign arenas, which can alienate sections of the diaspora and host-country publics, thereby diluting soft power.
3. Facilitating economic and knowledge partnerships:
 - Simplify regulatory frameworks for diaspora investment, philanthropy, and start ups, building on initiatives like IDF OI and state-level diaspora funds.
 - Create structured platforms for knowledge transfer—short term faculty positions, innovation networks, and sectoral advisory councils tapping diaspora expertise.
4. Protecting migrant workers and students:
 - Strengthen labour agreements with Gulf and other host countries to safeguard rights, wages, and dispute resolution mechanisms for Indian workers.

- Enhance consular support, helplines, and legal aid for students and professionals facing discrimination, fraud, or exploitation, reinforcing India’s image as a protective state.
5. Crafting a coherent Brand India narrative:
- Integrate diaspora stories into official branding campaigns that emphasise India’s pluralism, democracy, and innovation, not only its ancient civilisation and spirituality.
 - Use public diplomacy, cultural centres, and digital outreach to showcase diaspora achievements alongside domestic successes in technology, sports, arts, and social innovation.

Conclusion: From remittances to reputation

The Indian diaspora has travelled a long way from being viewed mainly as a source of remittances to being recognised as a multidimensional soft power resource. Their financial contributions stabilise India’s external accounts and sustain household livelihoods, while their entrepreneurship, skills, and networks connect India to global value chains and innovation ecosystems.

Equally important, the diaspora projects Indian culture, values, and narratives into the world’s streets, classrooms, parliaments, and digital platforms, thereby co creating “Brand India” as dynamic, diverse, and aspirational. Yet this soft power is neither automatic nor risk free: it requires careful policy design, respect for host country contexts, and an inclusive vision that embraces the diaspora as partners rather than instruments. If managed with sensitivity and strategic foresight, the Indian diaspora can remain one of independent India’s most enduring and distinctive sources of soft power in the 21st century.

References

- Drishti IAS. (2025, October 7). Unleash the strategic power of Indian diaspora. Drishti IAS.
- eGyanKosh. (n.d.). Unit 46: Diaspora and soft power diplomacy. Indira Gandhi National Open University.
- India Brand Equity Foundation. (2025, November 9). The diaspora effect: Driving bilateral ties and remittances to India. IBEF. <https://www.ibef.org/blogs/the-diaspora-effect-driving-bilateral-ties-and-remittances-to-india>
- Ministry of External Affairs.(2015). Annual report 2014–15.Government of India. <https://www.mea.gov.in>

JOCIPE

- Ministry of External Affairs.(2023). Annual report 2022–23.Government of India.
- Nye, J. S. (2004). Soft power: The means to success in world politics. PublicAffairs.
- Parliament of India, Lok Sabha. (2024–2025). Committee on External Affairs (18th Lok Sabha), Sixth report on welfare of overseas Indians (Report No. 6).Lok Sabha Secretariat.
- RemitSo. (2024, December 31). The diaspora effect: How remittances drive India’s growth. RemitSo.
- Vajiram& Ravi.(2025, December). India’s diaspora diplomacy: Pride, power, and the need for restraint abroad. Vajiram& Ravi. <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/indias-diaspora-diplomacy-pride-power-and-the-need-for-restraint-abroad/>
- Verma, S. (2018).Understanding India’s soft power dynamics. International Journal of Academic Research and Social Sciences, 7(3), 123–131.
- VIF India. (2025, August 3). Indian diaspora and remittance flows: Trends, impacts, and policy implications. Vivekananda International Foundation.
- Zutshi, R. (2025). The synergy of public relations and soft power in India’s external engagement. International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Policy Research, 4(2), 45–58.

A Study of Indian Election's Survey Methods

Dr. Virpal Singh

Abstract

There is not denying the fact that election Analysis is an essential component of the Indian democratic process. It involves examining electoral trends, voting behaviour, public opinion, and predicting election outcomes. It can be said that surveys are the primary tool used in election analysis because they help measure public attitudes and preferences both before and after elections. Indian election studies combine electoral analysis, large-scale field surveys, and booth-level data analysis to map a complex, diverse landscape defined by fluctuating social schisms and high voter turn-out. Led by institutions like Lokniti-CSDS, the National Election Study (NES) has used rigorous, often face-to-face, sampling methodology to analyse voter behaviour, attitudes and demographic trends since 1967. This paper attempts to explore survey methods in Indian elections.

Key Words: Indian, Election, Survey Method.

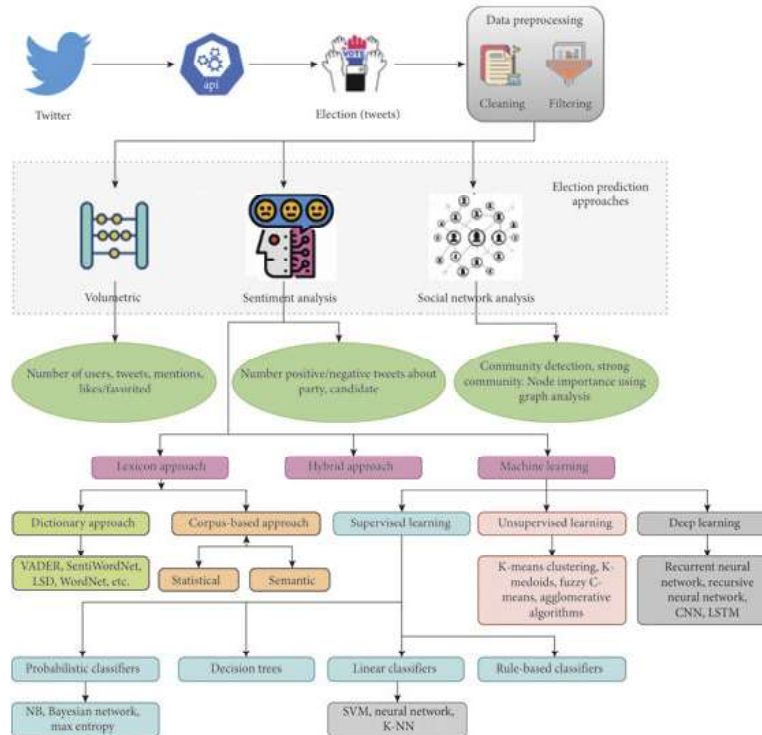
Meaning of Survey:

A survey is a research method used to collect information from a specific group or population about their opinions, beliefs, preferences, or attitudes. In election analysis, surveys help determine which issues influence voters, which candidate or party is popular among the electorate, and what trends exist in different regions.

Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Political Science, Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Khalsa College Sri Anandpur Sahib, Punjab

October-December, 2025

(107)



Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Overview-of-election-prediction-approaches-and-techniques_fig2_350739937

Main Types of Survey Methods in Election Analysis

1. Pre-Poll Survey

A Pre-Poll Survey is conducted before elections. Its purpose is to understand voter intentions, political preferences, and key issues that matter to the electorate before voting takes place. Example: Public opinion polls conducted by television channels or research agencies prior to elections.

2. Exit Poll

An Exit Poll is conducted on election day immediately after voters cast their votes. Voters are asked which candidate or party they voted for.

Importance of Exit Poll

Exit polls provide an early indication of possible election results and are widely used by media organizations for preliminary analysis.

In India, exit polls are regulated by the Election Commission of India under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

3. Post-Poll Survey

A Post-Poll Survey is conducted after elections. It aims to understand why voters supported a particular candidate or party. These surveys analyze voting behavior and the reasons behind election outcomes.

4. Sample Survey

In a Sample Survey, data is collected from a representative subset of the population rather than the entire electorate. Statistical methods ensure that the sample reflects the broader population. Example: Selecting 10 constituencies out of 100 in a state for detailed voter interviews.

5. Door-to-Door Survey

In this method, surveyors visit households and conduct face-to-face interviews. This method is considered highly reliable but is expensive and time-consuming.

6. Telephonic / Online Surveys

With advancements in digital technology, opinions are now collected through telephone interviews and online forms. These methods are faster and more cost-effective but may sometimes face issues of representativeness and reliability.

Importance of Surveys in Election Analysis

Understanding Public Opinion: Surveys identify political preferences, concerns, and attitudes toward governance and policy.

Helping Political Strategy: Political parties use survey results to design campaign strategies and messaging.

Analyzing Voting Patterns: Surveys help examine behavioral patterns influenced by factors such as caste, religion, language, region, gender, and socio-economic status.

Information for Media and Citizens: Pre-poll surveys and exit polls inform the public about electoral trends and enhance political awareness.

Assistance for Policy Makers: Post-election surveys help governments understand public expectations and frame policies accordingly.

Conclusion:

The study of Indian elections, especially from the Lokniti-CSDS perspective since the 1960s, provides an invaluable, long-term database

JOCIPE

for understanding the changing nature of Indian democracy. It can be said that surveys are the most significant tool in election analysis. They help in understanding voter behaviour, predicting trends, and strengthening democratic systems. In the modern technological era, survey methods have become increasingly scientific and data-driven. Therefore, election analysis remains incomplete without surveys, as they reflect the voice of the people in a democratic society.

References:

1. The American Voter – Campbell, Angus; Converse, Philip E.; Miller, Warren E.; and Stokes, Donald E. (1960). University of Chicago Press.
2. Political Analysis – Van Evera, Stephen (1997). Cornell University Press.
3. Election Commission of India – Guidelines on Exit Polls under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
4. Survey Research Methods – Fowler, Floyd J. (2014). Sage Publications.
5. The SAGE Handbook of Public Opinion Research – Donsbach, Wolfgang & Traugott, Michael W. (Eds.). Sage Publications.

A Study on the Economic Conditions of Workers in the Wood Industry: A Case Analysis of Jairampur (Arunachal Pradesh)

Nehukoh Simai

Abstract:

This study presents an economic inquiry into the laborers employed in the wood-based industry of Jairampur, located in the Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. Historically a focal point for timber extraction due to its rich forest cover and strategic proximity to the Stillwell Road, Jairampur's wood industry has undergone significant structural shifts following environmental regulations and the Supreme Court's intervention in timber felling.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the socio-economic status, wage structures, and livelihood sustainability of the workforce. Utilizing a mix of primary field surveys and secondary data, the study explores the demographic profile of the laborers, predominantly comprising indigenous tribal communities and migrant workers. Findings indicate that while the wood industry remains a vital source of non-farm income, the laborers face severe economic vulnerabilities, including seasonal unemployment, lack of formal social security, and exposure to occupational health hazards.

The inquiry reveals a significant disparity between the high market value of processed wood products and the stagnant real wages of the manual workforce. Furthermore, the transition from large-scale timber milling to regulated, small-scale units has created a "precarious employment" environment. The paper concludes that for the industry to remain a viable economic engine for Jairampur, there is an urgent need for state-led intervention in the form of skill diversification, the

Guest Lecturer, Department of Economics, Rangfrah Govt. College,
Arunachal Pradesh, India

introduction of modern wood-processing technology, and the formalization of labor contracts. Policy recommendations focus on balancing forest conservation goals with the economic survival of the forest-dependent population in the Northeast frontier.

Keywords: Woods Industry, Economic Inquiry, Forest-Based Livelihoods, Timber Regulation, Sustainable Development.

Introduction:

The forest-based industry has historically served as the backbone of rural economies in resource-rich regions across the globe. In the context of India's Northeast, particularly Arunachal Pradesh, the "woods industry" is not merely a commercial sector but a complex socio-economic ecosystem. Arunachal Pradesh, often referred to as the "Lungs of Northeast India," boasts a forest cover that accounts for over 79% of its geographical area. Within this landscape, the town of Jairampur in the Changlang district emerges as a critical case study. Situated near the historic Stilwell Road and sharing a porous border with Myanmar, Jairampur has long been a hub for timber extraction, processing, and trade. However, the economic life of the labourers within this industry is a narrative of paradox—working amidst immense natural wealth while grappling with systemic poverty and job insecurity.

The historical trajectory of the wood industry in Jairampur is marked by a "boom and bust" cycle. During the late 20th century, the region saw a proliferation of sawmills and plywood factories, driven by the high demand for tropical hardwoods in mainland India. This era created a massive demand for manual labor, drawing both local indigenous tribes—such as the Tangsa and Singpho—and migrant workers into the folds of the industrial economy. However, the landmark 1996 Supreme Court ruling in the *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs. Union of India* case, which imposed a blanket ban on non-forest activities without prior approval, fundamentally altered the industry's structure.¹ For the labourers of Jairampur, this shift meant a transition from a thriving, albeit unregulated, market to a highly restricted and often precarious informal economy.

Central to this economic inquiry is the profile of the "labourer." In the woods industry of Jairampur, labour is categorized into various tiers: logging, transportation, and mill processing. Each tier presents distinct economic challenges. The felling of timber in the rugged terrains of Changlang requires high physical endurance and specialized skills, yet these workers often operate without formal contracts or insurance. The socio-economic status of these individuals is characterized by a

high dependency on “middlemen” or forest contractors. This dependency often leads to a debt-trap or “vicious cycle of poverty,” where wages are advanced to laborers during the lean monsoon months, only to be deducted from their earnings during the peak working season, leaving little room for capital accumulation or savings.

The geographical isolation of Jairampur further complicates the economic dynamics. Being a frontier town, the cost of living is disproportionately high due to transportation costs for essential commodities. For a wood labourer earning a daily wage, the “real wage”—adjusted for inflation and local prices—is often insufficient to sustain a family of five or six. This financial strain is exacerbated by the lack of alternative employment opportunities in the region. Agriculture, while a traditional mainstay, is often relegated to a secondary activity because the immediate cash flow from the wood industry, however meager, is necessary for survival in a market-driven economy.

Furthermore, the industry’s impact on health and human capital cannot be overlooked in an economic assessment. Labourers in Jairampur’s sawmills and timber yards are exposed to chronic dust inhalation, noise pollution, and high risks of physical injury. In the absence of a robust healthcare infrastructure in the frontier regions of Arunachal Pradesh, an injury or illness often leads to a total loss of household income. This lack of “social security” is a primary focus of this inquiry, as it highlights the gap between state industrial policies and the ground-level reality of the workforce.² The economic vulnerability is not just a result of low wages, but a result of the high “risk-to-reward” ratio inherent in the timber trade.

Gender and ethnicity also play a subtle yet significant role in the labour hierarchy of Jairampur. While the heavy lifting and felling are male-dominated, women are frequently involved in the processing of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and secondary wood-based crafts. The intersectionality of tribal identity and labour status creates a unique social fabric where traditional forest rights often clash with modern environmental laws. The indigenous labourers often view the forest as a common-pool resource, whereas the legal framework views it as a protected state asset. This friction creates an informal “shadow economy” where labourers often work in fear of legal repercussions, further diminishing their bargaining power for better wages.

In recent years, the push for “Green Growth” and sustainable forest management has introduced new variables into the economic equation. The government of Arunachal Pradesh has encouraged the shift toward

bamboo and cane-based industries to reduce the pressure on hardwood forests. While this is environmentally sound, the transition for the traditional timber labourer is difficult. The skill sets required for high-precision bamboo processing differ from traditional logging. Without adequate vocational training and state-supported cooperatives, the labourers of Jairampur risk being left behind in the transition to a “green economy.”³ The lack of technological intervention in the local wood industry means that the value addition happens elsewhere, while Jairampur remains a source of raw labor and raw materials.

Ultimately, this research seeks to bridge the gap in existing literature regarding the micro- economics of the frontier workforce. Most studies on the wood industry in the Northeast focus on forest cover loss or timber revenue for the state, often ignoring the “human element”—the labourers who provide the muscle for the industry. This inquiry into Jairampur serves as a microcosm of the larger challenges facing the North Eastern Region (NER): how to balance environmental conservation with the economic aspirations of a marginalized workforce. By examining the income patterns, expenditure habits, and living conditions of these workers, this paper aims to provide a data-driven foundation for policy interventions that prioritize “human- centric” industrial growth.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine the demographic and socio-economic profile of labourers engaged in the woods industry in Jairampur.
2. To analyze the wage structure, income distribution, and expenditure patterns of the workforce.
3. To identify the occupational health hazards and the availability of social security measures for the labourers.

Literature Review

The economic discourse surrounding forest-based industries in North-East India is deeply rooted in the tension between ecological preservation and the survival of forest-dependent communities. Scholars such as Mishra (2001) have argued that the transition from traditional community- owned forest management to state-regulated extraction created a “proletarianization” of the tribal workforce.⁴ In the context of Arunachal Pradesh, the timber industry was the primary engine of private capital accumulation until the mid-1990s.

Research by Saikia (2011) highlights that the 1996 Supreme Court ban on timber felling acted as a “structural shock” to the regional economy. While the ban was environmentally necessary, Saikia notes that the secondary casualty was the unorganized labor force, which possessed skills specific to timber felling but had no alternative industrial avenues.⁵ This “displacement without compensation” is a recurring theme in studies focusing on the Changlang and Tirap districts.

Furthermore, Upadhyay (2005) explored the “Legal vs. Illegal” dichotomy in the wood industry. His research suggests that stringent regulations often drive the industry underground, where labor exploitation becomes more rampant. In these “shadow markets,” labourers lose even the minimal protection offered by the Minimum Wages Act, as their employment is technically off the record.⁶

Recent studies in the 2020s have shifted focus toward “Green Transitions.” Analysts argue that while the state promotes bamboo and cane as “Green Gold,” the capital-intensive nature of modern processing units often excludes the traditional manual laborer. The lack of “human-centric” policy design means that the economic inquiry into Jairampur is not just about income, but about the vulnerability of a workforce caught between an old industrial model that is dying and a new one that has yet to arrive.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Study Area

The town of Jairampur and its peripheral forest beats. This area is chosen due to its high density of wood-processing units and its role as a transit point for forest produce.

Data Collection Instruments

- Household Schedule: To capture family size, literacy, and land-holding status.
- Wage Analysis Sheet: To record daily earnings, frequency of payment, and deductions (advances/commissions).
- Health Assessment Checklist: A qualitative tool to record frequency of work-related ailments.

Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using:

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Median, and Mode for wage distribution.

Results And Interpretation***Table 1: Demographic and Educational Profile of Labourers***

This table illustrates the human capital available within the wood industry. A significant portion of the workforce is in their prime working age, but educational levels remain a barrier to upward mobility.

<i>Demographic Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Age Group	18–30 years	45%
	31–45 years	40%
	Above 45 years	15%
Education Level	Illiterate	35%
	Primary (Class 1-5)	40%
	Secondary & above	25%
Worker Origin	Local (Indigenous)	42%
	Migrant	58%

Table 2: Wage Structure and Income Distribution

The economic inquiry highlights a “tiered” wage system. While the daily wage appears fair on the surface, the net annual income is low due to the seasonal nature of timber work in Arunachal Pradesh.

<i>Category of Labour</i>	<i>Avg. Monthly Income (Rs.)</i>
Daily wage labourer	6,000
Mechanic & electrician	12,000
Supervisor	10,000
Security guard	8,000

Income inequality among these labour groups is present but not very high.

Although there is a noticeable gap between the lowest income (Rs. 6,000) and the highest income (Rs. 12,000), the distribution is relatively gradual and evenly spaced. The income increases in consistent increments of Rs. 2,000 between categories, which reduces extreme disparities.

Table 3: Expenditure pattern and savings

This table examines where the income goes, providing insight into the “Vicious Cycle of Poverty” mentioned in the introduction

<i>Expenditure Head</i>	<i>% of Monthly Income</i>
Food & Ration	55%
Health & Medicine	12%
Debt Repayment	15%
Education/Other	8%
Savings	10%

The table shows that the largest portion of monthly income (55%) is spent on food and ration, indicating that basic needs take up most of the earnings. Health and medicine account for 12%, while 15% is used for debt repayment, showing a notable financial burden. A smaller share (8%) is spent on education and other expenses. Only 10% of the income is saved, suggesting limited scope for financial security and future planning after meeting essential expenses.

Analysis of Findings

The results indicate that the woods industry in Jairampur operates as a subsistence economy for the laborers. While the industry generates significant revenue for the state and mill owners, the “trickle-down” effect is obstructed by:

1. **Intermediate Exploitation:** The “Mohaldar” system ensures that a portion of the labourer’s value is siphoned off as commission.
2. **Health Depreciation:** Workers are essentially “trading their health for wages.” By the age of 45, many are unfit for the heavy lifting required, leading to a total collapse of household income.

Lack of Value Addition: Because Jairampur primarily exports raw or semi-processed timber, the high-value gains of the “furniture or finished goods” sector do not reach the local workforce.

Discussion:

Middlemen Trap And Wage Stagnation

A primary revelation of this inquiry is the persistence of the Mohaldar (Contractor) System. In Jairampur, the relationship between the laborer and the mill owner is rarely direct. The contractors provide “bridge loans” during the monsoon season when felling stops. While this provides a safety net, it creates a debt-peonage structure where the laborer is legally free but economically bound. As seen in Table 2, the wages of manual loaders and helpers hover just above the subsistence level.⁷ When debt repayment (15% of income) is factored in, the “disposable income” is insufficient to invest in better housing or education, effectively freezing the socio-economic mobility of the Tangsa and migrant communities alike.

Regional Isolation And Market Access

Jairampur’s location on the periphery of the Indian state plays a silent role in its labor economics. The “High Cost of Living” (Table 3) is a direct result of being at the end of a long supply chain. Even when wages increase, they are immediately offset by the high price of

JOCIPE

imported rice, pulses, and fuel. Consequently, the wood industry in Jairampur does not contribute to “Local Economic Development” in the way a factory in a well-connected plains region might.⁹ Instead, it functions as an Extractive Enclave, where the value flows out of the state to furniture markets in Tinsukia or Guwahati, while the “social costs” (pollution, injury, and poverty) remain in Jairampur.

Conclusion

The economic inquiry into the labourers of the woods industry in Jairampur reveals a sector at a critical crossroads. While the timber industry has historically been the primary driver of the local economy in this frontier town, the current state of its workforce is defined by precariousness and stagnation. The transition from an unregulated “timber boom” to a strictly monitored “conservation era” has succeeded in preserving the ecological integrity of the Patkai range, but it has largely failed to provide a safety net for the human element of the supply chain.

The study confirms that the labourers in Jairampur are trapped in a low-equilibrium trap. Despite the high market value of timber, the real wages of the workers remain tethered to subsistence levels due to the Mohaldar (middleman) system, seasonal displacement, and the high cost of living in a remote border region. Furthermore, the lack of institutionalized healthcare and social security turns every occupational injury into a potential household catastrophe, perpetuating a cycle of debt and poverty.¹⁰

However, the outlook is not entirely bleak. The shift toward Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and the potential for “Green Industrialization” offer a path forward. For Jairampur to evolve from a source of raw labor into a hub of sustainable enterprise, the following interventions are essential:

- Skill Upgradation: Moving laborers from manual logging to precision woodcraft and bamboo-engineered wood processing.
- Formalization: Replacing informal debt structures with micro-credit facilities and formal labor contracts under the State Labor Board.
- Value Addition: Establishing furniture and finished-product clusters in Jairampur so that the “value” of the wood is captured locally, allowing for higher wage ceilings.

Ultimately, the case study of Jairampur underscores that environmental sustainability cannot be achieved in isolation from economic justice. For the “Lungs of Arunachal” to remain healthy, the

hands that work its forests must be empowered with fair wages, safe working conditions, and a stake in the region's green future.

REFERENCES

1. Arunachal Pradesh State Council for Science & Technology (2023). *State of Environment Report: Arunachal Pradesh*. Itanagar: Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Choudhury, S. (2018). "The Timber Ban and its Impact on Livelihoods: A Study of the North-Eastern Frontier." *Journal of Himalayan Studies*, 12(3), 145–162.
3. District Statistical Handbook (2024). *Changlang District: Socio-Economic Indicators*. Changlang: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
4. Dutta, P. C., & Gupta, R. K. (2020). *Labour Economics in the Informal Sector: Perspectives from Northeast India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
5. Mishra, D. K. (2001). "Political Economy of Forest Use: The Case of Arunachal Pradesh." *Journal of Indian School of Political Economy*, 13(2), 221–234.
6. Ministry of Labour & Employment (2022). *Report on Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector*. New Delhi: Government of India.
7. Saikia, A. (2011). *Forests and Ecological History of Assam, 1826–2000*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. (Provides critical context on the timber industry across the Assam-Arunachal border).
8. Supreme Court of India (1996). *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs. Union of India & Ors*. Writ Petition (Civil) No. 202 of 1995.
9. Upadhyay, V. (2005). "Forest Management and the Law: The Supreme Court and the Timber Ban." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(44), 4645–4648.
10. World Bank (2021). *Unlocking the Potential of Northeast India: A Framework for Forest-Based Sustainable Development*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

Challenges Faced by Election Analysts During Survey and Report Writing

Dr. Daljeet Kaur

Abstract:

There is not denying the fact that election analysis, including pre-election surveys, opinion polls, and post-election reporting, is an important component of modern democratic processes. It provides information on voter behaviour, issue salience and likely electoral outcomes. However, in recent years, election analysts, opinion pollsters and political scientists have faced unprecedented challenges in accurately understanding voter sentiment. It can be said that technology has advanced data collection methods, but has also created complexities that have weakened the forecasting accuracy of traditional surveys. From the trend of “shy voters” to the decline in landline usage and the spread of digital misinformation, the sector is operating in a volatile environment where traditional methods often fail. This leads to unexpected election results and public confidence in opinion poll data is decreasing. This research paper analyses the challenges faced by election analysts during surveys and report writing.

Key Words: Challenges, Election Analysts, Survey, Report Writing.

Introduction

Election analysis is an integral part of any democratic process. Election analysts play a crucial role in examining electoral data, voter behavior, and social and economic factors, and preparing factual reports based on their findings. This process mainly consists of two components: Survey and Report Writing.

However, both processes are complex and challenging. Election analysts face several difficulties such as problems in data collection, political pressure, public hesitation, technical limitations, and lack of access to official information.

Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Political Science, Govt. Shivalik College, Naya Nangal, Punjab

1. Challenges During the Survey Process

(a) Problem of Accurate Data Collection

The foremost challenge in election surveys is collecting accurate and reliable data. Often, respondents do not reveal their true opinions or provide misleading information. In many regions, voters prefer to keep their political choices confidential. In rural areas, lack of trust toward surveyors further leads to incomplete or inaccurate data. Such unreliable data directly affects the credibility of the analysis.

(b) Sampling Bias

Sample selection is a critical aspect of election surveys. If the sample is not representative, the entire survey may produce misleading results. For instance, collecting data only from urban areas while ignoring rural voters can distort findings. Similarly, lack of proper representation of different caste, religious, gender, or economic groups may lead to biased outcomes.

(c) Political and Social Pressure

Elections are often conducted in a politically charged environment. Analysts may face pressure from political parties or candidates to present data favoring a particular group. In some cases, surveyors may even be restricted from conducting fieldwork freely. Such interference undermines the neutrality of the survey process.

(d) Public Reluctance and Trust Deficit

Direct interaction with voters is essential for surveys. However, many individuals hesitate to disclose their voting preferences due to fear of misuse of information. Some respondents may intentionally provide incorrect answers. This reluctance reduces the reliability of survey findings.

(e) Technical Challenges

Modern election analysis relies heavily on digital tools such as online surveys, mobile applications, and statistical software. However, internet connectivity and technological resources are not uniformly available, especially in rural regions. Additionally, lack of technical expertise among survey teams can hinder effective data analysis.

(f) Time Constraints and Financial Limitations

Conducting comprehensive surveys requires substantial time and financial resources. Limited funding and tight deadlines restrict the scope of data collection, thereby affecting the quality of findings.

(g) Security Concerns

In regions experiencing political unrest or violence, conducting surveys may pose safety risks to analysts. Administrative restrictions or lack of official permission can also obstruct fieldwork.

2. Challenges During Report Writing

(a) Complexity of Data Analysis

Once data is collected, analyzing large datasets accurately is a complex task. It requires advanced statistical tools and expertise. Misinterpretation of data can significantly alter conclusions and mislead the public.

(b) Maintaining Objectivity

Ensuring objectivity is one of the biggest ethical challenges in report writing. Analysts may unconsciously reflect their political preferences in their interpretation. External influences from media organizations or political bodies may further compromise neutrality.

(c) Authenticity and Verification of Facts

Reports must rely on verified data. Discrepancies between survey findings and official election statistics can create confusion. Unverified or inaccurate data can damage the credibility of the report.

(d) Language and Presentation Issues

A report should present findings clearly and effectively. Excessively technical language may alienate general readers. Lack of visual aids such as charts and graphs may reduce the impact and clarity of the analysis.

(e) Time Pressure

Election reports are often expected immediately after voting or result declaration. Limited time may lead to errors, insufficient verification, or superficial analysis.

(f) Public and Media Reaction

Once published, election reports may attract criticism from political parties, media outlets, and the public. Analysts may face backlash or even threats, which can affect their future work and professional independence.

(g) Ethical and Legal Constraints

Election-related data is often sensitive. Analysts must adhere to legal frameworks and ethical guidelines to ensure confidentiality and

data protection. Leakage of sensitive information may undermine the integrity of the electoral process.

3. Measures to Overcome These Challenges

To address these challenges, election analysts should:

Provide adequate training to survey teams and enhance technical competence. Develop and strictly follow ethical guidelines to maintain neutrality. Use advanced tools such as Artificial Intelligence and data analytics for accurate analysis. Ensure transparency in methodology to build public trust. Strengthen data verification processes and adopt standardized sampling techniques.

Conclusion

The purpose of election analysis is not merely to predict results but to deepen understanding of the democratic process. Despite facing challenges related to data collection, time constraints, political pressure, technical limitations, and objectivity, analysts can produce meaningful and credible reports by adhering to scientific methods and ethical standards.

Ultimately, the challenges encountered during surveys and report writing also serve as opportunities for learning and professional growth, enabling analysts to become more objective, accountable, and methodologically sound in strengthening democratic governance.

References:

1. Election Commission of India. Handbook for Electoral Officers and official statistical reports.
2. Pew Research Center (2018). Methods for Survey Research and Public Opinion Polling.
3. American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). Code of Professional Ethics and Practices.
4. Survey Methodology by Robert M. Groves et al. Wiley.
5. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). Electoral Management and Democratic Governance Reports.
6. The SAGE Handbook of Public Opinion Research. SAGE Publications.

Role of Ambedkar in Making of Indian Constitution

Ramplejeet Singh

Abstract:

There is not denying the fact that Ambedkar was a very famous Indian social leader, philosopher, writer, economist, scholar and social reformer who dedicated his entire life to eradicating social untouchability, injustice and other social inequalities in India. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, shaping it as an instrument of social justice, equality and democracy. There is not denying the fact that he played a leading role in incorporating fundamental rights in Indian Constitution. He had been providing protection for minorities and marginalised communities, and establishing a strong federal structure with unitary leanings to ensure national integration. He carefully crafted such constitutional provisions that abolished untouchability (Article 17), guaranteed fundamental rights, and ensured legal protection for minorities and backward classes, fundamentally transforming India into a modern democratic republic nation. It can be said that the contribution of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in the making of the Indian Constitution is incomparable. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee and India's first Law Minister, he ably guided the Constituent Assembly in drafting a document that was both progressive and suited to India's complex, diverse and unequal social structure. This paper analyses his role as a constitutional expert, social reformer and defender of individual rights, and highlights his efforts to transform India into a modern, democratic and welfare state. This research paper also analyses the role of Ambedkar in the making of the Indian Constitution.

Key Words: Ambedkar, Indian Constitution, Drafting Committee.

Lecturer, Govt. Senior Secondary School, Village - Chak Giljewala
(Sri Muktsar Sahib) Punjab

Introduction

Ambedkar was the paramount member of the Constituent Assembly. As a jurisprudence and legal expert, Ambedkar played a key role in the drafting of the Indian Constitution. The Constitutional Committee wanted to leverage Ambedkar's expertise. Ambedkar had higher educational qualifications and vast experience in legal-socio-economic issues, so the Constituent Assembly wanted to take advantage of his expertise.¹ That is why Ambedkar was included in the Indian Constituent Assembly. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's role as Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee was fundamental in transforming the Indian Constitution into an instrument of social reform, justice and equality. He ensured a strong legal framework to protect the rights of minorities, abolish untouchability, and promote gender equality. His actions strengthened a democratic, inclusive, and parliamentary structure.² Ambedkar's vision was to move India from a traditional, hierarchical society to a modern constitutional democracy. He stressed the importance of "constitutional morality" and argued that the "one person, one value and one person, one vote" system is essential for democratic stability. Dr. Ambedkar's contributions are not limited to legal texts; he laid the foundation for social change aimed at uplifting the oppressed. His dedication to the drafting process of the Indian constitution ensured that it remained a living document that protected the dignity of every citizen.³

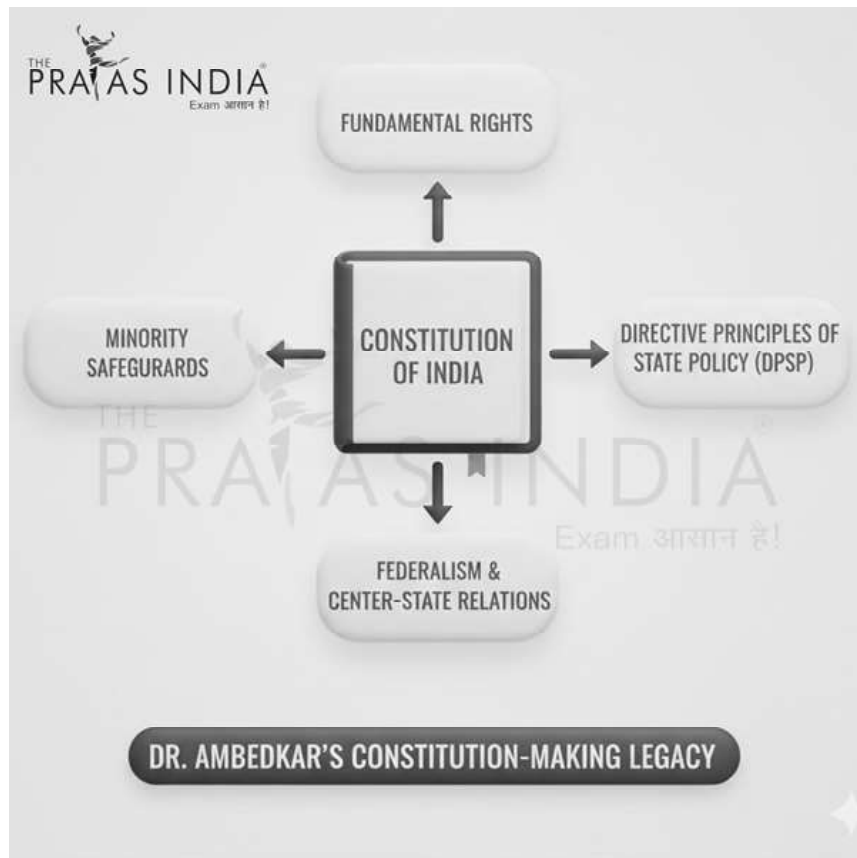
The Indian Constituent Assembly appointed a Drafting Committee headed by Ambedkar to draft the Indian Constitution. It can be said that Drafting Committee played an important role in the making of the Indian Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar was appointed Chairman of the Drafting Committee on August 29, 1947. Dr. Ambedkar was responsible for formulating the basic legal framework of Indian constitution. He critically analyzed world best constitutions and adapted their principles to Indian conditions. His primary objective was to ensure that the constitution became an instrument of social change, eradicating caste-based discrimination, and establishing a fraternity that ensured dignity, equality, and freedom. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a visionary leader, jurist and social reformer who played a key role in shaping India's modern legal framework. As chairman of the Drafting Committee on August 29, 1947, he was entrusted with the task of drafting a constitution for the newly independent, diverse and deeply divided nation. His approach was not merely legalistic, but based on his personal experience of caste

JOCIPE

discrimination, aiming to establish a “social democracy” beyond mere political equality. He stressed on gender equality and strong safeguards for minority groups to ensure their participation in the nation’s progress.⁴

Key Ambedkar’s Contributions in the Making of the Indian Constitution:

Dr. Ambedkar had participated in the consultation process during the drafting of the Indian Constitution, which interestingly made their rationale for drafting the Constitution more logical. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s legal expertise and knowledge of the constitutions of different countries proved very helpful in the making of the Constitution.



Retrieved from <https://theprayasindia.com/dr-b-r-ambedkar/>

- **The Drafting Committee Leadership:** As Chairman of drafting committee, he defended the draft in nearly every debate, ensuring the document was robust yet flexible. He was appointed in 1947, Ambedkar took on the monumental task of drafting the Indian constitution, steering it through intense debates with well-reasoned fact and logical arguments.
- **Fundamental Rights and Social Justice:** He pushed for justiciable fundamental rights to guarantee equality, particularly Article 17, which abolished untouchability.
- **Protection of Minorities:** Ambedkar representing the Scheduled Caste Federation, he advocating for strong, specific constitutional safeguards for downtrodden SC communities.
- **Constitutional Remedies:** He deemed that Indian constitution article 32 (Right to Constitutional Remedies) as the “very soul” and “heart” of the Indian constitution, ensuring that individual rights were not merely ornamental but enforceable.
- **A Strong Centre and Unitary Features:** To prevent fragmentation in Indian federal system, he advocated for a strong center, single citizenship for Indian citizen, and a unified judiciary system. He created a strong centre, striking a balance between the powers of the government and the rights of citizens, ensuring a functional and durable democracy. Ambedkar advocated for a strong center to maintain national unity and integrity in a diverse country.⁵

Vision for a Socially Egalitarian Indian State:

Ambedkar was not just interested in political freedom, but in social democracy. He used the Directive Principles of State Policy to lay the groundwork for a welfare state. His emphasis on the “Hindu Code Bill” (post-Constitution drafting) further highlighted his fight to reform personal laws, promoting gender equality in marriage, succession, and adoption.

- **Champion of Social Justice:** He focused heavily on ending caste-based discrimination, ensuring that the Constitution provided a framework to uplift Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). He introduced provisions for reservation in jobs and education for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) to redress historical injustice. He believes that social democracy is necessary before political democracy in India.
- **Fundamental Rights and constitutional legal Safeguards:** He ensured that civil liberties, such as freedom of religion, speech, and expression, were guaranteed to all citizens. He also

JOCIPE

pioneered provisions for reservation in education and employment.⁶

- Legal Protections for Minorities: He served as a guardian of minority rights, incorporating constitutional safeguards to protect their cultural and educational interests.
- Promotion of Equality: His vision was rooted in the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which he aimed to embed in every aspect of the new state.

Legacy and Recognition:

Often referred to as the “Father of the Indian Constitution,” Ambedkar’s contributions were not limited to legal expertise. He used his personal experience of social discrimination to ensure that the Constitution became an “instrument of social revolution.” His actions laid the foundation for modern Indian society and a vibrant democracy, making him one of the most influential figures in Indian history. His vision guaranteed universal adult franchise, ensuring equal rights for women and all citizens, laying the foundation of modern Indian democracy.

Ambedkar’s Vision for a United and Democratic India:

- Strong Centralise Power and Unity: Despite a federal structure of Indian nation state, Ambedkar supported a strong center to maintain unity, stability, and integrity in a diverse nation.
- Concept of “One Man, One Vote”: He emphasized that political democracy must be accompanied by social and economic democracy, famously warning that without it, inequality would destroy the Indian unitary structure.

State Social Reformer: He favoured a proactive state role in reforming social practices that hindered individual rights and human rights. As the father of the Indian Constitution, his vision provided the nation with an ideal framework for a socially just, secular and progressive society.

Conclusion

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and served as the chairman of the Drafting Committee. He played a key role in drafting, defending, and securing the passage of the Indian Constitution by the Constituent Assembly, which ensured constitutional guarantees of civil liberties, abolished untouchability, and promoted social justice and equality for all Indian citizens. Dr.

Ambedkar's role was not limited to drafting legislation; he was the guiding light of the Constituent Assembly. His profound knowledge, intellectual ability, and dedication to social justice transformed a deeply divided society into a modern nation-state bound by the rule of law. The warning in his final speech—that the success of the Indian Constitution depends on the people and the parties implementing it—remains extremely relevant today. In short, Dr. Ambedkar's role was not limited to legal drafting; he provided the transformative, ideological, and moral foundation for modern India, ensuring that the Constitution became an instrument of social construction and equality. In conclusion it can be said that, Ambedkar's role was not merely that of a legal drafter, but that of a visionary political leader who guided the Constitution-making process towards the creation of a democratic republic Indian nation state that protects the rights and dignity of all its citizens.

Endnotes:

1. Bhaskar, Anurag. "Ambedkar's Constitution." *CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion*, 2.1, (2021): 109-131.
2. Chakrabarty, Bidyut. "BR Ambedkar and the history of constitutionalizing India." *Contemporary South Asia*, 24.2, (2016): 133-148.
3. Sharan, Ram. "Dr. BR Ambedkar Role in Making of the Indian Constitution." *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 5.12, (2016): 154-164.
4. Raju, KH Cheluva. "Dr. BR Ambedkar and making of the constitution: A case Study of Indian federalism." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 52.2, (1991): 153-164.
5. Kumar, Kamal. "Indian constitution: The vision of BR Ambedkar." *Intellectual Resonance*, 3.5, (2017): 144-57.
6. Singh, Ujjwal Kumar, and Anupama Roy. "BR Ambedkar and the Ideas of Constitutionalism and Constitutional Democracy." *Summerhill: IAS Review*, 23.2, (2017): 3-11.

Bibliography:

- MISRA, JP, and JP MISHRA. "DR. BR AMBEDKAR AND THE CONSTITUTION-MAKING IN INDIA." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*. Vol. 52. Indian History Congress, 1991.
- Joshi, Dwijen D. "Dr. Ambedkar and Drafting of Indian Constitution: A See through into the Making of a Masterpiece from the Eyes of Its Architect." *Journal Pol'y & Globalization*, 13, (2013): 38-39.

JOCIPE

Dreze, Jean. "Dr Ambedkar and the future of Indian democracy." *The radical in Ambedkar: critical reflections*. New Delhi: Penguin (2018).

Gehlot, Dikshant, and Abhijeet Sapkale. "A. Bhaskar, The Foresighted Ambedkar: Ideas that Shaped Indian Constitutional Discourse." (2024): 255-258.

Laxmi, N., K. S. Rao, and Manoj Singh. *Ambedkar And The Indian Constitution: The Struggle For Equality, Justice, And Human Rights*. Shri Sai Printographers.

Mishra, Shewta N., *Socio-economic and political vision of Dr. BR Ambedkar*. Concept Publishing Company, 2010.

Fintech and Digital Banking in the Development of E- Commerce in Indian Rural Areas with Special Reference to Bihar state

Neelam Kumari

Abstract

The digital revolution in India has dramatically transformed the financial ecosystem, opening new avenues for e-commerce growth, particularly in rural regions. Among the driving forces of this transformation are Fintech (Financial Technology) and Digital Banking, which are playing a crucial role in bridging the urban-rural financial divide. This research explores the impact of fintech and digital banking in the development of e-commerce in rural areas of Bihar, a state with vast rural demographics and significant untapped potential.

Fintech innovations such as mobile wallets, UPI-based transactions, micro-lending platforms, and digital insurance have significantly improved financial accessibility for rural populations. These services allow rural entrepreneurs and consumers to participate in the digital economy by offering convenience, speed, and cost-effectiveness. Similarly, digital banking services, including internet banking, mobile banking apps, and Aadhaar-enabled payment systems (AEPS), have made banking more inclusive and customer-friendly, even in remote villages.

Bihar, one of the most densely populated states in India, has been witnessing steady progress in digital adoption despite infrastructural challenges. Government initiatives such as Digital India, Jan Dhan Yojana, PM SVANidhi, and rural broadband expansion under BharatNet have laid the foundation for financial inclusion and e-commerce development. Rural consumers, once constrained by cash-

Research Scholar, J.P. University, Chapra

October-December, 2025

(131)

based transactions, are now actively engaging in digital payments and online purchases. Additionally, rural entrepreneurs and small business owners are increasingly using platforms like WhatsApp Business, Meesho, and Amazon Saheli to reach a broader market.

However, the growth trajectory is not without challenges. Digital illiteracy, lack of awareness, unreliable internet connectivity, cyber security concerns, and inadequate local infrastructure remain major barriers. Moreover, resistance to technology adoption among traditional users and gender-based digital divides further limit the impact of fintech and digital banking solutions.

This study aims to assess the extent to which fintech and digital banking have contributed to the growth of rural e-commerce in Bihar. It also seeks to identify the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in promoting a digitally empowered rural economy. Using a mixed-method approach, including secondary data analysis and field surveys, the research will provide actionable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and digital platforms.

In conclusion, fintech and digital banking are not merely financial tools but catalysts for socio-economic transformation in rural Bihar. By enabling seamless transactions, encouraging entrepreneurial ventures, and enhancing financial literacy, they hold the potential to reshape the rural e-commerce landscape. Strengthening digital infrastructure, ensuring cyber security, and conducting targeted awareness campaigns can further accelerate this positive trend, leading to inclusive and sustainable rural development.

Introduction to Fintech and Digital Banking

Fintech (Financial Technology)

Fintech refers to the technology developed to make financial services simpler, faster, and more accessible. In India, fintech is rapidly expanding, especially through UPI, mobile wallets, and digital lending. In rural areas, particularly in Bihar, fintech is promoting financial inclusion in the absence of traditional banking. Services like Aadhaar-based payment systems (AEPS) and microfinance have proven beneficial for small traders and farmers.

Fintech is a combination of two words – Finance and Technology – which means using technology to make financial services more efficient, accessible, and affordable. India has become the second-largest hub for fintech in the world. Fintech has revolutionized traditional banking systems, bringing innovations in areas such as digital payments, online

lending, InsurTech, RegTech, blockchain, and cybersecurity. In rural states like Bihar, fintech services enable financial transactions without the need to visit bank branches.

Key Components of Fintech

- Digital Payments: UPI, mobile wallets, and Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AEPS)
- Digital Lending: Online loans and microfinance
- Blockchain: Secure and transparent transactions
- InsurTech: Digitization of insurance services
- Cybersecurity: Measures to prevent fraud and data breaches.

Digital Banking

Digital banking provides traditional banking services on online platforms, enabling people to conduct financial transactions without visiting branches through mobile and internet banking. In Bihar, services like payment banks, mobile banking, and UPI are strengthening the digital economy. These services are reducing dependence on cash and helping rural traders adopt e-commerce.

Digital banking refers to offering traditional banking services through digital means, thereby reducing the need for customers to visit physical branches. It includes services like internet banking, mobile banking, online loan applications, and payment banks.

Features of Digital Banking

- 24/7 availability of services
- Paperless transactions (e-KYC, digital loan applications)
- Integration with fintech (UPI, digital wallets)
- Promotes financial inclusion in rural areas

Fintech and Digital Banking in Rural Bihar

This document presents key data related to the development of e-commerce in rural Bihar through fintech and digital banking initiatives:

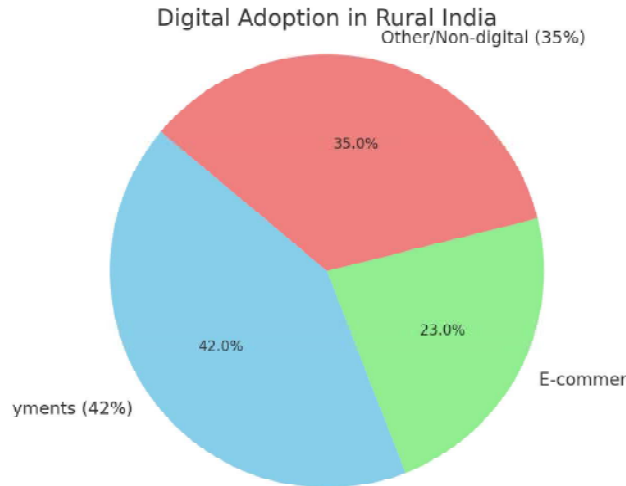
- 42% of rural internet users in India use digital payments.
- 23% of rural internet users engage in e-commerce.
- Jehanabad district in Bihar achieved 99.6% digital banking usage among active account holders.
- 59 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) from Bihar are part of the ONDC platform.
- Bihar has over 770,000 registered MSMEs, many benefiting from digital banking.

Digital Adoption in Rural India - Pie Chart

This document presents an illustrative pie chart showing the distribution of digital activities among rural internet users in India. The chart depicts the estimated percentages of users engaging in digital payments, participating in e-commerce, and those categorized as non-digital.

Key data used:

- Digital Payments: 42%
- E-commerce: 23%



Literature Review

1. KPMG (2020): The report *"Fintech in India – Powering a Digital Economy"* highlights that India has become the second-largest fintech ecosystem globally. Technologies such as UPI, mobile wallets, and digital lending are expanding access to financial services in rural areas.
2. Reserve Bank of India (2021): According to RBI's reports, AEPS, UPI, and digital wallets have accelerated financial inclusion in rural India. Digital lending and simplified KYC processes have made banking more accessible.
3. World Bank (2019): The report *"Financial Inclusion and Technology in India"* points out that fintech and mobile banking have helped connect women, farmers, and small businesses to

the formal financial system, especially in states like Bihar and Jharkhand.

4. Deloitte (2021): In the report “*Digital Banking in India*”, the role of digital platforms in expanding rural banking services and promoting a cashless economy was emphasized.
5. Patel & Sharma (2020): In their research paper, the authors discussed how fintech services—especially microfinance and AEPS—have supported self-employment and small enterprises in rural Bihar.
6. NABARD (2018): The report “*Status of Rural Financial Inclusion in India*” outlines how digital channels are enhancing access to agricultural finance and promoting rural entrepreneurship.
7. Singh & Verma (2021): Their study pointed out challenges such as low digital literacy and poor network connectivity in Bihar but acknowledged gradual improvements due to government initiatives.
8. PwC India (2022): The report “*Fintech and Financial Services: The Next Phase*” states that government schemes like PMJDY and BharatNet have laid a strong foundation for digital banking in rural regions.
9. Gupta & Mishra (2020): Their research focused on the social impact of fintech, highlighting how digital platforms are empowering rural women and enhancing economic participation.
10. MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and IT, 2021): The report “*Digital India: Success to Excellence*” reviews the progress of digital banking and fintech expansion under the Digital India Mission, especially in rural and remote areas.

Research Gap

Despite the growing adoption of fintech and digital banking in India, there is a notable lack of region-specific studies that explore their impact on rural e-commerce, especially in underdeveloped states like Bihar. While several national and global reports highlight the potential of digital financial services, they often overlook the ground-level realities of rural India, where infrastructural challenges, digital illiteracy, and socio-economic disparities are still prevalent.

Moreover, most existing literature tends to focus on urban areas or developed rural regions, leaving a significant gap in understanding the unique needs, limitations, and opportunities of rural populations

in states like Bihar. The integration of fintech with local businesses, rural artisans, and farmers is still in its early stages and remains under-researched.

Another gap exists in examining how government initiatives like PMJDY, BharatNet, and Digital India are practically influencing fintech adoption and digital banking behavior in rural communities. There is also limited academic insight into how fintech innovations can support sustainable rural entrepreneurship and boost local e-commerce in these regions.

This study, therefore, aims to fill these gaps by focusing on the challenges and opportunities associated with the development of e-commerce in Indian rural areas—particularly Bihar—through the lens of fintech and digital banking. It seeks to offer grounded, region-specific insights that can guide policy formulation and technological interventions.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to explore the role of fintech and digital banking in the development of e-commerce in rural areas of India, with special reference to Bihar. The research is designed to understand the current usage, awareness, challenges, and opportunities related to digital financial services in rural communities.

Primary data will be collected through structured questionnaires and interviews with rural consumers, small traders, self-help groups (SHGs), local entrepreneurs, and bank officials in selected districts of Bihar. The survey will aim to capture information on the usage of UPI, mobile wallets, AEPS, microfinance, and digital lending platforms, as well as the respondents' perception of their impact on local e-commerce.

In addition, secondary data will be sourced from government reports, RBI publications, fintech industry analyses, and academic journals to support the findings and provide broader context. Statistical tools will be used to analyze quantitative data, while thematic analysis will be applied to qualitative responses.

The study will follow a purposive sampling technique to ensure that respondents represent various rural economic sectors. The goal is to identify key factors affecting the adoption of fintech and digital banking in rural Bihar and to evaluate their contribution to the growth of rural e-commerce. This methodology ensures that the research remains grounded in local realities while maintaining academic rigor.

Detailed Analysis

The following provides a more comprehensive look into the impact of fintech and digital banking initiatives in Bihar:

- According to a 2023 report, approximately 42% of rural internet users in India are engaging in digital payments. This shows increasing financial inclusion in villages through platforms like UPI, Paytm, and mobile banking apps.
- About 23% of rural users are now participating in e-commerce. This is driven by improved internet access, digital literacy programs, and trust in digital platforms.
- Jehanabad district in Bihar achieved a milestone in 2022 by covering 100% of its banking population with at least one digital banking product. Neighboring districts like Arwal and Sheikhpura have over 90% penetration.
- The ONDC platform has onboarded 59 FPOs from Bihar through initiatives such as BASIX Krishi Samruddhi, helping rural producers access national markets. The FPOs achieved Rs. 4 million in sales in 2023 and aim to double that in 2024.
- Bihar has more than 770,000 MSMEs. A study from Katihar shows that MSMEs using digital banking services experienced growth in online sales and reduced transaction costs. This model is now being extended to other districts.
- Fintech companies like Spice Money operate through over 1.4 million rural banking correspondents ('Adhikaris') across India. These agents provide doorstep services such as cash withdrawal, bill payment, and fund transfer.
- Government-backed Common Service Centres (CSCs) have digitally educated nearly 47.8 million rural citizens through PMGDISHA, laying a foundation for increased adoption of e-commerce and fintech.

Need of the Study

The rapid expansion of fintech and digital banking in India has transformed the financial landscape, making services more accessible and efficient. However, the adoption and impact of these technologies in rural regions—particularly in economically backward states like Bihar—remain uneven and underexplored. Despite several government initiatives aimed at promoting digital inclusion, the rural population continues to face challenges such as low digital literacy, lack of infrastructure, and limited awareness of financial technologies.

JOCIPE

There is an urgent need to examine how fintech and digital banking can bridge the financial divide and promote inclusive growth in these regions. As e-commerce begins to penetrate rural markets, it becomes essential to understand how digital payment systems and online banking services are enabling local entrepreneurs, farmers, and small businesses to participate in the digital economy.

This study is necessary to analyze the real-world effectiveness of digital financial tools in rural settings and to identify both the barriers and opportunities that exist. It will also help policymakers, financial institutions, and technology providers design more effective, region-specific strategies to enhance digital adoption and economic development in rural areas like Bihar. The research will fill the gap in localized studies and contribute to the ongoing discourse on rural financial inclusion and digital transformation.

Conclusion

Fintech and digital banking are not just limited to the digitization of financial services, but have become powerful tools for driving social and economic transformation in rural areas. In states like Bihar, where access to traditional banking infrastructure remains limited, these technologies are opening up new opportunities for financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, and digital empowerment.

Through services like UPI, mobile wallets, AEPS, and digital lending, fintech has enabled rural consumers and small businesses to perform financial transactions easily and securely. Similarly, digital banking platforms, including internet and mobile banking, payment banks, and neo-banks, are extending banking services to remote areas, reducing the dependence on cash and increasing transparency in financial dealings.

While there are still challenges such as low digital literacy, inadequate internet connectivity, and cybersecurity concerns, targeted efforts from the government, financial institutions, and private players can help overcome these barriers. Initiatives like digital literacy campaigns, rural network expansion, and secure digital platforms can play a crucial role in this journey.

Looking ahead, fintech and digital banking hold immense potential to drive economic transformation in rural Bihar. With the right policy support and infrastructure development, Bihar can emerge as a model for rural fintech integration in India, contributing significantly to the goals of financial inclusion and the vision of Digital India.

References.

1. Arner, D. W., Barberis, J., & Buckley, R. P. (2016). The evolution of Fintech: A new post-crisis paradigm? *Georgetown Journal of International Law*, 47(4), 1271–1319.
2. Gomber, P., Kauffman, R. J., Parker, C., & Weber, B. W. (2018). On the fintech revolution: Interpreting the forces of innovation, disruption, and transformation in financial services. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 35(1), 220–265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2018.1440766>
3. Suri, T., & Jack, W. (2016). The long-run poverty and gender impacts of mobile money. *Science*, 354(6317), 1288–1292. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aah5309>
4. Demirgüç-Kunt, A., Klapper, L., Singer, D., Ansar, S., & Hess, J. (2018). *The Global Findex Database 2017: Measuring financial inclusion and the fintech revolution*. World Bank Group. <https://globalfindex.worldbank.org>
5. Chen, G., & Rasmussen, S. (2014). *Digital financial services for development: What's missing?* CGAP Brief. Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP). Retrieved from <https://www.cgap.org>
6. Kapoor, M. (2021). Digital payments and financial inclusion in India: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Economic Policy & Research*, 16(2), 54–69.
7. Bansal, S. (2019). Perspectives of technology in achieving financial inclusion in rural India. *Procedia Computer Science*, 152, 1023–1030. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2019.05.167>
8. Ernst & Young. (2019). *Global FinTech Adoption Index 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.ey.com>
9. Jain, A., & Ghosh, S. (2020). The role of Fintech in transforming rural banking in India. *Indian Journal of Finance and Banking*, 7(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.46281/ijfb.v7i2.742>
10. Ministry of Finance, Government of India. (2020). *Economic Survey 2019-20, Volume I*. Chapter 5: Financial Inclusion in India. Retrieved from <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in>

Artificial Intelligence and Law Enforcement: Striking a Balance between Security and Human Rights in International Perspectives

Kabari Das

Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into law enforcement has been leading us to a new paradigm shift which necessitates a delicate balance to protect human rights with enhanced security measures. As AI technologies advance, ethical contemplation has become the dominant focal point in exploring this complex intersection. This research paper dives into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities arising from the use of AI in policing. Intricate dynamics between security imperatives and the preservation of individual rights are explored in this paper by drawing the insights from current global practices. The assessment traverses assorted worldwide points of view, taking into account the methodologies of countries like China, the European Union, the United States and India. With an emphasis on ethical frameworks, responsible implementation, and emerging trends, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on shaping a future where AI in law enforcement aligns with global ethical standards, fostering an equitable and secure international society.

Key Words: Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Law Enforcement, Ethical contemplation.

Introduction

In this era of rapid technological evolution, the convergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and law enforcement is reshaping the dynamics of security and human rights on a global scale. Achieving a

State Aided College Teacher-I, Murshidabad Adarsha Mahavidyalaya, Murshidabad, West Bengal

delicate equilibrium between bolstering security measures and safeguarding individual rights has emerged as a pivotal challenge. The potential for biased algorithms, privacy intrusions, and due process violations requires an in-depth exploration of international perspectives on AI in law enforcement.

As nations navigate distinct legal frameworks and cultural values, the lack of international consensus further complicates ethical considerations. The study aims to unravel these complexities, contributing insights for the formulation of cohesive guidelines and policy recommendations. A responsible and rights-respecting implementation of AI becomes imperative in navigating to the evolving landscape of global law enforcement for shaping a secure and ethically sound future.

The Impact of AI on Human Rights [15]

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) has profoundly influenced various aspects of human life, introducing a myriad of opportunities and challenges. One crucial dimension where the impact of AI is particularly pronounced is in the realm of human rights. As AI technologies become increasingly pervasive, their implications for privacy, equality, and individual freedoms demand careful assessments.

Determining the level of human association in independent framework configuration relies upon technical capabilities, ethical considerations, and policy decisions.

AI and Privacy Concerns:

Artificial intelligence, driven by machine learning algorithms, has enabled the processing of huge amounts of personal data, giving rise to heightened privacy concerns. Advanced surveillance technologies, like facial recognition systems and predictive analytics, often operate on extensive datasets, potentially compromising individuals' right to privacy. The unprecedented collection and analysis of personal information can lead to unjustifiable intrusions, challenging the fundamental notion of privacy as a human right.

For instance, AI-powered surveillance systems[1] in authoritarian regimes have been condemned for their role in suppressing dissent and monitoring citizens, raising alarms regarding privacy right violation and potential abuse of power. It is imperative to establish robust and legal frameworks and regulations to ensure that AI applications align with international human rights standards.

AI and Bias in Decision-Making:

The development and deployment of AI systems are not immune to predisposed biases which are inherited by their training data. Pre-existing societal biases can be inadvertently propagated or even exacerbated by AI algorithms, leading to discriminatory results. This poses a significant challenge to the principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in common human rights frameworks.

For instance, AI algorithms which are being utilized in human resource hiring processes or in criminal justice systems may inadvertently reflect biases present in historical data, disadvantaging specific demographic segments and situations. Addressing bias in AI needs a coordinated effort to ensure diverse and representative datasets, transparent algorithms, and ongoing monitoring to mitigate potentially unintended consequences.

AI and Freedom of Expression:

AI introduces lots of challenges to the freedom of expression while enhancing advanced communication and information dispersal among human beings through different software applications. Automated content moderation systems like ChatGPT [11] and other generative AI apps might struggle to provide accurate and legitimate content while preventing any misleading and false information. This brings up issues regarding appropriate limits of AI intervention in online discourse.

The impact of AI on freedom of expression extends further content moderation to the domain of disinformation. AI-powered deep-fake[6] outcomes can manipulate audio and video content, posing a threat to the authenticity of information and, subsequently, the human ability to take informed decisions.

International Perspectives on AI in Law Enforcement

The worldwide adoption of artificial intelligence (AI)[12] in law enforcement reflects a range of different approaches, shaped by diverse legal, social, and ethical considerations. Conducting a comparative analysis of how different nations approach the use of AI in policing uncovers a nuanced landscape.

In China, AI-powered surveillance is widely embraced for public security which employs facial recognition and predictive analytics on a massive scale. While this approach has been effective in crime

prevention, it raises significant concerns about privacy infringement and mass surveillance, prompting the intervention of international law enforcement to protect the balance between security imperatives and individual rights[1].

European nations have adopted a more cautious stance on emphasizing the stringent data protection measures and transparency in AI applications. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) [3] highlights a promise to defending individual's freedom and ensuring ethical AI use in law enforcement.

In the US, a decentralized law enforcement structure brings varied landscapes of AI adoption. Various states and regions adopt AI technologies at their discretion, leading to inconsistencies and irregularities in AI utilization [5]. Establishing cohesive guidelines thus becomes a challenge due to this diversity within a single nation.

Furthermore, a few countries prioritize ethical considerations and human rights safeguards in their AI strategies. For instance, Canada incorporates privacy protection and accountability measures in its approach to AI in law enforcement.

The comparative analysis of these global perspectives exhibits the intricate relationship between cultural contexts, legal frameworks, and the ethical dimensions of AI in policing. Establishing global norms and ethical standards requires acknowledging this diversity while making progress towards a generic AI law enforcement guidelines which can protect fundamental human rights.

AI is expected to play a significant role in shaping the context within which human decision-makers operate. The combination of humans and machines, referred to as "centaurs," is considered a plausible near-term goal to harness the strengths of both, though it necessitates a clear and reasonable delineation of responsibilities.

AI is supposed to have a prominent impact in three key categories in international politics and policymaking:

1. **Analytical Roles:** is as of now utilized in scientific jobs, handling enormous datasets and recognizing patterns. It can be instrumental in monitoring compliance with treaties and optimizing common aspects of political exchange by enhancing the capability of information processing when new complexities are introduced.
2. **Predictive Roles:** AI's potential for prediction, especially in demonstrating complex negotiations, offers policymakers insights into possible future events. However, predictive

algorithms are not yet consistently more accurate than human counterparts, and challenges exist in the interface between machine and human understanding.

3. **Autonomous Systems:** The deployment of autonomous logistical systems and weapons introduces indirect implications for international politics. The large-scale replacement of human labor in logistical roles may cause economic and political disruptions. The deployment of AI in military, human security and economic roles requires demonstrating effectiveness comparable to or better than humans at a similar cost. Combining human and machine intelligence appears promising for a gradual transition, leveraging AI's rapid data processing and human abilities to check, correct, and interpret results within existing policy frameworks.

Efforts to establish ethical and legal frameworks for autonomous systems are in progress. Initiatives like the 'Toronto Declaration' [4] is expected to safeguard rights to equality and non-discrimination in machine learning systems, emphasizing the responsibilities of public and private sectors.

In India[8], the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) in law enforcement is emerging within a framework that balances technological advancements with democratic values and individual rights. The Indian perspective on AI in policing acknowledges the potential benefits for enhancing crime detection and public safety. However, the nation is struggling with the imperative of safeguarding privacy while upholding constitutional rights in the process.

The Indian government has expressed interest in utilizing AI for predictive policing and data analytics, acknowledging the need for effective law enforcement while respecting constitutional principles. This aligns with the landmark Supreme Court judgment in the Justice K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India (2017) case [16] which perceived the right to privacy as a fundamental right. The judgment has prompted controversies on the ethical use of AI technologies, emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability.

India's approach adds a unique dimension to the global AI adoption, considering the nation's commitment to democratic principles, cultural diversity, and legal ethos. The ongoing efforts to develop guidelines for regulating facial recognition technology in law enforcement underscore the intricacies in the Indian's standpoint. Recognizing this diversity in

the comparative assessments adheres to the holistic understanding of responsible AI implementation which upholds human rights and democratic values.

Ethical Frameworks and Guidelines for AI in Law Enforcement

Privacy concerns arise as AI applications frequently include the collection, processing, and analysis of huge amount of personal data. Ethical frameworks must focus on the protection of individual privacy rights, establishing clear boundaries on data utilization and ensuring that surveillance systems align with legal and ethical standards.

Transparency is the foundation of ethical AI implementation in law enforcement. All involved organizations must adopt practices to provide clear explanations of how AI algorithms operate, ensuring transparency in decision-making processes. This transparency will not only build public trust but also allow for scrutiny, fostering accountability and diminishing the risk of bias.

Accountability mechanisms are significant in addressing probable predispositions and biases and prevent unintended consequences of AI algorithms. Establishing clear chain of responsibilities for the development, deployment, and oversight of AI systems will ensure that individuals or entities can be held accountable for any misuse or ethical breaches. Ethical frameworks must also prioritize fairness[10] by inculcating diversity and inclusivity in dataset categorization and algorithmic design to addressing biases and avoid reinforcing existing societal inequalities.

International coordination is primary imperative in formulating ethical frameworks[10] which can transcend national boundaries. Generic standards and guidelines can facilitate a collaborative commitment to responsible AI use in law enforcement. Collective efforts should consider pooling of different viewpoints, experiences, and expertise, adding to the improvement of complete and universally applicable ethical frameworks.

AI might present both helpful and harmful applications in society. On the positive side, advance AI based healthcare system can diagnose and prevent diseases, enhance accessibility for the visually impaired through image recognition technologies, optimize agricultural farming techniques, contribute to climate change modelling, improve government services' efficiency, work as virtual personal assistant,

JOCIPE

create simulation modelling, processing natural languages, contribute to robotics and accomplish many other complex tasks [9]. Alternately, unsafe applications can potentially incorporate predispositions in criminal justice through risk scoring and predictive policing, discriminatory profiling using facial recognition, spread of disinformation through AI-generated content and deep fakes, perpetuate bias in job markets during hiring processes, and drive financial discrimination by using non-financial data for creditworthiness assessment. It's inevitable to recognize that even ostensibly helpful AI applications may have negative ramifications, and addressing these issues requires cautious assessments through ethical frameworks[10]. Trust in AI systems among different applications is present in Figure 1.

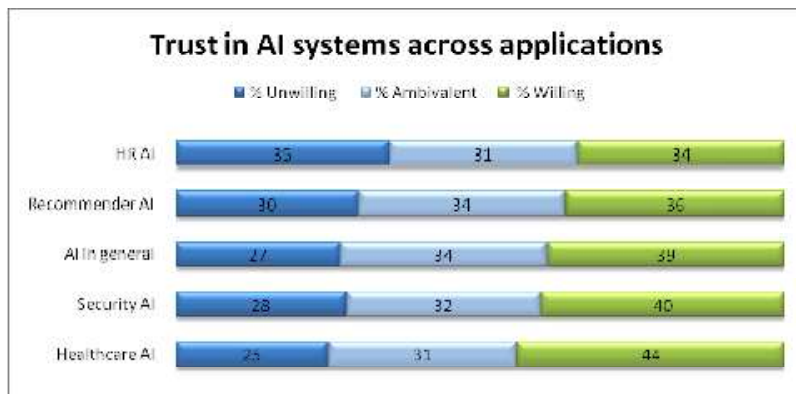


Figure 1. Trust in AI systems across applications

In essence, ethical frameworks for AI in law enforcement should embody principles of privacy protection, transparency, accountability, and fairness. These frameworks act as ethical measures, guiding the responsible adoption of AI technologies to ensure that advancements in policing enhance public safety while upholding their fundamental rights.

By the year 2027, businesses are poised to embrace a range of advanced transformative technologies. Among these digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity, are in leading position offering unparalleled opportunities for growth in future. Cloud computing, big data analytics, and environmental management technology are also in close pursuit promising enhanced efficiency and sustainability. Figure 2 ranks the technologies based on their likelihood [2] to be adopted by companies from the year 2023 to 2027.

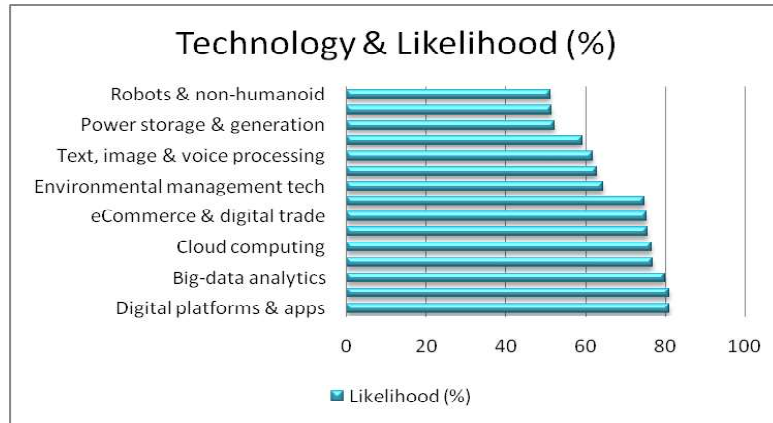


Figure 2. Ranking of technologies and their likelihood to be adopted by companies from 2023-2027.

Principles and Practices for Trustworthy AI

Principles and Practices for Trustworthy AI encompass various aspects:

1. Technical Performance, Accuracy, and Robustness:
 - Regular assessment of AI system performance and precision.
 - Rigorous testing of output robustness in different circumstances.
 - Utilization of high-quality training data for AI development.
2. Transparency and Justifiability:
 - Transparent explanation of AI system purpose, functioning, and decision-making.
 - Maintaining an audit trail of methods and datasets used in AI development.
3. Data Privacy, Security, and Governance:
 - Integration of safety and privacy measures into AI applications.
 - Secure storage and specific, consented use of AI-related information.
 - Robust security measures to prevent adversarial attacks.
4. Fairness, Non-discrimination, and Diversity:
 - Ensure fairness and absence of bias by regular assessments.
 - Comprehensive plan to take care of a diverse range of users.

JOCIPE

- Development involving inputs from a different groups and individuals.
- 5. Human Agency and Oversight:
 - Establishment of appropriate human oversight by qualified specialists.
 - Regular audits to ensure AI systems operate ethically and reliably.
- 6. Accountability and Contestability:
 - Clearly defined accountability and responsibility during AI system failures.
 - Provision for individuals or stakeholders to challenge AI outcomes through a fair review process.
- 7. AI Literacy:
 - Support for individuals in understanding AI frameworks and ethical contemplations.
- 8. Risk and Impact Mitigation:
 - Comprehensive evaluation and mitigation of risks, unintended consequences, and possible harms from AI systems throughout development and deployment.

The AI Network Society formulated Draft AI R&D Guidelines for International Discussions, published by the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in July 2017. These guidelines aim to maintain a balance between the advantages and potential risks associated with AI networks. These guidelines comprises of nine core principles and serve as a framework for researchers and developers involved in AI system building[7]. For a concise overview of the guidelines, please refer to Table XX.

Table1. A framework of nine core principles involved in AI system building[7]

Principle	Description
I. Collaboration	Developers should pay attention to the interconnectivity and interoperability of AI systems.
II. Transparency	Developers should pay attention to the verifiability of inputs/outputs of AI systems and explainability of their decisions.
III. Controllability	Developers should pay attention to the controllability of AI systems.
IV. Safety	Developers should ensure that AI systems do not harm the life, body, or property of users or third parties through actuators or other devices.
V. Security	Developers should pay attention to the security of AI systems.
VI. Privacy	Developers should take into consideration that AI systems will not infringe the privacy of users or third parties.
VII. Ethics	Developers should respect human dignity and individual autonomy in R&D of AI systems.
VIII. User assistance	Developers should take into consideration that AI systems will support users and make it possible to give them opportunities for choice in appropriate manners.
IX. Accountability	Developers should make efforts to fulfill their accountability to stakeholders, including users of AI systems.

International Collaboration and Governance

Collaborative international governance plays pivotal role in shaping the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in law enforcement on a global scale. As AI transcends national boundaries, coordinated efforts are essential to establish generic norms, ethical guidelines, and regulatory frameworks that improvise its deployment and administrations.

Efforts to enhance global AI administration mechanisms involve organizations like INTERPOL, WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), ICJ(International Court of Justice) and other inter-governmental organizations. These platforms provide arenas for member states to coordinate and define legal guidelines, promoting transparency, and addressing challenges related to cross-border data sharing and interoperability.

Collaborative initiatives also include joint research projects, knowledge-sharing platforms, and forums where policymakers, technologists, and ethicists can participate in discourse. These endeavours lead to the creation of standard and responsible AI applications. Figure 3 shows the confidence of general public on technology companies and government entities to develop, use and govern Artificial Intelligence. Mean of 5 point scale amalgamating confidence is used in the figure.

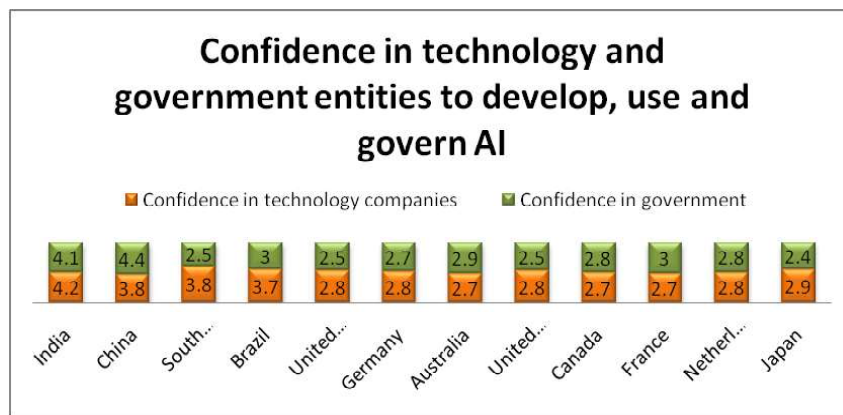


Figure 3. Confidence in technology and government entities to develop, use and govern AI

Trust in AI systems has seen a significant increase from 2020 to 2024, with a striking ascent in perceived trustworthiness. A study led by KPMG, Australia and the University of Queensland shows, citizens

JOCIPE

of India and China expressed more optimistic sentiments regarding the reliability of AI systems compared to other nations in the world. Notably, Indians exhibit the most positive outlook, with a staggering 93% expressing trust, closely followed by the Chinese at 87%. Conversely, residents in western nations, alongside Japan, exhibit less favourable opinions regarding the trustworthiness of AI. Figure 4 depicts the acceptance levels of AI across the globe.

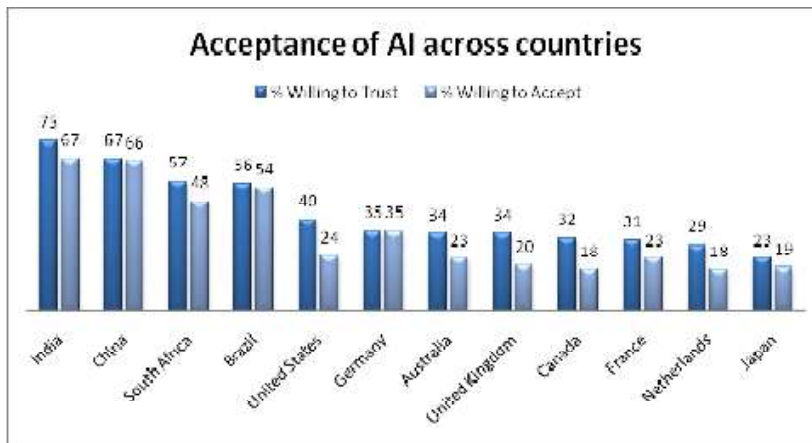


Figure 4. Acceptance of AI across countries

It is also noted that there is an absence of trust in government capabilities regarding AI in the USA, Japan, and the UK. In contrast, high levels of confidence are reported in China and India regarding their governments' AI-related endeavours.

Conclusion

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in law enforcement signifies a transformative shift with profound implications for society. As AI technologies gets refined, ethical considerations, human rights safeguards, and global collaboration emerge as critical pillars in navigating this evolving landscape. Addressing challenges related to bias, discrimination, and privacy infringement requires responsible AI implementation guided by transparent, diverse, and accountable practices. The future trends in explainable AI, interdisciplinary coordinated effort, and the foundation of AI ethics highlight the ongoing commitment to ethical contemplations. As we embrace the potentials of AI in law enforcement and policing, it is imperative to harness technological advancements keeping public safety in mind while upholding the fundamental human rights. Therefore, international coordinated effort will play a crucial role in shaping AI as the future.

References:

- (i) Zuboff, Shoshana. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2019.
- (ii) Menon, S. S., Trenker, J., Owens, T., Tas, O., & Blumtritt, C. (July 2023). The double-edged sword of AI: Will we lose our jobs or become extremely productive? Unleashing Artificial Intelligence's true potential. In *Insights Compass AI Future* (Chapter 3). Source: <https://www.statista.com/site/insights-compass-ai-future-ai-work>
- (iii) European Union General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR). (2018). Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>
- (iv) Access Now. (2018). The Toronto Declaration: Protecting the rights to equality and non-discrimination in machine learning systems. Source: <https://www.accessnow.org/the-toronto-declaration-protecting-the-rights-to-equality-and-non-discrimination-in-machine-learning-systems/>
- (v) Diakopoulos, N. (2016). *Accountable Algorithms*. University of Maryland. Source: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2765265>.
- (vi) Salokannel, P. (n.d.). *The Impact of AI: How Artificial Intelligence is Transforming Society*. 3D Bear: https://www.3dbear.io/hubfs/3DBear_April2019%20Theme/Images/favicon.ico
- (vii) Mohta, M. (2023, July 25). AI: A Boon or A Bane? www.timesofindia.in <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/ai-a-boon-or-a-bane/?source=app&frmapp=yes>
- (viii) Coeckelbergh, M. (April,2020). *AI Ethics*. The MIT Press.
- (ix) Nandan Nilekani, T. B. (2023, December). UNLOCKING INDIA'S POTENTIAL WITH AI. www.imf.org: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2023/12/POV-unlocking-india-potential-with-AI-Nilekani-Bhojwani>
- (x) Kaushiki Sanyal, R. C. (2020). *Artificial Intelligence and India* (Oxford India Short Introductions). OUP India.
- (xi) Tegmark, M. (July,2018). *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. Penguin UK.
- (xii) Citron, D. K., & Chesney, R. (2018). Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security. *California Law Review*, 107(6), 1753-1794.
- (xiii) Japan. (2017). *Draft AI R&D Guidelines for International Discussions*. Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan. Source: http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000507517.pdf.
- (xiv) Chandra, R. (2021). The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Indian Perspective: A Critical Study. *Journal of Legal Studies and Research*, 7(4), ISSN 2455-2437.
- (xv) Sen, A. (2023, March 28). *The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Society: Opportunities, Challenges, and Ethical Considerations*. LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/impact-artificial-intelligence-society-opportunities-challenges-sen>

- (xvi) Kamble, R., & Shah, D. (2018). Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Human Life. *International Journal of Research - GRANTHAALAYAH*, 6(6), ISSN-2350-0530(O), ISSN-2394-3629(P). DOI: 10.29121/granthaalayah.v6.i6.2018.1363.
- (xvii) Marr, B. (2023). What Is The Impact Of Artificial Intelligence (AI) On Society? www.bernardmarr.com:https://bernardmarr.com/what-is-the-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-ai-on-society/
- (xviii) Werthner, H., Prem, E., Lee, E. A., & Ghezzi, C. (Eds.). (2022). *Perspectives on Digital Humanism*. ISBN 978-3-030-86143-8 (Print), ISBN 978-3-030-86144-5 (eBook). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86144-5>
- (xix) Kalla, D., Smith, N., & Kuraku, S. (2023). Study and Analysis of Chat GPT and its Impact on Different Fields of Study. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 8(3), ISSN 2456-2165.
- (xx) Russell, S., & Norvig, P. (2011). *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach* (3rd ed.). DOI: 10.1016/j.artint.2011.01.005
- (xxi) International Justice Resource Center. (2018). Guide to Researching International Human Rights Law. Source:<https://ijrcenter.org/guide-to-researching-international-human-rights-law/>
- (xxii) Gillespie, N., Lockey, S., Curtis, C., Pool, J., & Akbari, A. (2023). *Trust in Artificial Intelligence: A Global Study*. The University of Queensland and KPMG Australia.<https://doi.org/10.14264/00d3c94>
- (xxiii) Risse, M. (2018). *Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence: An Urgently Needed Agenda*. Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard Kennedy School.
- (xxiv) Justice K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 494 of 2012 (2017).
- (xxv) Times, T. N. (2023 July 13). F.T.C. Opens Investigation into ChatGPT Maker Over Technology's Potential Harms,.

BRICS, De-dollarization and Global Power Shifts: An Overview

Dr. Shammi Kumari

Abstract

De-dollarization is a “significant reduction in the use of dollars in world trade and financial transactions, [as well as] decreasing national, institutional and corporate demand” for United States dollars.

Concerns about de-dollarization — the loss of the US dollar’s role as the world’s hegemonic currency — have re-emerged recently due to a series of developments following the onset of Russia’s war against Ukraine. These developments range from the growing weaponization of the US dollar (USD or dollar), the continued decline in USD reserves, the growth in bilateral trade relationships denominated in non-dollar currencies, and the emergence of alternatives to the US-dominated international payments system, the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT).

De-dollarization has been a persistent theme since the collapse of the Bretton Woods Gold System in 1971 and the rising US national debt.

The research employs analytical descriptive technique to explore the factors that influence the BRICS Plus-led de-dollarization and the results it may lead to. The United States faces challenges, including its diminishing economic influence, which necessitates strategic choices and diplomatic measures for adaptation. The present article proposes recommendations based on creating internal strategies to meet the BRICS Plus’s economic needs and external strategies to be designed in response to proactive economic challenges of the United States in the international context.

Keywords: BRICS Plus, Bretton Woods Gold System, De-Dollarization, Global Power Shifting, Global Influence, SWIFT

Contractual Asst. Prof. (Economics), Doranda Collage, Ranchi University, Ranchi, Jharkhand

Introduction

The recent announcement on December 20, 2023, by Russia and China of their intent to abandon the US dollar in their bilateral transactions marks a noteworthy development within the ongoing trend of de-dollarization. This shift aligns with the broader strategy pursued by the BRICS alliance, potentially signifying a significant step towards a more diversified international monetary system.¹

This study looks into the phenomenon of de-dollarization, exploring the multifaceted factors driving this trend.

Beyond the immediate economic ramifications, de-dollarization could engender a multitude of effects on the international monetary system, encompassing potential alterations in exchange rate volatility, trade patterns, and presenting challenges for established financial institutions.

For the United States, this phenomenon presents a multifaceted picture, encompassing potential drawbacks such as diminished economic leverage, alongside opportunities for forging new partnerships and adapting financial strategies.²

The intricate geopolitical landscape further complicates the de-dollarization narrative. Developing economies navigate this trend within a dynamic environment characterized by evolving competition and partnerships. Examining initiatives such as BRICS Plus holds significance, as their actions pertaining to de-dollarization and the global economy possess the potential for considerable consequences.

A Brief History of the Dollar's Global Grip

The adoption of the US dollar as a national currency, known as dollarization, transcends mere economic considerations. Its historical and critical context is deeply intertwined with pivotal moments like World Wars I and II, culminating in the establishment of the Bretton Woods Agreement (1944). These events, driven by war and international cooperation, profoundly shaped the trajectory of the dollar's global dominance.

This advantageous position propelled the US to becoming a significant creditor, amassing substantial gold reserves from wartime payments made by European nations.³

This system instituted a system of fixed exchange rates, where most currencies were pegged to the US dollar, which itself was convertible

to gold at a fixed price. The confluence of a robust US economy, political stability, and the Bretton Woods framework cemented the dollar's position as the primary currency for international trade and finance.

However, the adoption of the US dollar as a national currency transcends the realm of purely economic considerations. It carries profound social and cultural ramifications. Proponents of dollarization often emphasize its potential to stabilize inflation and attract foreign investment. Conversely, critics contend that it undermines national sovereignty by relinquishing control over monetary policy to external forces. Furthermore, the adoption of the dollar can potentially erode cultural identities intertwined with local currencies, sparking debates about the broader implications of cultural imperialism versus international integration.

In essence, dollarization represents a complex interplay of economic, social, and cultural dynamics. While it offers potential economic benefits such as enhanced stability and access to global markets, it also raises critical questions regarding national sovereignty, cultural identity, and societal inequalities.⁴

The historical and critical aspects of dollarization constitute a multifaceted narrative shaped by the legacies of war, international cooperation, and cultural considerations. Comprehending the broader historical context and multifaceted nature of dollarization is crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of its implications for national economies, cultural identities, and the dynamics of global power.

Drivers of De-Dollarization

BRICS Plus, comprising significant arising husbandry, possesses its own currencies and seeks to boost its profitable and geopolitical influence on the global stage. This analysis explores how BRICS Plus may impact de-dollarization motorists.⁵

- Profitable adaptability: BRICS Plus nations, comprising significant arising husbandry, aim to drop their vulnerability to external profitable pressures by diversifying their foreign exchange reserves down from the US bone . This strategy seeks to alleviate the impact of currency oscillations and implicit warrants that could disrupt their profitable stability.
- The Rise of Indispensable currencies: Certain BRICS Plus members, particularly China, laboriously promote their public currencies as druthers to the US bone in transnational trade

and fiscal deals. This trouble contributes to de-dollarization and potentially alters the global profitable geography by creating a multipolar currency system.

- Geopolitical pressures: Rising geopolitical pressures and evolving profitable dynamics are fueling the global trend of de-dollarization. As BRICS Plus nations gain lesser global influence, they may seek to lessen their dependence on the US dollar to alleviate implicit political and profitable retribution. This could further incentivize the use of indispensable currencies in transnational deals.
- Fiscal stability: The pursuit of fiscal stability can also contribute to de-dollarization. For illustration, the recent freezing of Russia's foreign currency reserves by the US, following the Ukraine irruption, led to a notable decline in the US dollar's share of global foreign exchange reserves. This event may prompt BRICS Plus countries to explore indispensable currencies for transnational trade and fiscal conditioning, aiming to guard their fiscal stability.⁶

In conclusion, the bournes of BRICS Plus to enhance their profitable and geopolitical influence, coupled with the need for increased profitable adaptability and fiscal stability, can contribute to the ongoing trend of de-dollarization.

Consequences for the International Monetary System

The prospective trials of BRICS Plus pertaining to de-dollarization and their ramifications for the global financial frame can be delineated across distinct thematic confines. These include advocacy for the application of indigenous currencies, the establishment of indispensable fiscal architectures, bolstering institutional collaboration, and diving associated challenges and constraints.

The advocacy for indigenous currency operation entails trials aimed at incentivizing trade counterparts to settle deals using original currencies, therefore circumventing reliance on the dollar. Likewise, it involves disquisition into the expression of a compound currency handbasket encompassing BRICS Plus currencies or the development of a devoted reserve currency for the collaborative.⁷

The advent of a multipolar currency system may precipitate increased exchange rate fluctuations, potentially impeding global trade and investment flows.

Furthermore, the emergence of regional monetary blocs could fortify regional financial architectures, engendering power dynamics among competing blocs. Established institutions like the IMF may necessitate adaptations in their operational and governance frameworks to accommodate the evolving currency landscape.⁸

Impact on Global Power Dynamics

The implicit conduct of BRICS Plus regarding de-dollarization and its impact on global power dynamics can be divided into several crucial areas:

1. Improving economic autonomy and influence: BRICS Plus nations could mitigate their reliance on dollar-denominated debt by increasing the issuance of debt in their respective currencies and fostering investment from within the bloc.
2. Countering US dominance and cultivating novel alliances: The establishment of financial entities such as the New Development Bank and BRICS Payment Platform presents alternatives to institutions predominantly governed by the US, such as the IMF and World Bank. Collaboration with other developing nations and regional coalitions, such as the African Union, has the potential to extend the influence and scope of the BRICS Plus, thus constituting a broader counterbalance to US hegemony.⁹
3. Implications for geopolitical relationships: The process of de-dollarization may engender the formation of novel economic alliances and partnerships grounded in shared interests and alternative financial frameworks. Consequently, the realignment of power dynamics could precipitate heightened competition and potential conflicts between the United States and emerging economies, particularly concerning resource access, trade routes, and influence in developing nations.

Despite its potential, the BRICS Plus faces several challenges. The task of reconciling the divergent interests of its member states may impede its capacity to present a cohesive front. Therefore, navigating intricate geopolitical relationships and potential opposition from the US and its allies will be imperative for BRICS Plus to effectively reshape global power dynamics.¹⁰

Nevertheless, success hinges upon their ability to surmount internal obstacles, navigate the multifaceted geopolitical terrain, and adeptly leverage their collective economic and political influence.

Implications for the US Global Influence

The potential impacts of the BRICS on the US global influence can be divided into several categories:

- **Weakening Economic Leverage:** As the BRICS Plus countries diversify their reserve holdings and trade arrangements, the efficacy of US dollar-based sanctions could diminish, constraining the US influence in global affairs.
- **Shifting Power Dynamics:** The expansion of the BRICS Plus and regional coalitions may spawn new focal points of economic influence, contesting the US unilateralism, restructuring global trade and investment flows, and diminishing the US predominance in international organizations.
- **Challenges for the US Adaptation:** In a world less reliant on the dollar, the United States may necessitate adjusting its tools of influence, placing greater emphasis on diplomacy, military alliances, and alternative forms of engagement to uphold its global standing. Evolving global power dynamics could also engender domestic political hurdles within the US, as reconciling national interests with a shifting global order and potential economic transformations could prove politically challenging.
- **Geopolitical Competition and Alliances:** The ascendancy of the BRICS Plus and the process of de-dollarization hold considerable potential to reshape the global power landscape, instigating intricate dynamics within international relations. Heightened competition across various spheres may precipitate the emergence of new blocs and a reconfiguration of existing alliances:
- **Monetary Influence:** As de-dollarization gains momentum, major players such as China, Russia, and the EU are poised to advance their respective currencies or regional financial frameworks, intensifying the struggle for monetary supremacy. This rivalry not only stands to remodel global trade and investment patterns but also to shape political alignments, as nations align themselves with influential financial entities.
- **Emerging Financial Systems:** The advent of digital currencies and alternative financial hubs presents another arena for geopolitical contention. Competition for dominance over these novel systems may further mold alliances and partnerships, as nations vie to leverage their access to cutting-edge financial technology.

- **Strategic Resources and Trade Routes:** As economic linkages within the BRICS Plus and other blocs strengthen, competition for access to strategic resources and control over vital trade routes is bound to intensify. This could precipitate the formation of resource-centric partnerships and alliances, that could give rise to new epicenters of economic and political influence.

The rise of non-Western powers and the potential for conflicts stemming from resource rivalry or financial competitions necessitate an adaptable and proactive approach to international relations. Nations can effectively adapt to the evolving global order and preserve their influence amidst emerging geopolitical challenges by investing in domestic competitiveness, fostering transparent financial systems, and cultivating strategic partnerships.¹¹

New Blocs: BRICS Plus, De-dollarization, and Shifting Alliances

The rise of BRICS Plus and de-dollarization could be more than just a reshuffling of existing alliances; it has the potential to trigger the formation of entirely new economic and political blocs. These new groupings could emerge around shared interests, such as:

- **Regional currencies:** De-dollarization endeavors hold the potential to spur the establishment of regional currencies or payment infrastructures, fostering economic collaboration and potentially laying the groundwork for novel political alliances. For instance, the BRICS Plus nations may contemplate instituting a basket currency system or advocating for the use of their respective currencies in regional trade, thus reinforcing economic bonds and erecting a counterweight to the prevailing US dollar- dominated system.
- **Shared development goals:** Countries with congruent development priorities and challenges could coalesce into blocs focused on attaining those objectives. The BRICS Plus, with its emphasis on inclusive development and South-South cooperation, may attract other emerging economies in search of alternative development projects and partnerships.
- **De-dollarization goals:** Amid mounting apprehensions regarding the US hegemony and politicization of the dollar, de-dollarization could evolve into a unifying objective for numerous nations. This collective aspiration might precipitate the formation of coalitions geared toward advancing alternative financial architectures and diminishing dependence on the US dollar.

- **Diversification of Partnerships:** Nations may seek fresh alliances with counterparts beyond their traditional affiliations, driven by mutual concerns regarding de-dollarization, regional economic imperatives, or a desire to hedge against geopolitical uncertainties. This could precipitate a more multipolar world characterized by less rigid alliances and more fluid alignments rooted in specific issues and objectives.

By incorporating insightful observations, the analysis now comprehensively elucidates the broader ramifications of de-dollarization and the emergence of the BRICS Plus on the global political and economic stage.¹²

Shift Towards a Multipolar World Order

The rise of non-Western powers like China and Russia, as the US dollar's dominance diminishes, may accelerate the shift towards a multipolar world order. Initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative highlight this shift, promoting alternative infrastructure and trade partnerships outside the US-led world order.

This dynamic scenario involves both risks and opportunities. There is a heightened potential for conflict, particularly concerning access to resources and control of crucial trade routes, as emerging powers contend for influence. For instance, Russia's military intervention in Ukraine underscores the strategic significance of energy reservoirs and the likelihood of resource competition exacerbating geopolitical tensions.

Nevertheless, this evolving landscape also presents avenues for strategic collaborations and multilateral engagements. Encouraging multilateral cooperation on issues such as global governance and financial stability can mitigate the risks of conflict and facilitate a smoother transition to a more diversified financial milieu.

Despite the prevailing uncertainties and risks, these transformations also furnish opportunities for nations to cultivate fresh partnerships, safeguard their interests, and recalibrate their strategies to flourish within an evolving global framework. Adaptability, strategic decision-making, and a commitment to cooperation emerge as imperative elements for navigating this intricate and dynamic terrain.¹³

Implications for Emerging Economies

The emergence of the BRICS Plus, encompassing Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, alongside other prominent emerging economies, carries advantageous and formidable implications for these

nations and the global economic landscape. Efforts aimed at reducing reliance on the US dollar and diversifying currency reserves can augment financial stability, mitigate susceptibility to external shocks, and foster conducive economic environments. BRICS Plus heralds prospects for enhanced regional integration, fostering economic expansion and advancement, while potentially unlocking new market avenues and avenues for financial inclusivity.¹⁴

Yet, challenges persist, including the management of exchange rate fluctuations and potential liquidity constraints, particularly concerning less-established currencies. Creating resilient regional financial institutions, bolstering infrastructure, and instituting supportive legal and regulatory frameworks are imperative for facilitating efficient cross-border transactions and risk mitigation within BRICS Plus. Negotiating geopolitical intricacies and reconciling divergent interests are pivotal for optimizing the benefits of BRICS Plus integration.¹⁵

The process of de-dollarization engenders multifaceted challenges and opportunities for emerging economies, necessitating adept management of currency volatilities, institutional enhancements, and geopolitical intricacies to ensure financial stability and regional collaboration. The emergence of BRICS Plus presents a duality of prospects and challenges, underscoring the necessity for meticulous governance to realize successful integration and harness the advantages of the evolving global economic paradigm.

De-dollarization Complexities of BRICS Trade Facilitation

Aggarwal (2020), in “On de-risking and de-dollarizing intra-BRICS trade via smart contracts,” explores the potential of smart contracts to mitigate risk and reduce dependence on the US dollar in trade transactions among BRICS nations. Aggarwal suggests that regulatory reforms aimed at creating a streamlined business environment could attract investment and counteract the potential economic advantages of BRICS Plus integration.¹⁶

Drawing on Khmelevskaya (2015), the present analysis explores the potential of coordinated financial arrangements within the BRICS bloc to facilitate intra-bloc trade and investment.

Cooper and Farooq (2016) compare China and India’s differing approaches to the G20 and BRICS, highlighting the disparity in their influence. While both countries seek to elevate their international standing, China adopts a more nuanced and adaptable strategy, evolving its tactics over time.¹⁷

Regional Initiatives and Currency Blocs

The ascent of BRICS Plus presents an auspicious opportunity for regional initiatives and currency blocs committed to de-dollarization. Such endeavors hold the promise of bolstering regional integration, augmenting bargaining leverage, and fostering financial stability.

Strengthening integration within BRICS Plus can facilitate trade expansion, stimulate investment flows, and synchronize economic policies. Augmenting bargaining prowess entails fostering a unified voice in international forums, diminishing dependence on the US dollar, and sharing financial knowledge and expertise. For ensuring financial stability, the establishment of regional liquidity provision mechanisms, synchronized exchange rate strategies, and collaborative financial oversight and regulation are imperative.¹⁸

These strategies underscore the advantages and challenges associated with regional initiatives and currency blocs amid the de-dollarization narrative, emphasizing the intricate interplay of economic, political, and institutional dynamics. As the global financial terrain undergoes metamorphosis, comprehending and adeptly navigating these dynamics emerge as indispensable imperatives for countries and regions aspiring to shape their financial destinies.

The efficacy of these initiatives hinges upon their capacity to address internal disparities, fortify institutional frameworks, and prioritize collaborative approaches in navigating the ever-evolving global economic topography.¹⁹

Policy Implications and Responses

To uphold its global sway, the US should prioritize engaging in strategic diplomacy, actively pursuing dialogue, forging alliances, and fostering consensus on global economic imperatives. Strengthening economic fundamentals assumes paramount significance, necessitating policies that bolster competitiveness, stimulate innovation, and underpin sustainable growth.

A focus on resilience and diversification can equip the US to mitigate the potential drawbacks of de-dollarization. Embracing adaptability and receptiveness to novel ideas is imperative. This entails active engagement in the advancement of emergent trends such as digital currencies and financial technologies.²⁰

The ramifications of de-dollarization transcend national borders, necessitating international cooperation and dialogic exchanges. Proactive policy responses from stakeholders assume pivotal

significance in navigating the shifting geopolitical terrain engendered by BRICS Plus and de-dollarization.

Prioritizing strategic diplomacy, fortifying economic fundamentals, embracing adaptability, and fostering international cooperation can effectively manage the challenges and harness the opportunities presented by this new epoch in the global financial arena.²¹

Conclusion

This research investigates the potential implications of the BRICS Plus De-Dollarization process for global power dynamics within the emerging economic landscape. Employing a data-driven approach and integrating insights from historical analysis, geopolitics, and economic trends, this study sheds light on the intricate nuances of this evolving phenomenon.

The analysis reveals a multifaceted de-dollarization landscape within BRICS Plus, presenting diverse opportunities and challenges that necessitate careful consideration and strategic coordination. Motivations such as China's aspirations for currency prominence and Brazil's pursuit of economic stability underscore the importance of collective action to reduce reliance on the US dollar. Establishing a cohesive stance while addressing potential areas of discordant objectives requires diplomatic finesse.

The nascent emergence of BRICS Plus highlights the complex interplay between economic potentials and geopolitical influence. It is imperative to critically examine how these dynamics shape established power configurations and alliances, while also anticipating potential transformations and challenges. Adaptability, collaborative efforts, and proactive risk mitigation strategies are crucial for successfully navigating this intricate landscape.

Proactive policy responses, informed by rigorous strategic analysis, are indispensable for preserving the United States' preeminent position within the evolving global economic architecture and navigating the dynamically shifting international landscape.

References

1. Aggarwal P. (2020). On de-risking and de-dollarizing intra-BRICS trade via smart contracts. *BRICS Journal of Economics*, 1 (4), 54-69. <https://doi.org/10.38050/2712-7508-2020-1-4-6>
2. Bond P. (2018). BRICS banking and the debate over sub-imperialism. In *Rising Powers and South-South Cooperation* (pp. 55-73). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315232195-4>

3. Burova A., Kozlovtseva I., Makhankova N., Morozov A. (2021). Dollarization, Financial Stability Risks and Monetary Policy Implementation: Exploring the Nexus. *Ensayos Económicos*, 1 (77), 50-71.
4. Caldararo N. (2023). China, Invasions in Europe and De-Dollarization: Dismembering Empires and Collapse of Nations. *IUP Journal of International Relations*, 17(4), 7-40.
5. Elson A. (2021). The US Dollar as a Global Currency. *The Global Currency Power of the US Dollar*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83519-4_1
6. Faudot A. (2018). The US dollar and its payments system: architecture and political implications. *Review of Keynesian Economics*, 6 (1), 83–95. <https://doi.org/10.4337/roke.2018.01.05>
7. Frieden J. (2019). The political economy of the Bretton Woods Agreements. In N. Lamoreaux & I. Shapiro (Eds.), *The Political Economy of the Bretton Woods Agreements* (pp. 21–37). Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvk8vz01.4>
8. Gouvea R., Gutierrez M. (2023). De-Dollarization: The Harbinger of a New Globalization Architecture? *Theoretical Economics Letters*, 13 (4), 791-807. <https://doi.org/10.4236/tel.2023.134046>
9. Guttman R. (2022). *Multi-Polar Capitalism: The End of the Dollar Standard*. Palgrave Macmillan Cham.
10. Hartley J. (2023). *De-Dollarization? Not so fast*. Social Science Research Network. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4477009>
11. Levy-Yeyati E. (2021). *Financial dollarization and de-dollarization in the new millennium*. Latin American Reserve Fund Working Paper. https://flar.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Financial-dollarization-and_0.pdf
12. Li Y. (2023). *Trends, reasons and prospects of de-dollarization*. Econstor. Research Paper No. 181. <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/278680>
13. Liu Z. Z., Papa M. (2022). *Can BRICS de-dollarize the global financial system?*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009029544>
14. Luft G. (2023). China and the Changing Global Monetary Landscape. In *China's Development and the Construction of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 671-677. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-7423-6_86

15. McDowell D. (2023). Financial sanctions and political risk in the international currency system. *Review of International Political Economy*, 28 (3), 635-661. <https://doi.org/10.1093/osoi/9780197679876.003.0002>
16. Mendoza Perez L. A. (2023). *Essay on Dollarization in Emerging Markets*. University of Houston, USA.
17. Saaida M. B. (2023). The BRICS' Move Away From US Dollar: The Implications For International Politics. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 10 (7), 35-39. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10700468>
18. Sawant P. A. (2023). BRICS and the Sustainable Development Goals. *Indian Journal of Lifelong Learning & Educational Guidance*, 4 (1), 36-46.
19. Singh R. (2023). Russia, India, and China Alliance—Towards balancing the World Order. *Electronic Journal of Social and Strategic Studies*, 3 (3), 328-350. <https://doi.org/10.47362/EJSSS.2023.3304>
20. Song G. H. (2023). Valuation of Cryptocurrency Without Intrinsic Value: A Promise of Future Payment System and Implications to De-dollarization. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 49 (2), 221-248. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41302-023-00237-2>
21. Team W. W. (2023). *Russia, China completely abandon US dollar in bilateral trade, says Russian PM*. WION. <https://www.wionews.com/world/russia-china-completely-abandon-us-dollar-in-bilateral-trade-says-russian-pm-671667>

Child Labour and the Right to Education: A Socio-legal Conflict In Contemporary India

Dr. Bhoma Ram*

Bhawna Chaudhary**

Abstract

The persistent duality of child labour and the constitutional mandate for universal education presents one of the most complex socio-legal challenges in contemporary India. While Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution, bolstered by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, recognizes education as a fundamental right, the socio-economic reality of millions of children remains tethered to the workforce. This research paper critically examines the inherent conflict between these two spheres, arguing that legislation alone is insufficient to dismantle the structural foundations of child exploitation.

Using a socio-legal methodology, the study analyzes the evolution of Indian child labour laws, with a specific focus on the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016. A central point of critique is the controversial proviso allowing children to assist in “family enterprises,” which often serves as a legal loophole for home-based industries. Furthermore, the paper investigates the socio-economic drivers—including chronic poverty, lack of quality infrastructure in government schools, and the “opportunity cost” of education for marginalized families—that render legal protections ineffective.

The research also highlights the role of judicial activism, referencing

*(Assistant Professor) Department of Law, Jayoti Vidhyapeeth Womens University, Jaipur

**Research Scholar, Department of Law, Jayoti Vidhyapeeth Womens, University, Jaipur

landmark Supreme Court judgments such as *M.C. Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu*, which have attempted to bridge the gap between policy and practice. The findings suggest that the disconnect between the legal age of childhood (which varies across different statutes) and the ground-level demand for cheap labour creates a “protection gap.” The paper concludes by advocating for a harmonized legal framework, enhanced social security for vulnerable families, and a transition from mere “school enrollment” to “quality learning” as the primary tools for eradicating child labour and fulfilling the constitutional promise of the Right to Education.

Keywords: *Child Labour, Right to Education (RTE), Article 21-A, POCSO, Socio-Legal Conflict, 2016 Amendment, Family Enterprises, Judicial Activism.*

Introduction

The concept of childhood is universally idealized as a “Golden Age”—a period of innocence, play, and cognitive development. However, for millions of children in India, this ideal remains a distant myth. Instead of classrooms and playgrounds, their reality is defined by the grit of brick kilns, the fumes of glass factories, or the monotony of domestic servitude. While the Indian Constitution, under Article 21-A, guarantees the Right to Education (RTE) as a fundamental right, the socio-economic reality of child labour continues to obstruct this vision. Child labour in India is not merely a legal violation or a breach of statutory provisions; it is a profound symptom of deep-rooted systemic failures, ranging from chronic poverty to the inadequacy of the public education system.

The tension between the Right to Education Act, 2009, and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act represents one of the most significant socio-legal paradoxes in contemporary Indian jurisprudence. On one hand, the state is constitutionally mandated to provide free and compulsory education; on the other hand, the survival of many marginalized families depends on the meager earnings of their youngest members. This creates a “vicious cycle of deprivation” where child labour prevents education, and the lack of education ensures the persistence of poverty into the next generation.

Despite India’s rapid economic growth, the “cheap labour” market continues to thrive on the vulnerability of children. Legal frameworks have evolved, moving from mere regulation to a more prohibitive stance, yet the implementation remains fragmented. The 2016 Amendment to the Child Labour Act, for instance, was touted as a progressive step

but introduced controversial provisos that many activists believe have legalized child labour in the informal sector under the guise of “family enterprises.”¹

Research Problem

The core research problem lies in the direct conflict between the economic necessity of the family and the legal obligation of the state to educate the child. This study investigates why, despite a robust constitutional framework and international commitments (such as ILO Conventions 138 and 182), the Indian state has struggled to bridge the gap between “enrollment” and “retention” in schools. It questions whether the law effectively addresses the “opportunity cost” of education for a family living below the poverty line.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research paper are:

- To critically analyze the existing legal and constitutional framework governing child rights and education in India.
- To identify the specific socio-legal loopholes introduced by the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016.
- To examine the socio-economic drivers—such as poverty, migration, and caste—that sustain child labour despite legal prohibitions.
- To suggest a holistic socio-legal remedy that integrates economic support for families with the mandatory enforcement of the Right to Education.

The Constitutional and Legislative Framework

India possesses what is often described as one of the most robust “on-paper” legal shields for children in the developing world. The transition from a colonial legal mindset to a welfare-oriented constitutional framework has seen the child evolve from a “subject of parental control” to a “subject of individual rights.” However, the legislative journey reveals a complex interplay between idealistic constitutional mandates and the pragmatic difficulties of a developing economy.

Constitutional Provisions: The Bedrock of Child Rights

The Constitution of India serves as the primary source of protection for children, embedding their rights within the chapters of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).

- Article 21-A: The Right to Education: Inserted via the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, this article was a watershed moment in Indian jurisprudence. It mandates that *“The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.”* This provision effectively elevated the Right to Education from a mere directive to an enforceable Fundamental Right. It implies that the state is not just a provider of education but is legally liable if a child within this age bracket is found to be out of school. The conflict arises when a child is found working during school hours; in such cases, the violation of Article 21-A is simultaneous with the engagement in labour.²
- Article 24: Prohibition of Employment in Hazardous Factories: This is a specific fundamental right against exploitation. It categorically states: *“No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.”* While this was a progressive inclusion in 1950, for decades, its narrow focus on “hazardous” industries allowed child labour to flourish in the “non-hazardous” informal sector, such as agriculture and domestic work, which accounts for nearly 80% of child labour in India.
- Directive Principles (Article 39, 45, and 51A): While not enforceable in a court of law, these principles act as the moral compass for state policy.
 - Article 39(e) and (f): Direct the State to ensure that the “tender age of children is not abused” and that they are given opportunities to develop in a healthy manner, protected against exploitation and moral abandonment.
 - Article 45: Originally aimed at providing free and compulsory education within ten years of the Constitution’s commencement, it was later amended to focus on early childhood care and education for children below the age of six.
 - Article 51A(k): Added a Fundamental Duty for parents or guardians to provide opportunities for education to their child or ward between the ages of 6 and 14 years.

Legislative Evolution: From Regulation to Prohibition

To give teeth to these constitutional promises, the Indian Parliament enacted several laws, most notably the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 (CLPR Act).

JOCIPE

Initially, the 1986 Act did not ban child labour entirely; it only “prohibited” it in certain specified occupations and processes (mostly hazardous) and “regulated” the working conditions in others. This regulatory approach was heavily criticized for being a “half-measure” that accepted the inevitability of child labour. It was only with the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, that the legal discourse shifted. The RTE Act created a legal obligation for the state to ensure every child is in a classroom, which logically necessitated a complete ban on child labour during school hours.

This led to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016. This amendment attempted to harmonize the labour laws with the RTE Act by:

1. Banning the employment of children (below 14 years) in all occupations and processes.
2. Introducing the category of “Adolescents” (14–18 years), prohibiting their employment in hazardous occupations.

However, as we shall see in the subsequent analysis, this “robust” shield contains significant cracks—specifically the proviso allowing children to work in “family enterprises”—which continues to pit the child’s right to education against their role as an economic contributor to the household.

The Legislative Tug-of-War

The legislative history of child labor in India is marked by a gradual shift from a “regulatory” mindset to a “prohibitive” one. However, this transition has been fraught with internal contradictions, often described by legal scholars as a “tug-of-war” between industrial demand for cheap labor and the constitutional mandate for universal education.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986

Before the landmark 2016 amendments, the primary governing statute was the CLPR Act of 1986. This Act was significantly limited in its scope:

- **Selective Prohibition:** It did not ban child labor across the board. Instead, it prohibited the employment of children (defined as those under 14) only in specific “occupations” and “processes” listed in its schedule—primarily high-risk sectors like mining, explosives, and heavy factories.
- **Regulation over Eradication:** For any industry not listed as “hazardous,” the Act merely “regulated” the working conditions (hours of work, holidays, and health and safety). This legislative

stance essentially validated child labor in the vast informal sector, such as agriculture, domestic work, and tea stalls.

- The Educational Gap: Because the 1986 Act allowed “non-hazardous” work, it created a massive hurdle for the later implementation of the Right to Education (RTE). A child could legally be a domestic help or a farmhand during school hours, making “compulsory” education an unenforceable goal.

The 2016 Amendment: A Controversial Shift

With the introduction of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, the government aimed to harmonize labor laws with the 86th Constitutional Amendment (Article 21-A). On the surface, the 2016 Act appeared more progressive, but it introduced a dual-layered structure that remains highly contentious.

- Total Prohibition for Children: It banned the employment of children below 14 years in all occupations and processes, finally aligning labor law with the RTE age bracket.
- Introduction of “Adolescents”: It created a new category for those aged 14 to 18, prohibiting them only from “hazardous” occupations (mining, inflammable substances, and hazardous processes as defined by the Factories Act).

The “Family Enterprise” Loophole

The most significant point of friction in the 2016 Amendment is the proviso to Section 3, which allows a child to “help” his family or family enterprise. The law states that a child can assist their family provided the work occurs:

1. After school hours or during vacations.
2. In non-hazardous occupations.

The Critique: A Legal Backdoor Social activists and organizations like the *Kailash Satyarthi Children’s Foundation* argue that this proviso effectively cripples the spirit of the law. In the Indian context, “family enterprises” are often decentralized hubs for major industries.

- Hidden Exploitation: Industries like carpet weaving, beedi rolling, matchstick making, and gemstone polishing are frequently outsourced to home-based units. By labeling this as “helping the family,” the law makes it nearly impossible for labor inspectors to intervene.
- The Burden on the Child: Even if a child works “after school hours,” the physical and mental exhaustion of 4-5 hours of labor severely diminishes their capacity to learn, leading to high dropout rates.

JOCIPE

- **Socio-Economic Entrenchment:** Critics argue that this provision disproportionately affects children from marginalized castes and impoverished backgrounds, as they are the ones most likely to belong to families engaged in traditional, low-income home-based industries. This creates a “caste-based” labor trap where the child is legally bound to the ancestral occupation rather than being liberated through education.

Socio-Economic Drivers of the Conflict

A legal statute, no matter how well-intentioned, operates in a vacuum if it ignores the socio-economic reality of the people it intends to govern. In India, the conflict between the Right to Education (RTE) and the survival of the Child Labour market is fueled by a complex web of structural inequalities. For many families, the decision to send a child to work rather than school is not a choice made out of ignorance, but a desperate strategy for survival.

The Poverty Trap: The Child as an “Economic Asset”

The most pervasive driver of child labour is chronic, intergenerational poverty. For a family living below the poverty line, a child is frequently viewed through the lens of an “economic asset” rather than a dependent. This is particularly evident in agrarian states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where large family sizes and landlessness exacerbate financial instability.

- **Immediate Survival vs. Deferred Returns:** The primary conflict lies in the timeline of benefits. Education is a long-term investment with “deferred returns”—the child may earn a better living ten years down the line. However, the need for food, medicine, and debt repayment is immediate.
- **The Opportunity Cost:** When a child goes to school, the family loses the daily wage that child could have earned in a tea stall, a farm, or a small workshop. In the eyes of a destitute parent, the “opportunity cost” of education is simply too high. Consequently, the child’s childhood is sacrificed to bridge the gap between starvation and subsistence.

The Quality of Education: Enrollment vs. Retention

While the RTE Act has been successful in increasing “enrollment” rates across India, it has struggled significantly with “retention.” The legal mandate ensures a seat in a classroom, but it does not guarantee an environment conducive to learning.

- **Infrastructure Deficit:** Many government schools, particularly in rural regions like the Kosi belt or North Bihar, suffer from severe infrastructural gaps—lack of clean drinking water,

functional toilets (especially for girls), and electricity. These factors directly contribute to high dropout rates.

- **Lack of Vocational Relevance:** The current primary education system is often criticized for being overly academic and disconnected from the rural economy. Parents who do not see a clear path from a primary school certificate to a stable job often withdraw their children to engage them in traditional trades or “family enterprises,” believing that early vocational “on-the-job” training is more valuable for their survival than a formal degree of perceived low quality.
- **The Teacher-Student Gap:** High vacancy rates and the practice of “multi-grade teaching” (one teacher for multiple classes) result in poor learning outcomes. When children remain functionally illiterate even after three years of schooling, the perceived value of education diminishes, making labor seem like a more “productive” alternative.

Migration and Seasonal Labour: The “Invisible” Children

Migration is a massive, yet often overlooked, driver of the socio-legal conflict. Millions of families in India engage in seasonal migration, moving from states like Bihar and Jharkhand to Punjab, Haryana, or Karnataka to work in brick kilns, construction sites, or sugarcane fields.³

- **Inter-State Barriers:** When a family migrates, the child’s education is the first casualty. Differences in the medium of instruction (language) and the lack of transferable school records mean that the child cannot easily enroll in a school at the destination.
- **Documentation Hurdles:** Despite the RTE’s provision that no child should be denied admission for lack of documents, migrant families often face harassment or administrative hurdles regarding Aadhaar cards or birth certificates.
- **The “Helper” Role:** In industries like brick kilns, wages are often paid based on “piece-rate” (number of bricks made). This incentivizes the entire family, including children, to work as a single unit to maximize output. These children fall through the cracks of the RTE monitoring system because they are “temporary” residents, making them invisible to the local educational authorities.⁴

The Caste and Gender Dimension

The socio-economic conflict is also deeply rooted in identity. Statistics consistently show that a disproportionate number of child labourers

JOCIPE

belong to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC).

- **Social Stratification:** In many rural areas, social hierarchies dictate that children from marginalized communities should follow ancestral occupations. This “social gravity” pulls them away from the classroom and back into the labour force.
- **Gender Bias:** While boys are often pushed into industrial or agricultural labour, girls are disproportionately engaged in “invisible” work—domestic chores and sibling care. This domestic labour is rarely recognized as “child labour” by law, yet it is the single largest reason for the high dropout rate among girls, directly conflicting with their Right to Education.

Judicial Activism and the Role of the Courts

In the face of legislative gaps and executive apathy, the Indian Judiciary has consistently emerged as the “guardian” of the child. Through the instrument of Public Interest Litigation (PIL), the higher courts have expanded the scope of constitutional protections, transforming the Right to Education from a distant Directive Principle into an immediate, enforceable Fundamental Right. The courts have recognized that child labour is not just a statutory offense but a profound violation of the “Right to Life” guaranteed under Article 21.⁵

Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1993): The Judicial Birth of RTE

Before the Parliament passed the 86th Amendment, the Supreme Court laid its conceptual foundation in the landmark case of *Unni Krishnan, J.P. v. State of Andhra Pradesh*. In this visionary judgment, the Court held that the Right to Education is implicit in and flows from the Right to Life and Personal Liberty under Article 21.

The Bench famously observed that “the Right to Life is meaningless without the Right to Education.” The Court reasoned that a life without the opportunity for mental and intellectual development is a life reduced to “animal existence.” By declaring that every child has a fundamental right to free education until the age of 14, the Judiciary effectively forced the State’s hand, leading to the eventual constitutional amendment and the subsequent RTE Act of 2009. This case shifted the legal discourse from viewing education as a state “charity” to a citizen’s “entitlement.”

M.C. Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu (1996): Economic Deterrence and Rehabilitation

While *Unni Krishnan* focused on the right to learn, *M.C. Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu* directly confronted the “Sivakasi” matchstick and

firework factories—the then-notorious hubs of child exploitation. This judgment is revolutionary for introducing the principle of economic deterrence against employers.

The Supreme Court issued several historic directives:

- **The Rehabilitation Fund:** The Court ordered the establishment of the ‘Child Labour Rehabilitation Welfare Fund’. It mandated that any employer found employing a child in a hazardous occupation must pay a compensation of ¹ 20,000 per child into this fund.
- **The Burden of Education:** The Court emphasized that if a child is withdrawn from work, the State must ensure the child is enrolled in a school. Furthermore, the Court suggested that an adult member of the child’s family should be provided employment in place of the child to ensure the family’s income does not collapse.
- **Survey and Monitoring:** It directed the government to conduct comprehensive surveys to identify children working in hazardous sectors, shifting the responsibility of “discovery” from NGOs to the State machinery.

Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India (1984 & 1997)⁶

In the *Bandhua Mukti Morcha* cases, the Supreme Court dealt with the intersection of Bonded Labour and child exploitation. The Court held that children working in the carpet industry of Uttar Pradesh were essentially “bonded” by their circumstances. The Judiciary redefined the role of the State, asserting that it is the “duty” of the government to ensure that children are not only rescued but also provided with “social and economic rehabilitation” to prevent them from falling back into the labour trap.

The Doctrine of “*Parens Patriae*”

The Courts have often invoked the doctrine of *Parens Patriae* (parent of the nation), which grants the State—and by extension, the Judiciary—the legal standing to act as the guardian of those who cannot defend themselves, such as children. By using this doctrine, the courts have overridden the “parental right” to put a child to work, asserting that the child’s individual right to development under the Constitution takes precedence over familial economic interests.

The cumulative effect of these judgments has been to bridge the “protection gap.” The Judiciary has made it clear that while poverty is a reality, it cannot be used as a legal justification for the state’s failure to protect a child’s childhood.

Critical Analysis: The 2016 Amendment Loophole

While the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, was marketed as a landmark reform to align labor laws with the Right to Education, a deeper socio-legal analysis reveals a troubling “Socio-Legal Paradox.” By attempting to balance traditional Indian family values with modern child rights, the legislature inadvertently created significant legal backdoors that threaten to undo decades of judicial progress.⁷

The “Family Enterprise” Proviso: Legalizing the Informal Sector

The most contentious element of the 2016 Amendment is the proviso to Section 3, which permits children under 14 to “help” their families in non-hazardous occupations after school hours or during vacations. While this was ostensibly designed to allow children to learn traditional crafts or assist in family farms, it ignores the structural reality of the Indian economy.

- **Decentralized Exploitation:** Many of India’s most exploitative industries—such as beedi rolling, carpet weaving, incense stick (agarbatti) making, and bangle manufacturing—operate through a system of “outsourcing” to home-based units. By allowing work in “family enterprises,” the law effectively shields these industries from inspection. A child working in a dingy home-setting is legally “helping his parents,” even if that help involves 5 hours of repetitive, strenuous labor that directly impacts their cognitive ability to engage with schoolwork the next day.
- **The Monitoring Nightmare:** From an enforcement perspective, this clause makes the law nearly impossible to implement. Labor inspectors have no legal jurisdiction to enter private homes to verify if a child is “helping” or “working,” or to check if the work is truly happening “after school hours.” This creates an invisible workforce that is beyond the reach of the RTE’s monitoring mechanisms.

The Drastic Reduction of “Hazardous” Occupations

Perhaps the most regressive aspect of the 2016 Amendment is the radical redefinition of what constitutes “hazardous” work. Prior to the amendment, the schedule of hazardous occupations and processes included over 80 items. The new framework has slashed this list down to just three broad categories: mining, inflammable substances/explosives, and hazardous processes as defined under the Factories Act, 1948.

- **The Omission of High-Risk Sectors:** By narrowing the definition, the law has technically reclassified several dangerous industries as “non-hazardous” for adolescents (14–18 years) and potentially “safe” for children to “help” in. Industries like glass-blowing, where children are exposed to extreme heat, or chemical processing and e-waste recycling, which involve toxic fumes, are no longer explicitly barred in the same stringent manner they once were.⁸
- **The Adolescent Vulnerability:** Under the new law, adolescents are permitted to work in any industry not covered by these three categories. This leaves 15-to-17-year-olds—who should ideally be completing secondary education—vulnerable to exploitation in construction, garment sweatshops, and pesticide-heavy agriculture, all under the guise of legal, “non-hazardous” employment.

The Conflict with the “Spirit” of RTE

The 2016 Amendment creates a bifurcated childhood. It suggests that a child can be a “student” from 9 AM to 3 PM and a “labourer” from 4 PM to 8 PM. Socio-legal research consistently shows that child labor and education are mutually exclusive. The physical exhaustion, the lack of time for homework, and the psychological shift from a “learner” to an “earner” lead to a massive spike in dropout rates at the secondary level.⁹

Furthermore, this amendment disproportionately affects children from marginalized communities (Dalits, Adivasis, and Muslims) who are statistically more likely to be involved in home-based traditional occupations. By legally anchoring these children to their “family enterprises,” the state is effectively reinforcing the caste-based division of labor, contradicting the constitutional goal of social mobility through education. Instead of using the RTE to break the cycle of poverty, the 2016 Amendment risks codifying it.¹⁰

Conclusion and Recommendations

The socio-legal conflict between child labour and the Right to Education (RTE) in India is a reflection of a deeper struggle between a progressive constitutional vision and a regressive economic reality. This research paper has demonstrated that while India possesses an advanced “on-paper” legal framework, the persistent “Poverty Trap” and the strategic loopholes in the 2016 Amendment—specifically the “Family Enterprise” clause—continue to provide a sanctuary for child exploitation. The law cannot operate in a vacuum; as long as the “opportunity cost” of schooling remains higher than the immediate

survival needs of a family, the classroom will continue to lose the battle to the workshop.

Eradicating child labour and fulfilling the mandate of Article 21-A requires a transition from a purely prohibitive legal approach to a holistic socio-economic strategy. To bridge the gap between “enrollment” and “real learning,” the following recommendations are proposed:

Currently, Indian laws suffer from “age-schizophrenia.” While the RTE Act and Child Labour Act focus on the age of 14, the POCSO Act and the Juvenile Justice Act define a child as anyone under 18. This inconsistency allows 15-to-17-year-olds to be legally exploited in “non-hazardous” labor, effectively ending their secondary education. There is an urgent need to align the definition of a “child” to a uniform 18 years across all statutes, ensuring that “adolescent” labour is not used as a transition phase toward permanent school dropouts.

To address the “Poverty Trap,” the state must make it economically viable for a destitute family to choose school over work. Expanding Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) linked specifically to school attendance—beyond the existing mid-day meal schemes—can help offset the loss of a child’s potential daily wage. Financial incentives should be structured to increase as the child moves into higher secondary education, where the dropout risk is highest.

The “Family Enterprise” loophole must be strictly regulated through Social Audits and community-led monitoring. Local bodies (Gram Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies) should be empowered to conduct periodic checks on home-based industries. If a family enterprise is found to be a front for industrial outsourcing (e.g., beedi rolling or carpet weaving), it should be treated as industrial exploitation rather than “familial help,” with strict penalties for the principal employer.

Finally, the state must look beyond mere enrollment. Investing in school infrastructure and integrating vocational training within the school curriculum can make education appear more “relevant” to marginalized families. When schools provide tangible skills alongside literacy, the perceived value of education rises, naturally reducing the inclination toward child labour.

In conclusion, child labour is not an inevitable consequence of poverty, but a policy failure. Only by harmonizing our laws and providing a robust social safety net can India ensure that the “Golden Age” of childhood is a reality for every child, regardless of their socio-economic background.

References

1. Bajpai, A. (2017). *Child Rights in India: Law, Policy, and Practice* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. (This book provides a

- comprehensive analysis of the legal evolution from the 1986 Act to the 2016 Amendment).
2. Government of India. (1949). *The Constitution of India*. Ministry of Law and Justice. (References for Article 21-A, Article 24, and Directive Principles).
 3. Government of India. (2009). *The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009*. Gazette of India.
 4. Government of India. (2016). *The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016*. Ministry of Labour and Employment.
 5. Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation. (2020). *The Impact of 2016 Amendments on Child Labour in India: A Field Study*. KSCF Research Wing. (A critical resource for the "Family Enterprise" loophole).
 6. M.C. Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu, (1996) 6 SCC 756. (The landmark Supreme Court judgment establishing the Child Labour Rehabilitation Welfare Fund).
 7. Satyarthi, K. (2017). "The Pendulum of Justice: Analyzing the 2016 Amendments to Child Labour Laws." *Journal of Child Rights and Legal Reform*, 12(2), 45-62.
 8. Srivastava, S. S. (2021). "Socio-Economic Drivers of School Dropouts in Rural Bihar." *Indian Journal of Economics and Development*, 9(4), 112-128. (Specific to the regional context of North Bihar and the Kosi region).
 9. Unni Krishnan, J.P. v. State of Andhra Pradesh, (1993) 1 SCC 645. (The judicial precursor that declared education a fundamental right under Article 21).
 10. UNICEF India. (2022). *Child Labour and Education: Progress and Challenges in the Digital Age*. Annual Report on the State of the World's Children.

Bank, Finance and Rural Development in Bihar

Santosh Kumar*

Dr. Raj Kumar Prasad**

Abstract

Regional rural banks play an important role in agriculture and rural development of India. RRBS has reached the rural area of India through its vast network. The success of rural credit in India largely depends on their financial strength. RRBs are the major financing institutions at the rural level which play the responsibility of meeting the needs of various types of agricultural credit. In the process of economic development in rural areas, banks have to play an innovative role by introducing innovations in the distribution and recovery system. It is impossible for farmers and other target groups in rural areas to first deposit a fixed amount and then invest in land or allied activities or service sector. It would be more realistic to first help them by giving them loans to invest in their familiar sector, so that they are able to increase their productivity and income. The banks must then recover the loan from the increased income. At present most of the Regional Rural Banks are facing problems of overdues, recoveries, non-performing assets and other problems. Therefore, it is necessary to study the current status of RRBs in Bihar. In this paper an attempt was made to analyze RRBS in Bihar.

Key Words: Regional rural bank, rural economy, NABARD, Bihar

Introduction

Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and even economic well-being of people living in rural areas. Rural development definitely requires proper credit services. To bridge the

*Research Scholar, Department of Management,
Veer Kunwar Singh University, Ara

**Supervisor, Retd Associate Professor and Head, Shershah College,
Sasaram, Rohtas

gap that exists in meeting the special credit needs of the country's poor, Govt. A working group was designated in rural credit. Based on his recommendations, Regional Rural Banking Institutions emerged in 1975. The objective of these types of banks was to extend banking to the non-urban masses, especially in areas without banking facilities, to provide cheap institutional credit to the weaker sections of the particular society, to mobilize rural cost savings and channelize them in relation to other productive activities inside the rural areas and to reduce the cost of providing credit score in rural areas.

Generally India's rural credit market comprises equally formal and informal monetary institutions and agencies that cater to the credit demands of the rural population. For the purpose of classification of bank branches, the Reserve Bank specifies a rural area as having a population of less than 1000. RRBs compete with specialized commercial banks in Asia's non-urban credit market. RRBs provide loans for agriculture and rural development while commercial banks also cater to the needs of trade and industry in rural areas.¹

Need of Regional Rural Bank

As reported in 2019, about 66% of the Indian population lives in villages. The cost savings and cash flows of the majority of the population in rural areas are rarely attributed to specific basic needs like food, housing, education, etc. Most of the people in rural areas are involved in farming activities. Rural families also need money for their agricultural activities. To meet the demand of loan they go to moneylenders because generally taking loan from financial institutions involves a lot of paperwork, formalities and is also time consuming. Moneylenders take advantage of this situation and charge high interest rates.²

As a result the rural people are struggling with huge debts. Rural individuals need financial institutions that can provide them loans at low rates and easy terms. The primary objective of setting up RRBs is to enable rural people to get loan products at amazingly low rates and easy terms.

Regional rural banks in Bihar

Within the framework of the multi-agency system in India, four of the various RRBs functioning as scheduled commercial banks are operating in the state of Bihar, namely Bihar Regional Rural Bank (BKGB), Madhya Bihar Gramin Bank (MBGB), North Bihar Gramin Bank (UBGB) and Samastipur Regional Rural Bank (SKGB). Of these four banks, BKGB, MBGB and UBGB emerged based on the merger of eight RRBs operating in the region. The merger took place in February

JOCIPE

2007. Rural banking structure is one of the huge parts of Indian banking.³

Many business analysts and strategy makers believe that the future growth of the banking sector in India largely depends on the vigorous performance of rural financial institutions (RFIs). Among the components responsible for financial transformation of events and poverty alleviation in the rural sector, the function of RFIs is considered to be of utmost importance as a significant portion of the institutional rural credit is used by RFIs for rural improvement to assist in the development of rural capital. Despite the fact that the performance of RRBs can be measured by the achievement of poverty reduction projects that they are committed to pursue as an incentive, their achievements as business banking associations can never be ignored. It is in this setting that the profit performance after consolidation of RRBs is expected to have tremendous centrality in the Indian rural banking situation. The case becomes more convincing when the process of consolidation in RRBs was originally initiated to arrest the rising levels of huge accumulated losses.⁴

In Bihar, 68.8 percent of RRBs branches are located in rural areas, 26.2 percent in semi-urban and 5.0 percent in urban areas. Of the two RRBs in the state, 75.4 percent of Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank's branches are located in rural areas. In contrast, the number of branches of North Bihar Gramin Bank located in rural areas is relatively less (61.9 percent). The number of branches of both RRBs in Bihar has remained the same between September 2021 and 2022. However, the number of ATM cards issued by these two banks has increased from 33.1 lakh in September 2021 to 33.6 lakh in September 2022. Apart from its branch network, RRBs also work through CSPs to provide certain facilities. As of September 2022, the RRBs in Bihar had 5679 CSPs working with them.⁵

Table 1: Number of RRB Branches in Bihar (September, 2022)

Bank Name	Branch Location			Total	ATM card (in lakh)
	Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban		
Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank	813 (75.4)	204(18.9)	61 (5.7)	1078(100.0)	22.3
Uttar Bihar Gramin Bank	639 (61.9)	349(33.8)	44 (4.3)	1032(100.0)	11.3
Total	1452 (68.8)	553(26.2)	105(5.0)	2110(100.0)	33.6

Source: Economy Survey-2022-23

Source: Economy Survey-2022-23

Importance of RRB's in Bihar

The study portrays the importance of RRB'S in Bihar state. It could be summarize that the course of consolidation taken ready for improving working execution of RRBs in Bihar state, was prevail with regards to improving benefit and feasibility position of the separate banks in this district.

Union of the banks help in lessening collected misfortunes position (from 469.2 crores to. 40.9 crores). For a portion of the banks viz. UBGB consolidation measure has set up a turnaround story.⁶

Nonetheless, story behind the accomplishment of solidification of RRBs in this district are expressed beneath:

- After consolidation, the RRBs in Bihar State are continuously advancing as business substances fit for contending with different RFIs. The customary part of taking into account the credit needs of target bunch customer base proceeds with them, yet the extension of business through NTG (non-target gathering) financing has opened up new vistas. In this manner the RRBs are redesigning the nature of administrations to meet their desire. The consolidated banks are shedding their prior picture of 'thin banking', consider giving a scope of items enveloping every single budgetary need and spotlight on 'monetary consideration' careful reformist utilization of advancements and ease elective conveyance channels.
- The blended RRBs were setting up a solid connection with NGOs, Government and other augmentation offices, network based associations, corporate, research establishments and socially and formatively arranged people and associations to develop individuals potential.
- There might be events when the rural bank in this locale would have occasions to fund in overabundance of as far as possible under administrative standards or purposeful standards by the Board of Directors. After union blended RRBs in Bihar state are presently participating in consortium account game plans on pari passu premise with public area banks.
- Merged RRBs were currently playing a credit–drove position of authority by giving credit over the gracefully chain including capacity, preparing, transportation, showcasing and retailing. A significant bit of leeway of the methodology is that credit dispensed to one fragment will help in recuperation of advances from another connection in the chain.
- The connection between support banks and RRBs are presently changed into a synergistic one, valuable to the two banks. After

JOCIPE

solidification, a MOU (for example update of comprehension) are presently executed between the support bank and the GOI and between the RRBs with their separate supported banks concerning the observing of execution of RRBs under different key boundaries e.g., gradual development in business, outreach, benefit, improvement in CD proportion, decrease in NPAs and so on

- Mechanization and computerization of the banking administrations. The basic solidification of the RRBs through blend has purchased colossal open doors for RRBs in Bihar State to prepare. It empowered them to turn out to be monetarily solid and greater regarding business volume just as effort. The blend of misfortune making RRBs has improved the productivity of RRBs and has become the quantity of benefit making RRBs.⁷

Micro Finance Initiatives

The targeted outcome of this sub-component is to enable 44,100 SHGs of poor households to develop and manage microfinance portfolios of Rs. 285.47 crore (\$68 million), including cumulative group savings of Rs. 1. 34.30 crore (\$08 million), cumulative interest accrual is Rs. 26 crore (\$6 million), cumulative loans from commercial banks amount to Rs. 51.40 crore (\$12 million) and cumulative community investment fund of Rs. 1 174 crore (\$41 million). This will be achieved by creating, developing and nurturing microfinance into a hierarchy of self-managed community based organizations with Self Help Groups (SHGs) as the building blocks.

The overarching goal of micro-finance intervention through the project is to create an environment of trust regarding the approach of banking with the poor. Its objective is to create institutions for the poor who are empowered enough to run the institution on the basis of financial prudence and stability. It aims to adopt a multi-pronged strategy to ensure financial flow into the rural economy from mainstream financial institutions and other supplementary sources like SHPIs and MFIs.⁸

Additionally, the medium term objective of the sub-component is as follows:

- To ensure that assets are created and incomes are improved for the community based organizations (CBOs) established or strengthened in the project.
- To facilitate the poor to convert their secure asset base into an economically viable, improved and sustainable living;

- Facilitate bookkeeping and accounting systems for CBOs for promoting transparency, accountability and ambience of faith for other stakeholders.

Conclusion

The RRBs have had a great deal of success in bringing banking services to previously unbanked areas and making institutional credit available to the weaker sections of the population in these areas. The efforts made by RRBs in branch expansion, deposit mobilization, rural development and credit deployment to weaker sections in rural areas are commendable. RRBs have successfully achieved their objectives, such as taking banking to the doorstep of rural households in unbanked rural areas, providing easy and cheap credit to the vulnerable rural section dependent on private lenders, encouraging rural savings for productive activities, generating employment in rural areas and reducing the cost of credit distribution in rural areas. Thus RRB is providing the strongest banking network. Government should take some effective remedial steps to make Rural Banks viable.

References

1. Bose S. Regional Rural Banks: The Past and the Present Debate
3. Das, U.R. (1998) "Performances and Prospects of RRBs", Banking Finance, 2005.
2. Gupta SK. "Profitability and Regional Rural Banks", Kurukshetra, July. 5. Gupta and Sodhi (1995), "Economic Liberalization and Rural Credit", Kurukshetra, 1996:43(10):27-30.
3. Horseman SB. Performance of Regional Rural Banks, New Delhi, 7. Ibrahim Dr. M. Syed (2010) "Performance Evaluation of Regional Rural Banks in India", International Business Research, 2002:3(4):203-211.
4. Jham Poonam. "Banking Sector Reforms and Progress of Regional Rural Banks in India (An Analytical Study)", Online published, 2012.
5. Khankhoje D, Sathye M. "Efficiency of Rural Banks: The Case of India", International Business Research, 2008:1(2):140-149.
6. NABARD: Reports.
7. RBI, Monthly Bulletins, Various issues
8. Report of Trend and Progress in Banking, RBI, Various issues

Poverty and Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Rural Bihar

Sweety Kumari*

Dr. Raj Kumar Prasad**

Abstract

Poverty measurement is important because it serves as a measure of the degree of development and advancement, and an indicator of the achievement or failure of systems for comprehensive development and poverty reduction. The reason for differentiating degrees of poverty in India has evolved over a long time. Poverty is concentrated spatially and among social and monetary groups, and those who are generally defenseless against poverty include landless workers, marginal farmers, socially backward classes, and individuals living in remote areas. The state government is giving full emphasis on these need alleviation projects to help the poor people. The push given by the public authorities is the right approach in all respects. Bihar has evolved from a moderately developing state to a better developing state. Despite the fact that the welfare and agribusiness sectors have been dismissed, progress in non-farm activities in the country is helping to reduce poverty. Rural poverty in India is much higher than metropolitan poverty. Thus, poverty in India is country specific and metropolitan deprivation is simply the spread of rural poverty into urban communities.

Key Words: Poverty, Development, Landless Workers, Farmers, Bihar

*Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Veer Kunwar Singh University, Ara

**Supervisor, Retd Associate Professor and Head, Shershah College, Sasaram, Rohtas

Introduction

The poor of the world are overwhelmingly the individuals of non-industrial nations that have neglected to stay aware of the financial degrees of the West since the start of the modern pioneer period in the sixteenth century. There are tremendous contrasts among the non-industrial nations. Physiological thickness is one manner by which the creating scene differs.

In certain nations a modest quantity of arable land with enormous number of populace can make neediness.

There are additionally tremendous contrasts in abundance inside nations and among individuals. Human advancement requires the advancement of human lives and prosperity.

It's in this way especially identified with living with considerable opportunities. Opportunity is related with the capacity to dodge starvation and undernourishment or to get away from untimely mortality. Neediness limits human opportunities and denies an individual of respect.

Neediness isn't only a question of insufficient pay yet in addition a matter of low education, short life desire and absence of essential necessities, for example, drinking water. Human Poverty idea of UNDP features basically the hardships in wellbeing, instruction and pay.

Sexual orientation imbalance changed human improvement files are useful to follow the gathering and district explicit impediments and for showing suitable medicinal measures.

Since these hardships are between related, an extensive methodology alone can kill destitution and guarantee ideal usage of HR for reasonable turn of events.¹

Conceptual Framework of Poverty

'Destitution' being a multi-dimensional idea alludes to the shortage of admittance to a bunch of least requirements for living, for example, food, lodging, garments, schooling and wellbeing offices and numerous other related fundamental necessities. Of these essential necessities the main perspective is the food prerequisite. Food is truth be told has the most noteworthy need to each person.

To comprehend the way of thinking of provincial neediness lightening in India, it is fundamental to have an investigation of the previous endeavours made toward this path.

Before autonomy, British Government was not excited or even intrigued about the destruction of Indian destitution.

At calculated level a meaning of destitution is included both in the assessment of extent of populace living in neediness (a large scale level gauge) and the ID of helpless families for focused conveyance of different neediness lightening projects, and it is mentally exquisite to think about a typical definition for both the activities. Practically speaking, in any case, the two methodologies have followed various ways.²

Literature Review

Ahluwalia's investigation (1977) assessed that in 1956-57 the provincial neediness was 54.1 percent which boiled down to 38.9 percent in 1960-61. It took Rs. 15 as the destitution line at 1960-61 costs. Ahluwalia assessed that in 1973-74 about 46.1 percent if the complete country populace was under destitution.

Krishna, Kapila, Porwal and Singh (2003) contemplated twenty towns of Vadodara and Panchmahals areas in Gujarat. The investigation indicated that every last advancement had been seen on the generally of the economy and progress of the populace in the course of the last 25 years. 59 percent of the family units around there were helpless 25 years back and the individuals in the 57 percent families stay helpless today. The tremendous development in the economy of Gujarat has neglected to improve monetary states of the destitute individuals living there.

Bardhan (1973) inspected the frequency of destitution in country India during 1960 and for this reason he broke down the NSS information for 1967-68 and 1968-69. In his paper, Professor Bardhan referenced the impact of two continuous dry spells Indian ranchers saw in 1965-66 and 1966-67 on the country populace.

Beam (2008) scrutinized the then Left Front Government for its powerlessness to control and limit the degree of joblessness, neediness and appetite in the province of West Bengal. The creator accused the public authority of West Bengal on the grounds that the public authority neglected to take up compelling measures to battle craving and destitution in West Bengal.

Karmakar and Sarkar (2004) made a broad examination dependent on country West Bengal. This investigation shows that there stays a disparity as far as portion of pay and populace in the event of rural and non-farming pay among various pay sub-gatherings. The investigation was led in Birbhum locale of the territory of West Bengal.

Maheshwari (2002) found that provincial neediness rose forcefully in 1992. She explored whether the ascent in destitution was because of terrible climate conditions or because of new monetary changes. In this paper the author assessed the overall effect of climate related components, monetary withdrawal and food grain costs on country destitution. It was discovered that the effect of antagonistic climate conditions was the fundamental explanation behind the decrease in food grain creation.

Rajasekhar and Satapathy (2006) in their paper made an appraisal of a significant antipoverty program for ladies in India. They made a nitty gritty investigation on the SGSY and its function to lessen destitution among the provincial ladies through the arrangement of independent work exercises among them, especially among the helpless ladies in self-improvement gatherings. They likewise found that for each situation the asset delivered for this reason for existing was not exactly the real assignment made.

Overview of Rural Bihar Poverty

Rural Bihar faces deep-rooted poverty, with over 39% of families living on ¹ 6,000 or less per month, often struggling with health, education, and living standards. Key poverty alleviation initiatives include JEEViKA (Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project), which empowers self-help groups, and the Bihar Laghu Udyami Yojana, providing financial aid for small enterprises.³

Key Poverty Statistics and Factors

- High Poverty Rate: Roughly 33.76% of Bihar's population is multi-dimensionally poor, making it one of the poorest states in India.
- Income Disparity: According to a 2023 survey, 9.4 million+ families (39.13%) live on less than ¹ 6,000/month.
- High Dependency Ratio: Bihar has India's highest dependency ratio (67.1%), where 70% of the population relies on only 30% of earners.
- Infrastructure Issues: 32 out of 38 districts have a per capita GDP below the state average, indicating uneven development.

Major Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Rural Bihar

- JEEViKA (Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project): Supported by the World Bank, this project enhances social and economic

JOCIPE

empowerment by fostering self-help groups (SHGs) and sustainable livelihoods across 34,043 villages.

- Bihar Laghu Udyami Yojana: A state-led scheme providing up to 1 2 lakh in grants for families with a monthly income under 1 6,000 to set up small businesses.⁴
- DAY-NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission): The Central government has allocated 1 6,181.41 crore to Bihar from FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25 to promote self-employment.⁵
- MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act): Provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural households.
- PMAY-G (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin): Aims to provide housing for the rural poor.
- Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY): Focuses on food security for the poorest families.
- Chief Minister Gramin Setu Scheme: Focuses on improving rural infrastructure and connectivity to aid economic activity.

Key Focus Areas for Alleviation

- Women Empowerment: Strengthening SHGs has been central to improving financial inclusion.
- Rural Non-Farm Activities: Promoting rural non-farm enterprises to reduce reliance on agriculture.
- Skill Development: Providing training to rural youths to create self-employment opportunities.

Evaluation of the Poverty Alleviation Programmes

Issues regarding Self Employment Programmes

The significant protests that have been gotten by the locale specialists are:-

- Non-collaboration from the banks.
- Delay in bank method and payment of the help.
- More than two-third of the regions, where SGSY has been actualized, face issues in operationalizing the plan which incorporate, among others, issues as a team with the banks, absence of mindfulness among the objective gatherings, lacking framework and staff uphold.
- Presence of various ineligible recipients.
- The movement of arrangement of the SHGs was slow.

- Extent of business created was insufficient for a sizeable number of poor to cross the neediness line. It created full work for very lower level of poor people, equal to 100 days of work for 20 % of poor people.

Issues regarding Wage Employment Programmes

The list of beneficiaries was not available at block and panchayat level offices.

- Registration of pay business searchers was not done.
- About 33 percent of works were embraced by gram panchayats, 50% by contractual workers, and 20% by people.
- Muster rolls have not been kept up.
- Most of the works embraced were street works and building works. According to the standards, need must be given to watershed improvement projects and minor water system plans.

Issues Regarding Social Security Programs

In practically all the plans, pay neediness is just tended to leaving weakness of the poor to different dangers immaculate.

- About 7 percent of the non-helpless recipients likewise got benefits.
- Difficulties in profiting the advantage have been experienced by 18.77% of the example recipients. The significant trouble showed is the non-collaboration of specialists.
- Families in the higher pay gathering, however insignificant in number have likewise profited by the plan. Almost 10% of the recipients having exorbitant shopper durables like TV, cooler, roof fan, and so forth, have crawled into the BPL list. There is in this way a requirement for additional improvement in the check framework.

Issues Regarding Basic Need Programs

- Perceptions and evaluations of the PDS in Rajasthan differ. Arranging Commission assessed spillage of food grains in Rajasthan to be 25-50 percent, its greater part happening at the FPS level.
- Long separations, sporadic and awkward timings of FPS and botched chances during movement.
- Also, the sorts of food grains provided by the FPS don't coordinate the decision of most of rustic populace in Rajasthan, who don't incline toward rice.

JOCIPE

- As an after effect of these issues, genuine sums lifted are far not exactly apportioned at all levels. Clearly APL families don't use the PDS food grains, perhaps in light of value contemplations or non-correspondence with their decision of food grains.

Issues Regarding Awareness of Poverty Alleviation Programs

- In numerous regions, the rules had not been gotten or were not accessible in Hindi/nearby language.
- The thought that NREGA is request driven has still not saturated among neighbourhood authorities in many regions.
- Workers were generally ignorant about their particular rights and the cycles that are needed to benefit of the rights.
- No markers exist for surveying public cooperation or their mindfulness.
- Most destitution mitigation programs have widely discussed support of Panchayati raj foundations and neighbourhood individuals in the usage of Schemes. Notwithstanding, in a dominant part of the states, the proposed recipients were not even mindful of the presence of such plans.⁶

Findings

- The extent of families comprising of various classifications has been practically consistent for example about 21% in S.C. families and 29% in S.T. families. The non S.C./S.T. families have been over half in all the years. It likewise affirms the positive effect of this plan in destitution easing.
- As far as wages are concerned, 65.77% use was dispensed for work compensation in 2019-20 and
- 34.23% use was dispensed for material buy. Subsequently, the accentuation was laid on giving pay works not resource framing works.
- If we need to see the actual improvement of the rural business plot, the quantity of absolute work in 2018-19 were 15337.95 which rose to 22346.08 in 2019-20 indicating the development pace of 45.69%.
- The studies shows the way that ladies labourers are looking into getting work than the male specialists. During the year 2012-13 ladies performed 51.20 percent individual days where

as S.C. and S.T labourers including the ladies of these classes added to 19.44% and 0.97% separately.⁷

- The concentrate likewise features that consistently new works were taken up by the govt., to build the business level.
- It might be alluring to give formal space to different associations for advancing the complete methodology under neediness decrease programs. This might be done through open - private organization in those zones where they have created fruitful encounters through their previous endeavours.

Conclusion

Understanding the livelihood dynamics of rural households is crucial for formulating rural, pro-poor policies. Quite a few studies in the past have explored the impact of several aspects of livelihoods on rural poverty using unidimensional or multidimensional poverty measures, which fail to capture the nuances of rural poverty sufficiently. Identifying the gap in the literature, we explore the dynamics of rural poverty in relation to access to livelihood capital and livelihood diversification of rural households in India.

In India, Bihar is one of the poorest states with poverty at 42.6%. Bihar constitutes about 3% of national geographical area, but supports, 8 % of its population. The state is characterized as most backward state of India. In Bihar there has been a slow decline in the incidence of poverty, from 62 % in early 1980s to 42 % at the end of 20th century. And it remained almost constant up to 2005-2006. There has not been any significant influence of the agricultural development and poverty alleviation programmes on reduction of poverty.

After cautious survey of the counter neediness plans one may have the feeling that all the projects are not profiting the focused on individuals according to the desire particularly regarding expanding their pay. This may maybe be because of spillages that have had occurred in the various projects. Spillages in open circulation framework (PDS), political debasement, high managerial expense, and the disappointment of the public authority to focus on the genuine recipients, i.e., the truly poor Apart from increasing pay and subsequently improve the nature of food, wellbeing, training, and related pleasantries a lot more things are given up.

References

1. Bardhan Pranab K. On the Incidence of Poverty in Rural India of the Sixties, Annual Number, 1973.

JOCIPE

2. Dandekar VM, Nilakantha Rath. Poverty in India-I. Dimension and Trends Economic and Political Weekly, 1971, 2.
3. Karmakar S. Income Inequality, Poverty and Food Security in west Bengal, India Journal of Social Science Studies, 2013, 30.
4. Kapila Uma. Indian Economy since Independence, Published by Academic Foundation, 2003.
5. Maheshwari Asha. Economic Reforms and Rural Poverty, Economic and Political Weekly, 2002.
6. Jha R. Reducing poverty and Inequality in India: Has Liberalizations Helped?, mimeo, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Goregaon, Bombay, 1999.
7. Tendulkar S, Sunderam K, Jain LR. Poverty in India, 1970-71 to 1988-89, ARTEP Working Papers, ILO, New Delhi, 1993.

Rethinking Positive Discrimination in India: Navigating the Debate Between Social Justice and Meritocracy

Keshav Kumar Mishra

Abstract

Positive discrimination in India, primarily enacted through reservation policies, functions as a constitutional tool to promote genuine equality and social justice. Grounded in the historical context of caste-based discrimination, these measures seek to elevate marginalized communities and guarantee their involvement in public institutions. Nonetheless, as time has progressed, affirmative action has sparked a lasting discourse regarding merit, institutional effectiveness, and equity. Critics assert that such measures compromise the principle of merit, whereas supporters argue that they are crucial for creating a fair and equitable environment. Recent judicial developments, particularly in *Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India*, indicate a noteworthy shift in the principles of affirmative action by integrating economic criteria and easing conventional constitutional restrictions like the 50% ceiling rule. This paper rigorously analyzes the foundational principles, judicial developments, and current issues surrounding affirmative action in India, advocating for a reimagined, multi-faceted framework that aligns social equity with merit-based ideals.

Keywords: Positive Discrimination, Affirmative Action, Reservation Policy, Social Justice, Substantive Equality, Equality before Law and Caste-based Discrimination.

Research Scholar Institute of Law, Sri JJT University Jhunjhunu
Rajasthan India

October-December, 2025

(195)

1. Introduction

India's societal framework has been significantly influenced by centuries of discrimination based on caste and the resulting social exclusion. The architects of the Constitution understood that mere formal equality—applying the same treatment to all—would fall short in a society marked by profound disparities. As a result, the Constitution embraced a progressive strategy by allowing the State to carry out affirmative action as outlined in Articles 15(4), 15(5), and 16(4).¹ The aforementioned provisions grant the State the authority to establish specific measures for those who are socially and educationally disadvantaged, including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, thus fostering genuine equality. While these policies were originally intended as short-term solutions to address past disparities, they have persisted for many years. This persistence prompts essential inquiries about their efficacy, breadth, and enduring consequences.² While affirmative action has certainly enhanced representation and access, it has also raised issues regarding reliance, inefficiency, and political influence. Therefore, it is imperative to reevaluate and reconsider affirmative action in modern India with growing urgency.

2. Theoretical Framework: Equity versus Achievement

2.1 *Social Justice*

The notion of social justice is rooted in the belief that individuals and groups who have faced historical disadvantages need special consideration to attain true equality.³ In the Indian context, the pursuit of social justice is intricately linked to the concept of substantive equality, aiming to tackle structural barriers instead of simply guaranteeing formal equality. Reservation policies serve as essential tools designed to redistribute opportunities and break down established hierarchies.

2.2 *Meritocracy*

Meritocracy, in contrast, highlights personal achievement, skill, and effectiveness as the foundation for choosing and promoting individuals. In societies characterized by disparity, merit cannot be regarded as a neutral or objective criterion. As highlighted by experts such as Amartya Sen, merit frequently mirrors the availability of resources including quality education, social connections, and economic stability. Consequently, favoring merit while neglecting foundational disparities threatens to sustain entrenched inequities.

2.3 Reconciling the Debate

The primary difficulty resides in reconciling two opposing yet interconnected objectives:

- Guaranteeing equitable access for every person
- Attaining fair results for groups that have been historically disadvantaged

Instead of perceiving social justice and meritocracy as opposing forces, it is more fitting to regard them as interrelated concepts that require thoughtful equilibrium within a legal structure.

3. Constitutional and Judicial Framework

3.1 Constitutional Provisions

The Indian Constitution provides a robust legal foundation for affirmative action:

- Article 14 guarantees equality before the law
- Articles 15(4) and 15(5) allow special provisions for backward classes
- Article 16(4) permits reservation in public employment
- Article 46 directs the State to promote the interests of weaker sections

These provisions collectively reflect a commitment to social transformation and inclusive development.

3.2 Landmark Judicial Decisions

The judiciary has played a pivotal role in shaping the contours of affirmative action:

- “Indra Sawhney v. Union of India”^x established the 50% ceiling rule and introduced the concept of the creamy layer.
- “M. Nagaraj v. Union of India”^y upheld reservation in promotions but imposed conditions such as backwardness and inadequate representation.
- “Jarnail Singh v. Lachmi Narain Gupta”^{1p} refined the application of the creamy layer principle.

These decisions demonstrate the judiciary’s effort to strike a balance between equity and efficiency.

4. Recent Supreme Court Developments

4.1 Economic Reservation Shift

In “Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India”¹¹, the Supreme Court affirmed the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment, which established a 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).

Key Implications

- Recognition of economic criteria as a standalone basis for reservation
- Relaxation of the 50% ceiling rule
- Validation of exclusion of SC/ST/OBC from EWS category

This judgment marks a significant departure from the traditional caste-based framework and broadens the scope of affirmative action.

4.2 Sub-Classification Doctrine

In the case of “State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh”¹², the highest Court allowed for sub-classification within the categories of SC/ST. This guarantees that the advantages of allocation are fairly shared among sub-groups, tackling internal inequalities and avoiding domination by more developed segments.

4.3 Merit Principle Clarification

Recent decisions have confirmed that individuals from designated categories are permitted to contend in the general category based on their merits.¹³ This principle underscores that reservation does not diminish merit; instead, it fosters equitable competition.

4.4 EWS Implementation in Education

The directives issued by the Supreme Court in 2026 underscored the necessity for rigorous enforcement of EWS quotas within private educational institutions, aligning with the Right to Education framework.¹⁴ This indicates a transition towards guaranteeing the successful implementation of policies.

4.5 Creamy Layer Refinement

Recent judicial observations have clarified the standards for identifying the creamy layer, guaranteeing that advantages are directed towards the most underprivileged individuals.¹⁵

5. Critical Evaluation

5.1 Achievements

Positive discrimination has yielded significant benefits:

- Increased representation of marginalized communities in education and employment¹⁶
- Political empowerment through reserved constituencies¹⁷
- Greater social mobility and inclusion

5.2 Limitations

Despite its achievements, affirmative action faces several challenges:

- Reinforcement of caste identities and identity politics^{1x}
- Dominance of the creamy layer, limiting benefits for the poorest^{1y}
- Concerns regarding institutional efficiency and merit^{2p}
- Absence of periodic review mechanisms
- Over-reliance on quotas without addressing structural issues

6. Merit Revisited

Merit should be comprehended within the framework of its societal implications. It is shaped by the availability of educational opportunities, financial assets, and community assistance frameworks.²¹ Consequently, affirmative action does not diminish merit; instead, it reinterprets it by considering the disparities in initial circumstances. It allows individuals from underprivileged backgrounds to engage in a more equitable manner.

7. Reforming Positive Discrimination

To ensure its continued relevance, affirmative action must evolve:

- Adoption of multi-dimensional criteria combining caste, economic status, and regional disadvantage
- Establishment of periodic review mechanisms
- Greater investment in education, healthcare, and skill development
- Reduction of political interference in reservation policies²²

Such reforms can enhance both fairness and efficiency.

8. Conclusion

Positive discrimination in India is currently at a pivotal moment. While it has been instrumental in advancing social equity, its ongoing efficacy hinges on its capacity to adjust to evolving socio-economic conditions. Recent Supreme Court rulings suggest a movement towards a more sophisticated and adaptable methodology, integrating economic factors and highlighting focused allocation.

The path forward for affirmative action does not involve discarding reservation but rather enhancing and improving it. A well-structured system that harmonizes fairness with individual achievement can guarantee that the objectives of equity, effectiveness, and inclusivity are met concurrently. Ultimately, the challenge lies not in selecting

one over the other, but in integrating them within a fluid constitutional framework.

References:

1. Constitution of India, Arts. 15(4), 15(5), 16(4).
2. Marc Galanter, *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India* (OUP, 1984) 3–10.
3. Upendra Baxi, *The Crisis of the Indian Legal System* (Vikas, 1982) 45.
4. Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Harvard University Press, 1992) 28–35.
5. Constitution of India, Art. 15(4), 15(5).
6. Constitution of India, Art. 16(4).
7. Constitution of India, Art. 46.
8. *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India*, 1992 Supp (3) SCC 217, 809–810.
9. *M. Nagaraj v. Union of India*, (2006) 8 SCC 212, 102–104.
10. *Jarnail Singh v. Lachhmi Narain Gupta*, (2018) 10 SCC 396, 15–18.
11. *Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India*, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 1540, 150–155.
12. *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh*, (2024) SCC (Constitution Bench).
13. Supreme Court rulings on open category merit principle (2025).
14. Supreme Court directions on EWS implementation under RTE (2026).
15. Supreme Court observations on creamy layer criteria (2026).
16. Government of India, Reservation Policy Reports.
17. Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution* (1966) 324.
18. Andre Béteille, *Caste, Class and Power* (OUP, 1991) 112.
19. *Ashoka Kumar Thakur v. Union of India*, (2008) 6 SCC 1.
20. A.M. Shah, “Reservations and Meritocracy”, *Economic and Political Weekly*.
21. Amartya Sen (n 4) 40.
22. M.P. Jain, *Indian Constitutional Law* (LexisNexis, latest ed.) 1050.

Navigating the Indo-Pacific: An Exhaustive Analysis of ASEAN-India Maritime Cooperation, Geopolitical Economy, and Regional Security

Moupriya Biswas

Abstract

Recent development in maritime relations between the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Republic of India unfold against a larger backdrop of competition between parsed geopolitics and security architecture, framed within complex layers of geo-economics space dubbed Indo-Pacifica. This ranged from traditional defence diplomacy via geo-economics integration up to non-traditional security paradigms, but it is the maritime domain where ASEAN-India strategic convergence found its most persuasive theatre. The Approach has evolved from the post- Cold War Look East Policy through to its contemporary action-oriented Act East Policy; resulting in relations that have reached a comprehensive strategic partnership. Through a close analysis of the complex institutional complementarities between AOIP and IPOI, the report underscores a common normative disposition for a free, open, and rules-based maritime order based on respect for ASEAN Centrality and UNCLOS. The report further discusses the geoeconomic factors underpinning this partnership, such as reconfiguration of supply chains in the post-pandemic world, ongoing structural review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), India's mega layers of domestic maritime infrastructure reforms - Sagarmala program, Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 etc. The paper

Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, The University of Burdwan, (West Bengal)

October-December, 2025

(201)

gauges the fundamentals of ‘Minilaterals’ such as Quad and AUKUS on how these can be transformational in nature for their impact on ASEAN institutional primacy, with ramifications for India as a crucial strategic pivot between Western-centric deterrent architectures and Southeast Asian multilateralism. Aiming at a number of key bilateral centers, notably Indonesia, but also Singapore and Vietnam, some of the United States’ more capable partners in countering non-traditional hazards, from illegal fishing to climate change to piracy and turning attention toward explaining what existing operational successes look like as well as persistent bureaucratic- and strategic shortcomings. It argues that a nuanced strategic device would not only be consistent with the aspiration of partnership and operationalising ambitious mandates for 2026 ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperative.

Key Words: ASEAN, India, Minilaterals, Geo-economics, Regional security, QUAD.

Introduction:

The Strategic Evolution of ASEAN-India Relations

The waters connecting the Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific are today’s most dynamic, economically critical and strategically contested domain in contemporary global politics. The Republic of India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) stand at the geographic and institutional center point of this Indo-Pacific continuum. Over the last 30 years, each side has built on millennia of civilization to go from tentative diplomatic outreach toward one another to a substantive, complex Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that was formally upgraded in 2022 (Lin, 2022). The maritime domain as the primary artery of international trade, a repository and corridor for some of the world’s most critical natural resources, and perhaps one of the most volatile fulcrums within great-power geopolitical competition represents the touchstone for this alignment.

The track of India’s foreign policy paradigms and to an increased potential as a sea power are rooted in India’s maritime orientation towards Southeast Asia (Pant, 2016). India’s post-Cold War geopolitical re-positioning on the world stage started in earnest from 1991 with the rollout of its “Look East Policy” designed to broach this because it industrialised after liberalising its recently opened up since stagnated, inward looking economy towards these faster growing economies popularly styled as “Asian Tiger” bloc by that time. This initial economic and diplomatic outreach translated into formal institutional ties at a steady pace — India became an ASEAN sectoral dialogue partner in

1992, full dialogue partner in 1995 and summit-level partner by 2002. However, New Delhi realized that this was not enough and accredited the evolving balance of power shift to China's maritime assertiveness and growing geo-economics centrality of wider Asia-Pacific region. This has given rise to the conceptualization of an "Act East Policy" (AEP) in 2014 during the time of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Act East paradigm was a paradigmatic shift philosophically and operationally from vague outreach to an action-oriented approach. It pushed physical and digital connectivity, institutional capacity building, but most crucially maritime defense diplomacy to an absolute forefront of India regional engagement (Lin, 2022). It also illustrates India's awakening to its maritime nature, a legacy of its civilizational maritime past, and the contemporary strategic mission of achieving considerable reach in the Northeast Indian Ocean—embarking on a more ambitious role in Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Lin, 2022).

As the centre of global economic gravity is moving unavoidably toward Asia, protecting Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and ensuring vital Southeast Asian chokepoints (the Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, Ombai-Wetar Straits) are open to trade has become existential for both New Delhi as well as many ASEAN capitals (RSIS, 2017). ASEAN also increasingly finds itself united with India in a shared imperative to uphold rules-based maritime order, resist unilateral hegemony and build a sustainable "Blue Economy" (ASEAN, 2023). The following comprehensive analysis unpacks this intricate lattice of maritime cooperation, differentiating between institutional, geo-economics and security-levels in the context of the lancinating geopolitical economy of Indo-Asia leading into a proposed 2026 ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation.

The Geopolitical Economy of the Indo-Pacific Space

"The Geopolitical Economy of the Indo-Pacific-The Alchemy of Global Trade, Marine Resource Competition and Great-Power Strategic Rivalry" Asia's continued outperformance relative to Western economies since the 1990s has further woven the continent into sprawling global value chains that are reliant on unrestricted and protected maritime transit (Lin,20222). As a result, geo-economics is no longer separated from geo-strategy; control of or access to the sea lanes determines the national economy's health.

Chief among such structural catalytic forces for ASEAN-India convergence is the rapid expansion of China's economic and military footprint. Beijing's grand strategy is built on a combination of economic

statecraft, aggressive diplomacy and military modernization. Broad overland and maritime silk roads between China, South Asia, southeast Asian countries (through the Belt and Road Initiative [BRI] and with its marine part in parallel often called as “string of pearls” pose a challenge creating dual use maritime industries in littoral nation theory of “Ind-ocean” (Brewster, 2018). At the same time, China’s wide-ranging militarization of maritime features in the South China Sea and its assertive stance on disputed territorial claims undermine the sovereignty of certain members of ASEAN. In response to this new order of things, both India and ASEAN work dynamically to diversify their strategic and economic portfolios so as not to be overly dependent on any one regional hegemon, favouring a multipolar Asia.

From a strictly economic standpoint, recent global crises that have caused worldwide disruption in supply chains were the immediate stimulators for “China Plus One” strategies to accelerate amongst global manufacturers. Global enterprises are currently restructuring their manufacturing systems away from the complete dependence on China, re-distributing capital expenditures as well as production facilities to Southeast Asia (especially Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia) as well as India. Trade data underscores this shift. India’s share of United States container imports grew from 3 percent to 5 percent during the period from 2017 through 2022, while that of Vietnam doubled from 4 to 8 percent, which one might interpret even as a parallel geo-economics rise (UNCTAD, 2023). These re-organized supply chains discussed above continues to show the highest growth rates globally along intra-Asian routes and points towards a highly integrated ASEAN-India manufacturing and logistics ecosystem.

In 2015, in order to protect these growing economic interests and project influence amiably, India enunciated the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine (Pant,2016). SAGAR is India’s ideational fulcrum to view the maritime commons as a shared developmental space. It prioritizes capacity building and humanitarian assistance, transparent infrastructure investment, and sustainable resource extraction in lieu of zero-sum military predominance. For ASEAN, whose governments depend on coastal economies and which has as many as five direct Indian Ocean littorals (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Myanmar), the assured security of this broad swathe of maritime space is not a strategic option but an absolute economic necessity (RSIS, 2017). The Indian Ocean historical trade network that predated the European colonial age and one without an overarching hegemon provides a cultural and historical model for this

contemporary geo-economics integration: prosperity through open sea lines of communication.

Institutional Architectures: Synthesizing the AOIP and IPOI

In purely economic terms, the global supply chain disruption in various global crises has only speeded up the implementation of the Chinas Plus One strategy among the world manufacturers. MNCs are in the dynamism of resettling their manufacturing chains beyond the conventional China to focus on their capital flows and production facilities in South-Eastern Asia (specifically Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia), and India. This change is emphasised by trade statistics. As an example, the Indian share in the United States container imports increased by 3 percent to 5 percent in 2017 to 2022, whereas the Vietnamese share doubled 4 percent to 8 percent, which is indicative of the parallel The ASEAN vision of the future of the Indo-Pacific (the AOIP) and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) have been intentionally built around a shared concept of organising a particular strategic crystal of their respective countries in the regional environment. Both models were developed and initiated in 2019 as non-treaty-based, inclusive, platforms to deal with strategic competition by means of functional and issue-focused cooperation (UNCTAD, 2023).

The AOIP as was adopted in the 34th ASEAN Summit is a collective effort by the Southeast Asian region to regain the Indo-Pacific discourse as non-military-strategic formulations used by extra-regional forces (Lin,2022). It has its basic foundation on the principle of ASEAN centrality which optimises openness, inclusiveness, respect to international law and conformity to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). The normative foundation of the AOIP is the principles of peaceful dispute settlement of the TAC and renunciation of the threat or the use of force. Structurally, the AOIP concentrates on four practical areas of cooperation which include maritime cooperation, connectivity, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and economic integration.

To build upon this model, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented the IPOI during the 14th East-Asia Summit in November 2019 in Bangkok. The IPOI is a successful operationalization of the larger vision of SAGAR, in seven broad thematic pillars. The pillars are headed by lead or co-lead countries and this permits a decentralised collaborative strategy of resolving regional problems (ASEAN, 2019).

JOCIPE

It is, however, a chronic diplomatic challenge to embed that convergence in financial practice. While the AOIP might thus be aimed at a more aspirational document, one lessens an agenda built on firmer actionable incentives in light of ASEAN's internal limitations and consensus approaches, India will at times prescribe purposeful partnerships through security-driven readings of concepts such as "Indo-Pacific" and the maritime space. Closing this operational gap will involve moving from statements of intent to operating projects with funding behind them, an explicit priority identified in the recently adopted ASEAN-India Plan of Action 2026-2030.

Maritime Trade, Infrastructure, and the Blue Economy

Economic integration is the material bedrock of ASEAN-India geopolitical convergence. This relationship takes on added significant as maritime transportation of goods are the lifeblood, with nearly 95 percent in terms of volume and over 70 percent by value of India's trade passing through maritime routes. In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, trade between India and ASEAN reached an unprecedented US\$122 billion, cementing ASEAN as India's fourth-largest trading partner (Department of Commerce, 2024). But this aggregate growth belies underlying structural imbalances that both parties are trying to address today with sweeping policy reviews and domestic infrastructure overhauls.

The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), which was signed in 2009 and came into effect in 2010, liberalized tariffs on over 90% of product lines to create one of the largest free trade areas globally. Although it did significantly increase the volume of bilateral trade, the agreement's structure produced unintended effects. India's trade deficit with the ASEAN bloc has widened substantially (NITI Ayog, 2019). China's appeal to their Asian neighbors for free trade increased apprehension over similar structural deficits, exacerbated by the prospect of Chinese exports circumventing tariffs through third countries in a larger trade bloc; India's related decision to engage in RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) negotiations with China was strategically abandoned in 2019.

India's Domestic Maritime Overhaul: Sagarmala and MAKV 2047

The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), which was signed in 2009 and came into effect in 2010, liberalized tariffs on over

90% of product lines to create one of the largest free trade areas globally. Although it did significantly increase the volume of bilateral trade, the agreement's structure produced unintended effects. India's trade deficit with the ASEAN bloc has widened substantially. China's appeal to their Asian neighbors for free trade increased apprehension over similar structural deficits, exacerbated by the prospect of Chinese exports circumventing tariffs through third countries in a larger trade bloc; India's related decision to engage in RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) negotiations with China was strategically abandoned in 2019.

Table 1: Sagarmala Project Distribution and Capital Expenditure Profiles.

Sagarmala Project Theme	Number of Projects	Estimated Investment (in Rs. Million)
Port Modernization & New Port Development	234	291,622
Port Connectivity Enhancement	279	206,363
Port-Linked Industrialization	14	55,887
Coastal Community Development	81	11,573
Coastal Shipping and Inland Water Transport	231	14,526
Total	839	579,971

(Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, 2023).

Given its strong commitment to regional integration, but also the need for India to protect national economic interests, a comprehensive review of AITIGA was initiated by both sides; the conclusion would be substantial in nature and expected between 2025 and 2026. The updated deal is designed to modernize the trading relationship so that it is more user-friendly and trade-facilitative. Key areas of work include streamlining bridge the complex customs procedures, pursuing proactive measures for non-tariff barriers, strengthening rules of origin to prevent transshipment abuses and embedding supply chains more deeply into global value networks. we need a balanced trade relationship to ensure the political capital exists for deeper strategic engagement.

The Blue Economy as a Diplomatic Instrument

Beyond physical infrastructure and tariff negotiations, the concept of the "Blue Economy" has emerged as a vital instrument of geopolitical statecraft. No longer viewed solely as a niche environmental framework, the Blue Economy allows states to translate sustainability commitments into strategic leverage, diplomatic legitimacy, and normative leadership. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) pioneered

this concept, repositioning ocean governance as a normative issue of sustainability and justice rather than one centered purely on extractive growth (Edmunds, McCabe, & Bueger, 2021).

The Blue Economy refers to altering the Indian Ocean from being seen as the “Ocean of the South” to being perceived as the “Ocean of the Future” for India and ASEAN. Under this banner, joint projects focus a lot on dealing with fisheries in a way that is good for the environment, developing renewable energy offshore, and marine biotechnology. Also, dealing with the bad effects of climate change, like rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and extreme weather disasters, is a top priority for ASEAN archipelagos and India’s long coastline. Because of this shared vulnerability, multilateral groups like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) work together very closely. This brings South and Southeast Asia collaboratively through common sustainable trajectory.

Minilateralism vs. ASEAN Centrality: Balancing the Strategic Architecture

The larger Indo-Pacific’s strategic architecture is experiencing significant institutional change due to the rapid rise of “Minilateralism” alongside, at times, supplanting multilaterals (Samaranayake, 2025). The proliferation of such exclusive, capability-driven alliances presents a systemic and unprecedented challenge for ASEAN for whose diplomatic leverage and regional security ultimately rely on the idea that it is the consensus-driven hub of the regional architecture, enshrined as ASEAN Centrality.

The first is the Quad, a grouping of the US, India, Japan and Australia, and AUKUS, a binding trilateral security pact between Australia, the UK and the US, which is overwhelmingly taking up strategic space and affecting ASEAN-India relations. AUKUS is a significant advancement in West’s military deterrence of China (Samaranayake, 2025). The two pillars of AUKUS, the delivery of nuclear-powered attack submarines to Australia (Pillar One) and joint development of advanced technologies like hypersonic, quantum computing and artificial intelligence (Pillar Two) has shaken up the region. ASEAN’s reaction to AUKUS has been deeply fragmented. It has been a cautious ambiguous acceptance. The member states have to juggle the dormant need for external regional deterrence with intense fears of unleashing an uncontrollable conventional and nuclear arms race in the same neighbourhood. The Quad is, by contrast, a dialogue not a treaty. Quad partners seek a free and open Indo-Pacific by building

collective capacity and regional public goods rather than a narrow focus on kinetic military force power. India occupies and has the potential to quickly occupy key positions within this evolving matrix. Being the only member of “Quad” having a huge contested land border with China and a country that has a long history of strategic autonomy, and non-alignment, India cannot join any openly hostile anti-Chinese military alliance.

As a result, India employs its substantial engagement with ASEAN to validate its wider Indo-Pacific approach, ensuring that minilateral efforts do not replace but supplement ASEAN mechanisms. Using the Quad facilitated Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), India is a useful link for the ASEAN countries, bridging their intelligence, surveillance and capability gaps with space-based satellite tracking data to combat illegal fishing and smuggling. As India seeks to establish a networked security environment, it is trying to act as the strategic bridge between western-led minilateral security architectures and ASEAN’s inclusive multilateralism. This method diminishes Chinese regional supremacy while not binding vulnerable Southeast Asian states to binary, zero-sum geopolitics.

The ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation and Future Horizons

In the near term, huge diplomatic momentum is building towards the year 2026, which was officially declared the “ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation” by PM Modi and ASEAN leaders during the 22nd ASEAN-India Summit (Ministry of External Affairs, 2025). This designation is not just symbolic but is also a vital operational launch pad for the comprehensive ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2026-2030). The various initiatives that will be implemented during this time will allow us to bind the economic, environmental and security dimensions of the partnership. The core outputs involve creating definitive, funded partnerships in the blue economy and conducting the second iteration of the ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME) with an expanded scope.

It also includes convening the Second ASEAN-India Defence Ministers’ Meeting to coordinate regional security policies. Moreover, the geographical and strategic scope of the partnership is expanding. Timor-Leste’s recognition as the latest (11th) member of ASEAN offers new geopolitical opportunities. Augmenting these hard security and diplomatic initiatives, the Cruise Bharat Mission and the broader push for an integrated ASEAN-India Cruise Tourism Corridor are set for big gain in 2026 (ReCAAP ISC, 2024). The two regions will jointly

harmonise complex regulatory practices and relax visa regimes to identify commonality in cruise routes on cultural lines across the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. This will generate massive employment and foster organic people-to-people connectivity. Furthermore, it will help establish a dominant, collaborative role of the two regions in the booming maritime tourism in the Global South.

Structural Challenges and Strategic Policy Gaps

Although the relationship is undoubtedly on an upward trajectory and there are plans for 2026, there are nevertheless several structural realities and policy gaps that constrain ASEAN-India maritime cooperation. The challenges have to be managed skilfully for achieving the goal of the 2026-2030 Plan of Action. At first, within ASEAN itself, there is a basic but growing divergence in geographic and strategic threat perceptions. The bloc is increasingly divided conceptually between “continental” states like Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar which sit in China’s economic orbit through the BRI and share land frontiers with China, and “archipelagic” states like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam which are subjected to direct daily maritime coercion in the South China Sea.

In addition, great-power competition paralyzes southeast Asia, strategists like to say. Countries in South East Asia welcomes India as a benign security provider and balancer but are acutely wary of being sucked into a US containment strategy against China. Consequently, India has to be continuously and carefully calibrated its participation in minilaterals like Quad and its ties with members AUKUS (Samaranayake,2025). If India were to adopt externally developed maritime domain awareness platforms without co-developing, transferring technology, and co-governing the same with its ASEAN partners, it can be perceived in the region as a capacity-extractive proxy for the West and not as a true, capacity-enabling regional partner.

Thirdly, the concrete economic and infrastructure connectivity continues to lag behind rising diplomacy. The continuing trade deficit under AITIGA has been a major source of political friction in New Delhi, which has constantly empowered domestic protectionist lobbies and undermined the economic case for deeper regional integration (NITI Aayog,2024). At the same time, flagship physical connectivity projects, with the terrestrial Trilateral Highway connecting India to Thailand, and maritime port projects like Sabang in Indonesia, are endlessly stuck due to bureaucratic obstacles, complicated land acquisition challenges, and problematic financing models.

Conclusion:

Maritime cooperation between ASEAN and the Republic of India has transformed from a marginal element of post-Cold War diplomatic outreach to the core organizing principle of their current Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Sharing the Indo-Pacific geography, the legacies of the Indian Ocean trade and the realities of 21st-century geo-economics, both know that the future prosperity and security of each depends on a stable, rules-based maritime order. The institutional convergence of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) offer a comprehensive and highly inclusive framework to manage the repercussions of intensifying great-power rivalry without compelling regional states into restrictive alliances.

At the same time, the deep integration of their geo-economics strategies, as evident from the ongoing restructuring of global supply chains, the critical recalibration of the AITIGA, and the massive domestic investments under India's Sagarmala scheme and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, reflects a shared and long-term commitment to exploiting the Blue Economy for sustainable development. In the security domain, there is joint response to non-traditional threats (NTT), highly institutionalized naval exercises like SIMBEX and AIME and real-time sharing of information through higher centres like the IFC-IOR. All of these reflect enhanced operational interoperability between the two navies. To realize this partnership's fullest transformative potential, we need to move beyond ongoing structural impediments. To create a more effective strategic engagement, India will have to ensure that there is no growing tension between ASEAN centrality and emerging exclusive minilateral architectures. With functional cooperation, they can ensure it will remain a dynamic theatre of shared prosperity and multipolar stability rather than a zero-sum conflict and unilateral hegemony.

References:

1. Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (2019). *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific*. ASEAN Secretariat. (https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf) Accessed on 02.08.25
2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (2023). *ASEAN Maritime Outlook*. ASEAN Secretariat. (https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/20231011_AMO-Report-COMLETE.pdf) Accessed on 02.08.25

3. Brewster, D. (2010). An Indian sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean. *Security Challenges*, 6(3), 1-20. (<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:140589662>) Accessed on 04.08.25
4. Brewster, D. (2018). *India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean*. Oxford University Press. (https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/migrated_files/documents/atoms/files/brewster_sino_indian_cold_war_2018.pdf) Accessed on 05.08.25
5. Cordner, L. (2011). Progressing Maritime Security Cooperation in the Indian Ocean. *Naval War College Review*, 64(4), Article 7. (<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol64/iss4/7>) Accessed on 08.08.25
6. Department of Commerce, Government of India. (2024). *Foreign Trade (ASEAN)*. Ministry of Commerce and Industry. (<https://www.commerce.gov.in/about-us/divisions/foreign-trade-territorial-division/foreign-trade-asean/>) Accessed on 08.08.25
7. Edmunds, T., McCabe, R., & Bueger, C. (2021). *Capacity Building for Maritime Security: The Western Indian Ocean Experience*. Springer International Publishing. (<https://www.grafiati.com/en/literature-selections/india-maritime-security/book/>) Accessed on 12.08.25
8. Indian Council of World Affairs. (2022). *Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)*. ICWA. (<https://www.icwa.in/pdfs/IndoPacificOceansInitiative.pdf>) Accessed on 13.08.25
9. Lin, J. (2022). Can ASEAN and India Share a Common Outlook and Approach in the Indo-Pacific? *ISEAS Perspective*, 2022(87). ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute. (<https://www.iseas.edu.sg/tag/asean-india/>) Accessed on 20.08.25
10. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2025). *Prime Minister's participation in the 22nd ASEAN-India Summit in Kuala Lumpur*. Press Release. (<https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/40231/Prime+Ministers+participation+in+the+22nd+ASEANIndia+Summit+in+Kuala+Lumpur>) Accessed on 22.08.25
11. Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India. (2023). *Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047*. Government of India. (https://shipmin.gov.in/sites/default/files/Maritime%20Amrit%20Kaal%20Vision%202047%20%28MAKV%202047%29_compressed.pdf) Accessed on 25.08.25

12. Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore. (2025). *Public Consultation on the Review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement*. Government of Singapore. (<https://www.mti.gov.sg/newsroom/public-consultation-on-the-review-of-the-asean-india-trade-in-goods-agreement/>) Accessed on 26.08.25
13. NITI Aayog. (2024). *Trade Watch Quarterly Report Q1'FY25*. Government of India. (<https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-12/Trade-Watch.pdf>) Accessed on 27.08.25
14. Pant, H. V. (2016). *Rise of the Indian Navy: Internal Vulnerabilities, External Challenges*. Taylor & Francis Group. (<https://www.grafiati.com/en/literature-selections/india-maritime-security/book/>) Accessed on 29.08.25
15. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. (2017). *ASEAN and the Indian Ocean: Bridging the Strategic Gap* (Monograph No. 33). Nanyang Technological University. (<https://rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Monograph33.pdf>) Accessed on 31.08.25
16. ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre. (2024). *ReCAAP ISC Annual Report 2024*. Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. (<https://www.recaap.org/resources/ck/files/reports/annual/ReCAAP%20ISC%20Annual%20R1eport%202024%20-%20Final.pdf>) Accessed on 03.09.25
17. Samaranayake, N. (2025). *The Future of Minilateralism and Indian Ocean Security*. Perry World House, University of Pennsylvania. (<https://perryworldhouse.upenn.edu/news-and-insight/the-future-of-minilateralism-and-indian-ocean-security/>) Accessed on 05.09.25
18. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2023). *Review of Maritime Transport 2023*. United Nations. (<https://unctad.org/press-material/review-maritime-transport-2023-facts-and-figures-asia>) Accessed on 10.09.25

Integral Yoga and the Evolution of Consciousness: The Transformative Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo

Sanjib Ruidas

Abstract:

Integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, is a revolutionary way to look at how humans have changed over time. It focuses on the spiritual and mental growth of awareness as a way to reach divine realization. Aurobindo's approach combines the physical and spiritual worlds. He says that the evolution of human consciousness is more than just intellectual growth; it includes the full change of mind, body, and spirit. The idea of Supermind, a state of awareness that goes beyond mental limits and helps with spiritual change, is at the heart of his vision. This essay takes a close look at Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, both as a theory and a practice, and talks about what it means for personal growth, group transformation, and the future of humanity. The study also talks about how Aurobindo's ideas are still important in today's world, especially how they might help people find new ways to reach spiritual enlightenment and live together in peace in a world that is becoming more divided. Through a close study of all of Aurobindo's writings and an evaluation of how he has affected modern faith, this study aims to give a complete picture of how Integral Yoga helps the growth of human consciousness.

Keywords: Integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo, Supermind, evolution of consciousness, spiritual transformation, philosophy of transformation, modern spirituality, divine realization, personal growth, collective transformation.

Integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, is a deep combination of Eastern spiritual practices and Western philosophical thought. It offers

Department of Philosophy, State Aided College Teacher (1), Chandidas Mahavidyalaya (West Bengal)

a transformative view of how humans evolve and become aware. Aurobindo's Integral Yoga takes a more comprehensive approach than traditional types of yoga, which focus on individual freedom (moksha). Its goal is to completely change the person in all areas, including their mind, emotions, body, and spirit. This vision, which is based on the idea that awareness evolves, offers a completely new way of looking at the spiritual path. Here, self-realization goes beyond the individual to the collective consciousness, helping the world become more and more divine. The idea of Integral Transformation is at the heart of Aurobindo's thought. He criticizes the limits of normal mental awareness and says that people need to evolve to a higher level of consciousness that goes beyond the mental, vital, and physical realms. In 1973, Aurobindo put this idea into words: "*The divine consciousness is not something separate from the world, but it is the very foundation of all existence. It is through the awakening of the spirit within us that the true nature of the universe can be understood and realized.*" (Aurobindo, 1973, p. 124).

As a result, integral yoga is not just a way to meditate; it is a complete spiritual practice that aims to change every part of life for the better. Aurobindo says that people can discover their divine potential and help the whole world awaken spiritually by going through this process of change. A big part of this evolution is his idea of Supermind, which is a higher awareness that combines the higher and lower faculties of mind, intellect, and spirit. Supermind is a state of consciousness that goes beyond the limits of intellectual thinking and material reality. It makes it possible for both individual consciousness and collective existence to change. One of the most important ideas in Aurobindo's spiritual vision is the idea of evolution, especially the evolution of awareness. Darwin's theory of evolution is mainly about how living things change physically and biologically over time. Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution, on the other hand, talks about how things go beyond matter. He said that people are not fixed things, but are changing things that have the power to go beyond the mental and physical planes of life. "This transformation," according to Aurobindo, is a group effort that involves raising consciousness to higher, more divine states.

Aurobindo's ideas about how consciousness changes over time and about Integral Yoga are still very important in modern philosophical and spiritual discussions. His lessons offer a way to live a better, more peaceful life in the face of modern problems like environmental damage and spiritual isolation. They stress how all living things are linked

JOCIPE

and encourage people to understand their divine nature and help change society as a whole. Aurobindo's vision says that the mind can change over time to combine the practical and the spiritual, which would make life more balanced and unified. Aurobindo's philosophy also interacts with current ideas in psychology, especially when it comes to the idea of self-realization. Western psychology tends to focus on the mental and emotional parts of the self. Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, on the other hand, says that real self-realization involves changing every part of a person, leading to a higher, more divinely-infused awareness. This whole-person approach to human growth challenges current ideas in psychology by suggesting a deeper, more spiritual view of what it means to be human.

Integral Yoga is more than just a set of mental practices; it's a whole system that brings everything together. Sri Integral Yoga by Aurobindo is very different from other types of yoga. It is a complete spiritual method that includes all parts of a person's life, including their mind, body, emotions, and spirit, in the process of becoming more like God. Integral Yoga is based on the idea that human evolution is a continuous process of spiritual and mental growth. Each person not only tries to understand themselves but also takes part in changing the collective awareness. This is different from traditional types of yoga, which are mostly about freeing each person, or moksha. Aurobindo thought that integral yoga was a process that involved the whole person and tried to raise awareness from the normal mental and physical levels to a higher, more divine state.

In Aurobindo's thought, the idea of Supermind is at the heart of this process of change. Supermind is a state of awareness that is beyond what humans can normally understand. It is a higher consciousness that combines spiritual understanding with practical power. This higher consciousness helps a person get around in the real world while listening to divine guidance. "Does not merely perceive but carries the perception of all things into an immediate knowledge and a power to act on the basis of that knowledge" (Aurobindo, 1973, p. 200) is how he describes the Supermind. The mind, intellect, and soul are not separate things in Aurobindo's view; they are all connected parts of a greater divine truth. The realization of the Supermind marks the culmination of the spiritual ascent, where the individual transcends ego-bound limitations and attains a divine consciousness that permeates every part of their being.

Integral Yoga, therefore, is more than just a meditative practice or a philosophical theory. It is an all-encompassing spiritual practice that

changes the mind, body, and emotions of the person into a divine instrument that can bring higher consciousness into the world. As Aurobindo saw it, the point of yoga is not to get away from the world, but to become more involved with it by realizing that you are divine. Giving in to the divine will while still being involved in worldly matters is what Integral Yoga is all about. “Yoga is not a mere self-absorption but a self-dedication to the divine work of the world,” says Aurobindo in 1973 (p. 221). This dream wants people to be spiritually involved with the world and change not only themselves but also the ways that society and culture work to make life what it is.

Aurobindo’s idea of Integral Yoga is also very interested in how awareness changes over time. Unlike most theories of evolution, which focus on how bodies and organisms change over time, Aurobindo’s idea of evolution is more spiritual and mental. He says that people are not fixed things, but moving, changing things that have the power to go beyond their present state of consciousness. Realizing that the spiritual world and the material world are not two separate things but parts of the same divine truth is the key to this spiritual growth. (Aurobindo, 1973, p. 195) Aurobindo says, “The evolution of consciousness is not only a growth of the mental faculties but a progressive revelation of the divine in the human being.” According to Aurobindo, this process of evolution is both individual and collective. This means that the change in mind has an effect on everyone, everywhere. It’s not just about the self; it’s about society as a whole. Raising people’s awareness would make the world a better place for everyone, especially those who are spiritually aware.

Integral Yoga also tries to bring the material and spiritual worlds together, even though they seem to be at odds with each other. Many traditional spiritual practices stress giving up the world, but Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga encourages people to accept and change the material world, seeing it as a place where God can show up. It is clear from what Aurobindo said that “the divine is in the world, not beyond it” (Aurobindo, 1973, p. 218). Because Aurobindo sees the whole world as an expression of divine consciousness, he doesn’t agree with modern ideas that separate spirituality from the world’s material reality. In this way, his Integral Yoga teachings go against modernity’s mechanistic and materialistic view of the world. Instead, they offer a spiritualized view of life where matter and spirit live together and work together to make awareness grow. Aurobindo explained Integral Yoga, which means that it has a huge amount of ability to change people and groups. In addition to being a way to become more spiritually

JOCIPE

aware, it is also a way for society as a whole to become more spiritually aware. In contrast to the dualistic thinking that is common in modern spiritual and philosophical traditions, Aurobindo's ideas support a more complete and all-encompassing view of human awareness. Through Integral Yoga, Aurobindo hopes to bring about a change in development that raises humanity to a higher level of being, turning each person and the whole group into instruments of divine will and harmony for everyone.

Integral Yoga is Sri Aurobindo's theory that says people are going through a spiritual change that goes beyond normal ideas of intellectual and physical growth. At the heart of this idea is the idea that consciousness is evolving. Aurobindo thought that the evolution of consciousness was not just a biological or psychological process, but a divine one through which people would awaken to their real, higher spiritual potential. By including the spiritual side of life in our knowledge of how people grow and change, this point of view is very different from common evolutionary theories, especially those that are based on materialism or Darwinism. Aurobindo wrote in 1973 that the development of awareness is a way of unfolding divine truth and moving toward a state of supramental consciousness. "A progressive manifestation of the Divine in the material world" is what he calls this process (p. 120). He thought that people were not just physical beings that had to follow the rules of nature, but also spiritual beings whose minds were growing toward greater self-realization and union with God. The ultimate goal of this evolution is to reach the Supramental, which is a higher state of awareness that goes beyond the intellect and mind and brings together spirit, power, and knowledge in a way that works well together. This stage is a big change from an ego-bound, individual consciousness to a global consciousness that sees how everything is connected and works in line with God's will.

Aurobindo said that Integral Yoga gives you the mental discipline you need for this change. Instead of focusing on individual freedom like some traditional types of yoga do, Integral Yoga encourages the whole person—body, mind, and soul—to work together to reach a higher state of awareness. On this road, the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual parts of the self all grow at the same time. "The mind must be raised and changed, the life-energy must be spiritualized, and the body must be consecrated," writes Aurobindo in 1973 (p. 154). Through this all-encompassing change, each person can be a part of the evolution of human awareness as a whole. According to Aurobindo, the growth of consciousness happens in two ways: individually and as a group. The

change starts with the person's mental awakening, but it is also connected to the evolution of people everywhere. According to Aurobindo, each person's progress toward higher awareness helps to awaken the collective consciousness, which leads to a higher spiritual realization for everyone. As Aurobindo (1973, p. 180) says, "The individual is the unit, but the collective is the aim; the individual grows into the Divine, and the collective grows into the Divine." This focus on both individual and collective evolution shows how all living things are connected and how the final goal is to be one with God.

Aurobindo's idea of development also questions the idea that the spiritual and material worlds are separate. In ancient metaphysical systems, the two are often very different from each other. The material world is often seen as less important or even as an illusion. Aurobindo, on the other hand, says that the material world is not something to be overcome, but something to be changed. Aurobindo (1973, p. 132) says, "The Divine is not beyond the world but immanent in it; the aim is not to escape the world but to change it through a divine realization." This point of view gives a more complete picture of spiritual growth, showing how the spiritual and physical can live together and help each other. Integral Yoga, then, provides a way to speed up the process of mind evolution. By doing this, people can go beyond the normal mental and physical limits of their lives and connect with the higher levels of awareness, reaching the Supramental state in the end. According to Aurobindo's vision, the higher stages of consciousness will soon be open to everyone. This means that humanity as a whole is about to go through a big change. Aurobindo had a bigger vision of a spiritually awakened world where people understand their divine potential and are a part of the process of change happening in the universe. This shift toward spiritual evolution is in line with that vision.

Sri Aurobindo explained that integral yoga is a complete and life-changing spiritual philosophy that combines all aspects of human life—mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual—into the search for higher awareness and divine realization. Integral Yoga is different from other types of yoga because it focuses on developing the whole person, not just one part of them. It does this by understanding that all parts of the self are linked. Several important principles are at the heart of this practice. They help the practitioner reach the supramental, which is a higher state of awareness that goes beyond normal human limits. Integral Yoga's first main idea is that you should give up your own will and follow God's. Aurobindo believed that the first step toward spiritual growth is to submit, not to a specific god, but to the Divine essence

JOCIPE

that is everywhere. This giving up is not a passive act of submission; it is a conscious and active opening of the self to divine direction and change. “Fundamental act of the soul’s journey,” Aurobindo wrote in 1973, “surrender is the way that a person opens himself to the higher spiritual forces that can guide and change him” (p. 68). This surrender helps the practitioner go beyond the ego and the limited self, which makes room for the flow of divine energy that changes awareness.

The practice of changing your mind is the second principle. This is what Aurobindo believed was most important on his spiritual road. He thinks that ego, desire, and misunderstanding are the things that hold the mind back in its normal state. For mental growth to happen, the mind has to go through a huge change. To do this, you have to go beyond your normal thinking mind and connect with higher levels of awareness. According to Aurobindo (1973), the mind needs to be not only cleaned, but also raised and changed. It needs to become a tool of the Divine that can show the truth of higher awareness (p. 124). The practitioner tries to quiet the lower, more fragmented mind and tune in to the higher mental abilities of spiritual insight and intuition. This leads to a direct experience of divine truth. Spiritualizing the life force, or prana, is another important part of integral yoga. Aurobindo said that the life-force is the vital energy that controls both the mind and the body. To bring about total change, the life-force must be in harmony with the higher spiritual planes. To follow this concept, you have to clean up your body and mind’s energies and direct them toward God’s will. Aurobindo wrote in 1973, “the life-force must be made to serve the higher consciousness, which means it must become a channel for the expression of the Divine Will in the material world” (p. 134). This spiritualization of the life-force affects all parts of a person’s life, like their emotions and mental health. It makes sure that all parts of a person are in line with the divine.

It is also important for Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga to include the body in the spiritual process. In traditional yoga, the goal is to go beyond the physical world. Aurobindo’s theory, on the other hand, stresses the body’s holiness as a tool for spiritual growth. People believe that the body is more than just a brief container; it’s a way for the divine to show itself in the real world. As Aurobindo (1973, p. 156), he says, “the body, like the mind, must be consecrated to the Divine.” According to this concept, the practitioner should respect, care for, and discipline their body, seeing it as a way for spiritual energy to change the material world. Also, the spiritual and physical worlds are not two different things; they are both parts of the divine reality. The awareness of the

supramental is another important idea in Integral Yoga. According to Aurobindo, the Supramental is the highest state of consciousness. It is a spiritual awareness that goes beyond the mind and intellect. People are no longer limited by their ego, their ignorance, or the passage of time when they reach this state. Knowledge and strength are one. People think that the supramental is the key to humanity's evolution because it is the awareness through which God shows up in the world. Aurobindo wrote in 1973, "The Supramental is not just a higher form of mind; it is a whole new mode of consciousness that brings divine truth into the material world" (p. 187). Realizing the Supramental isn't just an intellectual success; it's a complete spiritual awakening that affects every part of a person's being and lets them live out divine truth in their thoughts, actions, and interactions with others.

Lastly, Integral Yoga is not something you do by yourself. It's a process that recognizes that spiritual growth happens in groups. Aurobindo's idea of human evolution goes beyond the change of a person and includes the evolution of humanity as a whole. He thinks that the real goal of spiritual practice is not to free oneself, but to bring out the holy in all people. "The individual is the unit of evolution, but the collective is the aim," wrote Aurobindo in 1973. "The individual grows into the Divine, and through this, humanity evolves into the Divine" (p. 180). For this collective growth to happen, society needs to change. Spiritual awakening leads to the creation of a more peaceful, God-led world. One of the most important things about this concept is that it shows how important it is for everyone to awaken spiritually at the same time. While Sri Aurobindo was explaining integral yoga, he said that it can change all parts of a person, including their mind, emotions, body, and spirit. It is possible for a practitioner to reach their divine potential through self-surrender, mental change, spiritualization of the life force, and realizing the supramental. The ultimate goal of this road is not only enlightenment for each individual, but also the evolution of all people into a spiritually awakened, peaceful society. Integral Yoga offers a radical and transformative vision for the future of human awareness by combining all parts of life into the search for divine truth. Integral Yoga is Sri Aurobindo's groundbreaking addition to the world's spiritual and intellectual history. Aurobindo challenges us to see things beyond our narrow, self-centered views and accept a higher, divine purpose by picturing an awareness that changes everything and ties everything together. His philosophy is still a lighthouse for people who want to learn more about the human situation and find a way to live a happier life.

References:

- Aurobindo, S. (1973). *The synthesis of yoga*. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
- Aurobindo, S. (2006). *Essays on the Gita*. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
- Aurobindo, S. (1972). *The life divine*. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
- Gupta, S. (2018). *The evolution of consciousness in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy*. New Delhi, India: Routledge.
- Kottarathil, R. (2014). *Integral yoga and its applications: The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo in the modern world*. Chennai, India: The Sri Aurobindo Society.
- Sanyal, N. (2016). *Sri Aurobindo: The philosopher of integral yoga*. New Delhi, India: Sterling Publishers.

The Role of Government Schemes in the Social Development of Tribal Children and Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study of Tribal-Dominated Districts in West Bengal

Dr. Prasanta Sarkar

Abstract:

Tribal communities constitute a highly vulnerable segment of India's population. In terms of social development, these communities lag significantly behind other social groups. Consequently, their social mobility and overall social progress proceed at a very slow pace. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the social advancement of tribal communities came to a near standstill. For their economic sustenance, they rely predominantly on forests and forest resources. During the pandemic, the already limited social momentum of these communities slowed down even further. Widespread financial distress and hunger became evident among the tribal population. Financial hardship became particularly acute in the tribal-dominated regions of West Bengal; specifically, food shortages were observed in the tribal-inhabited villages of the Bankura and Purulia districts. To address the food crisis facing these communities, the government took a proactive role by implementing various welfare schemes. During the pandemic, women and children were the most severely affected groups; malnutrition became prevalent among children, and health-related issues among tribal women emerged as a critical concern. Through observations conducted in tribal-

Assistant professor, Department of Political science CDOE, The University of Burdwan

October-December, 2025

(223)

dominated regions, this article attempts to analyze and understand the proactive role played by the government in fostering the social development of tribal communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Social Progress, Social Mobility, Sustainable Development, Human Development, Gender Inequality, Healthcare System.

Introduction:

In the post-independence era, India has witnessed a dynamic interplay of continuity and change in its social landscape. As a pluralistic democratic nation, India is characterized by immense socio-economic and political diversity. Within this confluence of diversity, distinct variations and disparities are also evident. The trajectory of various socio-economic, political, educational, health, and human resource indicators across India's diverse social strata serves as a compass guiding the nation's sustainable development. However, within this broader developmental context, several vulnerable communities remain significantly marginalized—both economically and socially. In particular, India's indigenous tribal communities have, for various reasons, remained disconnected from access to education, healthcare, and general social welfare services. Although the government has implemented numerous welfare measures aimed at the upliftment of indigenous communities, even 75 years after independence, their economic prosperity has failed to show any substantial improvement. For the holistic development of India, it is imperative to accelerate the pace of progress for these marginalized tribal communities. Yet, due to various administrative and political impediments, the actual realization of such development for these communities has remained elusive. Across various political regimes in West Bengal, the dire economic plight of tribal communities has frequently been highlighted by various media outlets. The government's initiatives regarding these tribal populations have also been subjected to considerable criticism. Various studies conducted by the Pratichi Trust have exposed the deplorable state of health and education among women and children in West Bengal; the situation is even more dire for women and children belonging to indigenous tribal communities. During the pandemic, the condition of these vulnerable tribal populations became even more precarious. In the tribal-dominated blocks of West Bengal—specifically in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram, and Paschim Medinipur—instances of acute starvation witnessed a sharp surge. During the Left Front regime, media reports brought to public attention

the tragic deaths of tribal community members in Amlasole (in the undivided Paschim Medinipur district) due to food deprivation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, food scarcity once again resurfaced among the tribal populations. Through the implementation of various schemes and the provision of special entitlements to tribal communities, the government played a pivotal role in addressing and mitigating this critical food crisis. This article attempts to review the status of tribal children and women in West Bengal's tribal-dominated regions with regard to food, nutrition, education, and health. It discusses how various development schemes—specifically those aimed at the upliftment of women—play an effective role in enhancing the capabilities of tribal communities residing in marginalized areas. Furthermore, based on observations of tribal women in the marginalized pockets of underdeveloped districts such as Purulia in West Bengal, this article evaluates the role of tribal women in fostering social mobility within their communities.

Background of the Study:

India is a geographically, socio-economically, and politically diverse and pluralistic democratic nation. Through the harmonious principle of “unity in diversity,” India has maintained both the continuity and the dynamic nature of its social mobility. It is this continuous dynamism within the social system that has accelerated the pace of India's development. The participation of various social groups in this process of social mobility and development has rendered the system even more dynamic. The central theme of this paper is to examine how various government development schemes—while sustaining overall social mobility—have fostered sustainable development by driving progress among tribal women across key socio-economic, political, educational, health, and human resource development indicators. India is home to various marginalized communities, and the nation's holistic development cannot be achieved without their upliftment. With the objective of ensuring India's comprehensive development, the post-independence government has launched numerous social schemes specifically targeting backward and vulnerable sections of society. These welfare-oriented initiatives serve to accelerate the momentum of social development. This paper attempts a comparative analysis of several developmental schemes—implemented by both the Central and State governments in recent times—aimed at enhancing the social mobility of tribal women as a means of achieving India's overall development goals.

In a traditionally patriarchal society like India, women are often seen waging a rigorous struggle to make their voices heard across social, economic, and political spheres—and even in matters of personal decision-making. In the post-independence era, various government welfare schemes have been implemented to foster the development of marginalized communities within this patriarchal social framework. The primary objective of these initiatives has been the sustainable development of these vulnerable communities, aiming to accelerate their social mobility under state supervision. Within the framework of India's Five-Year Plans—and in adherence to international human rights laws—the government has placed special emphasis on the upliftment of these vulnerable groups. Particular stress has been laid on the development of tribal communities residing in specific regions of the country. The government has directed special attention toward enhancing the capabilities of tribal populations living across ten specific states and designated regions of India. Furthermore, significant emphasis has been placed on the health, education, public hygiene, and overall welfare of tribal women and children. Nevertheless, in the interest of national development, gender equality and women's empowerment have consistently been regarded as top priorities. As a nation, India draws its core strength from its immense diversity. A vibrant and dynamic young generation is currently paving the way for the country's transformation into a developed nation. Access to good health, advanced sanitation systems, and the opportunity to practice essential hygiene are among the defining characteristics of a developed state. For women in India, achieving good health is not only of paramount importance and absolutely essential, but it also presents a formidable challenge. 'Nari Shakti' (Women's Power) serves as an indispensable prerequisite for India's economic growth. In a global context, the UNDP's Human Development Report (2010) defines national development as a broad concept that places particular emphasis on the importance of access to basic life services. However, women's empowerment should not be confined solely to making women economically self-reliant; rather, equal importance must be accorded to the maintenance of women's health—specifically, their reproductive and gynecological health. This research paper focuses on how government schemes play a pivotal role in fostering the social mobility and sustainable development of tribal women.

The Current Status of Tribal Communities:

India is home to 104 million tribal people, constituting 8.6 percent of the total population. There are 705 distinct tribal groups in the

country. These tribal communities are primarily concentrated in ten specific states and the Northeastern region. A staggering 90 percent of this tribal population resides in rural areas. Indeed, the majority of the tribal population across 809 blocks spanning 90 districts of India lives in rural settings (Anustup, Sharadiya Issue, p. 388). Many endangered tribal communities inhabit these blocks. The concentration of indigenous people is highest across six districts of West Bengal. Among these, the districts of Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Purulia, Bankura, Jhargram, and Paschim Medinipur host the largest tribal populations. Within these districts, the Nagrakata block of Jalpaiguri, the Bandwan block of Purulia, the Ranibandh block of Bankura, the Amlashol block of Paschim Medinipur, and the Gopiballavpur block of Jhargram record the highest density of indigenous tribal inhabitants. Across various economic and educational indicators, the tribal communities in these areas rank below the average in terms of access to social amenities. Malnutrition among children and women is a widespread phenomenon in these tribal-inhabited regions. During various phases of the Left Front rule, reports regarding the deaths of tribal people in these marginalized areas—attributed to malnutrition—were frequently published in various newspapers. For these tribal communities living in marginalized regions, there has been little significant progress in terms of socio-economic conditions, education, or healthcare infrastructure. Their average per capita income is substantially lower than that of the general population in India. India's Human Development Index is typically assessed based on per capita income. However, in a traditionally patriarchal society like India, the economic status of women is comparatively lower. In a developing nation such as India, a vast number of women lack economic independence. Yet, within tribal communities, the scenario regarding employment presents a contrasting picture. Women in tribal communities lag significantly behind in the fields of education and healthcare. Furthermore, their participation in government employment and self-employment sectors remains low. Tribal women also lag considerably behind in terms of social empowerment. Consequently, regarding inclusive social progress and sustainable development, tribal women remain collectively disadvantaged. The majority of women in India dedicate themselves to domestic chores; as a result, their average per capita income remains significantly low. Moreover, when viewed through the lens of human resource development indicators—specifically health, education, and economic empowerment—women remain significantly behind. This is particularly true in marginalized regions, where the necessary

healthcare facilities and opportunities for women are woefully inadequate. Those tribal populations residing in marginalized areas are often deprived of access to public healthcare services. Although various studies have examined the socio-economic status, employment, connectivity, education, and economic conditions of tribal women, the specific issues of their inclusive progress and sustainable development have, in many instances, remained neglected. The primary objective of this research is to analyze how various government schemes play a pivotal role in fostering development within these communities. To shed light on the significant role played by government welfare schemes and financial assistance in the development of indigenous women in marginalized areas, as well as in fostering inclusive social progress.

Compared to traditionally privileged social groups, the child mortality rate among indigenous populations has risen from 10 percent to 38 percent. The maternal mortality rate among tribal communities is comparatively much higher. Among tribal populations, the mortality gap for children under the age of five has widened from 21 percent to 48 percent. By late 2014, in several states with high tribal populations, the mortality rate for children under five was two to three times higher than in other states. Malnutrition, food scarcity, and a lack of the necessary infrastructure for proper pediatric care are primarily identified as the root causes of this high child mortality rate. By 2011, an estimated 146,000 tribal children under the age of five were dying annually in India (estimated based on the National Family Health Survey and the 2011 Census) (Anustup, p. 389). Malnutrition is cited as the primary cause behind these child and maternal deaths within tribal communities. Due to a lack of proper planning and medical guidance, pregnant women often suffer from nutritional deficiencies; consequently, the children they deliver frequently fall victim to malnutrition. Tribal families often find themselves unable to provide the specific types of nutritious food required during pregnancy. Furthermore, these communities are often deprived of essential public health services provided by the government during the maternal period. Additionally, malaria and tuberculosis are largely responsible for the mortality of children and women within tribal societies. Although tribal populations constitute only 8 percent of the national population, they account for 30 percent of all malaria cases in the country—a figure that exceeds 60 percent in cases involving *P. falciparum*—and represent 50 percent of all malaria-related deaths nationwide. In terms of economic loss, this amounts to approximately 6,000 crore rupees annually (Anustup, p. 390). Among the indigenous tribal communities

of West Bengal, malnutrition stands out as a leading cause of death among children and women. Moreover, tuberculosis and malaria are significantly responsible for mortality within these groups. The prevalence of pulmonary tuberculosis among tribal communities is notably higher than in the rest of the country: 703 cases per 10,000 people, compared to 256. In tribal-dominated areas, indications of certain pandemic-related shifts are becoming apparent at the primary level; simultaneously, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases is on the rise. Indeed, one in every four tribal adults suffers from high blood pressure. Reports of deaths caused by malnutrition in the tribal regions of West Bengal first surfaced in 2004. The news of deaths due to food scarcity among the Sabar tribe in the Amlasole block of West Bengal sparked a major political controversy within the state (The Telegraph, August 23, 2006). Allegations of corruption were leveled against the then-ruling government regarding the proper distribution of food supplies officially provided to tribal communities through the public rationing system. Furthermore, in 2005, reports emerged regarding the death by starvation of a tribal woman named Parvati Sabar (30). In 2011, Danish researcher Oliver Rubel highlighted these issues in a research paper; subsequently, in 2013, two significant works were published: Deepak Kumar Bar Panda's *Jangalmahale Adivasi Jiban: Amlasoler Dinlipi* (Tribal Life in Jangalmahal: The Amlasole Diary) and Chandan Singh's *Kindling of an Insurrection: Notes from Jangalmahal* (Anandabazar Patrika, August 19, 2017). These reports of malnutrition-related deaths ignited a heated debate in both national and West Bengal politics. Criticism mounted regarding government services concerning tribal malnutrition and public health. In the 21st century, the precarious state of public health among tribal women and children in West Bengal was starkly exposed, and these deaths were frequently likened to the starvation deaths witnessed during the Bengal Famine of 1943. These issues—specifically the rights to food and public health for West Bengal's tribal communities—generated immense public outcry, which opposition political parties at the time effectively brought to the forefront of public discourse through their campaigns.

The Impact of the Pandemic in Jangalmahal: The tribal communities in this region are heavily dependent on the forest for their sustenance. For these communities, the announcement of the lockdown proved to be an even greater threat than the coronavirus itself. Procuring food became a formidable challenge for them. The nationwide lockdown, announced by the Prime Minister of India at 8:00 PM on March 24, 2020, was a harrowing experience for the tribal population. The majority

JOCIPE

of tribal people earn their livelihood by gathering firewood from the forests or collecting Sal leaves to sell in the local markets. With the closure of markets and fairs, their ability to gather fuel or sell Sal leaves came to a complete standstill. On March 20, the Chief Minister of West Bengal announced that the government would provide free rations starting April 1. Those who possessed ration cards received some food supplies through official government channels. However, those indigenous people who did not hold ration cards were left to spend their days in starvation. Subsequently, it was announced that individuals without ration cards could submit an application—providing their names and addresses—to receive ration supplies. Yet, these supplies consisted solely of rice and wheat. Not only are the allotted rations of rice and wheat insufficient to sustain a family for an entire month, but with all sources of income completely cut off, the situation deteriorated to a point where people were forced to survive by eating only one meal a day and going hungry for the other. Eventually, as the distress reached a critical level, the Block Administration arranged for the distribution of vegetables, lentils, soybeans, and packets of soap to the most vulnerable villages. Furthermore, various voluntary organizations extended a helping hand to the tribal villages during the pandemic by providing aid in the form of rice, lentils, and potatoes. A survey conducted in Purulia between April 4 and 6, 2020—examining the impact of COVID-19 on thirty Sabar hamlets and 33 Sabar individuals—revealed that the majority of the Sabar people rely on daily wage labor; however, none of them had received their wages. In other words, due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown, work had ceased, and they were left unpaid for the labor performed during that month or week. Consequently, despite receiving rations, the indigenous tribal communities became entirely dependent on relief aid for their survival. The Feliya Sabar Kalyan Samiti made every possible effort to provide assistance, while the Lokeswarananda I Foundation extended relief aid not only to the Sabar community but also to the most destitute families in remote villages across every block of Purulia. The food packages provided by the Nanritam and Lokeswarananda Foundation included staples such as rice, lentils, potatoes, and soybean oil; additionally, supplemented with sugar, they contained nutritional supplements specifically tailored for children and pregnant women. During the Left Front era, the public distribution system in the Jangalmahal region served 26.8 million beneficiaries. For adults living below the poverty line, the weekly ration allocation consisted of two kilograms of rice at a subsidized rate of ₹ 2 per kilogram,

and 750 grams of fortified wheat flour for ¹ 5. This ration was available to individuals with an annual income of less than ¹ 24,000. Early in the Trinamool Congress administration, the ration system was expanded to include those tribal communities in Jangalmahal whose annual income fell below ¹ 36,000; however, the allocated quantities and prices remained unchanged. Seven blocks in Birbhum, three in West Medinipur, four in Bankura, eight in Purulia, and the entirety of the Jhargram district were officially designated as the Jangalmahal region. Following the enactment of the National Food Security Act, 2013, the categorization of beneficiaries eligible for subsidized rations underwent some modifications. Based on a socio-economic survey conducted in 2012, eligible beneficiaries were brought under the purview of the National Food Security Act. With the support of the West Bengal government, the total number of ration beneficiaries increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the volume of rations received by tribal families saw a substantial increase, thereby providing a temporary resolution to their food security challenges. In the post-pandemic period, the State Government continued to distribute subsidized food items among tribal communities; this initiative not only alleviated their food shortages but also contributed significantly to reducing the rates of malnutrition among women and children.

A Survey of Purulia District:

Purulia is one of the most underdeveloped districts in West Bengal. It is situated in the region bordering the state of Jharkhand. The rural areas of this district are predominantly inhabited by tribal communities. The connectivity and transportation infrastructure in these rural areas are extremely fragile. The highest concentration of tribal communities within the district is found in the Manbazar and Baghmundi blocks. This study attempts to shed light on public health issues—specifically concerning children and women—across various blocks of Purulia district, West Bengal. To this end, a survey was conducted across two selected blocks—encompassing five Gram Panchayats within each block, and five villages within each Gram Panchayat—with the aim of providing a research-based overview of the public health status of tribal children and women in West Bengal.

A survey was carried out using a structured questionnaire to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tribal communities. The survey revealed that the majority of tribal community members faced severe food shortages during the pandemic. Furthermore, unable to access modern healthcare facilities for health-related issues, women

in these communities often resorted to traditional tribal remedies and practices. Additionally, the study sought to examine how various government schemes have brought about changes in the education and health sectors within these tribal regions. The research survey indicated that, during the tenure of the previous government, food insecurity was a major issue in most tribal villages; at that time, the government had not undertaken any significant positive initiatives regarding food and nutrition. Due to the marginalized nature of these tribal areas, there was a severe scarcity of health centers across the district and its various blocks. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, rural health workers maintained constant vigilance, specifically monitoring the health of elderly tribal individuals on a regular basis. They also actively collected data regarding the health status of pregnant women.

Relative to the actual requirements, there was a significant shortage of doctors and nurses in the existing health centers. Consequently, the tribal population was compelled to rely on district hospitals for healthcare services. Given that many of these communities reside in remote, marginalized areas, the transportation and connectivity required to reach the district hospitals were woefully inadequate. As a result, many children and women frequently succumbed to their ailments without receiving any medical treatment. During the survey, Kavita Soren (name changed) stated that health workers visited their locality regularly throughout the pandemic. However, even prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the area was plagued by persistent issues of malnutrition among women and children, as well as various other ailments. Currently, with the support of the state government, a rationing system has been introduced to address food insecurity. Throughout the pandemic, every tribal family received government assistance in the form of food grains. At present, through the 'Duare Sarkar' (Government at Doorstep) initiative, government-provided food supplies are being delivered directly to every tribal household. Consequently, the food crisis has been significantly alleviated, thereby contributing substantially to the effort to combat nutritional deficiencies among women and children. While local health centers are currently equipped with the necessary medical instruments for basic health check-ups, the available resources remain considerably short of actual requirements. Nevertheless, with the assistance of the state government, these primary health centers are now able to facilitate the treatment of various diseases by regularly conducting health screenings for women and children and providing them with essential medicines.

Conclusion:

The foregoing discussion reveals that, in the post-independence era, the socio-economic condition of India's indigenous tribal communities was severely underdeveloped. Currently, in tribal-dominated regions, malnutrition resulting from food scarcity has significantly declined compared to the past, and the scope of primary healthcare services—particularly for women and children—has expanded considerably. Various educational initiatives launched by the Government of West Bengal—such as the Sabuj Sathi and Kanyashree, schemes—have garnered an overwhelming response among tribal students. Virtually every tribal family has benefited from the assistance provided through these programs. Consequently, the incidence of female feticide in these areas has decreased, and the dropout rate among young girls has declined. Furthermore, various social superstitions prevalent within the tribal social structure have diminished significantly compared to the past, and the prevalence of child marriage has dropped substantially. The tribal society is steadily transitioning from a traditionally underdeveloped social order toward a dynamic, developing society; in this transformation, the government's various welfare schemes are playing a pioneering role.

Bibliography and References:

1. A, M., & Kaushal, K. (2014). A descriptive study to assess the knowledge and practice regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls of a Govt. school in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*, 4(1), 44–50.
2. Anandabazar Online (2018), November 27.
3. Aich, Debashish (2022). 'Corona akale anahare Shabortala, Bhat De Haramjada, Kolkata: The Cafe Table.
4. Aich, Debashish (2016) Piprer Dim o Budhu Shaborera, Nimkathir Jibon, Kolkata: The Cafe Table.
5. Anandabazar Patrika (2017), August 19.
6. Aich, Debashish (2022). Kebol gudam vora chal, Dal ar gal vora ayein, Bhat De Haramjada, Kolkata: The Cafe Table.
7. Aich, Debashish (2022). 'Lodha-kheriya kotha ,Anustup, Vol. 56, Issue 4, Pujo Shankha, Kolkata
8. Bandyopadhyay, Sumahan (2012), Prasanga Adibasi , Concept Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Delhi.

9. Biswas, S., Alam, A., Islam, N., Roy, R., & Satpati, L. (2024). Understanding period product use among young women in rural and urban India from a geospatial perspective. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), Article 20114. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-70383-w>
10. Bokova, I. (2015). Empowering adolescent girls and young women through education: A joint programme by UNESCO, UN Women, UNFPA, and the World Bank. UNESCO.
11. Chakraborty, Sudhanshu (2014) *Dinolipi: Unnayan chokre amlashol*, Kolkata: Durbar.
12. Chandra-Mouli, V., & Patel, S. V. (2017). Mapping the knowledge and understanding of menarche, menstrual hygiene and menstrual health among adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries. *Reproductive Health*, 14(1), Article 30. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-017-0293-6>
13. Department of Women and Child Development. (1999). *Girl child in India: The situational analysis*. Government of India.
14. Deshpande, T. N., Patil, S. S., Gharai, S. B., Patil, S. R., & Durgawale, P. M. (2018). Menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls: A study from urban slum area. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 7(6), 1439–1445. https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpe.jfmpe_80_18
15. Ghimire, S. (2017). Knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls. *International Journal of Research in Medical Sciences*, 5(8), 3426–3430. <https://doi.org/10.18203/2320-6012.ijrms20173539>
16. Hutton, G., & Chase, C. (2017). Water supply, sanitation, and hygiene. In C. N. Mock, R. k.
17. Jana, Smaranjit & Tarun Basu (Eds.) (2014). *Janajati shabar o Amlasholer*, Kolkata: Durbar.
18. Kabari Mandi, Interview (2025), March 8.
19. Mallick, Ritwik (2012). *The Indigenous People of Verrier Elwin*, Kolkata: Setu.
20. Nugent, O. Kobusingye, & K. R. Smith (Eds.), *Injury prevention and environmental health* (3rd ed.). The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank
21. Nielsen, A. C. (2011). *Sanitary protection: Every woman's health right*. Plan India.
22. Singhdeo, Gopiballabh (1986). *Shabar Porichiti*, Chatrak, Puja Special Issue.

23. Sarkar, I., Dobe, M., Dasgupta, A., Basu, R., & Shahbabu, B. (2017). Determinants of menstrual hygiene among school going adolescent girls in a rural area of West Bengal. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 6(3), 583–588. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.222054>
24. Sinha, R. N., & Paul, B. (2018). Menstrual hygiene management in India: The concerns. *Indian Journal of Public Health*, 62(2), 71–74. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijph.IJPH_135_18
25. Sonowal, P., & Talukdar, K. (2019). Menstrual hygiene knowledge and practices amongst adolescent girls in urban slums of Dibrugarh town: A cross-sectional study. *Galore International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*, 4(1), 44–48.
26. *The Telegraph* (2004), August 23.
27. *The Indian Express* (2018), December 9.

Ambedkar and the Upliftment of the Dalit in India: Revisiting the Constitution of India

Tapasi Pal

Abstract

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a renowned jurist, economist and social reformer. Advocating political rights and social freedom for Dalit and contributing to the establishment of the state of India. After 79 years independence, caste based division have not been completely eradicate from India. It has not been possible to eliminate untouchability. The prudent, visionary and intellectual leader dedicated himself to establishing equality in the religious, economic and social sphere to Shudras and untouchable community. He was an advocate of 'unity in diversity'. He advocated for the establishment of a strong parliamentary democratic government for preserving Indian unity and the integrity. The paper emphasized, he endeavoured to integrate the marginalized and untouchable sections of society into the national mainstream by implementing various affirmative measures within the Indian constitution.

Keywords: Dalit, social freedom, political rights, parliamentary democracy, unity in diversity, marginalised, mainstream.

Introduction

Ambedkar is a posthumous zealous crusader of the Dalit social, political and economic association. The caste system has been present in the Indian social structure for many centuries. The Western educated champion of human rights Dr b.r Ambedkar was a pioneer of the holistic development of Indian marginalise classes. During the letter Vedic period the society was divided into four social group namely-Brahmin,

Guest Lectur, Department of Political Science, Mankar College, Purba Bardhaman

Kshatriya, Vishya and Sudras. Sudras remain in the bottom of social hierarchy and depressed every situation. They were deprived every basic human rights, they were regarded as untouchable and marginalised from the mainstream of society. Those were considered to belong the Dalit class. In Hindu society, who were constantly oppressed by the upper class. To liberate from this discriminatory behaviour, Ambedkar emphasized on education, liberty, equality and the establishment of fraternity.

The chief architect of the Indian constitution Dr B.R. Ambedkar was also victim of untouchability. He was born into a lower caste family belonging to the Mahar committee of Maharashtra. Ambedkar had to face many adverse circumstances due to being born into a lower caste family. He realized how rigid the hierarchical caste and Varna system of Maharashtra was. From childhood Ambedkar was a brilliant student. His father and grandfather were patrons of education and served in the military forces of the British government. Therefore, despite various adverse circumstances he made every possible effort to support Ambedkar's education. All the Ambedkar primary education started at a local Marathi school, but his higher education was completed in the west. He was a multifaceted personality - a parliamentarian, a scholar, an Indian jurist, an advanced thinker, a philosopher, an anthropologist, a historian, an economist and a constitutionalist of world repute.

Historical context of the caste system

Ambedkar fundamentally resaped the Dalit Identity by offering a robust ideological framework that opposed centuries of oppression. Through his sharp critique of the caste system, Ambedkar exposed its inherent injustice and argued for its abolition. According to Ambedkar, the inequality present in human society actually originates from society itself. Ambedkar stated that the Rig Veda mentions only three varnas; these three Varnas are the - Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya. Ambedkar viewed the Shudras as Aryan and rejected the Indo - Aryan migrations, describing it as "so absurd that it ought to have been dead long ago" in his 1946 work. Who were the Shudras? Ambedkar viewed Shudras as originally having been part of the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo - Aryan society, and there is no racial distinction between the upper caste Hindus and the lower caste people. But became socially degraded after the inflicted many tyrannies on Brahmins.

Ambedkar disputed various hypothesis of the Aryan homeland being outside India, and concluded the Aryan homeland was India itself.

According to Ambedkar the Rig Veda says Aryan and Dasyus competing religions groups, not different people.

Critique of Hinduism and Caste System

After exposing the inherent fallacies of the caste system and its conceptual contrast Chaturvarna; Ambedkar appeals to the people for transforming the Hindu social order. He argues that abolition of caste, can be achieved only by intermarriage among the Hindus, intermarriage must historically be a factor of greater force in social life than it need be in the life of the non-Hindu the real remedy for breaking caste in intermarriage. Nothing else will serve the solvent of caste.

The caste systems historically demonstrates how it has been maintained through religious, social and economic structures. Understanding this context is crucial to evaluating Ambedkar's critique, as he argued that caste was not just a social evil but an intrinsic feature of Hinduism itself. His challenge to the system was not merely about reform but about dismantling its very foundations.

Pragmatic contribution

Dr BR Ambedkar was strongly supporter of Dalit concerns. He condemned the Varna system. Ambedkar laid special emphasis on education to solve the problem of untouchability in Hindu society. He made many provisions for the upliftment of Dalit in the Indian constitution. He laid special emphasis on liberty equality and fraternity in the Indian constitution. These safeguards are available in the form of fundamental rights under article 12 to 32. He adopted Buddhism on his Heroic struggle against untouchability. Jawaharlal Nehru said, "Baba Saheb Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of hindu society.

Ambedkar advocate the equal status of Dalits and condemned the Varna system. He devoted his whole life for the upliftment of poorer classes of the society. He undertook various social and political programs for the upliftment of the lower class of society. For practical implementations of the objective Dr b.r Ambedkar organised different conference to sprade awareness among Dalits. Dr BR Ambedkar was a pivotal figure in the Dalit movements and consciousness of Dalit he played various role including legal protest, social protest movements and political advocacy to remove the entrenched cast system and promote social justice. Ambedkar created several protest is writing against the caste discrimination in the society. He took various activities for dalit upliftment such as - in 1924, Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrit

Hitakarini Sabha, aimed to promoting education among the Dalits and improving their socio economic status. He started many priorical agenda like “Mook Nayak” , “Bahishkrit Bharat” in 1927 to give a voice to millions of voiceless people. In the same year he also launched the “ Samaj Samata Sangh” to give social equality among untouchables and to encourage inter- caste marriage and the another is “ The Janata” was started by Ambedkar during this time. He also formed the “ Samata Sainik Dal” to voice the concerns of the Dalits.

He also took various social movements for promoting social justice. He started ‘Mahad Satyagraha’ movement in 1927. It was first social movement led by Dr b.r Ambedkar to give social rights to the Dalit and abolished caste based discrimination in India. In 1927 when he was engaged in the legal profession in Bombay, it was mainly on his initiative that the ‘ Bole Resolution’ (named after the social reformer S.K .Bole) was adopted in the Bombay provincial legislative assembly because the untouchables have equal rights in water bodies, pond, dharmasala, school, government office, court and hospitals used for public purpose. According to this resolution in 1924, the ‘Chawdar tank’ was declared open to the untouchable on the proposal of the Mahad Municipality. Leter in December 1927 Dr. B. R Ambedkar and his followers symbolically burned the copies of ‘Manusmriti’ the traditional Hindu legal text. The act was a symbolic protest the text endorsement of the caste system, caste based discrimination and especially to women and lower caste inequality. In 1930 ki organised another movement to established the untouchables right to enter the famous temple of Kalaram at Nasik.

Dr b.r Ambedkar contribution’s as a representative of the oppressed classes in the three round table conferences organised by the British government between 1930 to 1932 constitutes a significant contribution to Indian politics. Ambedkar founded many political and social organisation. Some of the important organisation mainly the Independent Labour Party, Republic Party, Schedule Caste Federation Organization was created in 1937.

In 1930 Ambedkar started a weekly paper name Janata, later renamed as Prabuddha through which he endeavoured to educate the people on social, political, historical, religious, educational, economic and other problems of the downthrodren people of India.

An important political movement organised by Ambedkar for the depressed class. The Poona Pact was an agreement in 1932 between Dr b.r Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi. It replaced separate electorates for Dait with reserved seats within the general electorate ensuring

JOCIPE

their political representation and preserving social harmony. But Ambedkar faced moral pressure on the issue of Gandhi's life and agreed to a compromise to the Pune Pact (1932). This incident brought about Ambedkar's complete disillusionment with Hindu social reforms. He realised that the abolition of caste discrimination was not possible from within the fold of Hinduism. Therefore, he advocated not only for the political solidarity of the untouchable communities within Hindu society, but also for their complete religious conversion. In 1935, Yeola Conversion conference Dr B.R. Ambedkar declared his intention to leave Hinduism and eventually convert to Buddhism. During this conference, he made the historic statement: "I was born a Hindu, but I will not die as a Hindu". After the 1935 declaration, Ambedkar spent over two decades studying various religions, including Islamic, Christianity and Sikhism before deciding on Buddhism. He fulfilled his vow 21 years later in 1956, Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur where he embraced Buddhism along with 365000 to 500000 followers.

Emphasis on Parliamentary Democracy

Ambedkar is one of the foremost thinkers of modern India. He was a great social revolutionary. The social thought of Ambedkar basically revolves around the idea of understanding the dynamic of caste system in India and fighting a tireless crusade against the curse of untouchability. He emphasizes that democracy is a tool in the hand of ordinary people to further their interests and safeguard human values and dignity. His vision was not a mere established political democracy but social democracy, what he called a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as the principle of life. It's achieved through state-led economic planning and the legal abolition of caste. He advocated for "state socialism", proposing nationalisation of key industries and land to ensure equitable distribution and prevent capitalist exploitation, while maintaining parliamentary democracy.

Ambedkar emphasized the establishment of a parliamentary democratic system of governance. According to him, equality is the primary objective of the democracy and endeavour to maintain a balance between liberty and equality. Despite this, he was aware of the limitation of parliamentary democracy could not succeed without the establishment of democracy in the social and economic sphere; for this reason, he advocated for separate electorates for the Dalits community. In the constitution of India, Ambedkar took possible initiatives to ensure the recognition and protection to the political and economic rights of the Dalits community. Ambedkar advocated for the recognition of

Indian states based on language, famously proposing the 'one state one language' formula to ensure administrative work. However he opposed granting official language status to religion language. He favour Hindi as the official link language to foster National unity and integrity to promote Liberty equality and fraternity. In his work, 'Thoughts on linguistic states' (1956), he emphasized that states should be formed a linguistic basis, but advised that one language could form multiple states for better management.

Political Right and Dalit Empowerment

Dr Ambedkar's role in the political sphere was equally significant in the formation of Dalit upliftment. Ambedkar emphasised that political power was the key to unlocking social, economic and educational upliftment. His "Educate, Agitate, Organize" mantra encouraged Dalits to be self reliant and assert their right through legal and political means rather than depending on the charity of others. For this he demanding separate electorates for Dalits to ensure they could choose their own representatives. As the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar insured that the right of daleep were enshrined in law. The Indian Constitution under Ambedkar's guidance abolished untouchability, granted Dalits equal right and provided for a affirmative actions policies such as reservation in education, employment and politics. These provisions aimed to changing the historical injustice faced by Dalits and providing them with opportunities to integrate into the mainstream of Indian society. He believed that Dalits could only secure their rights and interest through active participation in the democratic process. His efforts led to the inclusion of special provisions for Dalits in the political system, ensuring their representation in legislative bodies.

Ambedkar also emphasized the importance of women. He fought for equal human rights for both men and women. He tried to create a just and gender neutral world. He was a strong advocate for women rights and gender equality. He was a campaigned against social practices like child marriage and advocated for women's education and empowerment. To him sexual discrimination should be root out from the society and everybody should get equal opportunity into the society. The Indian Constitution grantees social and economic justice to women and that is because of Ambedkar contribution. Ambedkar took various measures in the Indian Constitution for the advancement of women. He advocated for equal participation of women, unequal treatment of women in factories, equal pay and equal rights. In 1938, Ambedkar as

JOCIPE

a legislative assembly member of Bombay, recommended that birth control facilities be made available to women. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common civil code for Hindu society. It was a revolutionary attempt to protect and development of Hindu women, aimed at strengthening women's right regarding property, marriage and inheritance. When the bill was not passed by parliament, Dr Ambedkar resigned to the Ministry of Law in protest against the fundamentalist and in favour of the right of the Hindu women whose status was miserable like Dalits in India.

Constitutional Safeguard for the Depressed Class

Dr. Ambedkar was appointed the chairman of the drafting committee that was constituted by constituent assembly to draft a constitution for independence India. That the constitution inshrined principles of equality, liberty and social justice and included various provisions for affirmative action to uplift marginalised section of the society to ensure abolish untouchability and promoting social justice. He wanted to incorporate legal safeguard in the constitution of India. Ambedkar was the champion of fundamental right. Part III of the Indian constitution guarantees the fundamental rights to the citizens against the state. These provisions aimed at preventing discrimination and promoting social justice are known as fundamental rights.

The fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution are:

- guaranteeing equality before the law and equal protection of law (Article 14),
- Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15),
- Equality opportunity in matters of public employment (Article 16),
- Abolition of untouchability (Article 17),
- Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour (Article 23)

In briefly it may be said that Ambedkar and the founding father of our constitution emphasized that the objective of our constitution was to establish an egalitarian society where rights were guaranteed to not a few but to all. It seeks to achieve a balance between Political and civil right on the one hand and social and economy right on the other or between the individual rights and demand a social justice. While the fundamental rights guarantee the rights and liberties of the Individual against arbitrary state action, the Directive Principles seek

to emphasized economics and social goals, the Directive Principles strive to create a welfare state and a just social order without any economic exploitation. Article 38 contains the essence of these principles.

The state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall inform all the institution of National life.

The provisions of Part XVI of the Indian Constitution may be described as special provisions relating to certain classes-

- Article 330 provides that seat shall be reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People, and
- Article 332 provides that seats shall be reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly in the states.

The real contribution of Ambedkar is reflected in the protective discrimination scheme or the reservation policy of the government envisaged under some provisions of Part III and many of Part IV dealing with the constitutional mandate to ameliorate the condition of the schedule casts and schedule tribes and the other backward classes.

Conclusion

A true democrat at heart, Ambedkar's sincerity in safeguarding the interest of depressed classes and securing the human rights of oppressed classes is undeniable. Through his intellectual leadership, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made significant contribution to the advancement of human right in India, leaving a lasting legacy that content to inspire social justice movements today. He wish to create India as a great Nation through social and economic revolution within bloodshed, as the real democratic state is the everlasting gift to the people of India. Ambedkar envisioned that a new society would emerge, built upon the abolition of cast and religious distinctions. Ambedkar was always inspiring for the Dalit struggle. During independent to present day Ambedkar play an important role in the Dalit society the Indian Constitution, therefore can be referred as 'Ambedkar's constitution' not only because of Ambedkar significant contribution but also because of its egalitarian principles, and the aspirations for change, which it has generated among one of the most marginalised social groups in the world.

JOCIPE

Given this emphasis in recognising Ambedkar's crucial role and impact in framing the Indian Constitution, it is natural to reflect on whether the constitution was able to affect the caste system in more than seventy nine years of its making.

The motto and slogan of Ambedkar what known as "educate, agitate, organize" has made the people to aware of the things that happening around in Indian social context, perhaps it was a great remedy, to this social problem. In this regard, as a true safeguard he placed the atmost emphasis on the spirit of fraternity. Ambedkar view - "fraternity is the name for disposition of an individual to treat man as the object of reverence or love and the desire to be in unity with fellow beings". His contribution in upliftment of the downthroden made him a Messiah among the downthroden. So, we can say Dr B.R. Ambedkar not only leader of Dalit liberation movement he was a great man of Dalit community for their all kind of upliftment as well as all marginalised section of Indian society. Ambedkar one and only person who was feel and think very deeply for Dalit rights, equality, justice and their self-respect, so his role is very significant of upliftment of Dalits in India.

References

1. Basu, D.D. (2022). *Introduction to the Constitution of India (26th ed.)*. LexisNexis.
2. Roy, H., & Singh, M.P. (2020). *Indian political thought: Themes and thinkers (3rd ed.)*. Pearson Education.
3. Bakshi, P M. (2025). *The Constitution of India. (20th ed.)*. LexisNexis.
4. Omvedt, G. (1994). *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Sage.
5. Chakraborty, B., & Pandey, R. K. (2009). *Modern Indian Political Thought*. New Delhi: Sage.
6. B. R. Ambedkar([wikipedia....https://en.m.wikipedia.org](https://en.m.wikipedia.org)).
7. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambedkar_family

The Nature of Meaning: A Philosophical Exploration of Semantics in Frege and Wittgenstein

Jibon Ankure

Abstract:

This paper examines the concept of meaning within the philosophical frameworks of Gottlob Frege and Ludwig Wittgenstein, two major philosophers in the philosophy of language. Frege's theory, which focuses on the differentiation between "sense" and "reference," is analyzed about its formal and logical methodology regarding meaning, wherein the meaning of a term is ascertained by its cognitive content (sense) and its objective reference. Wittgenstein, conversely, dismisses a static, referential perspective on meaning, promoting a pragmatic, context-dependent theory that highlights the significance of language in social practices. His notion of "language games" and the assertion that meaning is determined by usage stand in opposition to Frege's emphasis on logic and truth conditions. The paper examines the implications of these divergent methods for modern semantic theories, emphasizing their continued significance in the analysis of meaning, reference, and language utilization. This comparative analysis seeks to illustrate how the contributions of Frege and Wittgenstein offer complementary perspectives on the complex and dynamic nature of meaning in language.

Keywords: Frege, Analytic, Semantic, Sense, Reference.

The essence of meaning has been a crucial issue in the philosophy of language, with few philosophers influencing its evolution as significantly as Gottlob Frege and Ludwig Wittgenstein. These two philosophers, despite their divergent methodologies, profoundly influenced our comprehension of meaning, reference, and linguistic usage. Frege's initial contributions established the groundwork for

SACT, Dept. of Philosophy, Galsi Mahavidyalaya, Galsi (West Bengal)

contemporary semantics, although Wittgenstein's subsequent philosophy challenged and reinterpreted conventional concepts of meaning and its connection to language. By analyzing their contributions, we may delineate the progression of concepts on meaning from a logical, formalist viewpoint to a more pragmatic, usage-oriented framework. This paper aims to examine the theories of these two influential figures, their perspectives on meaning construction, and the ramifications of their concepts for modern semantic theory. Frege's differentiation between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) represents a significant advancement in the theory of meaning. In his foundational text, *On Sense and Reference* (1892), Frege contends that the meaning of a term encompasses both its sense (the manner of presenting the thing) and its reference (the real item it denotes). Frege's invention was to demonstrate that sense and reference are separate, with sense providing a means to comprehend the reference without requiring knowledge of the referent itself. This differentiation established the foundation for much of the subsequent analytical philosophy of language. Frege (1892) posits that "The thought is the common property of all who understand the sentence, and this is independent of the sense in which the expression is presented." This concept situates meaning within a more systematic, logical framework, wherein meaning is associated with truth conditions and logical relations.

Wittgenstein, however, offers a marked divergence from Frege's formalist methodology. In his later work, especially in *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Wittgenstein formulates a pragmatic theory of meaning that underscores the social function of language and its reliance on context and usage. Wittgenstein's renowned assertion, "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.43), implies that meaning cannot be comprehended in isolation from the practices and rules that regulate language usage. According to Wittgenstein, meaning is not intrinsic to words or symbols but is determined by their usage in quotidian contexts. This transition from Frege's concentration on the logical connection between language and reality to Wittgenstein's emphasis on everyday language undermines the concept of a fixed, objective meaning. The disparity between Frege's and Wittgenstein's ideas prompts significant inquiries on the connection among meaning, language, and reality. Frege's model is based on the conviction of meaning's objectivity, which can be examined through formal logic, while Wittgenstein's perspective emphasizes the variability and social contingency of meaning, stressing its reliance on

linguistic practices. These divergent viewpoints have considerable ramifications for philosophical semantics as well as for linguistics, cognitive science, and artificial intelligence, where inquiries on the construction and comprehension of meaning are paramount. Putnam (1975) asserts that “The meaning of a word is not a fixed relation to some external object or entity but is a matter of its place within the web of human practices.” This perspective is more congruent with Wittgenstein’s conception, wherein meaning is inherently tied to context and usage.

Gottlob Frege’s contributions to the philosophy of language, especially his theory of meaning, have significantly influenced semantic theory. His differentiation between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) constitutes the foundation of his comprehension of meaning, and his contributions persist in influencing discussions in philosophy, linguistics, and cognitive science. Frege’s theory posits that meaning transcends mere mental representation or arbitrary associations between words and objects; it is a complicated, logical structure amenable to component analysis. This part rigorously analyzes Frege’s theory of meaning, emphasizing his fundamental distinctions, the ramifications for linguistic comprehension, and the challenges his theory has encountered. Frege’s important insight, initially expressed in his 1892 work *On Sense and Reference*, was the notion that the meaning of a term comprises two separate components: sense and reference. Frege posits that the reference of a term denotes the item or entity it signifies, but the meaning of a phrase refers to the mode of presentation or the manner in which the object is depicted. Frege (1892) elucidates that “the reference of a proper name is the object itself; the sense of a proper name is the manner in which it presents the object.” This differentiation enables Frege to tackle concerns regarding the informativeness of identity statements and the challenge of referring to non-existent entities. The statement “The morning star is the evening star” conveys a true notion; nonetheless, it is instructive because to the distinct senses of the two terms, despite their reference to the same entity (i.e., Venus). Frege’s approach thus clarifies apparent inconsistencies regarding meaning by differentiating between the cognitive value of a statement (its sense) and the real object it denotes (its reference).

Frege’s primary focus was the connection between meaning and truth. According to Frege, the meaning of a statement is its truth value, which is ascertained by the logical structure of the sentence and the relation of its components. In his *Begriffsschrift* (1879), he famously

claims that “the meaning of a proposition is its truth-value.” Frege’s logicism contends that mathematics may be reduced to logic, based on the premise that the meaning of mathematical statements is determined by their truth conditions. This perspective has profoundly impacted the evolution of formal semantics, wherein meaning is frequently examined through the truth conditions of propositions (Montague, 1970). Frege’s rigorous logicism has been contested by critics who assert that it neglects the social and contextual elements that shape meaning, a concern subsequently addressed by philosophers such as Wittgenstein. Frege’s theory presents the context principle, which asserts that “a word possesses meaning only within the context of a sentence” (Frege, 1892). This theory posits that words acquire meaning by their function within broader language frameworks. Frege’s adherence to this idea is seen in his conviction that meaning is not inherent to a word in isolation but is invariably linked to its application within a sentence. This perspective represented a significant advancement in comprehending meaning through syntactic and semantic frameworks; yet, it has been criticized for neglecting the subtleties of quotidian language usage, as demonstrated by Wittgenstein’s later writings.

Notwithstanding its groundbreaking character, Frege’s theory of meaning has faced numerous critiques. A significant concern is his handling of non-denoting expressions, including imaginary or hypothetical things. Frege’s model is effective for referring concepts with explicit references (e.g., “Venus”), but it has difficulties with phrases such as “unicorn” or “the present King of France,” which lack a definitive reference in reality. Frege’s differentiation between sense and reference does not completely address the challenges presented by non-existent or ambiguous references, a concern subsequently examined by philosophers like Bertrand Russell (1905) through their own theories of meaning and reference. Moreover, Frege’s emphasis on logical structure has faced criticism for overlooking the significance of pragmatics and social context in the determination of meaning. Austin (1962) contended that “meaning encompasses more than merely the logical or referential attributes of words; it is grounded in the practical application of language within social contexts.” Notwithstanding these critiques, Frege’s theory continues to serve as a fundamental framework in the exploration of meaning. His differentiation between sense and reference has impacted the evolution of formal semantics and the contributions of subsequent philosophers, especially within the analytic tradition. Moreover, his emphasis on

the significance of logic in meaning has impacted modern discussions in the philosophy of language, particularly about meaning and truth in formal systems (Quine, 1960). Frege's theory established the foundation for most of 20th-century philosophy of language, impacting both logical positivism and subsequent pragmatic views, including those of Wittgenstein and Davidson.

Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy signifies a profound divergence from preceding conceptions of meaning, especially those formulated by Gottlob Frege. Frege concentrated on logical structure and the differentiation between sense and reference, whereas Wittgenstein's later philosophy, particularly in *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), highlighted the social and pragmatic dimensions of language. Wittgenstein posits that meaning is derived from the practical application of words within language, as articulated in his renowned assertion, "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.43), so redirecting attention from theoretical definitions and formal frameworks to the quotidian practices and situations of word usage. This viewpoint contests the notion that meaning may be comprehended irrespective of the manner in which words are utilized within certain social situations. Wittgenstein's subsequent philosophy focused on the pragmatic operation of language and its interconnection with human activity. Contrary to Frege's focus on logical relations, Wittgenstein asserted that meaning emerges from the integration of language inside life itself. He contended that "language is not a system of symbols representing pre-existing objects in the world; rather, it is a tool we employ to navigate and interact with our environment" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.2). According to Wittgenstein, words derive meaning from their use in particular social practices, rather than from a static connection between a word and an object. He challenges the notion that words possess inherent meanings that can be discerned independently from their contextual usage.

In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein presents the notion of language games, which elucidates his perspective on meaning as contingent upon context. He elucidates that "a language game is a practice or a form of life wherein the significance of a word is dictated by the regulations that govern its application" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.23). Wittgenstein posits that no one, comprehensive concept of meaning is universally applicable to all words. Meaning is multidimensional and influenced by the various actions in which language participates. The term "game" can signify distinct meanings depending on the context, such as a sporting event, a board game, or a

political strategy, illustrating the diverse social settings in which language is utilized. This emphasis on language usage in context suggests that meaning is dynamic, continuously negotiated and formed through particular social interactions. Wittgenstein's perspective on meaning fundamentally rejects the notion of essential definitions that accurately encapsulate the underlying essence of a word. Contrary to the stringent frames of meaning in prior philosophy, Wittgenstein (1953) contends that "the meaning of a word is not a set of necessary and sufficient conditions, but a family resemblance among the different uses of that word" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.66). The concept of familial resemblance posits that words possess a spectrum of interconnected meanings, each sharing some common characteristics without being confined to a singular, immutable essence. Wittgenstein employs the term "game" as an exemplar, observing that numerous games exist, each with distinct rules and structures, yet they all possess an indistinct commonality that enables us to identify them as games. The concept of family resemblance contests the traditional perspective of meaning as exactly specified, highlighting its fluid and contextual characteristics.

Wittgenstein's repudiation of essentialism and emphasis on pragmatic usage significantly impact the study of meaning. Wittgenstein's theory underscores the significance of language in practice, facilitating a more adaptable and dynamic comprehension of meaning that is attuned to context and social conventions. This viewpoint is especially significant in the examination of meaning in quotidian language, where words are frequently employed in complex and context-dependent manners. Nonetheless, Wittgenstein's perspective has encountered criticism, especially from individuals who contend that it jeopardizes the feasibility of a systematic explanation of meaning. Critics have noted that Wittgenstein's methodology lacks a definitive framework for addressing ambiguities or conflicts regarding meaning, particularly in instances of confusing or inconsistent language use (Kripke, 1982).

Wittgenstein's method, although freeing in its dismissal of strict definitions, presents the issue of addressing instances when language use seems contradictory or where social processes lack clarity. A notable facet of Wittgenstein's perspective on meaning is his approach to philosophical dilemmas. He contends that numerous classical philosophical dilemmas stem from misconceptions regarding the essence of language. Questions regarding the essence of reality or the boundaries of knowledge frequently rely on erroneous assumptions concerning the framework of language. Wittgenstein (1953) asserts

that “philosophical problems resemble ailments of comprehension, and the appropriate remedy is to dissolve them through meticulous analysis of language usage” (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.109). Comprehending the functions of words in daily life helps clarify numerous confusions that lead to philosophical dilemmas.

The theories of meaning advanced by Gottlob Frege and Ludwig Wittgenstein exemplify two divergent methodologies for comprehending language, cognition, and reference. Although both philosophers are regarded as seminal thinkers in the philosophy of language, their perspectives diverge significantly, especially regarding the functions of logic, context, and the essence of meaning. Frege’s contributions established the foundation for contemporary formal semantics, highlighting the interplay between signs, sense, and reference. Conversely, Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, as expressed in *Philosophical Investigations*, criticizes the foundational assumptions of Frege’s theory, presenting a pragmatic and contextual perspective on meaning.

The distinctions between Frege and Wittgenstein expose essential philosophical divergences in the functioning of language and the comprehension of meaning within it. Frege’s theory of meaning is founded on a logical framework that differentiates between the sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) of a term. Frege posits that the meaning of a sentence is dictated by the sense of its constituents, which subsequently denote objects in the world. In his influential article, “On Sense and Reference,” Frege (1892) states, “The reference of a word is the object it denotes, while its sense is the manner in which this object is presented” (p. 26). This distinction is essential as it enables Frege to explain how many phrases can denote the same object while imparting different interpretations. The phrases “the Morning Star” and “the Evening Star” both denote the planet Venus, however their meanings are diverse, as they depict Venus in varying contexts. Frege’s framework provides a meticulously organized, formal perspective on meaning, wherein comprehension is intricately linked to logical relationships and the abstract representation of entities in the world.

Conversely, Wittgenstein’s later work rejects formalistic and abstract interpretations of meaning. His renowned assertion, “The meaning of a word is its use in the language” (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.43), signifies a transition from a theoretical, sense-oriented perspective of meaning to one grounded in practical, social application. Wittgenstein’s perspective on meaning is fundamentally pragmatic and contextual. He contends that the significance of a word or sentence

cannot be entirely encapsulated by abstract definitions or by alluding to a series of logical conditions, as proposed by Frege. Meaning is rooted in the utilization of language within quotidian behaviors. Wittgenstein (1953) asserts, "A word can have meaning only if it is used in a context of language-games" (p. 23), highlighting that meaning emerges from the many and dynamic situations in which words are utilized in human endeavors. This repudiation of a rigid logical structure for meaning constitutes a fundamental divergence from Frege's formal semantics. A significant distinction between Frege and Wittgenstein pertains to their conception of reference. Frege asserts that reference is a crucial component of meaning, with each word denoting an object in the world. This perspective corresponds with the notion that language functions as a mapping system, wherein terms possess fixed, objective referents. For Wittgenstein, reference is not as stable or fundamental as Frege posits. Wittgenstein (1953) challenges the notion of a fixed relationship between words and things, contending that meaning is more dynamic and associated with the usage of words in social contexts. He asserts, "A name possesses meaning solely within the framework of an entire language, and its reference is not an isolated entity but rather a component of a network of applications" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.66). The reference of a word is dictated by its function within the larger linguistic context, rather than by an inherent link to a particular thing in reality.

Moreover, Frege's theory is based on the conviction that an exact and universal logic of language is attainable. His work is profoundly shaped by formal logic, and he asserts that the meaning and reference of concepts may be meticulously examined using logical frameworks. Frege's adherence to formalism stands in stark contrast to Wittgenstein's subsequent skepticism regarding the feasibility of a singular, universal language capable of encapsulating the intricacies of human meaning. Wittgenstein's repudiation of formalism is apparent in his methodology to philosophical issues, which he perceives as stemming from misconceptions about the essence of language. Wittgenstein (1953) contends, "The confusions encountered in philosophy stem from the improper use of language" (p. 2). Wittgenstein, by prioritizing colloquial language and quotidian usage, contests the belief that philosophical dilemmas can be resolved solely through logical analysis, so directly critiquing the Fregean perspective. Besides these philosophical distinctions, Frege and Wittgenstein also disagree in their perspectives on the individual's involvement in the construction of meaning. Frege's theory posits that meaning may be objectively

discerned through logical and linguistic analysis, substantially irrespective of personal viewpoints or societal conventions. Frege posits that the meaning of a term is defined by its sense and reference, which may be universally shared and comprehended. Conversely, Wittgenstein underscores the significance of social interaction and communal practices in the formation of meaning. Wittgenstein posits that meaning does not exist independently of the linguistic practices inside social contexts. He contends that “meaning is not an attribute of words, but a consequence of the practices in which words are situated” (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.43). This position highlights the significance of community and context in influencing language functionality, hence contesting the Fregean concept of a static, objective meaning. Notwithstanding these substantial disagreements, both Frege and Wittgenstein are united in their conviction that language is fundamental to comprehending thinking and meaning. Frege associates meaning with the logical structure of language, while Wittgenstein situates meaning in the use of language within particular social practices. Both theories aim to elucidate the relationship between language and the world, as well as the conveyance of meaning via words; yet, they diverge markedly in their foundational assumptions on the essence of meaning and the function of language in human cognition and communication.

The meaning theories advanced by Frege and Wittgenstein have significantly influenced modern philosophy, especially in the domains of language philosophy, semantics, and epistemology. Although both philosophers have unique perspectives on the essence of meaning, their concepts persist in influencing and contesting contemporary debates over the functionality of language, the construction of meaning, and the relationship between language and reality. Frege’s contributions established the foundation for formal semantics and analytic philosophy, whereas Wittgenstein’s later perspectives, highlighting linguistic practices and context, have impacted post-analytic and pragmatic methodologies. The enduring significance of their theories highlights the persistent relevance of their contributions to modern discussions regarding the interplay between language, thought, and reality. Frege’s differentiation between sense and reference established the basis for significant advancements in formal semantics, especially within analytic philosophy. His focus on the logical and systematic aspects of meaning has impacted modern philosophers like Saul Kripke (1982), who delved deeper into topics like reference and necessity. Kripke’s causal theory of reference expands upon Frege’s distinction

by asserting that a name's reference is influenced not just by its sense but also by causal-historical circumstances, a stance that remains a topic of contemporary discussion. This expansion of Frege's theory has been essential in confronting the issues presented by direct reference theories, such as those proposed by Russell and Mill, who highlighted the significance of context in establishing reference. Frege's work offers a vital framework for comprehending how meaning may be systematized and studied using formal structures, which remains a fundamental element of modern philosophy of language.

Wittgenstein's later philosophy, especially in *Philosophical Investigations*, presented a fundamentally distinct viewpoint that highlighted the fluid and context-dependent essence of meaning. His repudiation of formalism and assertion that "meaning is use" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.43) have profoundly influenced current discussions in pragmatics, epistemology, and the philosophy of language. Wittgenstein's perspective that meaning is rooted in social activities rather than abstract definitions has significantly impacted pivotal advancements in current philosophy, including theories of meaning in use and speech act theory. Philosophers such as John Searle (1969) and J.L. Austin (1962) have extensively utilized Wittgenstein's theories to investigate the dynamics of language in social interactions, suggesting that meaning is not fixed but is perpetually negotiated and influenced by the communicative behaviours of speakers. Furthermore, Wittgenstein's later philosophy has directly influenced post-analytic and continental philosophy, contesting the tenets of conventional analytic philosophy and facilitating more pragmatic and contextually attuned approaches to meaning. The French philosopher Michel Foucault (1972) contended that meaning is influenced by power dynamics and historical circumstances, which corresponds with Wittgenstein's perspective that meaning is inseparable from the social practices in which it exists. Foucault's exploration of the "archaeology of knowledge" resonates with Wittgenstein's focus on the historical and cultural influences that form language and meaning. Wittgenstein's philosophy has prompted a transition from codified, abstract interpretations of meaning to a more historical and social comprehension of language, which is profoundly attentive to the contingencies of ordinary usage.

Wittgenstein's philosophy poses a substantial challenge to conventional epistemology. Wittgenstein's assertion that meaning is rooted in language usage contests the notion that knowledge can be comprehended solely through objective linguistic representation. His

renowned statement, “A picture can represent reality; but a word is not a picture” (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.2), implies that meaning cannot be simplified to a direct connection with the universe. The departure from representational conceptions of meaning has impacted modern discourse on knowledge and truth, especially within post-positivist epistemology. Philosophers like as Richard Rorty (1980) have adopted Wittgenstein’s anti-representationalism, contending that knowledge ought to be perceived as a byproduct of language activities instead than a reflection of an objective reality. This viewpoint contests the conventional belief that language is solely a mechanism for depicting reality, proposing instead that meaning is consistently influenced by the practices and objectives of the communities that employ it. Wittgenstein’s latter work has significantly influenced both ethics and political theory, in addition to its effects on the philosophy of language. His perspective that meaning is inextricably linked to social activities and the “language-games” governing word usage influences the comprehension of moral and political terminology. Wittgenstein’s concept of meaning as usage has been employed to challenge essentialist interpretations of moral and political conceptions, promoting a more fluid and context-dependent comprehension. Feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1949) utilized Wittgensteinian principles to assert that gender and identity are not immutable but rather produced via social practices and language. Wittgenstein’s later work, by contesting the notion of permanent meanings in ethics and politics, has unveiled new avenues for comprehending the dynamic and contingent essence of social norms and values.

Frege and Wittgenstein’s theories offer significant insights into current issues in artificial intelligence (AI) and computational linguistics. Frege’s contributions to formal semantics have shaped the logical frameworks employed in AI for modeling human language, but Wittgenstein’s attention on context and usage corresponds with contemporary advances in natural language processing (NLP) that prioritize contextual comprehension of language. The emergence of machine learning and AI technologies that analyze language through statistical models and extensive corpora aligns with Wittgenstein’s assertion that meaning is dynamic and arises from usage. This transition towards perceiving meaning as context-dependent has created new avenues for the advancement of AI systems capable of comprehending and producing human language with greater flexibility and nuance than conventional symbolic methods rooted in Fregean logic.

JOCIPE

The essence of meaning, examined through the philosophies of Frege and Wittgenstein, uncovers two essential methodologies for comprehending language and its connection to reality. Frege's dual theory of sense and reference is fundamental to logical and formal semantics, whereas Wittgenstein's emphasis on language games and meaning as use underscores the dynamic, social, and context-sensitive character of meaning. The disparity between these two philosophers highlights a fundamental philosophical distinction between a formal, objective understanding of meaning and a pragmatic, usage-oriented interpretation. Their concepts persistently shape discussions in philosophy, linguistics, and cognitive science, and their lasting impact on the philosophy of language guarantees that inquiries into the essence of meaning remain pivotal in modern discourse.

References:

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Harvard University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. Pantheon.
- Frege, G. (1892). *On sense and reference*. In M. Black (Ed.), *Philosophical writings of Gottlob Frege* (pp. 56-78). Basil Blackwell.
- Glock, H. J. (2008). *Wittgenstein: A philosophical introduction*. Routledge.
- Kripke, S. A. (1982). *Wittgenstein on rules and private language*. Harvard University Press.
- Rorty, R. (1980). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Princeton University Press.
- Smith, M. (2002). *Frege's philosophy of language* (2nd ed.). Duckworth.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Blackwell.

Strategic Realignment and Competitive Coexistence: A Longitudinal Analysis of India-China Relations (2014–2025)

Dr. Ila

Abstract: The decade between 2014 and 2025 represents a paradigm shift in the geopolitical landscape of Southern Asia. Under the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's engagement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) transitioned from high-stakes personal summitry to a systemic structural breakdown following the 2020 Galwan Valley crisis, culminating in a cautious, highly securitized tactical stabilization by late 2025. This article examines the structural drivers of this transformation, analyzing the interplay between border sovereignty, economic de-risking, and the emergence of a maritime-continental rivalry. It argues that the relationship has moved from a "managed peace" to a state of "competitive coexistence," where engagement is transactional, heavily vetted for security, and underpinned by a permanent military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

1. Introduction: The Collapse of the Post-1988 Consensus

For nearly three decades, the 1988 "Rajiv Gandhi-Deng Xiaoping consensus" provided a stable, albeit fragile, framework for India-China relations. This consensus was predicated on a fundamental decoupling: the two nations agreed to maintain "peace and tranquility" along the disputed border while allowing economic, diplomatic, and cultural ties to flourish. The logic was that a burgeoning economic partnership would eventually create the political capital necessary to resolve the boundary question.

Assistant Professor, Political Science, RDS College, Muzaffarpur, Bihar

October-December, 2025

(257)

However, the period 2014–2025 witnessed the total exhaustion of this model. As both nations emerged as assertive global actors with overlapping spheres of influence, the “Cold Peace” was replaced by a “Hot Contestation.” The rise of a more nationalist India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a more expansionist China under President Xi Jinping created a “clash of two dreams.” By 2020, the decoupling of the border from the rest of the relationship was no longer sustainable, leading to a decade defined by securitization and strategic autonomy.

2. 2014–2019: The Rise and Fall of Personalized Summitry

The early years of the Modi administration were characterized by “personalized diplomacy,” an attempt to leverage leader-to-leader rapport to bypass institutional rigidities and historical baggage.

2.1 The Development Partnership (2014–2016)

The 2014 Ahmedabad Summit was designed to be a historic reset. PM Modi invited President Xi to his home state of Gujarat, aiming to attract massive Chinese investment (\$20 billion was promised) into Indian infrastructure and industrial parks. However, even as the leaders sat on a swing in Sabarmati, a major Chinese military incursion was underway in the Chumar sector of Ladakh. This “Chumar incident” served as an early warning that Beijing viewed the border not as a settled matter to be shelved, but as a tool of tactical pressure to be used during diplomatic engagements.

2.2 The BRI Schism and the “Masood Azhar” Friction

Relations began to fray structurally in 2017. India became the only major power to formally boycott China’s “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) Forum. New Delhi’s rejection of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was a definitive assertion of sovereignty, as the project traversed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Simultaneously, China’s persistent technical hold at the UN on designating Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist convinced New Delhi that Beijing was actively shielding Pakistan-sponsored terrorism to keep India “boxed in” within South Asia.

2.3 Doklam and the Informal Summit Model

The 73-day Doklam standoff in 2017, where Indian and Chinese troops faced off on Bhutanese territory, was the closest the two nations had come to war since 1967. To prevent a total collapse, the two leaders

initiated “Informal Summits”—Wuhan (2018) and Mamallapuram (2019). These summits were designed to create “strategic guidance” for the two militaries. While they successfully provided a temporary “thaw,” they failed to address the underlying structural asymmetry. Beijing continued to view India as a secondary power that should accept Chinese hegemony in Asia, while New Delhi insisted on a “multipolar Asia” as a prerequisite for a “multipolar world.”

3. 2020–2023: The Great Rupture and the Securitization of Policy

The June 15, 2020, clash in Galwan Valley was the “1962 moment” for the 21st century. It shattered the trust required for the post-1988 consensus and led to a fundamental reevaluation of India’s strategic posture.

3.1 Kinetic Escalation and the “Armed Stagnation”

The fatalities in Galwan—the first on the LAC in 45 years—necessitated a massive mirror-deployment. By late 2020, both nations had moved approximately 50,000 to 60,000 troops each to the frontlines, backed by heavy artillery, missile batteries, and advanced air defense systems. The LAC, previously a lightly patrolled boundary, became a permanent, “live” military front, akin to the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan. For three years, diplomatic and military talks (the Corps Commander level meetings) achieved only incremental disengagement in areas like Pangong Tso and Gogra-Hotsprings, while a state of “abnormalcy” persisted elsewhere.

3.2 The Technology Cold War: Digital Sovereignty as Defense

India pioneered a model of “digital de-risking” that predated similar moves in Europe and the United States.

- **The App Bans:** Citing “sovereignty and integrity of India,” the government banned TikTok, WeChat, and over 200 other Chinese applications. This was an attempt to cut off China’s access to the data of India’s 800 million internet users.
- **Telecom Exclusion:** The exclusion of Huawei and ZTE from 5G trials and the subsequent “Trusted Sources” directive for the telecom sector effectively purged Chinese hardware from India’s critical digital backbone.
- **Investment Barriers:** *Press Note 3* (April 2020) mandated government approval for all FDI from countries sharing a land border. This effectively stalled billions of dollars in Chinese

investments (notably from Great Wall Motor and BYD), signaling that India was willing to trade economic growth for national security.

4. The Maritime-Continental Dilemma: A Two-Front Rivalry

By 2022, it became clear that the India-China rivalry had escaped the confines of the Himalayas and entered the maritime domain, creating what analysts call the “Himalayan-Pacific Linkage.”

4.1 The Indian Ocean as the New Battleground

China’s “String of Pearls” strategy—building ports in Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Gwadar (Pakistan), and Kyaukpyu (Myanmar)—began to mature into a potential military network. The 2022 and 2024 visits of Chinese “research vessels” (satellite trackers like the *Yuan Wang* class) to Sri Lanka and the Maldives highlighted India’s vulnerability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

4.2 The Quad and Global Alignments

India’s response was a decisive pivot toward the Indo-Pacific construct and a deepening of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). By 2023, the Quad had moved from a “talk shop” to a functional security partnership focused on maritime domain awareness and critical technology. Beijing’s labeling of the Quad as an “Asian NATO” served only to drive New Delhi closer to Washington, albeit within the framework of “strategic autonomy.”

5. 2024–2025: The Tactical Reset and “Cold Normalization”

The period from late 2024 to 2025 represents a new phase: a “Cold Reset.” Driven by mutual economic fatigue and the realization of a military stalemate, both sides sought a pragmatic stabilization without resolving the core territorial dispute.

5.1 The October 2024 Breakthrough

After 21 rounds of military talks, the two sides reached an agreement on October 21, 2024, regarding “patrolling arrangements” in the Depsang Plains and Demchok. This agreement was unique as it restored patrolling rights to the *status quo ante-2020*. The subsequent meeting between PM Modi and President Xi on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan (October 2024) signaled a formal end to the “freeze,” though it did not signal a return to the “Wuhan Spirit.”

5.2 The 2025 Stabilization: Pragmatism over Trust

By early 2025, several steps were taken to normalize the *mechanics* of the relationship:

- **Aviation and Connectivity:** Direct flights between Delhi and major Chinese cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou) resumed in late 2025 after a five-year hiatus.
- **Visa Streamlining:** India began easing visa restrictions for Chinese technicians to support the “Make in India” initiative, which was struggling with supply chain delays in electronics and EV batteries.
- **The SR Dialogue Revitalized:** The 24th round of Special Representatives (SR) talks, led by NSA Ajit Doval and FM Wang Yi, was held in August 2025. The dialogue moved from “crisis management” to exploring “early harvests” of boundary negotiations, specifically in the Sikkim sector.

5.3 The Trade Paradox

Despite intense friction, trade remained the “sticky” part of the relationship. In 2025, bilateral trade hit a record \$155.6 billion, an increase of 12% over the previous year. However, India’s trade deficit reached a staggering \$105 billion. This economic dependency, particularly in active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and renewable energy components, remains India’s primary strategic vulnerability.

6. The “Neighborhood First” vs. “Zhongguo” Centrality

The rivalry intensified in South Asia, where China’s footprint grew through the Global Development Initiative (GDI). In the Maldives (2024) and Nepal (2025), changes in government led to a oscillating dance between New Delhi’s “Neighborhood First” policy and Beijing’s economic largesse. India’s 2024-2025 focus shifted toward “sovereignty-safe” development, providing alternatives to Chinese debt-driven infrastructure in Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

7. Theoretical Framework: Competitive Coexistence

As of late 2025, the relationship is defined by Competitive Coexistence. The “naive engagement” of the 1990s has been permanently discarded. The current state is characterized by:

1. **Securitization of the Economy:** Trade is no longer independent of border tranquility.

2. **Armed Peace:** The LAC is now a permanently militarized border. Infrastructure built since 2020—including the second bridge over Pangong Tso and the Shinku La tunnel—ensures both sides maintain high-readiness postures.
3. **Transactional Diplomacy:** Cooperation occurs in “pockets” (e.g., BRICS, G20) where mutual interests against Western hegemony overlap, but these do not translate into bilateral trust.

8. Conclusion: The Long Standoff

The decade 2014–2025 has taught New Delhi that China is its primary strategic challenge—not just a border neighbor, but a systemic rival. The “Cold Reset” of 2025 provides a necessary tactical pause, but the structural contest for the leadership of Asia remains the defining geopolitical struggle of our time.

Data Sources:

1. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India: *Annual Report 2024-25; Press Release on 24th SR Talks (August 2025)*.
2. Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS): *India-China Trade Balance Analysis (April 2026 update)*.
3. Observer Research Foundation (ORF): *Special Report: The Securitization of India's Economic Policy (May 2025)*.
4. S. Jaishankar: *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World (2024 Updated Ed.)*.
5. International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS): *The Military Balance 2025: Southern Asia Analysis*.
6. Chatham House: *How China-India Relations Shape Asia (Research Paper, April 2025)*.
7. Economic Times/Reuters: Reports on record trade volumes and flight resumptons (Feb 2026).

Changing Nature of Centre-state Relations During Coalition Era

Dr. Sandeep Kaur

Abstract: Politics of India has witnessed several changes. The federal phase of India can be divided until before 1989 and federal phase after that. The most marked phase of Indian federalism had started from 1989. Since the general elections of 1989 till that of 2014, no single party has been able to get a majority to form a government at the Centre. From 1989 onwards, mostly unstable coalition governments have been formed in India. The beginning of the coalition era has significantly affected the Centre-State relations. It had resulted in reducing the conflict between the Union and the states. The era of coalition governments has rightly been termed as the beginning of “Cooperative Federalism”. But, much has changed afterwards. In the general elections of 2014, 2019 and 2024 the BJP led NDA got absolute majority. The BJP led NDA government has been set up new trends in Indian Federalism. It has a great impact on centre-state relations. The centre-state relations again have become controversial. This paper highlights the changing nature of centre-state relations during coalition era.

Keywords: Coalition, Federalism, Democracy, Centralisation, Regionalism

Introduction:

India is the largest democracy in the world. Since the reemergence of coalition government in 1989, it has undergone several changes. It is also true that even after seventy-five years of independence, the working of the federal system is not up to the mark in the sphere of Centre-State relations in India. “Keeping in view the gravity of the strong demand for more autonomy and powers from the states by the regional parties, it was decided to map the spectrum of our federal

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Khalsa College Patiala (Punjab)

system and sum up its experiences, inadequacies, and points of strength, as well as outline the requirements and approaches towards the cooperative federalism in an era of coalition polity and governance.”¹

“Changes in the Indian party system from one-party dominance to one and a half to multi-party coalition have altered the parameters of Indian federalism. With two important breakdowns in 1967 (at the state level only) and 1977 (at the centre as well), the Indian party system since 1989 finally turned into a multi-party system with polarized pluralism and regional or federal segmentation.”² In fact, the Janata Party formed the government with its allies at the Centre in 1977. It was the first non-Congress government at the central level. This four-party government was not technically a coalition because its four constituents had agreed to merge. And, they contested the election on a single manifesto and on a shared symbol.

Changing Nature of Centre-State Relations from 1989 to 2014:

Since the general elections of 1989 till that of 2014, no single party has been able to get a majority to form a government at the Centre. From 1989 onwards, mostly unstable coalition governments have been formed in India. The beginning of the coalition era has significantly affected the Centre-State relations. It had resulted in reducing the conflict between the Union and the states. The era of coalition governments has rightly been termed as the beginning of “Cooperative Federalism”.

During the pre-1967 phase, India’s central government effectively dominated the constituent states. This condition existed, not because of any constitutional device, but because of the presence of certain ingredients in the body politics.”³ The two unique factors were significant conditions for the centre’s effectiveness, i.e., Nehru’s leadership and the domination of a single political party over both the central and state governments. The constitutional framework of the Union-State relationship worked reasonably well from 1950 to 1967. “The structure and relationship outlined above no longer exist. The post-1967 election period saw the creation of a significantly different political milieu— an environment change with profoundly altered centre-state relations.”⁴

The fourth general election of 1967 broke the Congress dominance in several states and gave way to a new phase of coalition government and politics. These elections also made centre-state relations an

important feature of inter-party competition. Bargaining had long been an important element of relations between New Delhi and States. With the weakening of the hold of the Congress Party and the death of Nehru, “the extra-constitutional arrangements in the centre-state relations and the role of the personal factors in the centralisation of the Congress organisation diminished and in its place emerged a bargaining culture, where the state Chief ministers instead of depending on the personal influence of the Prime Minister on central leadership, began to think in terms of their constitutional powers, vis-à-vis the Union. This position continued till early 1971 when the process of federalisation within the Congress Party was checked and also to some extent reversed.”⁵

After 1967, certain regional parties began to appear across the country. The influence of these parties was usually confined to the states in which they were formed. They were represented in the assemblies as well as in the Parliament. The situation had become somewhat volatile. In a number of states, local or regional parties, confined to a particular state, joined hands with other parties to form governments which were unstable and short-lived. The emergence of the coalition governments and regional parties in the states had a major impact on the working of the federal system created by the Constitution. The regional parties wanted changes to be made in the Constitution so that the States could have more power and authority. In particular, some wanted the removal of Article 356, describing it as draconian.

During the 1970s, the DravidaMunnetraKazhagam (DMK) and the ShiromaniAkali Dal (SAD) had demanded devolving almost all powers to the States, leaving the Centre with minimal subjects like defence, telecommunications, foreign affairs, etc. The DMK had appointed the Rajmanner Committee on Centre-State relations. The ShiromaniAkali Dal had passed the Anandpur Sahib resolution in 1973, raising these demands.

“The centre-state relations during the 1969-77 period were practically reduced to a state of near non-existence as a problem of federal politics in India. Unitarism triumphed under the aegis of a strong state whose power was controlled by a ruling party which had lost its democratic mainspring. Centre-state relations were, at independence, orchestrated in accordance with an equilibrium model in which politically homogenous states on the one hand and the centre on the other acted as countervailing forces in the evolution of a powerful post-colonial state. At the end of the Emergency and on the eve of the 1977 general election, however, they had undergone a paradigm shift characterized by a puissant centre presiding over a federation of

JOCIPE

thoroughly enfeebled states.”⁶ The general elections of 1977 helped reverse the process of paradigmatic shift by strengthening democratic opposition to the regime and once again bringing out the question of centre-state relations into the open as one of fundamental importance for the future of the Indian state.

There were several characteristics of the era from 1989 to 2014, i.e., the dominance of the Congress became a thing of the past, it was the phase of coalition governments at the Centre, the regional parties asserted themselves, and the Central government became weak.

Since 1989, the Indian polity witnessed marked changes compared to the earlier period of 1950-1989. During the earlier period, a single party dominated at the Centre and States, barring brief interludes. After that, federal tendencies gathered strength, and there were demands for restructuring Centre-State relations. Since 1989, coalition governments and different parties came to power in the Centre and the States. All the governments that were formed after 1989 have been coalition governments supported by regional parties. The National Front, which came to power in the Centre after the 1989 elections, was the first coalition government. Except for the Janata Dal, this coalition government was comprised of state-based parties, i.e., the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Telugu Desam Party (TDP), and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP). The The Janata Dal, the leading partner, was a national party with strong regional bases in various parts of the country. It was a minority government and was dependent on the outside support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Left, which were poles apart ideologically. This was the first time when state-based parties like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) for the second time shared power at the Centre. In 1977-79, SAD was a coalition partner of the Janata Party.

The starting of coalition politics was a positive response towards Centre-State relations as the regional identities and parties were allowed to shape the national politics. The emergence of a coalition government in 1989 changed the nature of Centre-State relations from centralised to “cooperative federalism”. During this era, the regional political parties played an important role in the centre.

A landmark in Indian politics took place in 1996, when the United Front government with the support of the Congress came into power. This was the government of 14 regional parties. The leader of the United Front, H. D. Deve Gowda, was a regional leader. In fact, the novelty of the United Front exercise was that the power shifted from the Centre

to the States. “This coalition government was functioning on the basis of the document finalized by the constituent regional parties called the “Common approach to major policy matters and a Minimum Programme” or as it was commonly called the Common Minimum Programme. The Common Minimum Programme envisaged advancing the principles of political, administrative, and economic federalism. It also wanted to go beyond the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission because there has been a new articulation of states’ rights and the need for greater powers to the states to meet the aspirations of the respective states. The most important thing was that the Central government had acknowledged the need to recast Centre-State relations for the first time.”⁷

“Since the Centre-State relations have been a focus area in Indian federal polity and governance, the problems of Article 356, state autonomy, financial powers, and other related issues have figured prominently in the literature of Indian Administration. The frequent imposition of President’s rule in different states under Article 356 of the Constitution by the successive Union Governments for partisan ends during the last five plus decades of its operation has been a core issue.”⁸

An important development in Centre-State relations was the appointment of the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) in 2000. In its report the Commission recommends a new look at fiscal federalism to allocate taxation of the expanding service sector of the economy to the concurrent list rather than settling the matter in a serendipitous way through the residuary mechanism. It also suggests earmarking some service sector tax bases for state governments so as to augment their resources.⁹ “Another important recommendation is the establishment of an ‘Inter-State Trade and Commerce Commission’ under Article 307 read with Entry 42 of the Union List. It seems to rely on the strengthening of judicial settlement of interstate river-water treaties, presumably in the background of its failure to arrive at a political settlement. Besides, it would like to see more effective utilisation of the Inter-state Council and the desirability of prior consultation by the Union government with the Inter-state Council may be considered before signing any treaty vitally affecting the interests of the states regarding matters in the state list.”¹⁰

Regionalism and Demand for State Autonomy:

The emergence of coalition governments at the centre in 1989, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004, and 2009 confirmed the growing regionalisation of

JOCIPE

Indian politics at the national level. The general elections from 1989 to 2009 did not return any single political party with a majority to rule at the centre, resulting in the weakening of the centre. Since 1989, the country not only witnessed minority/coalition governments at the centre but also signified the compulsion of national parties to share power at the centre with diverse regional and state parties. “In the 1990s and 2000s, the regionalisation of the party system and the onset of economic liberalisation hastened the process of federalisation, in which the states gained political and economic autonomy.”¹¹

During the coalition era, the regional parties raised their voice against various issues. A number of regional parties are against the Centre, based on language and culture. The problem of regionalism has increased day by day. The state of Assam and other eastern states also witnessed agitations to oust the non-Assamis from Assam and the other states. Even in Assam, the Bodos also demanded a separate state under the leadership of the All Bodo Students Union. In the recent years in West Bengal, the Gorkhas also demanded a separate state of Gorkhaland. Initially, the demand for a separate independent state was also raised by the Dravidian parties, but it was soon left after independence and reduced to the demand for a separate state. However, a demand for a separate state has been continuously raised by different ethnic and linguistic communities in different parts of the country. The states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand were established on different bases in 2000. Against this backdrop, the announcement to form a separate state of Telangana on December 9, 2009, sparked off demands for smaller states.

“Regionalism may also manifest in the form of a movement for special privileges for the ‘sons of the soil’ against outsiders. Bombay, a city known for the wide variety of its linguistic, religious, and cultural communities, has a political party, called the Shiv Sena, that has demanded that jobs in the city not be given to migrants from other Indian states. The Shiv Sena has been particularly hostile to Tamil migrants occupying the middle-class jobs sought by the local Marathi-speaking population.”¹² This type of regionalism was not really sharp before 1967. Regional divergence was widening by the controversy over centre-state relations.

In the mid-1970s, sub-regional cultures had begun demanding their recognition in governance at the state level. It was difficult for the Congress to take care of all provinces and their local problems due to a number of different issues of local nature that had begun to raise their heads. The common masses were also more concerned with local issues than national ones.

With the emergence of regional parties and coalitions at the centre, the states have become more vocal in their demand for more autonomy for them in all spheres. In fact, the demand for more autonomy cannot be ignored since the coalition era. In such a situation, compromise on issues of regional autonomy has to be made by the centre, because the coalition governments have become an important part of the national politics of India.

Thus, by the end of the 1980s, there were non-Congress governments in almost half of the states. During the 1980s and 1990s, the state autonomy movements in Punjab and Assam gathered momentum. Jammu and Kashmir had also joined this trend. Insurgencies continued not only in Assam but other states of the north-west as well. In 1977, the West Bengal government had adopted a memorandum that is called the West Bengal memorandum and gave many recommendations on centre-state relations. In 1978, the Akali Dal too came out with a resolution called the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. It demanded greater autonomy for the states.

Centre-State Relations from 2014 onwards:

Since 2014, India has entered a new party system. This period was marked by re-nationalism with the BJP as the new 'dominant' party. "Although the Indian federal system has been progressive in accumulating political and societal changes and keeping the country together since its constitutional blueprint was first drawn in 1950, there has been a fundamental transformation of the functional principles of federalism since 2014 and can be described as a phase of national federalism."¹³

In the general elections of 1989, the era of one-party dominance had come to an end. The end of one-party dominance and emergence of coalition government had changed the nature of Indian federalism from centralised to cooperative federalism. In 2014, 2019 and 2024 the BJP contested the election with its allies as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), but got a majority on its own. Against the backdrop of the coalition government, the BJP won 282 seats in 2014. The general elections of 2014 appeared to mark a change in the Indian federal system. It was repeated in 2019 and 2024. The BJP got 303 seats in 2019 and 240 seats in 2024 and formed the government again under the leadership of Narendra Modi. Although the BJP formed the government with its allies in 2014, 2019 and 2024 it is a shift from coalition to a single-party majority system. Thus, it has ramifications to usher in a new trend in the centre-state relations.

JOCIPE

It is the start of a new era in Indian politics. It is a single-party government under the umbrella of a coalition. At present, the Central government has become more powerful. The role of regional parties in this government has also been decreased. The central government is in a position to take decisions on its own.

By 2019, centralization moved to a new level and was quite unlike anything in the past. In fact, both the Congress and the BJP are closet centralisers and reluctant federalists, with one significant difference. Both parties justify centralisation in the name of economic development and national unity and integrity.

Since 2014, the Centre-State relations have become more centralized despite the BJP's rhetoric of competitive, co-operative federalism. During this term, the government took huge steps that are leading from co-operative federalism to national federalism, i.e., demonetization, role of NITI Ayog, introduction of new farm bills, Goods and Service Tax (GST), removal of Article 370, implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)/ National Register of Citizens (NRC), and changing role of Governor, etc. In this context, it is necessary to study the changing nature of Centre-State relations during NarendraModi-led Government.

The nature of party setup indicates trend of centralization. "Due to centralized political party organization the formation of government is decided by the central body of the party and no by the members of the legislative body. Central body of the party decides the candidate for the Chief Minister. Even in the selection of Council of Ministers the Chief Minister has to follow the guideline and directions of the central leadership."¹⁴ Nowadays, this dimension is prevailing more.

Political relations between the Centre and the states decide the nature of federalism. Historically, the nature of Indian federalism remains centralized during one-party dominance. On the other hand, it remains cooperative during coalition era. In the general elections of 2014, 2019 and the BJP got full majority. It is not depend on any outside support. It has started new era in Indian politics. Again, India has come to an era of one-party dominance. Virtually, it is the end of coalition politics and post-coalition era has been started in India.

Nowadays, the government is in a position to take decision on its own choice. Prime Minister has complete control over government. The operational dimensions of Indian polity and the working of Indian political system have changed the Parliamentary government into a Prime Ministerial government in reality. Prime Minister has its control over the other departments of the central government. Therefore, the

centralisation of powers in the Prime Minister Office is affecting the Centre-State relations as well. It has too changed the nature of “cooperative federalism” to “centralised federalism.”

According to K. K. Kailash, “non-BJP opposition has often noted that agencies like the Income Tax Department and the Enforcement Directorate have been selectively used to target opposition leaders in different states. In November 2018, two states (Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal) withdrew what is called their ‘general consent’ that allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to function in their respective states. Things look as ugly in West Bengal when the CBI attempted to interrogate and arrest the Kolkata Police Commissioner in connection with their enquiry in two corruption scandals. The fracas in Kolkata and the public spectacle it generated was not in the spirit of cooperative federalism.”¹⁵

Conclusion:

Since the independence, politics of India has witnessed several changes. The federal phase of India can be divided until before 1989 and federal phase after that. The most marked phase of Indian federalism had started from 1989. Since 1989, Indian federalism was changed from one-party dominance to a multiparty system. Since then, the period of coalition governments had been started. The regional parties came to the forefront. From 1989 to 2014 there was not any national party in a position to get majority on its own.

In a nutshell, during the period of coalition governments, centre-state relations were quite harmonious and healthy as compared to during one-party dominant governments. In this changed political scenario, the regional parties begun to share power at the national as well as state level. This era can also be viewed as the healthy trends towards cooperative federalism as well as national unity. During this era, the Centre-State relations and the state autonomy issues were resolved to the maximum extent.

The regional parties were able to strengthen their presence in national politics, through the coalition politics. They had a stronger voice about the different regional issues. The coalition system was more participatory and responsive. Though this, the autocratic and dominant of single-party monopoly was replaced.

But, much has changed afterwards. In the general elections of 2014, the BJP led NDA got absolute majority. The same history was repeated again in 2019 and 2024. Due to the sole majority the BJP led NDA government has been set up new trends in Indian Federalism. It has a

great impact on centre-state relations. The centre-state relations again have become controversial. Nowadays, centre government in a position to take decision according to its own will. A number of decisions were also taken by the central government from 2014 to onwards. These decisions have affected the centre-state relations. Thus, one can say that it has started an era of one-party dominance as was in pre-1967 times.

Therefore, it is need to develop a federal democratic set up and culture to give proper recognition to the diverse identities in the country. It is must for the smooth functioning of the democracy and federalism. In the post-independence era, there have been significant socio-economic and political changes occurring in Indian federal set up. Nowadays, there is a need of thorough restructuring of centre-State relations in order to correct existing imbalance and strengthen the federal system.

(Footnotes)

- ¹ Sundar Ram (ed.), *Federal System and Coalition Government in India*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 2007, p. 9.
- ² M. P. Singh, "Paradigm Shifts in Canadian and Indian Politics: The Changing Party System and the Federal Politics", in A. P. Vijapur (ed.), *Dimensions of Federal Nation Building*, Manak Publications, New Delhi, 1999, 268.
- ³ C. P. Bhambari, *Political Process in India 1947- 1991*, Vikas Publications, New Delhi, 1991, p. 85.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, p. 86.
- ⁵ Pradeep Kumar, *Studies in Indian Federalism*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1988, p. 204.
- ⁶ T V Sathyamurthy, "Impact of Centre-State Relations on Indian Politics An Interpretative Reckoning, 1947-87", *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 23, 1989, p.2137.
- ⁷ M.G. Khan, "Coalition Government and Federal System in India," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.64, No. ¾, July-December 2003,p. 183.
- ⁸ Sundar Ram (ed.), *op.cit*, p. 3-4.
- ⁹ *Report of the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution*, NCRWC, 2002, Chap. 11, para 8.13.3, p. 159.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*.
- ¹¹ M.P. Singh and RekhaSaxena, *Federalizing Indian Politics in the Age of Globalization Problems and Prospects*, Primer Books, New Delhi, 2013, p. 76.

- ¹² Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1978, p. 266.
- ¹³ B. D. Dua and M.P. Singh (eds.), *Indian Federalism in New Millennium*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2003, p. 14.
- ¹⁴ Surander Singh Nain, “Changing Dynamics of Indian Federation in the Post Coalition Era”, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. IXXIX, No. 3, July-September, 2018, p. 589.
- ¹⁵ K. K. Kailash, “The Chimera of Cooperative Federalism” in Yamini Aiyer and Louise Tillin (eds.), *The Union and the States*, Seminar 717, May 2019, <https://www.india-seminar.com/semframe.html>

Empowering Women through Microfinance: A Catalyst for Socio-Economic Transformation

Neha Rani

Abstract

There is not denying the fact that microfinance is a financial service provided to low-income individuals or small entrepreneurs who lack access to traditional banking services. It provides small loans (microloans), savings accounts, and insurance, primarily in rural areas, to promote self-employment and reduce huge poverty. There is not denying the fact that women's empowerment is a multifaceted process that includes greater control over resources, increased decision-making power, and enhanced self-esteem. It can be said that in developing countries, particularly in rural India, women are often systematically excluded from Indian financial systems. It is fact that micro-finance has emerged as a globally recognized powerful tool for poverty alleviation and women's empowerment. By overcoming traditional banking barriers, microfinance institutions (MFIs) provide financial services such as loans, savings, and insurance to low-income women, enabling them to undertake income-generating activities. Micro-finance aims to bridge this gap by providing financial services to individuals excluded from traditional banking system. It can be seen that microfinance is an important tool for empowering women by providing them access to credit, savings and insurance, which enables entrepreneurship, improves household income and increases decision-making power. By promoting financial independence, microfinance initiatives (particularly through self-help groups) break the cycle of

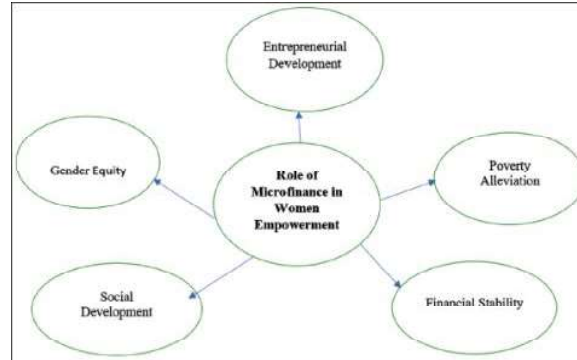
Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Sardar Dilbag Singh Govt.
College Jadla (S.B.S. Nagar), Punjab

grave poverty and enhance women's social status, although success often requires additional, non-financial support services. The primary hypothesis of this research is that micro-finance acts as a catalyst for women's empowerment by enabling economic activities and changing social dynamics. The study also highlights the need for holistic support such as financial literacy and training. This research paper analyses the role of micro-finance in transforming women's economic independence and uplifting their social status, which ultimately contributes to community-level development. This research shows that micro-finance significantly increases women's income and household decision-making power, but still faces challenges such as excessive indebtedness, high interest rates, and deep-rooted patriarchal stereotypes. This research paper concludes that microfinance is a necessary condition for women empowerment, but not a sufficient one. It suggests that its integration with skills development and financial literacy is essential for sustainable results. This research paper also analyses the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment, focusing on economic, social and psychological dimensions.

Key Words: Empowering, Women, Micro-finance, Socio-Economic.

Introduction:

Microfinance plays a leading role in economic empowerment and poverty alleviation in disadvantaged communities especially in rural India. It is a universally recognized means of promoting women's empowerment and ultimately realizing economic independence and development. It can be said that microfinance area has emerged as a globally recognized tool for poverty alleviation, with a particular focus on empowering women in developing economies.¹ By providing small monetary loans, savings, and insurance services to low-income women who are deprived of formal banking facilities, microfinance institutions (MFIs) promote economic independence and social change in the society. Microfinance institutions empower women by providing them access to financial services such as credit, savings, and insurance, thereby fostering entrepreneurship and self-reliance. It enhances women's decision-making abilities, improves self-confidence, and enhances social standing. Often targeting low-income women, it promotes economic, social, and political empowerment through income-generating activities.



Retrieved from-<https://drj.ves.ac.in/pages/table-of-contents/fulltext/?id=61&title>

There is not denying the fact that microfinance has emerged as a cornerstone of development strategies, particularly in developing countries, as it provides financial and monetary services for credit, savings and insurance— to low-income individuals who lack access to traditional banking system. Microfinance is more than just a financial tool. It is a catalyst for women’s empowerment, increasing economic independence, social mobility, and decision-making power within the family and social community.² Women’s empowerment is considered a key driver for economic development, as it has a positive impact on family well-being, nutrition and education. However, in many local regions of India, women face systemic social and economic barriers, including a lack of assets to mortgage, limited mobility, and traditional gender roles, which hinder their economic participation. It can be said that Micro-finance addresses these gaps by providing women with financial products tailored to their needs, promoting entrepreneurship, and transforming the socio-economic landscape. Among its beneficiaries, women are often the primary target, accounting for over 85% of clients in many micro-finance institutions (MFIs). This strategic focus is based on evidence that women are reliable borrowers, have high loan repayment rates, and invest their income directly in household welfare, education, and nutrition.

Microfinance and Women Empowerment: Conceptual Framework

Microfinance refers to a wide range of financial services—including microcredit, savings, insurance, and financial training—provided to low-income individuals or groups, primarily women, who lack access to traditional banking. Microfinance financial aid isn’t just about

monetary loans; it also includes savings, insurance, and money transfers. It often operates through self-help groups (SHGs), where Indian women collectively save and borrow, and promoting financial discipline. Indian women are a primary target group for micro-finance because earlier studies show that they are better credit risk takers than men, have higher loan repayment rates, and are more likely to invest in household welfare.³ Women in rural India face numerous economic barriers, including lack of property rights, limited financial literacy, and cultural restrictions. Microfinance can effectively address these barriers.

There is not denying the fact that Microfinance is a powerful catalyst for Indian women's transformation from passive beneficiaries to active economic actors. By improving income and social status, it brings about significant change in Indian rural society. For maximum impact, future micro-finance programmes must be "benefit-oriented"—that is, they must provide education, technical training, and market access as well as financial services. It can be said that Micro-finance is considered a "liberating force" against deprivation and poverty and played a key tool for achieving sustainable development. It promotes sustainable livelihoods, better working conditions, and is consistent with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Decent Work Agenda.

Impact of Micro-finance on Women Empowerment:

In India's journey towards inclusive growth, microfinance has been one of the most effective tools for empowering women in rural and semi-urban backward areas. By providing small, unsecured loans and financial services, microfinance has become a powerful tool for promoting women's economic independence, decision-making, and social mobility. It can be said that microfinance significantly promotes women's empowerment by providing them with access to credit, savings, and financial services, thereby improving economic independence, entrepreneurship, and decision-making power within families.⁴ It enhances social standing and self-confidence, enabling women to invest in their families' health, education, and nutrition, ultimately promoting economic prosperity and stability. However, the success of women's micro-finance activity is sometimes limited by external factors such as local community standards, institutional practices, and the need for additional skill development support.⁵

Economic Empowerment

- **Income Generation:** Microfinance enables women to start and expand small businesses like milk farming, cow-farming, tailoring and handicrafts.

JOCIPE

- **Asset Creation:** It is a fact that women's active participation in micro-finance increases their earning, which is often invested in purchasing livestock, land or home renovations.
- **Reduction in Dependency:** The women financial independence reduces dependency on male relatives and traditional moneylenders, thereby reducing the risk of exploitation or harassment.

Social Empowerment:

- **Decision-making Power:** Increased financial contribution of women leads to greater participation in household decisions, including children's education, health, and family expenses.
- **Social Capital and Leadership:** Women's membership in self-help groups facilitates networking, leadership skill development, and increased participation in local community governance (Like participation in Panchayat activities).
- **Mobility and Confidence:** It can be seen that transacting money and attending meetings increases women's confidence and physical mobility outside the home.
- **Psychological Empowerment:** Women report that increased self-esteem and less sensitivity to domestic stressors due to their contribution to the family's economic stability.

Socio-Cultural Empowerment:

The impact of microfinance extends beyond financial parameters. It directly affects the social status of women.

- **Improved decision-making power:** With economic independence, women gain greater power over household decisions, including children's education, health expenses, and property acquisition.
- **Self-confidence and mobility:** Access to funds and participation in group meetings increases women's self-esteem, mobility and self-confidence, enabling them to participate more effectively in public life.
- **Social capital and leadership:** Self-help group (SHG) models promote community development, leadership skills and political participation among women, thereby changing traditional patriarchal dynamics.

The Link Between Micro-finance and Women's Empowerment:

It can be said that microfinance empowers women by providing them with access to small loans, savings and financial services, thereby promoting economic independence, enhancing household decision-

making and increasing women's self-confidence. By supporting women's home-based businesses and income-generating activities, it can help them break-down traditional barriers, improve family health and education, and assume leadership roles in their social communities. It's worth noting that women's empowerment is a multi-faceted process, encompassing economic, social, and political change. Microfinance impacts these areas through various channels.

- **Financial Independence:** By accessing small loans without collateral, women can start small businesses such as handicrafts, retail shops and agriculture. This financial autonomy reduces their dependence on male relatives and as well as it increases their contribution to household income, and boosts their confidence in financial management.
- **Increased Decision-making Power:** Economic contribution changes household dynamics. Earlier studies show that women who manage their own income have greater power over important decisions such as investing in children's education, health expenses and purchasing property.
- **Social Mobilization through Groups:** The self-help group (SHG) model, commonly used in India, brings women together to collectively save and access credit. These groups act as a support system, reducing isolation and building social capital, allowing women to discuss broader issues such as health, education, and even addressing domestic violence or social injustice.
- **Increased Mobility and Visibility:** The need for regular meetings and interactions with markets and bankers forces women to step-out of their homes, thereby increasing their physical mobility and visibility in the public sphere.

Micro-finance as an Economic Catalyst:

Microfinance serves as a vital economic catalyst by providing small loans, savings, and insurance to disadvantaged individuals and small businesses. It promotes financial inclusion, reduces poverty, empowers women, and encourages entrepreneurship, helping marginalised people to improve their incomes and living standards. It serves as a bridge for individuals and micro-enterprises that lack access to traditional banking, providing them with financial services tailored to their needs.⁶ A large percentage of clients are women, whom microfinance enables to become financially independent, support their families, and join the workforce.

- **Access to Capital and Entrepreneurship:** Microfinance bridges the gap left by formal banking, helping women start small-scale businesses such as agriculture, handicrafts and retail, creating sustainable sources of income.

JOCIPE

- Financial Independence and Savings: In addition to loans, microfinance promotes a culture of savings, allowing women to accumulate assets, own livestock, and purchase “micro-machines,” which enhance their financial strength.
- Income Generation and Poverty alleviation: Participation in microfinance programmes, especially through Self Help Groups (SHGs), consistently shows increased household incomes and reduced poverty-related vulnerability.

Challenges:

Microfinance, while effective, is not a panacea and faces several obstacles. Despite positive results, microfinance faces several significant challenges:

- Excessive indebtedness: It can be seen that repeatedly taking loans from various microfinance institutions poses the risk of getting into a debt trap, especially when the business does not yield immediate profits.
- High interest rates: It is fact that microfinance loans in India often have high interest rates (20-30%), which can reduce net economic benefits.
- Misuse of loans: In many cases, loans taken by women are used by male relatives, while the burden of repaying the loans falls on the women.
- Lack of training: There is not denying the fact that microfinance often fails to provide necessary technical or vocational training, limiting the growth potential of women-led enterprises.
- Use of loans: The past studies show that in some cases, loans are used for emergency consumption needs rather than productive investment.
- Lack of holistic support: This is fact that financial access is often insufficient without training in financial literacy, marketing skills and capacity building, limiting the potential of microfinance enterprises.
- Debt cycle risks: Excessive lending and high interest rates in some unregulated microfinance institutions can lead to financial stress.

Limitations:

While micro-finance has transformed the lives of many women, it is not a miracle cure and has some limitations in its potential for empowerment:

- **Credit control and repayment pressure:** In some cases, women are used as intermediaries, where male family members control the use of credit while the woman is responsible for repayment. It can be said that high interest rates and rigid payment schedules can also cause financial stress, increasing the debt burden.
- **Limited impact on structural inequalities:** It can be said that microfinance increases economic autonomy, but it does not automatically eliminate deeply entrenched patriarchal norms. Women may still face restrictions in accessing larger loans, land, or high-profit markets.
- **Increased workload:** There is not denying the fact that running a business along with household responsibilities can increase women's workload, affecting their health and, in some cases, forcing them to pull their daughters out of school to help with household chores.

Towards Sustainable Women Empowerment: Best Practices

To maximize the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment, a "gender-aware" approach is necessary, going beyond minimum loan provision:

- **Integration of Non-financial Services:** Providing financial literacy, business management training and technical skill development helps women to run successful businesses, thereby ensuring effective utilization of monetary loans.
- **Promote Gender-sensitive Policies:** Microfinance institutions should ensure that their policies allow women to own property and provide them with access to larger, tailored loan products.
- **Strengthening Social Components:** There is need to linking microfinance to social initiatives—such as health education, rights awareness, and legal aid can help overcome social barriers to women empowerment.
- **Men's Participation:** Involving men in gender sensitization programmes is important to change traditional norms and ensure women have control over their financial benefits.

Policy Recommendations and Future Prospects:

To maximize the impact of micro-finance on women's empowerment, the following strategies are proposed:

1. **Integration of Non-financial Services:** It can be said that small and medium financial institutions should integrate financial

JOCIPE

literacy, vocational training and entrepreneurship development with credit services.

2. **Regulatory Oversight:** There is need for strict enforcement of RBI guidelines on interest rate caps and transparent reporting is essential to prevent excessive indebtedness.
3. **Digital Inclusion:** There is not denying the fact that using mobile banking and digital platforms can reduce transaction costs and increase access for rural women.
4. **Targeted Assistance:** There is need to focus on the poorest families and marginalised communities to ensure comprehensive coverage of benefits.

Conclusion:

It's a fact that micro-finance is a vital tool for empowering women, transforming them from passive beneficiaries to active economic participants. By providing financial resources, it fosters self-reliance, enhances social standing, and in many cases creates a positive cycle of women empowerment. However, to achieve real and lasting empowerment, micro-finance must be part of a comprehensive strategy that includes education, legal reform, and social change, to empower women not only to manage poverty but also to end it. Microfinance is a powerful tool to promote women's empowerment in rural India, providing them with a path to economic self-sufficiency, social inclusion and improved decision-making capabilities. There is a positive relationship between microfinance and women's socio-economic upliftment, driven primarily by self-help group-bank coordination programmes. However, this is not a panacea. The sustainability of empowerment depends on overcoming challenges such as high indebtedness and patriarchal resistance through broader support systems. Women empowerment should be understood as a multidimensional concept involving financial independence, social recognition and personal competence. Women who undergo such transformation are better positioned to bring about change in their families and communities. As micro-finance develops, its success will depend on integrating financial services with education, support systems, and inclusive policies. Ultimately, empowering women through these multifaceted approaches significantly contributes to inclusive growth and long-term sustainable development.

Endnotes:

1. Cheston, Susy, and Lisa Kuhn. "Empowering women through microfinance." *Draft, opportunity international*, 64.8, (2002): 1-64.

2. Mudaliar, Arti, and Ayushi Mathur. "Women empowerment through microfinance." *International journal of Arts, humanities and management studies*, 1.2, (2015): 58-65.
3. Dash, Mihir, Venkat Mahendra Prasad, and C. J. Koshy. "Women empowerment through microfinance services." *Journal of Applied Management and Investments*, 5.1, (2016): 20-25.
4. Tariq, Shagufta. "Microfinance and women empowerment: A brief review of literature." *Pacific Business Review International*, 11.3, (2018).77-80.
5. Lamichhane, Basu Dev. "Microfinance for women empowerment: A review of best practices." *Interdisciplinary journal of management and social sciences*, 1.1, (2020): 13-25.
6. Kaur, Nripinder, and Harpreet Kaur. "Microfinance and Women Empowerment." *Vinimaya*, 38.3, (2017).

Bibliography:

- Haile, Hirut Bekele, Bettina Bock, and Henk Folmer. "Microfinance and female empowerment: Do institutions matter?." *Women's studies international forum*. Vol. 35. No. 4. Pergamon, 2012.
- Khursheed, Ambreen, Ather Azim Khan, and Faisal Mustafa. "Women's social empowerment and microfinance: A brief review of literature." *Journal of international women's studies*, 22.5, (2021): 249-265.
- Kumar, Lakshmi. "Illusion of women empowerment in microfinance: A case study." *Economic and Political Weekly*, (2013): 70-76.
- Laha, Arindam, and Pravat Kumar Kuri. "Measuring the impact of microfinance on women empowerment: A cross country analysis with special reference to India." *International Journal of Public Administration*, 37.7, (2014): 397-408.
- Wada, Kenji. "Microfinance: empowering women and/or depoliticizing poverty?." *Handbook on the International Political Economy of Gender*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018. 252-264.