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**FIELD PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS UNDER NEP -A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
THROUGH COLLECTIVE YOUTH EFFORTS**

Dr. Sagar ThakkarAssociate Professor, Department of Economics, VPM's Joshi Bedekar College of Arts & Commerce
Autonomous Thane**ABSTRACT**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a paradigm shift in Indian higher education, moving from rote learning to experiential, community-engaged pedagogy. This paper explores the potential of mandatory "Field Projects" to serve as vehicles for "Collective Service" and social transformation. A case study of an experimental initiative where students from an urban college in Thane conducted a comprehensive socio-economic and infrastructural survey of a partner college in the remote tribal region of Shahpur. Analyzing data from 77 student respondents, the study identifies critical bottlenecks such as excessive commute times (up to 4 hours daily) and digital exclusion. The paper argues that when students mobilize collectively, they transition from passive learners to "social auditors," generating actionable data that can drive strategic social development. This model demonstrates that NEP field projects can effectively bridge the urban-rural divide and transform lives through service.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Collective Service, Field Projects, Social Audit, Shahpur.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely the acquisition of technical skills; it is a tool for social emancipation and nation-building. The conference theme, *"Transforming Lives: The Power of Collective Service,"* resonates deeply with the evolving landscape of Indian higher education. For decades, a disconnect has existed between the academic curriculum in urban centers and the lived realities of rural India. While urban students study economic theories of development, they rarely witness the infrastructural bottlenecks that hinder it just a few dozen kilometers away.

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** seeks to dismantle these silos by mandating "Field Projects" and "Community Engagement" as credit-bearing components of the undergraduate curriculum. However, the implementation of these projects faces a risk: they may become pro-forma assignments where students collect data merely to secure grades.

This paper posits a counter-narrative: that these field projects should be viewed as opportunities for **"Collective Service."** When a cohort of 50 or more students engages with a community, their combined effort becomes a powerful force for social auditing. This study details such an initiative in Shahpur, a rural taluka in Thane district, where urban students acted as data enumerators to assess the challenges faced by their rural peers. The objective was twofold: to provide the partner college with a "Needs Assessment" report to leverage for development, and to instill a sense of civic responsibility in the urban students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of service into the curriculum is grounded in the theory of **"Service Learning,"** which Bringle and Hatcher (1995) define as an educational experience where students participate in organized service activities that meet identified community needs while reflecting on the service to gain further understanding of course content.

- **The NEP Mandate:** The NEP 2020 explicitly emphasizes "values-based education" and "community engagement" (Ministry of Education, 2020). It envisions higher education institutions (HEIs) not as ivory towers but as catalysts for local development.
- **The Rural-Urban Divide:** Research by Bandyopadhyay et al. (2021) highlights that while access to primary education has improved, rural higher education remains plagued by "infrastructural deficiencies" and a lack of digital resources. This creates a "capability deprivation" (Sen, 1999) for rural youth.
- **Social Audits:** The concept of the "Social Audit" (Aiyer, 2012) has been successfully used in schemes like MNREGA to ensure accountability. This paper proposes that student-led field projects can function as "academic social audits," effectively mapping the gaps in public service delivery that government surveyors might miss.

3. METHODOLOGY

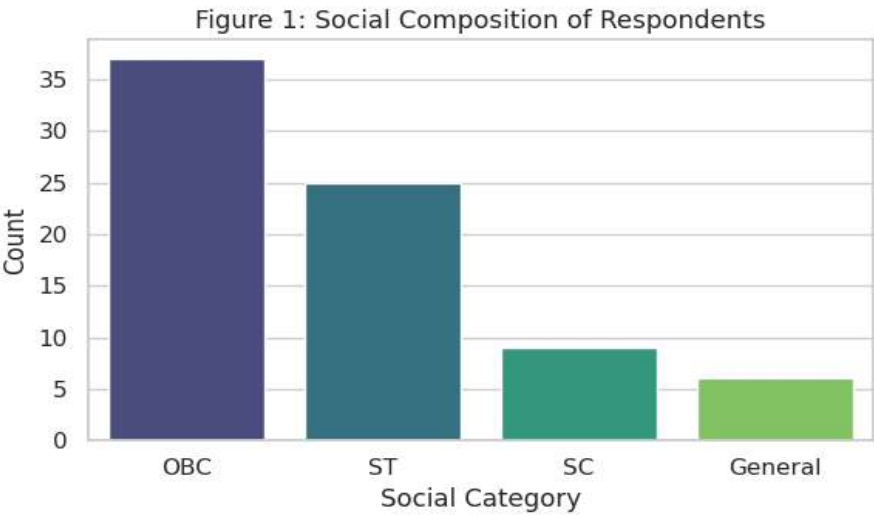
- **Study Area:**
The study was conducted in **Shahpur, Thane**. Despite being within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Shahpur remains a tribal-dominated area with distinct geographical challenges compared to the urban core of Thane city.
- **The Collective Force:**
The initiative involved a group of undergraduate students from VPM's Joshi-Bedekar College. Unlike individual projects where students work in isolation, this "Collective Field Project" involved the entire batch visiting the partner college together.
- **Instrument:**
A **structured questionnaire** was designed to capture:
 1. **Socio-economic Status:** Family income sources, education levels.
 2. **Infrastructural Access:** Commute times, transport modes, digital assets.
 3. **Student Priorities:** What facilities the students themselves feel are lacking.
- **Sample Size:**
A total of **77 responses** were collected from the local students at the Shahpur college.

4. DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The survey yielded critical insights into the challenges faced by rural students.

4.1 Socio-Economic Profile The demographic data reveals that the student body is predominantly from marginalized sections (OBC and ST), validating the need for targeted social intervention. Many are first-generation learners relying on agrarian incomes.

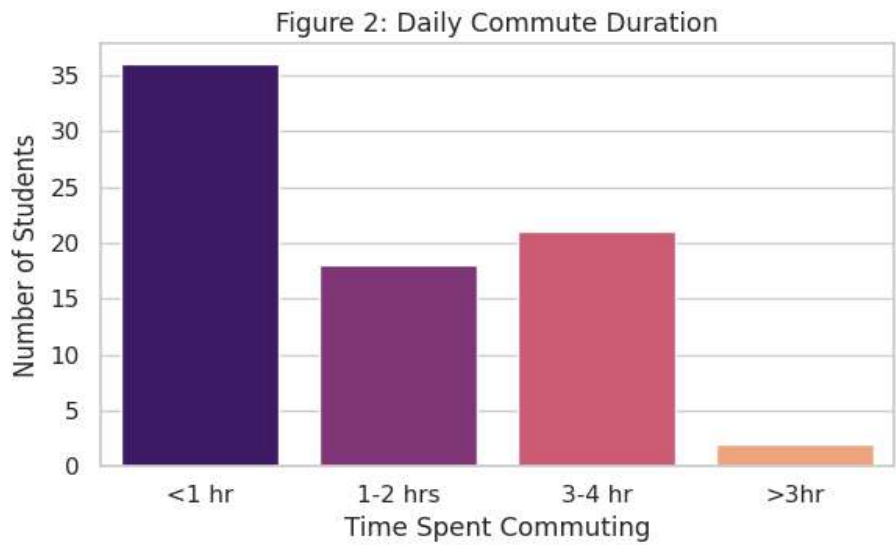
Figure 1: Social Composition of Respondents



Interpretation: Figure 1 illustrates that the majority of respondents belong to Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). This demographic composition underscores the importance of the college as an educational hub for marginalized communities in the Shahpur region.

4.2 The Burden of Commute A startling finding was the 'Time Poverty' faced by these students. As shown in Figure 2, a significant number of students spend 3-4 hours daily commuting. This is due to the irregularity of state transport buses and the long distances (>15 km) many have to travel.

Figure 2: Daily Commute Duration

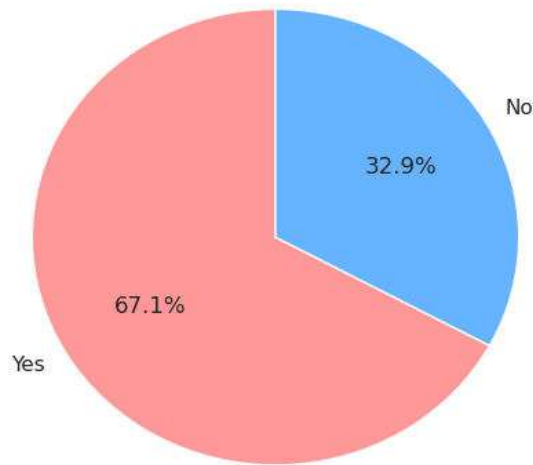


Interpretation: Figure 2 highlights the severe commute challenges. A substantial portion of the student body spends between 3 to 4 hours daily traveling to and from college. This excessive commute time directly subtracts from time available for study, rest, and part-time employment, putting these students at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts.

4.3 Infrastructural Bottlenecks When asked if they faced challenges due to inadequate infrastructure (internet, power, transport), 66.2% of respondents answered 'Yes' (Figure 3). This highlights a systemic failure that individual students cannot overcome alone.

Figure 3: Students Reporting Infrastructure Bottlenecks

Figure 3: Students Reporting Infrastructure Bottlenecks



Interpretation: Figure 3 demonstrates that nearly two-thirds of the students identify infrastructure (transport, internet, power) as a barrier to their education. This consensus validates the need for external intervention and collective advocacy to improve basic amenities.

5. THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE SERVICE

The data collected serves two purposes: Academic learning and Social Strategy. For the students of Shahpur, this "collective effort" by the visiting students has provided documented proof of their hardships—data that can now be used to petition for better bus services or digital facilities.

For the visiting students, the project transformed their understanding of "privilege." Witnessing peers who travel 4 hours a day to attend the same degree course fosters deep empathy. This aligns with the conference theme: collective service transforms not just the receiver, but the giver.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Shahpur experiment validates that the "Field Project" under NEP 2020 is an untapped resource for nation-building. It has the potential to be a low-cost, high-impact "Social Audit" mechanism.

Following are some recommendations to elaborate Field project as a tool of collaborative action and thereby bringing the social change:

1. Institutional Adoption:

Every urban college should "adopt" a remote village or partner college for a minimum of 3 years to ensure sustained data tracking and service.

2. Data Repositories:

The data collected by students should not gather dust in college libraries. It should be digitized and shared with local Gram Panchayats and District Collectors to aid in development planning.

At last it can be stated that by transforming "assignments" into "audits," we can harness the collective power of youth to transform lives.

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THE ROLE OF NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME IN NATION BUILDING: -A STUDY OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Nation building is a continual process that necessitates the active engagement of citizens, particularly the youth. The National Service Scheme (NSS), established in 1969, has become one of the preeminent platforms in India for engaging students in community service as well as for national development. This paper discusses the contributions of NSS in nation building through youth mobilization, character building, and social cohesion. Drawing upon an analysis of official data (2023-2025) and primary research with 45 students, the paper demonstrates that NSS plays a key role in producing active citizens who are conscious of their responsibilities to the society. There are almost 40 lakh volunteers and since its establishment, NSS has benefitted over 7.4 crore citizens, making it one of the largest youth volunteer programmes in the world. These findings indicate that NSS volunteers not only serve the community but also undergo a transformation personally, which leads them to become better citizens thus enhancing the foundations of a nation.

Keywords: National Service Scheme, Nation-Building, Youth Participation, Community Service, Social Integration, Volunteerism

INTRODUCTION

Nation-building is not just about economic growth or infrastructure development. It is fundamentally about creating a society where citizens feel connected to each other and work together for common good. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar once said that the Constitution can provide us with machinery, but the real spirit comes from the people who operate it. This is where youth participation becomes crucial.

The National Service Scheme was launched on 24th September 1969 with the primary objective of developing student personality through community service. The motto "Not Me but You" reflects its core philosophy of selfless service. Starting with just 37 universities and 40,000 volunteers in 1969, NSS has grown exponentially. As of October 2025, NSS engages approximately 39,87,781 volunteers across 657 universities, 20,669 colleges, and 11,988 senior secondary schools.¹ Since its inception, over 7.4 crore students have benefitted from NSS,² making it one of the world's largest youth volunteer programs.

This paper examines how NSS contributes to nation-building through various dimensions including promotion of national unity, development of leadership qualities, addressing social issues, and fostering civic responsibility among students.

UNDERSTANDING NATION-BUILDING

Nation-building is the development of national identity, unity, and collective purpose among a variety of people and identities. India is a very unique circumstance given our size and diversity - languages, religions, castes, cultures, etc. The important part is having frameworks and mechanisms for bringing people together despite and between their differences.

The founding fathers were acutely aware of this. Gandhiji's Constructive Programmed focused on community service efforts, and rural development. The National Policy on Education 1968 included a recommendation for national service for students, leading to the establishment of the NSS. The hope was to ensure that students learn to think beyond academic and formal educational institutions and gain a sense of the world around them to contribute to their communities.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining secondary data analysis with primary survey research to examine NSS's role in nation-building.

Secondary Data Sources: The research draws extensively from official government publications including the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Annual Report 2022-23, Press Information Bureau releases (2023-2025), and NSS official portal statistics. Data on NSS awards, special programs, and state-wise participation were compiled from authenticated government sources.

¹ NSS Volunteers, National Service Scheme, accessed October 2025,

² Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Press Release dated April 2021, PRID: 1623509

Primary Data Collection: A structured questionnaire survey was conducted among college students to understand ground-level perspectives on NSS participation and its impact. The survey comprised 12 questions covering awareness, participation patterns, perceived benefits, and suggestions for improvement. A total of 45 responses were collected from students during October 2025, providing contemporary insights into youth perception of NSS's role in nation-building.

Data Analysis: Secondary data was analyzed to establish historical growth patterns, current operational scale, and tangible contributions of NSS. Primary survey responses were compiled and analyzed to generate visual representations of student perspectives. This combination of official statistics and grassroots feedback provides a comprehensive understanding of NSS's multifaceted contribution to nation-building.

NSS: Structure and Nationwide Reach

NSS operates through a well-organized structure under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Students voluntarily enroll as NSS volunteers and commit to completing 120 hours of regular activities and one special camp of 7-10 days during their service period.

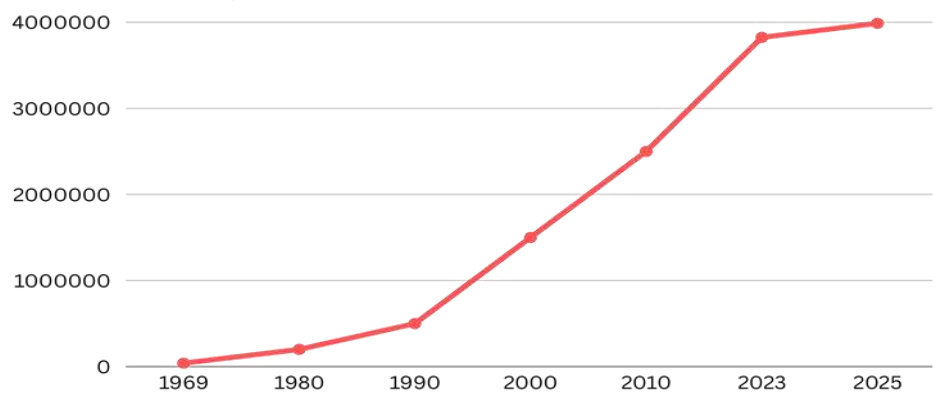
Table 1: Growth of NSS Infrastructure (1969-2025)

Year	University	Colleges	Schools	Volunteers
1969	37	NA	NA	40,000
2000	450+	10,000+	5000+	15,00,000+
2023	657	20,669	11,988	38,24,048
2025	657	20,669	11,988	39,87,781
Growth (1969-2025)	1,675%	NA	NA	9,869%

Source: NSS Official Data, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

The scale of NSS operations is impressive. In 2022-23 alone, NSS organized 7,986 special camps involving 4,33,363 volunteers across the country¹. State-wise data shows strong participation - Maharashtra had 3,87,115 enrolled volunteers as of March 2025, Tamil Nadu had 4.42 lakh volunteers, Kerala had 3.31 lakh, and Delhi had 74,600 volunteers.²

Figure 1 - NSS Volunteer Growth 1969-2025



This line graph illustrates the remarkable expansion of NSS from 40,000 volunteers in 1969 to nearly 40 lakh volunteers in 2025, representing a 99-fold increase over five decades.

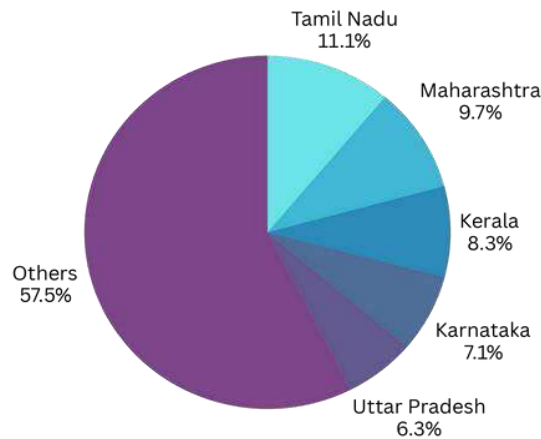
Table 2: Top States by NSS Volunteer Enrollment (March 2025)

Rank	State	Volunteers	% of Total
1	Tamil Nadu	4,42,000	11.1%
2	Maharashtra	3,87,115	9.7%
3	Kerala	3,31,000	8.3%
4	Karnataka	2,85,000+	7.1%
5	Uttar Pradesh	2,50,000+	6.3%
6-10	Others (Top 10)	8,00,000+	20.0%
-	Remaining States/UTs	17,92,666	44.9%
Total	All India	39,87,781	100%

Source: State NSS Directorate Reports and PIB Releases, 2025

¹ Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Annual Report 2022-23, pp. 45-46
² State-wise NSS data compiled from Ministry reports and PIB releases, March 2025

Figure 2 - State-wise Distribution



This pie chart demonstrates NSS's nationwide reach with top states showing significant participation while maintaining pan-India presence.

Role of NSS in Nation-Building

1. Promoting National Integration and Unity

NSS plays a remarkable role in promoting national integration. National Integration Camps (NICs) bring together selected students from different states for week-long interactions. Recent NICs were held at Kurukshetra University in Panipat (October 2024) and Chandigarh University (February 2025)¹, where approximately 100-200 youth from across the country participated.

The North-East region organized a dedicated NSS festival in Mizoram in August 2025, where about 250 volunteers from North-Eastern states gathered to showcase inter-state cooperation². The expansion from 37 universities in 1969 to 657 universities today shows how this integration effort has spread across India.

2. Addressing Social Issues and Community Development

NSS directly contributes to addressing pressing social problems through massive collective action.

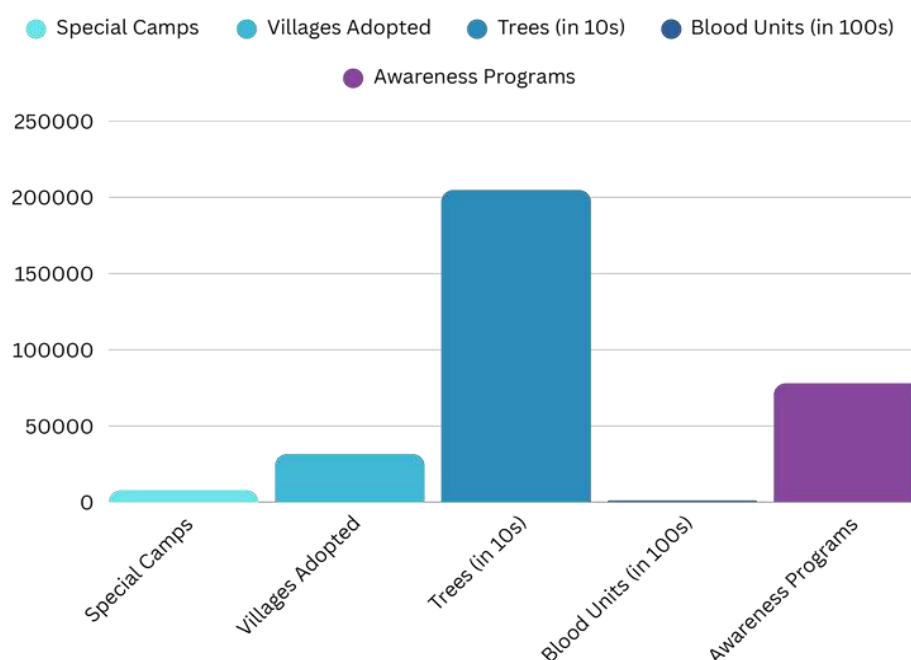
Table 3: NSS Impact Statistics (2022-23)

Impact Category	Quantity	Estimated Beneficiaries
Special Camps Organized	7,986	4,33,363 volunteers participated
Villages/Slums Adopted	31,673	50+ lakh citizens
Trees Planted	20,48,115	Environmental conservation
Blood Units Donated	1,20,634	3.6+ lakh patients
Awareness Programs	78,056	Crores of citizens reached

Source: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Annual Report 2022-23

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² Mizoram hosts NSS fest to foster community service among youths," Times of India (Guwahati edition), August 2025

Figure 3: Multi-Dimensional Impact of NSS Activities

This bar chart captures concrete contributions including environmental stewardship, support for health services, and significant community involvement.

The contributions depicted are tangible contributions to national development. For instance, when volunteers adopt villages for an extended period, they do surveys, hold health camps, build sanitation facilities, teach both children and adults, and work on agricultural projects.

3. NSS and Swachh Bharat Mission

NSS volunteers play an active role in India's cleanliness mission. The 31,673 adopted villages often become focal points for sanitation work. For example, the University of Hyderabad NSS team organized a major campus cleanup under Swachhata Pakhwada drive in August 2024.¹ With 40 lakh active volunteers, even small actions create massive impact when done collectively.

4. Crisis Response and National Service

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated NSS volunteers' dedication during crisis. Tamil Nadu Police deployed NSS teams to enforce lockdown norms and conduct awareness campaigns. NSS groups helped distribute rations, masks and spread public health messages. With 7.4 crore students trained through NSS since 1969, there was a large pool of service-oriented youth ready to respond when needed.

5. Developing Leadership and Citizenship Qualities

NSS serves as training ground for future leaders. The 120 hours of regular service and 7-10 days special camps provide substantial exposure to leadership challenges.

The NSS Award system recognizes outstanding contributions. In October 2025, the President presented MY Bharat-NSS Awards for 2022-23 to 10 NSS units/program officers and 30 student volunteers. Each honored NSS unit received ₹2,00,000 and each volunteer received ₹1,00,000. Awardees like Priyanus Hazarika from Dibrugarh University, Assam and Raja Bosumotary from Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh were recognized for their exceptional service.

6. Special Programs for National Pride

Republic Day Parade Camp: In 2024, a 200-volunteer female NSS contingent participated in the Republic Day Parade², representing youth service spirit before the nation.

Adventure Programs: NSS organizes National Adventure Camps involving trekking, rafting, and skiing. A 10-day National Adventure Camp in November 2024 at ABVIMAS Manali saw volunteers participate in challenging mountain activities.¹

¹ Swachhata Pakhwada campaign by NSS volunteers," University of Hyderabad Herald, August 2024

National Youth Festival: The 2024 theme was "MY Bharat – Viksit Bharat@2047 – By the Youth, For the Youth." It was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in Nashik on January 12, 2024. District-level programs engaged over 88,000 volunteers in road-safety and awareness campaigns.

Student Perspectives: Survey Findings

To understand ground-level perspectives, a structured survey was conducted among 45 college students. The findings provide valuable insights into youth awareness, participation patterns, and perceived impact.

Awareness and Participation:

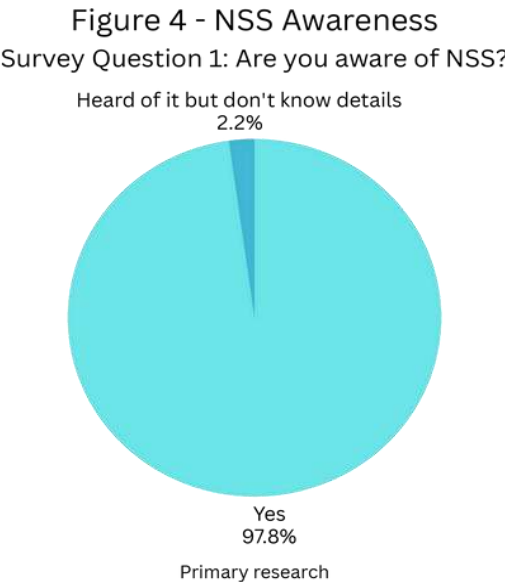


Figure 4: High Awareness of NSS Among Students

The survey revealed exceptional 97.8% awareness about NSS among college students, indicating successful outreach of the program.

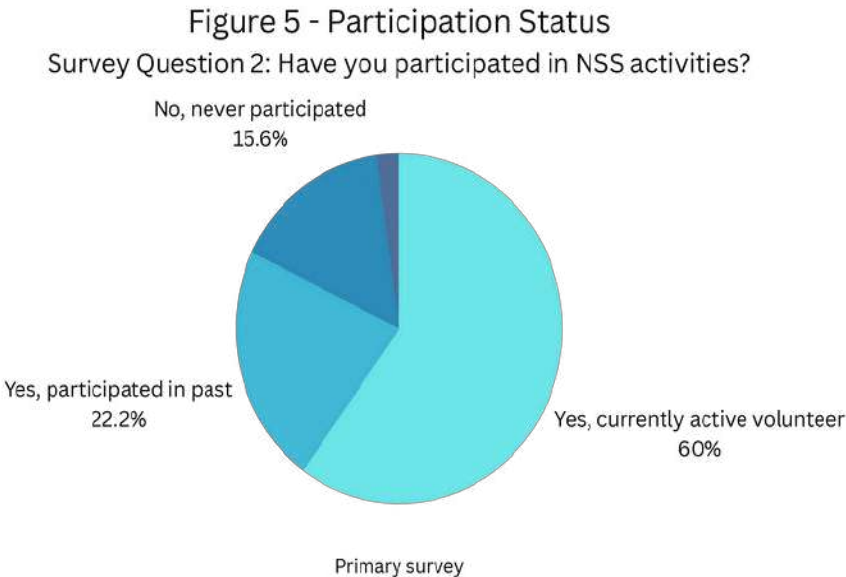


Figure 5: Strong NSS Participation Rate

A remarkable 82.2% have participated or are currently active in NSS, demonstrating high youth engagement in community service.

¹ Ten day's National Adventure Camp-2024 at ABVIMAS, Manali," Subharti University News, November 2024

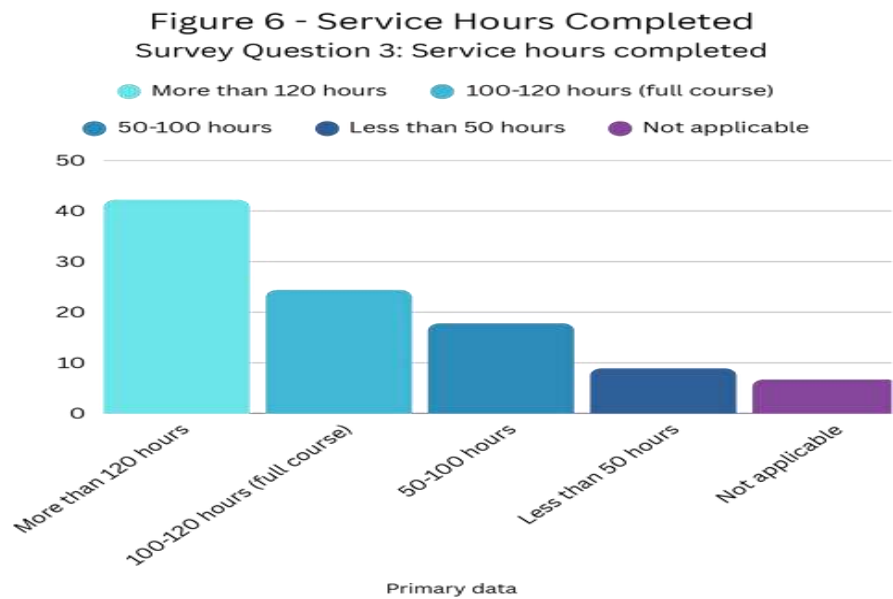


Figure 6: Commitment Levels of NSS Volunteers

66.6% completed full course or more, demonstrating significant commitment to community service beyond minimum requirements.

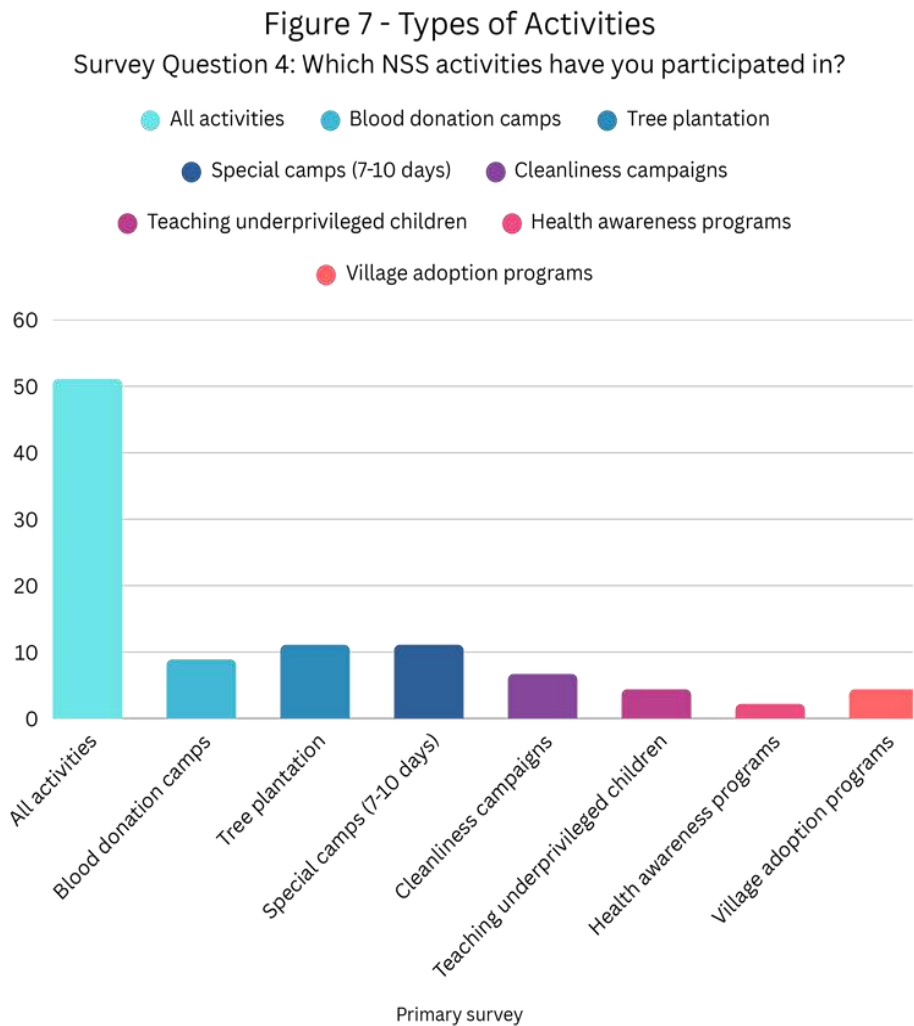


Figure 7: Diverse NSS Activity Participation

Over half the volunteers participated in all types of activities, reflecting NSS's comprehensive approach to community service.

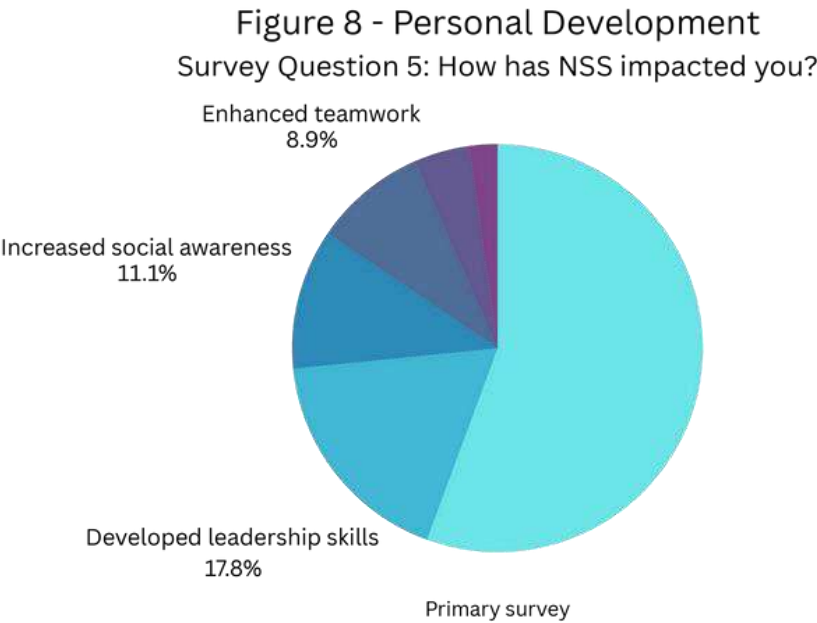


Figure 8: Holistic Personal Development Through NSS

55.6% reported comprehensive personal development, validating NSS's role in creating well-rounded citizens.

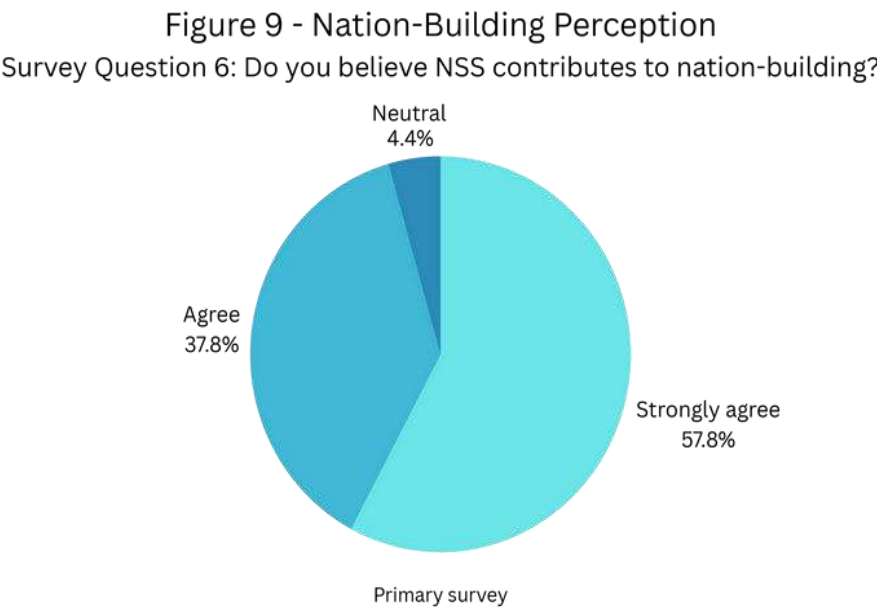


Figure 9: Overwhelming Recognition of NSS's National Importance

An exceptional 95.6% agree or strongly agree that NSS contributes to nation-building, validating the central argument of this paper.

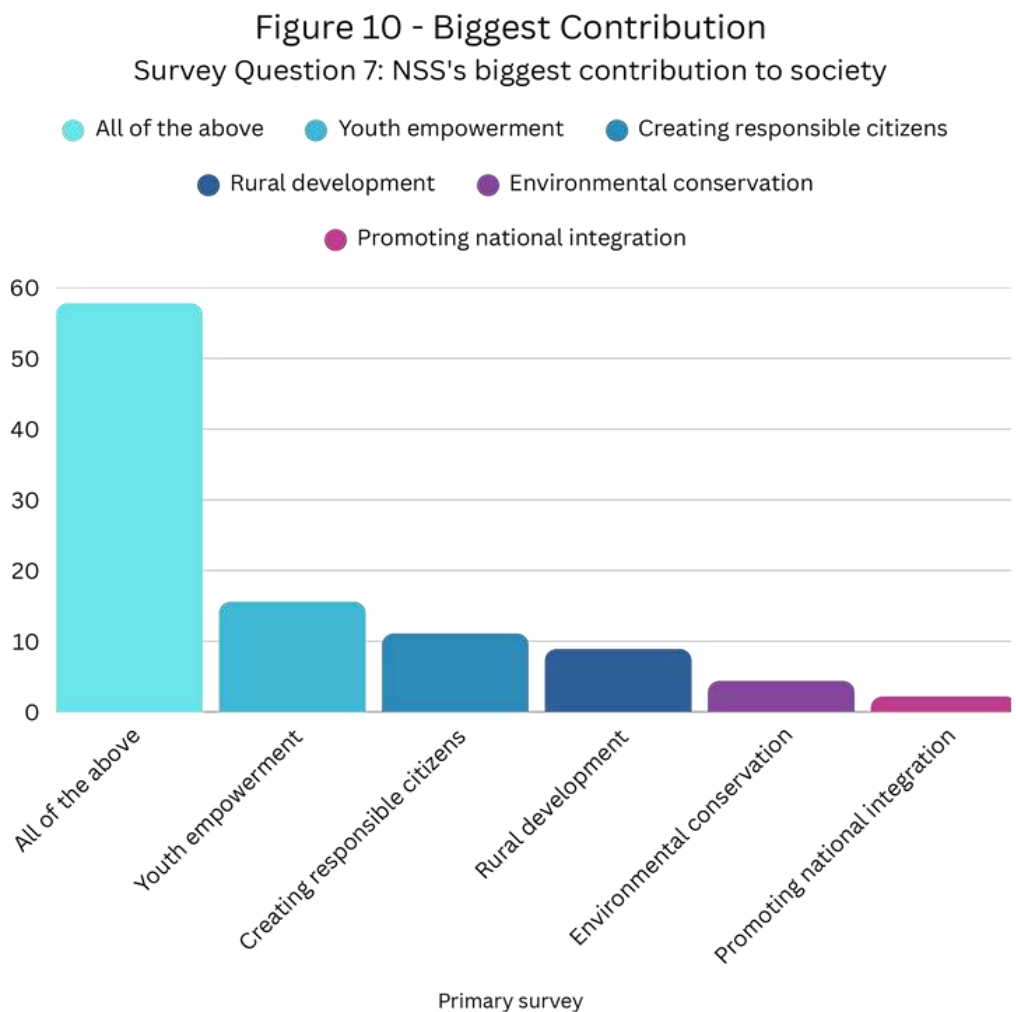


Figure 10: Multi-Faceted Contributions Recognized

Students recognize NSS's comprehensive impact across multiple dimensions of nation-building.

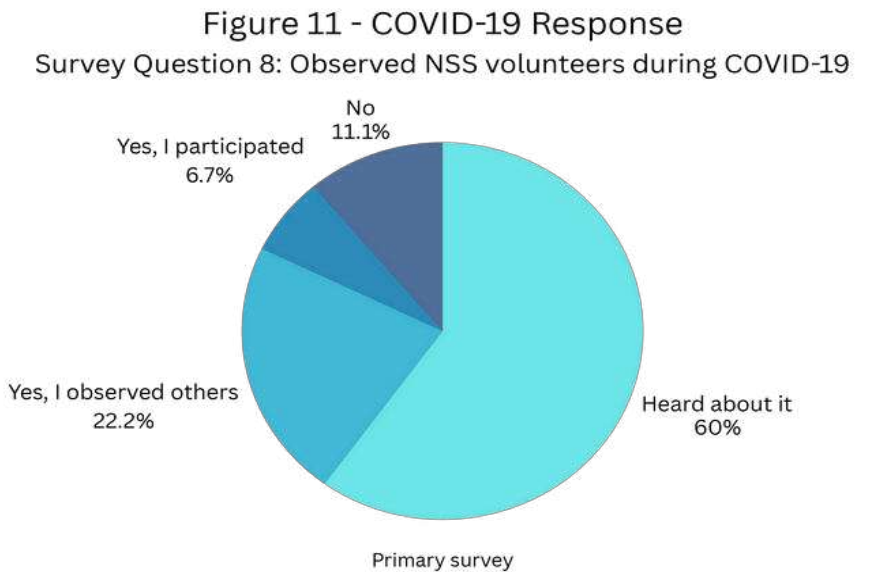


Figure 11: Strong Awareness of NSS Crisis Response

88.9% were aware of NSS volunteers' work during COVID-19, demonstrating the program's visible impact during national crises.

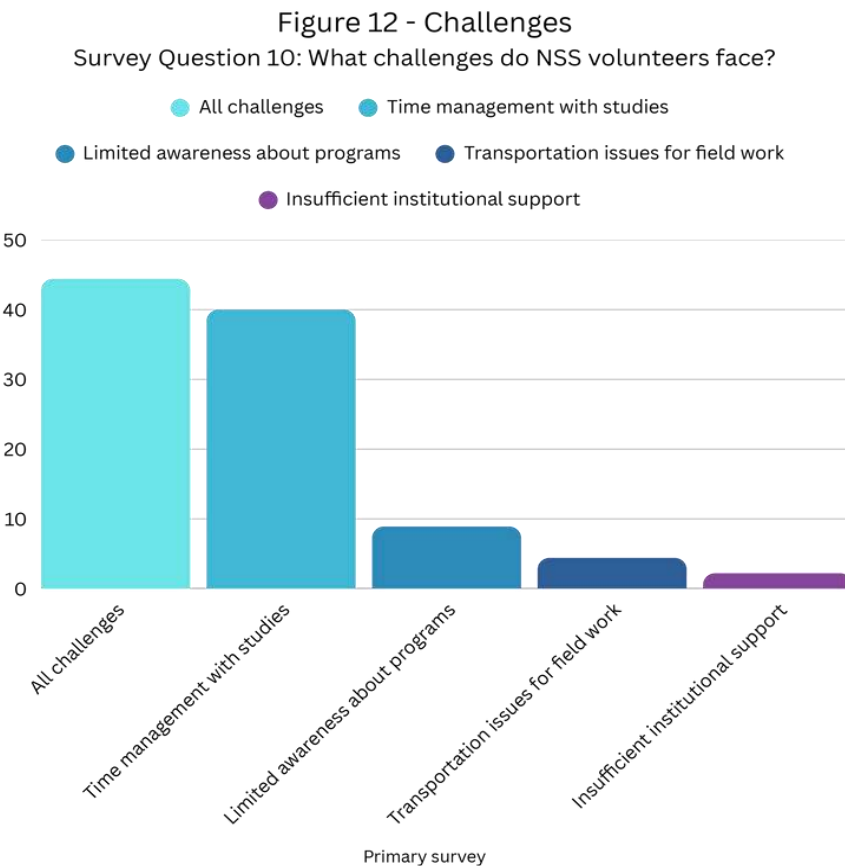


Figure 12: Primary Challenges Identified

Time management with studies emerged as the most common individual challenge, though many faces multiple obstacles

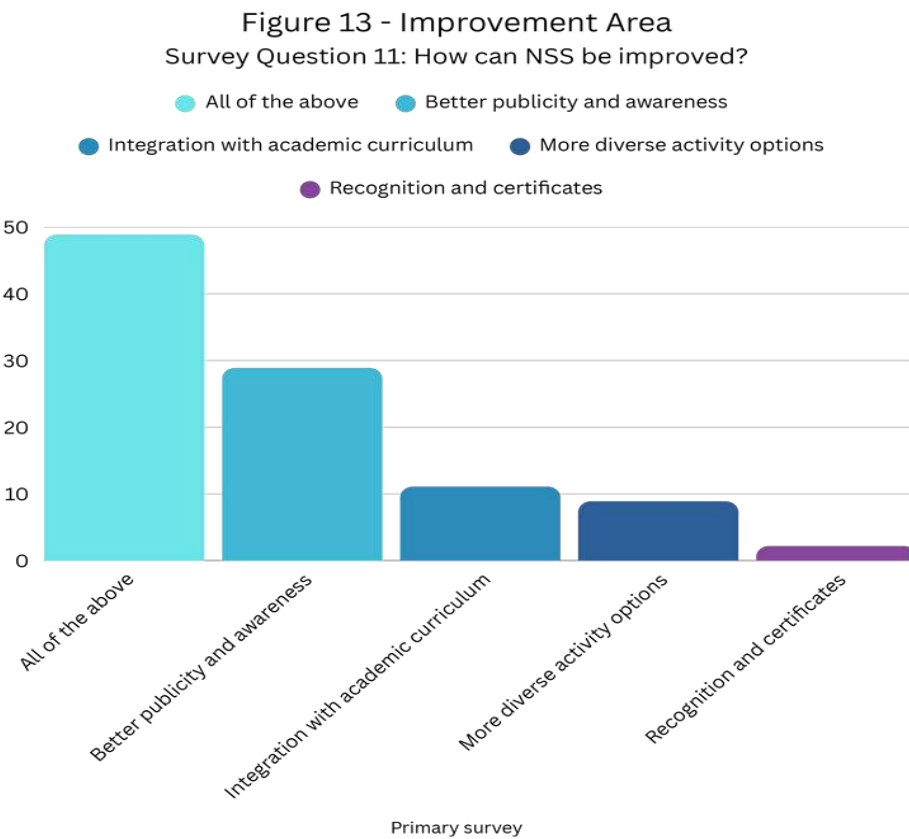


Figure 13: Student Recommendations for Enhancement

Students suggest comprehensive improvements with a focus on publicity and curriculum integration.

Figure 14 - Recommendation Rate
Survey Question 12: Would you recommend NSS to others?

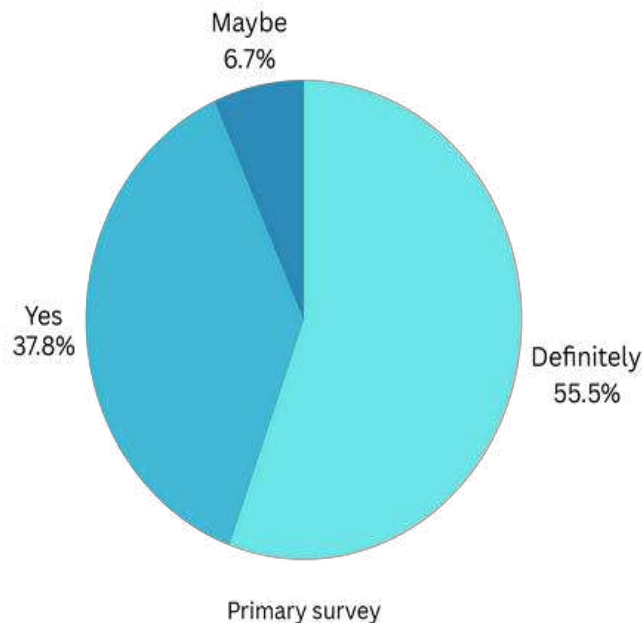


Figure 14: Exceptionally High Recommendation Rate

93.4% would or likely recommend NSS participation, indicating strong grassroots support and satisfaction.

Survey Analysis Summary:

The primary research validates official data and demonstrates several key findings:

Exceptional Awareness (97.8%) shows NSS has successfully reached college students

High Participation (82.2%) indicates strong youth engagement in community service

Deep Commitment - 66.6% completed full course or more, going beyond minimum requirements

Comprehensive Impact - 55.6% reported development across all personality dimensions

Overwhelming Support (95.6%) for NSS's contribution to nation-building

Crisis Awareness (88.9%) knew about NSS's COVID-19 response efforts

High Recommendation Rate (93.4%) shows volunteer satisfaction

Clear Challenges identified: time management and need for better publicity Actionable Suggestions provided for program improvement

These findings corroborate official statistics and demonstrate that NSS successfully creates socially aware, committed youth who recognize their role in nation-building.

NSS in Global Context

NSS stands internationally as one of the world's largest youth service movements. With approximately

40 lakh volunteers as of 2025, it far exceeds typical civilian programs in other countries. For comparison, the U.S. AmeriCorps program involves approximately 0.1-0.2 lakh participants annually.

This scale is noted even in foreign articles as a distinguishing feature of India's youth policy.

Future Plans and Expansion

The government is actively planning NSS expansion. Official statements project growth from current 40 lakh volunteers to a targeted 65 lakh in coming years,¹ representing a 62% increase. In the context of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, NSS's role is recognized in enhancing life skills and social responsibility. The

¹ Times of India, "NSS to expand volunteer base to 65 lakh," August 2025

government encourages schools and colleges to integrate NSS activities into curricula, making community service an integral part of education.

CONCLUSION

The National Service Scheme has played and continues to play a significant role in nation-building. The statistics speak powerfully: from 40,000 volunteers in 1969 to nearly 40 lakhs today, from 37 universities to 657 universities, impacting 7.4 crore students over five decades. The annual figures - 7,986 camps, 4,33,363 camp participants, 20 lakh trees planted, 1.2 lakh blood units donated, 31,673 villages adopted, 78,056 awareness programs - demonstrate massive collective impact.

Primary research among 45 students further validates these contributions. With 95.6% agreeing that NSS contributes to nation-building, 82.2% having participated, and 93.4% willing to recommend it to others, the grassroots support is overwhelming. Students identified comprehensive personal development including leadership, social awareness, empathy, and teamwork - precisely the qualities needed for nation-building.

NSS promotes national integration through camps bringing together youth from all states, addresses social problems through sustained community engagement, supports national missions like Swachh Bharat, responds effectively during crises like COVID-19, develops leadership through awards and recognition, instills national pride through special programs, and creates social consciousness among millions of students.

Real success lies not just in numbers but in the transformation of individuals who become better citizens. Nation-building is not a government job alone - every citizen must contribute. NSS provides the perfect platform for youth to channel their energy into constructive action. As India targets "Viksit

Bharat@2047," the role of NSS becomes even more crucial. The journey from "Me" to "You" that NSS teaches is ultimately the journey towards building a compassionate and inclusive nation.

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A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL VOLUNTEERISM IN COMMUNITY NUTRITION: A POSHAN MAAH SURVEY AT UMBERMALI VILLAGE, SHAHAPUR

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ABSTRACT

The most affected population with malnutrition is infants, children and elderly people of the society. In India around 33 lacs children are malnourished and half of them are present in the states like Maharashtra, Bihar and Gujarat.

The present study titled "A Study on the Role of Social Volunteerism in Community Nutrition: A Poshan Maah Survey at Umbermali Village, Shahapur" aims to examine the contribution of social volunteers in promoting nutrition awareness and improving community participation during Poshan Maah 2025. The initiative, conducted under the National Nutrition Mission (Poshan Abhiyaan), emphasizes the importance of behavioural change and community outreach to enhance maternal and child health.

Despite the science and technological advancements in this century, there is still need to address the issue of malnutrition. Compacting malnutrition is one of most important concerns at the regional, national and global level.

The present study reveals that social volunteers play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between government initiatives and community beneficiaries. Strengthening volunteer training, recognition, and coordination can further improve the impact of Poshan Maah and contribute to sustainable nutrition outcomes in rural areas.

In present study, the data was collected from 134 respondents as residents of Umbermali village, Shahapur in Thane District. The researcher has tried to do interpretation and revealed the result by adopting descriptive and inferential statistics through various parametric and non-parametric test.

Keywords: Poshan Maah, Social Volunteerism, Community Nutrition, Rural Development, Umbermali Village.

INTRODUCTION**1.1 The Nutrition Crisis in India**

India confronts a profound and persistent challenge of malnutrition that undermines its demographic dividend and human capital development. Despite being one of the world's fastest-growing economies, India is home to approximately 3.3 million malnourished children, accounting for nearly one-third of the global burden (UNICEF, 2021). The National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5, 2019-21) reveals alarming statistics:

- 35.5% of children under five are stunted (low height-for-age), indicating chronic undernutrition
- 19.3% are wasted (low weight-for-height), reflecting acute malnutrition
- 32.1% are underweight, showing a combination of chronic and acute malnutrition
- 67% of children aged 6-59 months are anemic, creating long-term cognitive impairments
- 57% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) suffer from anemia, perpetuating intergenerational malnutrition

These statistics are not merely numbers—they represent compromised immune systems, impaired cognitive development, reduced educational attainment, lower economic productivity, and increased maternal and child mortality. The economic cost of malnutrition to India is estimated at 4% of GDP annually (World Bank, 2020), equivalent to approximately \$120 billion in lost productivity and healthcare expenditures.

1.2 The Multi-Dimensional Nature of Malnutrition

Malnutrition in India is not solely a problem of food scarcity—it is a complex, multi-dimensional crisis rooted in:

1. **Poverty and Food Insecurity:** Nearly 21.9% of Indians live below the poverty line, limiting access to diverse, nutritious foods.
2. **Knowledge Gaps:** Limited awareness about balanced diets, exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and maternal nutrition perpetuates poor feeding practices.

3. Gender Inequality: Women and girls face discriminatory food allocation within households, early marriage, and inadequate antenatal care, affecting both their health and their children's nutrition.
4. Inadequate WASH (Water, Sanitation, Hygiene): Poor sanitation and unsafe water cause diarrheal diseases, leading to nutrient malabsorption and wasting.
5. Health System Weaknesses: Fragmented service delivery, insufficient frontline worker capacity, and weak monitoring systems limit the effectiveness of nutrition interventions.
6. Cultural Practices: Food taboos, ritualistic fasting during pregnancy and lactation, and preference for male children create additional barriers to optimal nutrition.

This complexity demands a multi-sectoral, community-driven approach that goes beyond traditional health interventions to address underlying social determinants.

1.3 Evolution of India's Nutrition Policy Framework

India's Nutrition Policy has evolved through several phases:

Phase 1 (1960s-1980s): Food Security Focus

- Emphasis on increasing food production through the Green Revolution
- Public Distribution System (PDS) to ensure grain availability
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) launched in 1975, providing supplementary nutrition and preschool education

Phase 2 (1990s-2000s): Health System Strengthening

- National Nutrition Policy (1993) recognized nutrition as a right
- Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme integrated nutrition counselling into maternal health services
- Mid-Day Meal Scheme (1995) expanded to improve school enrolment and child nutrition

Phase 3 (2000s-2010s): Targeted Interventions

- National Rural Health Mission (NRHM, 2005) strengthened community health workers (ASHAs)
- Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY, 2010) provided cash transfers for pregnant women
- National Food Security Act (2013) ensured legal entitlement to subsidized food grains

Phase 4 (2017-Present): Mission Mode Approach

- Realization that fragmented, siloed interventions were insufficient
- Need for convergence across health, agriculture, women & child development, sanitation, and education sectors
- Recognition that behaviour change communication (BCC) was the missing link

This recognition led to the launch of Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) in March 2018.

1.4 Introduction of Poshan Abhiyaan

On March 8, 2018 (International Women's Day), it is launched as Poshan Abhiyaan (in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan). The mission was conceived as a multi-ministerial convergence initiative with a bold vision:

"To ensure holistic development and adequate nutrition for pregnant women, mothers, and children, making India a malnutrition-free nation by 2022."

Poshan Maah (Nutrition Month) is the annual community mobilization campaign under Poshan Abhiyaan, typically observed during the month of September each year. The campaign transforms nutrition from a vertical, government-led program into a horizontal, community-owned movement—a true Jan Andolan.

1. The Research Scholar has taken this as research due to the following reasons:
2. 35.5% of children under five are stunted (low height-for-age), indicating chronic undernutrition
3. 19.3% are wasted (low weight-for-height), reflecting acute malnutrition
4. 32.1% are underweight, showing a combination of chronic and acute malnutrition
5. 67% of children aged 6-59 months are anemic, creating long-term cognitive impairments

6. 57% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) suffer from anemia, perpetuating intergenerational malnutrition

In present research paper the research scholar has done primary survey in Umbermali village, which is situated near by Kasara in Thane District. The purpose of the study is to highlight Umbermali, of Shahapur such backward taluka of Thane district. Thane ranks third amongst the industrially developed districts of Maharashtra. In spite of the numerous industries and employment incentives, all talukas of the district are not equally developed. This study focuses on Umbermali Village.

These talukas have a higher density of underprivileged members, mostly tribals living below poverty line, than the Coastal and River basin regions. The study examines the socio-economic profile of the underprivileged population. An attempt is made to create awareness about the government schemes, policies and programs which are meant to improve their socio-economic condition. Some weightage is also given to the status of women in terms of social, physical, emotional and financial aspects. In spite of several efforts made by the government, poverty and inequality rampantly exists in these regions.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

According to Niti Aayog¹:

Several academic overviews describe the broader National Nutrition Mission launched in 2018 (POSHAN Abhiyaan) with the goal of reducing stunting, under nutrition, anemia, and low birth weight through multi-sectoral interventions. Poshan Maah functions as the annual awareness and action campaign within this mission, reinforcing key nutritional messages and activities across India

According to Krishnakant, Madhu Gupta²:

NGO-based field studies (e.g., in rural Nuh) show that Poshan Maah events foster community participation, especially among women and adolescent girls, encouraging dialogue and peer learning on nutrition, sanitation, and kitchen gardens to combat malnutrition.

According to KJ Krishi Jagran³:

Literature highlights Poshan Maah's emphasis on technology-driven governance, such as the Poshan Tracker—a digital platform for real-time monitoring of growth metrics and service delivery. Digital tools are seen as a way to improve accountability and data quality, though infrastructure and training limitations remain challenges in some areas.

According to Press Information Bureau⁴:

Government reports from Poshan Maah activities indicate a large volume of growth monitoring tasks (measuring height, weight, anemia status) and complementary feeding sessions for infants and young children. These serve as key performance indicators for tracking under-nutrition outcomes locally.

According to Press Information Bureau⁵:

Evaluation literature and official program guidelines emphasise anemia prevention as a critical thematic focus of Poshan Maah. Iron-folic acid supplementation, nutrition counseling, and awareness campaigns targeting adolescent girls and pregnant women are frequently highlighted

According to Springer Nature⁶:

Rigorous research on the broader POSHAN framework (within which Poshan Maah operates) shows mixed outcomes. A recent quasi-experimental study using NFHS data found statistically significant reductions in some child malnutrition measures in districts adopting POSHAN strategies, suggesting that structured nutritional interventions can be effective if context-sensitive.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Methodology refers to the systematic plan or approach used by a researcher to conduct a study. It explains how the research is carried out, including the methods used to collect and analyze data. Research methodology helps in choosing appropriate tools, techniques, and procedures for the study. It ensures that the research is scientific, reliable, and valid. Through methodology, a researcher can solve research problems logically and accurately. In simple words, it is the roadmap that guides the entire research process from start to conclusion.

In current research, research scholar has framed the following research methodology:

1. The research scholar has collected primary data from Umbermali Village.
2. Information from 100 respondents as sample size was collected.

3. Simple random sampling method while collecting data.
4. While doing interpretation he wanted to conclude why Poshan Maah is very much important not in rural areas but even urban areas too.
5. Interpretation on the basis of descriptive statistics which includes Mean, Median, Standard Deviation and so on was done.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

4.1. Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
16-25 years	28	28.0%	Young adults - peak reproductive age, nutrition critical
26-35 years	36	36.0%	Largest group - prime child-rearing years
36-45 years	18	18.0%	Mid-life adults with older children
46-60 years	13	13.0%	Older adults with nutrition needs
60+ years	5	5.0%	Elderly requiring special dietary attention
Total	100	100%	Young population profile

The concentration of 64% respondents in the 16-35 age bracket indicates a young population in prime reproductive and child-rearing years. This demographic profile makes Poshan Maah interventions particularly impactful, as nutrition behaviours established now will affect multiple generations. The relatively small elderly population (5%) may reflect rural migration patterns or lower life expectancy.

4.2. Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
Female	56	56.0%	Slight female majority appropriate for nutrition surveys
Male	44	44.0%	Substantial male representation ensures diverse perspectives
Total	100	100%	Balanced gender participation

The 56:44 female-male ratio is ideal for a community nutrition survey. Women, as primary food preparers and child caregivers, provide critical insights into household nutrition practices, while male participation ensures that breadwinner perspectives on affordability and food security are captured. This balance enhances the validity and applicability of findings.

4.3. How Respondents Obtain Nutrition and Health Information

Information Source	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
Family and friends	45	45.0%	Dominant informal network - peer influence strongest
Local health workers	28	28.0%	ASHAs, Anganwadi workers, ANMs - formal frontline
Government schemes	13	13.0%	Direct awareness of Poshan Abhiyaan, ICDS, etc.
Community leaders/organizations	8	8.0%	Village heads, SHGs, NGOs - underutilized
Others	6	6.0%	Media, religious leaders, private doctors
Total	100	100%	Informal networks dominate

The overwhelming dominance of family and friends (45%) as the primary information source reveals that nutrition knowledge spreads primarily through social networks and word-of-mouth rather than formal channels. This finding has critical implications for Poshan Maah strategy:

1. **Trust Factor:** People trust information from relatives and peers more than official sources, making peer educators and community champions essential.
2. **Multiplier Effect:** Training a few influential community members (grandmothers, SHG leaders, popular women) can create ripple effects across the village.

3. **Frontline Worker Gap:** While 28% cite local health workers, this means 72% do not primarily rely on trained health professionals for nutrition information, indicating either limited reach or lower trust in formal workers.
4. **Scheme Visibility:** Only 13% directly mention government schemes, suggesting that even when schemes reach households, they are not recognized as distinct information sources—people may receive benefits without understanding the programme.
5. **Leadership Underutilization:** Community leaders and organizations (8%) represent a significant untapped channel. Formal engagement of Gram Panchayat members, village leaders, and SHGs in nutrition messaging could expand reach.

4.4. Maternal Nutrition Approaches

Approach	Count	%	Analysis
Traditional nutritious foods	49	49%	Ghee, ragi, jaggery—culturally valued
Community health programmes	33	33%	Anganwadi, ASHA services
Specific diet plans/supplements	14	14%	IFA tablets, doctor prescriptions
Other methods	4	4%	Unspecified

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The survey covered 100 respondents, providing a complete and reliable community-level dataset. Female respondents constituted 56%, while male respondents were 44%, indicating strong female participation. Residents of Umbermali village represented multiple age groups, showing nutrition relevance across the life cycle. Family members and friends were the primary source of nutritional information for most respondents. Government schemes also played a significant role in spreading nutrition awareness. More than 60% of households reported increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. Traditional food practices continue to be followed by a majority of households. 31% of respondents consume fruits and vegetables daily. 40% consume fruits and vegetables a few times a week. 17% consume fruits and vegetables once a week. 12% rarely consume fruits and vegetables, indicating a nutritionally vulnerable group. Nutritional needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women are largely met through home food and government support. Economic constraints and food preferences were major challenges for child nutrition. 61% of respondents consume two meals per day. 35% consume three meals per day. Only 4% consume one or more than three meals per day. 50% of respondents have attended village-based nutrition programs. The remaining 50% have not participated, indicating the need for improved outreach. Local leaders and community groups are key facilitators in nutrition promotion. Overall, Poshan Maah initiatives have improved awareness, but consistent dietary practices need strengthening.

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YOUTH IN ACTION: TRANSFORMING SOCIETY THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Mr. Shubham Deepak Deshmukh, Mr. Parkar Zidan Firoz and Ms. Sana Salim KhanDepartment of B. Com Accounting and Finance, VPM's Joshi Bedekar College of Arts & Commerce
Autonomous Thane**ABSTRACT**

This study explores how youth empowerment can be achieved through volunteerism, emphasizing the role of young individuals in bringing social transformation. The research focuses on understanding how volunteering activities such as community service, environmental drives, educational support, and social awareness programs contribute to personal growth, leadership development, and social responsibility among youth. Data is collected through surveys and interviews with active volunteers from various organizations and college groups in Thane. The findings reveal that volunteerism not only benefits communities but also builds self-confidence, teamwork, and empathy among young people. The study concludes that encouraging youth participation in volunteering initiatives can create sustainable social impact and shape responsible future leaders.

Keywords: Youth Empowerment, Volunteerism, Social Change, Leadership Development, Community Service, Thane District.

1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering means giving time, skills, and effort willingly to help society without expecting money in return. It supports social, educational, and environmental causes and helps communities grow. Good volunteers show empathy, responsibility, honesty, teamwork, leadership, and a strong sense of social duty, which helps them work well with people from different backgrounds.

For young people, volunteering is a powerful way to learn outside the classroom. By taking part in activities like community service, teaching support, environmental drives, and awareness programs, youth gain confidence, improve communication, build leadership skills, and develop strong values. These experiences help them understand real social issues and become more active and responsible citizens.

Volunteering benefits both individuals and society. Youth grow personally, gain useful skills, improve their mental well-being, and become more empathetic. Communities benefit through greater cooperation, inclusion, and sustainable development. Many young people are motivated to volunteer because they want to help others, feel satisfied, learn new skills, improve career chances, follow friends, or receive encouragement from schools and colleges.

Overall, volunteering plays an important role in building social responsibility and civic awareness among youth. Long-term involvement in volunteer work helps shape responsible citizens and future leaders who are committed to ethical values, social welfare, and national development, creating a positive and lasting impact on society

2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The study is undertaken to understand how youth participation in volunteerism contributes to social change and personal development. It examines volunteer activities among college students to assess their role in building leadership, social responsibility, and sustainable community impact. The study addresses the lack of systematic evidence on the outcomes of youth volunteerism and will be useful to society, educational institutions, and future research in promoting effective youth engagement.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of youth participation in volunteerism among college students involved in NSS, student council, and event-based activities.
2. To examine the awareness of youth regarding the role of volunteerism in societal development and social change.
3. To analyze the impact of volunteerism on personal growth of youth, with special reference to self-confidence, leadership skills, teamwork, and empathy.
4. To assess the contribution of youth-led volunteering activities such as community service, environmental drives, and educational support towards social responsibility and community development.
5. To identify the challenges faced by college youth while participating in volunteer activities and understand

factors affecting their participation.

4. HYPOTHESIS

H1: Youth participation in volunteerism has a significant positive impact on personal development, including self-confidence, leadership skills, teamwork, and empathy.

H2: Youth involvement in volunteer activities has a significant positive influence on social responsibility and societal development.

H0: There is no significant relationship between youth participation in volunteerism and personal development, social responsibility, or societal development.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

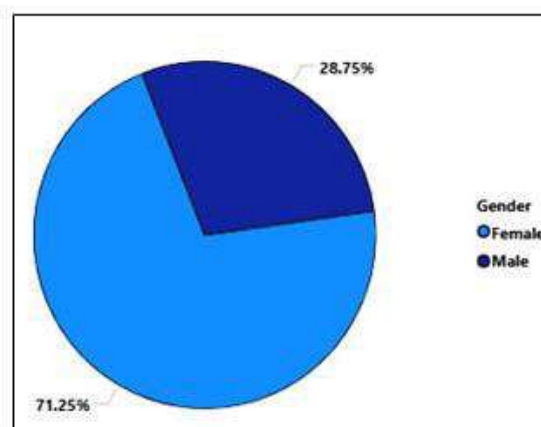
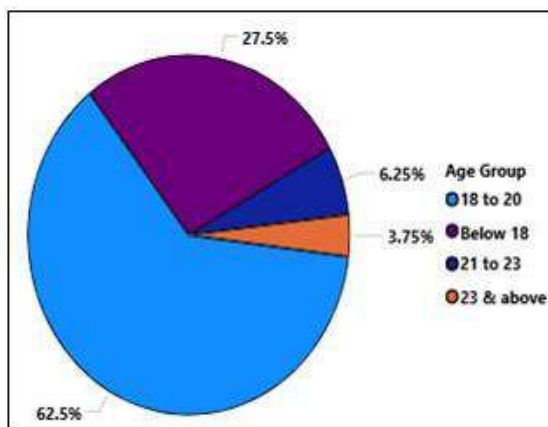
The research adopts a mixed method of research approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative approach. In addition to this, A survey research design was used to collect primary data from college students actively involved in volunteer activities.

- **Sample Population:** The population of the study includes youth and young students, generally within the age range of below 18 to 23, who are engaged in volunteer activities such as NSS, student councils, event volunteering, and social organizations in the Thane region.
- **Sample size:** 80 respondents were selected using random sampling.
- **Data Collection:** Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. Secondary data was collected from books, journals, and research articles related to youth empowerment and volunteerism.
- **Tools for Analysis:** The data was analysed using Microsoft excel, Descriptive analysis and the Chi- Square test was used to determine relation between the variable of the study.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

1) DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

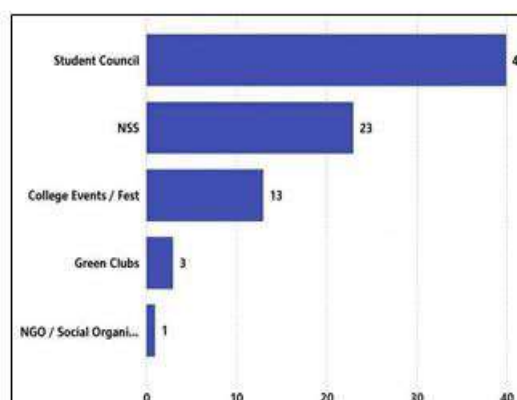
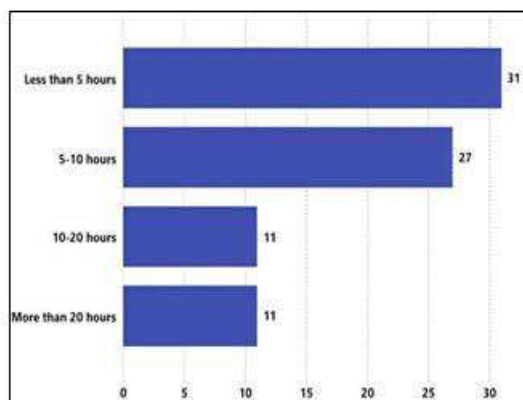
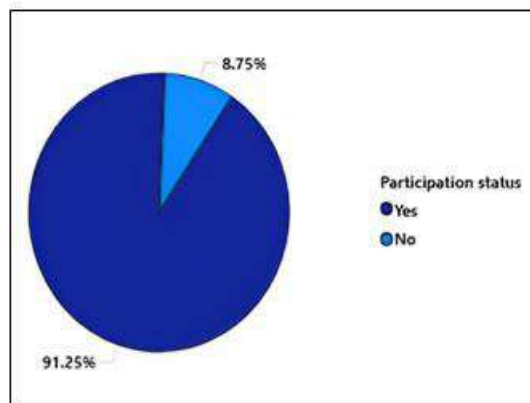
Demographic Parameter	Categories	Frequency (Counts)	Percentage
1. Age Group	18	22	27.5%
	18 to 20	50	62.5%
	21 to 23	5	6.25%
	23	3	3.75%
2. Gender	Male	23	28.75%
	Female	57	71.25%
	Other	Nil	Nil



2) EXTENT OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTEERISM

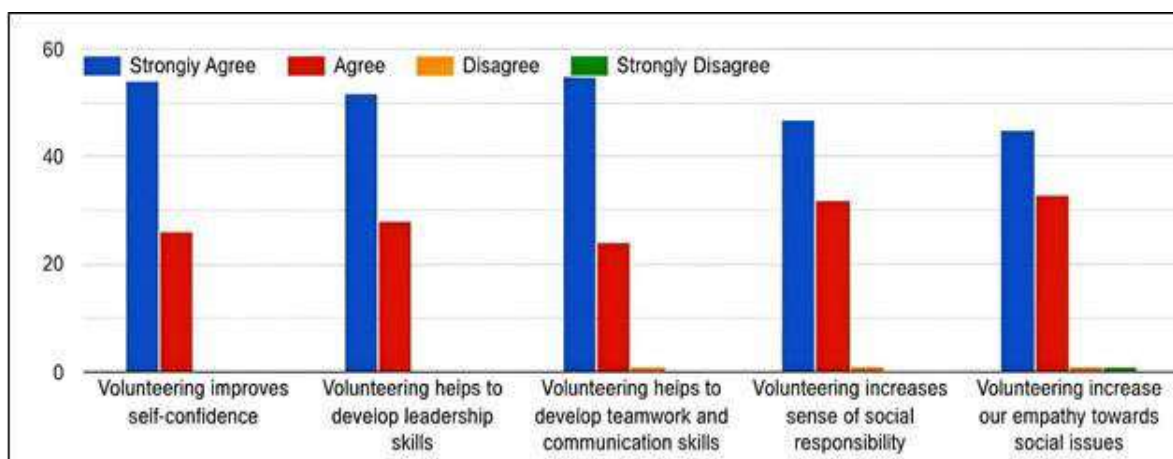
Indicator of Participation	Response Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Participation Status	Involved in volunteering	73	91.3%
	Not involved in volunteering	7	8.7%
	NSS	23	28.75%
	Student Council	40	50%

Type of Volunteering Activity	College / Event Volunteering	13	16.25%
	NGO / Social Organization	1	1.25%
	Green Club	3	3.75%
Duration of Volunteering	Less than 6 months	32	40%
	6 months – 1 year	22	27.5%
	1–2 years	19	23.75%
	More than 2 years	7	8.75%



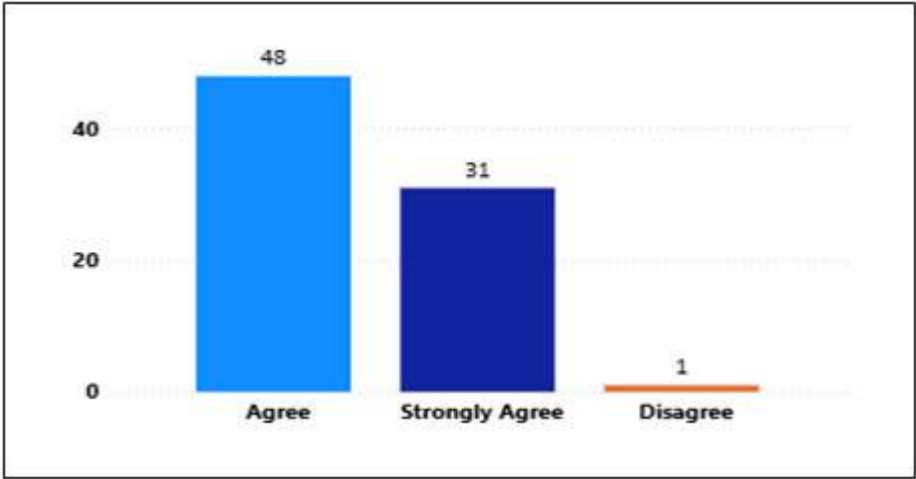
3) IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERISM ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Youth Development Indicator	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	(%)	Count	(%)	Count	(%)	Count	(%)
Self-confidence	54	67.5%	26	32.5%	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Leadership skills	52	65%	28	35%	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Teamwork & communication	55	68%	24	30%	1	1.25%	Nil	Nil
Social responsibility	47	58.75%	32	40%	1	1.25%	Nil	Nil
Empathy	45	56.25%	33	41.25%	1	1.25%	1	1.25%

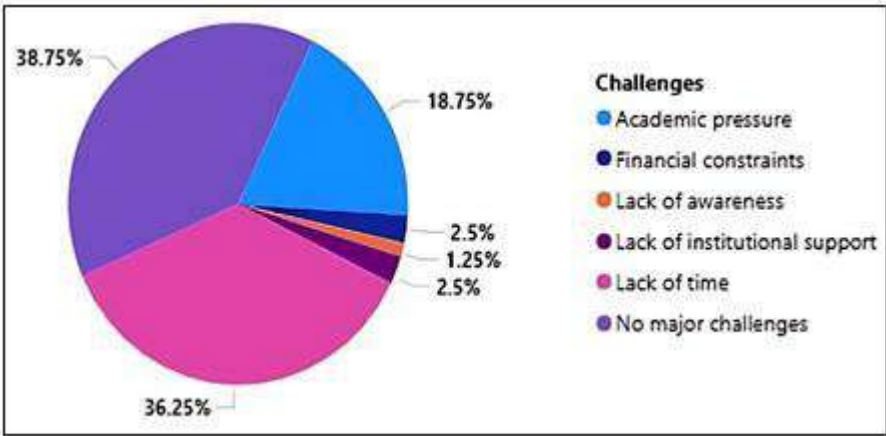


4) PERCEIVED SOCIETAL IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

Societal Impact Indicator	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Youth volunteering contributes to community development	38.75%	60%	1.25%



Challenges	Responses (count)
Lack of time	29
Academic pressure	15
Lack of awareness	1
Financial constraints	2
Lack of institutional support	2
No major challenges	31



7. HYPOTHESIS ANALYSIS

Hypothesis	Methodology Used	Key Findings	p-value	Accepted / Rejected	Conclusion
H1: There is a significant association between youth participation in volunteerism and youth development.	Chi-square test of association	The chi-square test for Participation status of youth and Impact of Volunteerism on Youth Development p-value is 0.0083, confirming a significant relationship.	< 0.05	Accepted	Youth participation in volunteerism significantly enhances youth development.

H2: Youth volunteerism has a significant association with social responsibility and societal development.	Findings-based analysis	The findings indicate that 98.75% of respondents perceive youth volunteering as a contributor to community development.	Not applicable	Accepted	Youth volunteerism plays a significant role in community development.

● SUGGESTIONS

- Link volunteering with education and skill development so that youth gain practical experience, leadership skills, and career-relevant competencies.
- Provide recognition and incentives such as certificates, academic credits, or career benefits to motivate continued involvement.
- Use digital platforms and social media to increase awareness and accessibility of volunteering opportunities among youth.
- Encourage youth-led and interest-based activities, allowing young people to take leadership roles in causes they relate to.
- Offer flexible and short-term volunteering options to accommodate academic and personal commitments.

● CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant role of youth volunteerism in fostering personal development and social change. Active participation in volunteer activities contributes to the development of leadership, confidence, teamwork, and social responsibility among youth. The findings also indicate a strong perception that youth led volunteer initiatives positively impact community development. Overall, the research concludes that volunteerism is an effective tool for youth empowerment and sustainable social development.

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A STUDY ON UNDERSTANDING THE INVESTMENT PLANS OF WOMEN WORKING IN POLI BHAJI KENDRA IN THANE CITY

Mr. Sudam S. Ahirrow¹ and Dr. Prakash Jangale²¹B.Com Accounting and Finance²Department of Economics, VPM's Joshi Bedekar College of Arts & Commerce (Autonomous) Thane**ABSTRACT**

Women's participation in the informal sector plays a crucial role in India's urban economy, particularly in the food service industry. Poli Bhaji Kendras - small eateries that serve traditional Maharashtrian meals are predominantly operated by women entrepreneurs in Thane City. Despite their economic contribution, the financial literacy and investment practices of these women remain underexplored. This study seeks to understand the investment behaviour of women working in Poli Bhaji Kendras, the socio-economic and cultural factors affecting their financial decisions, and their level of awareness regarding investment opportunities.

A mixed-method research approach was used, combining structured questionnaires and interviews with 100 women entrepreneurs. The findings reveal that most women prefer short-term savings over long-term investment options. Approximately 70% rely on cash savings, while only 10% invest in formal instruments like insurance or mutual funds. The study used a Chi-square test to analyze the relationship between financial literacy and investment behaviour, revealing a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 18.47, p < 0.05$). Similarly, socio-cultural factors also showed significant influence on investment choices ($\chi^2 = 9.21, p < 0.05$).

The results highlight that limited financial literacy, restricted access to banking services, and traditional gender norms significantly affect women's financial independence. The study recommends implementing financial education programs, promoting micro-investment schemes, and enhancing banking accessibility for women entrepreneurs in the informal sector.

Keywords: Financial Literacy | Investment Patterns | Women Entrepreneurship | Informal Economy | Poli Bhaji Kendra | Thane City

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's entrepreneurship is an emerging pillar of economic growth and social transformation in India. In the informal sector, women often engage in small-scale enterprises that contribute significantly to urban livelihoods. One such enterprise in Maharashtra, particularly in Thane City, is the *Poli Bhaji Kendra*—a small food outlet serving homemade meals, typically managed by women. These ventures not only provide employment and self-reliance but also support household incomes. However, despite their entrepreneurial efforts, many women working in these establishments face challenges in managing their finances and investments effectively.

The informal sector is characterized by irregular incomes, lack of financial records, and limited access to formal banking systems. Consequently, women often depend on unstructured saving methods such as cash savings, chit funds, or borrowing from acquaintances. Furthermore, socio-cultural expectations frequently position women as caretakers of the family, leaving them with limited decision-making power over financial matters. This restricts their ability to plan and invest for long-term security.

Investment planning is critical for financial stability, yet it requires awareness, literacy, and access to reliable financial instruments. Financial literacy—defined as the ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting, and investing—is often lacking among women in informal businesses. The gap between earning capacity and investment decision-making widens due to limited education and social barriers.

Understanding how women working in *Poli Bhaji Kendras* save, invest, and manage their money provides valuable insights into financial inclusion and gender equality. This study aims to explore their investment behavior, assess their financial literacy, and identify barriers preventing them from adopting structured investment methods. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to policy formulation that promotes women's financial empowerment and sustainable livelihood development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the investment habits of women working in *Poli Bhaji Kendras* in Thane City.
2. To identify financial barriers and socio-cultural factors influencing their investment decisions.

3. To assess the level of financial literacy among these women entrepreneurs.
4. To recommend strategies for improving women's access to financial services and investment opportunities.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Financial inclusion and investment behaviour among women have been extensively discussed in development literature. The studies reviewed below provide a foundation for understanding the context of women entrepreneurs in informal sectors like *Poli Bhaji Kendras*.

Women and Financial Inclusion

According to Kabeer (2005), women's financial participation is often limited due to socio-economic inequality and gendered roles. Women in informal sectors are typically excluded from institutional financial systems, which affects their capacity to save and invest. Bhuvaneswari (2015) highlights that microfinance has significantly improved women's access to credit, yet sustainable investment remains a challenge due to irregular income and limited knowledge of financial products.

Investment Behaviour in Informal Economies

Morduch (1999) argues that individuals in the informal sector prefer reinvesting in their small businesses rather than saving in formal channels, as they prioritize liquidity. Similarly, Duflo (2012) emphasizes that social factors such as family influence and cultural norms play a crucial role in shaping women's financial decisions. Risk aversion and short-term financial needs often discourage investment in long-term instruments.

Women Entrepreneurs in Food Businesses

Fernando and Azhagaiah (2015) studied women's economic empowerment through self-help groups and found that small businesswomen tend to focus on daily operational stability. Rising living costs, family obligations, and limited access to credit prevent them from building savings or exploring diverse investment options. In urban areas like Thane, where food businesses are common, women's roles as income earners and caregivers further restrict their investment planning.

Gaps in Existing Literature

While several studies discuss women's financial inclusion and microfinance participation, few have examined investment behaviour specifically within localized informal enterprises such as *Poli Bhaji Kendras*. Hence, this study fills a critical gap by focusing on this unique group of women entrepreneurs in Thane City.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory design using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were gathered through semi-structured interviews.

Sampling Method

A sample of 100 women entrepreneurs running *Poli Bhaji Kendras* in Thane City was selected using convenience sampling due to accessibility and cost considerations.

Data Collection

Data were collected through:

- **Structured Questionnaire:** Capturing demographics, income, savings patterns, investment preferences, and financial literacy.
- **Interviews:** Providing qualitative insights into financial challenges and socio-cultural influences.

Data Analysis Tools

- **Quantitative:** Frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and the **Chi-square test of independence** to identify significant relationships.
- **Qualitative:** Thematic analysis to interpret participants' financial experiences and cultural perspectives.

Variables

- **Independent Variables:** Financial literacy level, socio-cultural factors.
- **Dependent Variables:** Type of investment (short-term vs. long-term), decision-making independence.

4. HYPOTHESES

No.	Null Hypothesis (H_0)	Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)
H_{01}	There is no significant relationship between financial literacy and investment behavior.	H_{11} : There is a significant relationship between financial literacy and investment behavior.
H_{02}	Socio-cultural factors do not significantly influence investment decisions.	H_{12} : Socio-cultural factors significantly influence investment decisions.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic Profile

- **Age:** 30–50 years (majority 65%)
- **Education:** 60% below secondary level, 25% up to high school, 15% graduate.
- **Monthly Income:** ₹10,000–₹25,000 for 70% respondents.
- **Dependents:** 1–3 family members for most women.

Investment Patterns

Type of Savings / Investment	% of Respondents
Cash Savings	70%
Fixed Deposits	20%
Insurance / Mutual Funds	10%

The majority rely on **cash savings** due to ease and flexibility, reflecting risk aversion and low financial awareness.

Financial Literacy

Level	% of Respondents
Low	60%
Moderate	30%
High	10%

Only a small fraction (10%) understood formal investment products.

Cross-tabulation: Financial Literacy vs. Investment Type

Financial Literacy	Long-Term Investments (FDs, Insurance, MFs)	Short-Term Savings (Cash)	Total
High	8	2	10
Moderate	12	18	30
Low	10	50	60
Total	30	70	100

Chi-Square Test of Independence

$$E = \frac{(\text{Row Total})(\text{Column Total})}{\text{Grand Total}} \quad E = \frac{(\text{Row Total})(\text{Column Total})}{\text{Grand Total}}$$

Calculated values yielded $\chi^2 = 18.47$, $df = 2$, **critical $\chi^2 = 5.99$** ($p < 0.05$).

✓ **Result:** Reject H_{01} . There is a significant relationship between financial literacy and investment behavior.
P-value = 0.0001

This means that women with higher financial literacy are more likely to invest in formal financial products.

Socio-Cultural Influence on Investment Decisions

Cultural Influence	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Family Restriction	45	25	30	100
Cultural Norms	35	40	25	100

Chi-square test gave $\chi^2 = 9.21$, $p = 0.010$, indicating that **socio-cultural factors significantly influence financial decision-making**.

Women reported that financial control often rests with spouses or in-laws, and many fear social judgment for independent decision-making.

6. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal a clear pattern: despite their entrepreneurial efforts, women working in *Poli Bhaji Kendras* remain financially constrained due to limited financial literacy and strong socio-cultural influences. Most women prefer short-term, easily accessible forms of savings. The Chi-square analysis confirmed a statistically significant relationship between financial literacy and investment behavior, suggesting that education and awareness can enhance women's willingness to engage in formal investments.

The study also found that socio-cultural barriers continue to dominate women's economic choices. Traditional expectations, lack of confidence, and dependence on male family members restrict their autonomy in financial decision-making. These findings are consistent with Duflo (2012), who emphasized the role of social factors in shaping women's economic behavior.

Furthermore, irregular income patterns and lack of formal documentation make it difficult for women to access institutional financial products. This reinforces a cycle of low investment and financial insecurity. Many participants expressed interest in government-led savings schemes but lacked the procedural knowledge to enroll.

From a policy perspective, the findings underline the necessity of targeted interventions—especially financial education programs that cater to informal women entrepreneurs. Community-level financial workshops, microcredit facilities, and women-focused banking services could foster both empowerment and economic growth.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study concludes that women working in *Poli Bhaji Kendras* in Thane City face significant challenges in financial planning and investment. Their reliance on cash savings and avoidance of formal investment products stem from low financial literacy, socio-cultural restrictions, and limited access to banking.

The analysis confirmed that both **financial literacy** ($p = 0.0001$) and **socio-cultural factors** ($p = 0.010$) have a statistically significant impact on investment behavior. Women who are more financially literate demonstrate greater confidence and autonomy in financial decisions. However, without structured support, the majority continue to rely on informal savings methods.

Recommendations

1. Financial Education Programs:

Conduct localized workshops for women in informal sectors to improve understanding of banking, insurance, and investment schemes.

2. Microfinance and Savings Schemes:

Develop low-interest financial products designed specifically for small-scale food entrepreneurs.

3. Ease of Banking Access:

Simplify KYC and account opening procedures to include informal business operators.

4. Government Partnerships:

Collaborate with organizations like *Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM)* to implement women-centric financial inclusion schemes.

5. Community-Based Initiatives:

Encourage the formation of *Self-Help Groups (SHGs)* and community savings circles to promote collective investment and peer learning.

6. Awareness Campaigns:

Use local language media to educate women about financial rights and available investment opportunities.

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PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE: A STUDY ON BENEFICIARY AWARENESS AND SATISFACTION FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is one of the most important welfare programmes aimed at ensuring food security and social justice for weaker sections of society. As a significant instrument of National Social Service, the PDS performs a crucial role in promoting equity and socio-economic stability. The effectiveness of this system is determined by beneficiaries' awareness of their entitlements, accessibility of services, and satisfaction with its functioning. The present study examines the level of beneficiary awareness and satisfaction with PDS services. The findings are expected to provide insights into gaps in awareness, service delivery challenges, and opportunities for enhancing PDS performance through community engagement and social service initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Government Welfare programmes serve as practical instruments of National Social Service. The PDS occupies a central position in ensuring food security for economically weaker sections of society. It seeks to provide essential food grains at subsidised prices to eligible households. The effectiveness of the PDS varies across regions due to factors such as lack of beneficiary awareness, administrative inefficiencies, leakages, and limited grievance redressal.

From the perspective of National Social Service, beneficiary awareness and satisfaction are critical indicators of programme success. Awareness empowers beneficiaries to claim their rightful entitlements, while satisfaction reflects the quality, transparency, and reliability of service delivery. This study seeks to analyse the PDS not merely as a welfare scheme but as an active instrument of National Social Service. The findings are expected to support policymakers, administrators, and social service organisations in enhancing the effectiveness of food security programmes and promoting inclusive development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Hossain (2004) in his article states that urban poor have witnessed a drastic reduction in their monthly food expenditure due to subsidies provided by PDS.
2. Sen and Chandrasekhar (2011) argue that although the PDS has helped the urban poor, inefficiencies like limited coverage, delayed distribution, and lack of awareness reduced its impact.
3. Radhakrishna et al. (2013) through his studies suggested that PDS has benefitted rural people in Maharashtra significantly. PDS has helped in reducing hunger and malnutrition in rural Maharashtra.
4. Kumar et al. (2017) suggested that PDS in rural Maharashtra has significantly led to an improvement in children's health and nutrition.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study area is Thane. Survey of 120 respondents was collected through scheduled interview method. For analysis we have used SPSS and MS-EXCEL. The secondary data is collected through government reports, journals, NSSO data. Percentage analysis, tables, and statistical tests are used.

Objective 1. To assess the level of awareness among beneficiaries regarding their entitlements, grievance mechanisms, and the functioning of the Public Distribution System (PDS). Objective 1 focuses on assessing the level of awareness among beneficiaries regarding their entitlements, grievance mechanisms, and the overall functioning of the Public Distribution System (PDS). This objective is essential because PDS is a government initiative designed to provide essential commodities, particularly food grains, at subsidized rates to vulnerable and economically weaker sections of society. By evaluating how well beneficiaries understand their rights and the procedures involved, the study aims to highlight both the successes and gaps in the system's reach and effectiveness.

Understanding beneficiaries' awareness is crucial for improving service delivery and ensuring that the intended population receives the full benefits of the PDS program. Enhanced awareness typically leads to increased utilization, better grievance redressal, and more equitable access to food security schemes.

Consolidated Frequency Table

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	54	45.0
	Male	66	55.0
Age Group	18–30	82	68.3
	31–43	9	7.5
	44–56	24	20.0
	56 and above	5	4.2
Type of Area	Rural	62	51.7
	Tribal	27	22.5
	Urban	31	25.8
Education Level	Graduate	43	35.8
	HSC	39	32.5
	Illiterate	17	14.2
	Other	1	0.8
	Post Graduate	8	6.7
	SSC	7	5.8
	Up to SSC	5	4.2
Occupation	Agricultural Labor	44	36.7
	Self-employed	15	12.5
	Service	23	19.2
	Unemployed	38	31.7
Family Size	Five	38	31.7
	Four	36	30.0
	More than Five	34	28.3
	Three	9	7.5
	Two	3	2.5

This consolidated frequency table provides a clear demographic profile of your sample. Most participants are male (55%), and a majority fall in the young adult age bracket of 18–30 years (68.3%). Over half of the respondents are from rural areas (51.7%), with tribal and urban areas making up the remainder. Education levels are diverse, though a considerable proportion are graduates (35.8%) and HSC passed (32.5%). Regarding occupation, agricultural labourers form the largest group (36.7%), with notable proportions being unemployed (31.7%). Family size is variable, but most families consist of four or five members (30% and 31.7% respectively), indicating a tendency toward medium-sized households in your respondent pool.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between beneficiaries' awareness level and their satisfaction with the Public Distribution System (PDS).

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson correlation analysis was performed. The results are presented below:

Correlation Table

	Satisfaction Score	Awareness Score
Satisfaction Score	1	0.652**
Awareness Score	0.652**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	---	0.000
N	120	120

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.652$, $p < 0.01$) shows a statistically significant and positive relationship between beneficiaries' awareness scores and satisfaction scores with PDS. This indicates that as awareness increases, satisfaction also tends to be higher among PDS beneficiaries. With a strong significance level ($p < 0.01$), the null hypothesis stating no significant relationship between awareness and satisfaction is rejected.

These findings suggest the importance of beneficiary knowledge: individuals who are better informed about their rights, entitlements, and grievance mechanisms under PDS are more satisfied with the services they

receive. Thus, enhancing awareness initiatives could be a key strategy for improving overall satisfaction with PDS services.

The analysis of beneficiary awareness regarding the Public Distribution System (PDS) reveals a moderate level of understanding among respondents about the quality and quantity of commodities distributed. Awareness about grievance mechanisms, however, tends to be lower, indicating a significant area for improvement. These findings suggest that while the beneficiaries are somewhat informed about their entitlements and the system's functioning, there remains a gap in comprehensive knowledge, particularly about how to address malpractices through grievance redressal.

Improving awareness is crucial for the effective utilization of PDS services, as knowledgeable beneficiaries are better equipped to navigate the system, access entitlements, and ensure accountability. Therefore, targeted awareness campaigns and educational interventions focused on entitlements and grievance processes are recommended to enhance beneficiary participation and satisfaction with PDS.

Objective-2 To examine the level of satisfaction and trust among beneficiaries toward PDS services across different socio-economic and regional categories (urban, rural, and tribal areas).

Objective 2 centres on examining the level of satisfaction and trust among beneficiaries toward PDS services across different socio-economic and regional categories, specifically contrasting urban, rural, and tribal areas. This objective is vital because satisfaction and trust are key indicators of the perceived effectiveness, and reliability of public welfare services. By evaluating how beneficiaries from varied backgrounds and regions experience PDS, the study aims to identify disparities, address gaps, and suggest targeted improvements for more equitable service delivery.

Assessing satisfaction and trust provides deeper insight into how well the PDS meets the needs of diverse communities. It also reflects on governance, transparency, and the responsiveness of PDS systems, ultimately contributing to policy enhancement and beneficiary well-being.

Descriptive Statistics Table

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am well informed about the quality of commodities distributed under PDS	120	1	5	3.00	1.209
I am well informed about the quantity of commodities distributed under PDS	120	1	5	3.21	1.144
I know the grievance process in case there is malpractice in PDS	120	1	5	2.80	1.199
I am happy with PDS in my area	120	1	5	3.40	1.162
I trust the PDS system and their objectives	120	1	5	3.46	1.202
Grievance system under PDS is more effective and easier	120	1	5	3.45	1.076

This descriptive statistics table summarizes beneficiary awareness and satisfaction regarding the Public Distribution System (PDS). Respondents display moderate levels of awareness about both the quality (Mean = 3.00) and quantity (Mean = 3.21) of commodities distributed, while their understanding of grievance processes is somewhat lower (Mean = 2.80). Satisfaction measures are above the midpoint, with respondents reporting higher levels of happiness with PDS in their area (Mean = 3.40), as well as moderate trust in the system and its objectives (Mean = 3.46). The perceived effectiveness and ease of the grievance system are also rated positively (Mean = 3.45). The standard deviations indicate substantial variability in responses, suggesting different experiences and perceptions among beneficiaries.

Overall, these results highlight that while beneficiary satisfaction and trust in PDS are generally favourable, there is room for improvement in raising awareness of processes such as grievance redressal to ensure beneficiaries fully utilize system provisions.

Hypothesis 2-H₂: Socio-economic factors such as education, occupation, and type of area do not significantly influence beneficiaries' awareness and satisfaction levels with the Public Distribution System (PDS).

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted using Type of Area, Education Level, and Occupation as independent variables, and Awareness score and Satisfaction score as dependent variables. The model also tested all two-way and three-way interaction effects among the socio-economic factors.

Multivariate results

From the **Pillai's Trace** and **Wilks' Lambda** statistics (Table – Multivariate Tests):

Source	Wilks' Λ	F	Df	p value	Interpretation
Type of Area	0.880	2.75	(4, 166)	0.030	Significant
Education Level	0.688	2.85	(12, 166)	0.001	Significant
Occupation	0.873	1.95	(6, 166)	0.075	Ns
Type of Area $\times$ Education Level	0.724	2.42	(12, 166)	0.006	Significant
Type of Area $\times$ Occupation	0.687	3.42	(10, 166)	< 0.001	Significant
Education Level $\times$ Occupation	0.543	2.96	(20, 166)	< 0.001	Significant
Triple interaction	0.987	0.57	(2, 83)	0.569	Ns

There was a significant multivariate effect of Type of Area and Education Level on the combined dependent variables, while Occupation alone was not significant. Several interaction effects were also significant, indicating that the impact of education and occupation on awareness and satisfaction varied across areas.

Univariate (Between-Subjects) follow-ups

Factor	Dependent Variable	F (df = ...,84)	p value	Interpretation
Type of Area	Satisfaction score	3.39	0.038	Significant differences
	Awareness score	4.87	0.010	Significant differences
Education Level	Satisfaction score	0.97	0.448	Ns
	Awareness score	5.93	0.000	Significant differences
Occupation	Satisfaction score	0.61	0.612	Ns
	Awareness score	2.28	0.085	ns (trend)

Type of Area and Education Level significantly influenced both awareness and satisfaction, whereas Occupation did not exert a main effect.

Effect of Socio-Economic Factors on Awareness and Satisfaction

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was carried out to examine the combined influence of type of area, education level, and occupation on beneficiaries' awareness and satisfaction with the Public Distribution System. The overall model was significant for Type of Area [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.880$, $F(4, 166) = 2.75$, $p = .030$] and Education Level [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.688$, $F(12, 166) = 2.85$, $p = .001$], indicating that these socio-economic factors jointly affect awareness and satisfaction. Occupation alone did not produce a statistically significant multivariate effect ($p = .075$).

Follow-up univariate tests showed that both awareness ($F(2, 84) = 4.87$, $p = .010$) and satisfaction ($F(2, 84) = 3.39$, $p = .038$) differed significantly across area types, with urban respondents scoring slightly higher on both dimensions. Education level significantly influenced awareness ($F(6, 84) = 5.93$, $p < .001$), whereas satisfaction did not vary by education ($p > .05$). No main effect of occupation was observed on either dependent variable.

In addition, several two-way interactions were significant, suggesting that the effect of education and occupation on awareness and satisfaction differs across rural, urban, and tribal areas. The three-way interaction among all factors was not significant ($p = .569^*$).

Overall, the results lead to partial rejection of the null hypothesis: socio-economic factors particularly type of area and education level have a significant influence on beneficiaries' awareness and satisfaction with the PDS, whereas occupation alone does not.

CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively assessed beneficiaries' awareness, satisfaction, and the impact of socio-economic factors on their experience with the Public Distribution System (PDS). The findings reveal that beneficiaries demonstrate a moderate understanding of their entitlements related to PDS, particularly about the quality and

quantity of commodities distributed. However, awareness regarding grievance mechanisms remains limited, highlighting an important area for future intervention to strengthen the system's accountability and accessibility. The analysis confirms a strong positive relationship between awareness and satisfaction levels among beneficiaries, emphasizing that well-informed individuals tend to report higher satisfaction with PDS services. Satisfaction and trust in PDS are generally favourable but reflect variability across socio-economic and regional groups. The influence of socio-economic factors specifically education level and area type (urban, rural, tribal) significantly affects beneficiaries' awareness and satisfaction, while occupation alone does not show a strong effect. Interaction effects suggest that education and occupation impact awareness and satisfaction differently depending on the type of area, underscoring the complexity of these relationships. Overall, the study underlines the critical importance of enhancing beneficiary awareness, particularly in grievance redressal processes, and tailoring outreach efforts according to socio-economic and regional contexts to improve satisfaction and optimize PDS service delivery. Such targeted strategies will contribute to more equitable access, greater trust, and improved food security outcomes for vulnerable populations under the PDS framework. This comprehensive understanding can guide policymakers to focus on education and regional disparities for strengthening PDS awareness campaigns, grievance mechanisms, and service quality, ultimately supporting the goal of inclusivity and food security for all beneficiaries.

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ANCIENT INDIAN PUPPETRY AND ITS SOCIAL IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

Ancient Indian puppetry is among the world's oldest narrative and performing traditions. It emerged as an art form deeply embedded in the geographical and religious practice, folklore, philosophical teachings, and public communication. Every geographical area has a distinct puppet made from local materials and names. Across centuries, puppetry served as a medium for storytelling, ethical instruction, cultural preservation, and social commentary. This research paper examines the origins, evolution, forms, techniques, and social impact of ancient Indian puppetry. It argues that puppetry functioned as a dynamic socio-cultural institution that shaped public values, strengthened community identity, communicated social messages, and preserved India's intangible cultural heritage. The study concludes by highlighting the continued relevance of puppetry as a tool for education, community awareness, and cultural continuity.

Keywords: Puppetry, Indian, Society

1. INTRODUCTION

Puppetry, the art of animating objects to communicate stories and emotions, has played a central role in India's cultural and social evolution. Long before the rise of modern theatre, cinema, and print media, puppeteers travelled across regions performing myths, legends, epics, and moral tales in village squares, temple courtyards, and festive gatherings. As a result, puppetry became an informal yet powerful institution of social learning and cultural transmission.

Ancient Indian puppetry is not simply entertainment; it is a complex cultural technology combining craftsmanship, music, narrative arts, religious symbolism, and public communication. This paper explores the origins and development of Indian puppetry and critically analyses its social impact from historical, cultural, educational, and philosophical perspectives. Puppetry is one of the most important aspects of ancient Indian traditional culture.

2. Historical Origins of Puppetry in India

2.1 Early Literary and Archaeological Evidence

References to puppets appear in some of India's oldest literary sources. The *Natya Shastra* describes various modes of performance including puppets, while the *Mahabharata* uses metaphors comparing human destiny to "a wooden doll controlled by strings," suggesting familiarity with puppet theatre. Archaeological discoveries from the Indus Valley civilization reveal clay and terracotta figurines with movable limbs, indicating early forms of mechanical or ritual puppets.

These sources suggest that puppetry in India developed alongside ritual dance, storytelling, and sacred performances, gradually evolving into a distinct folk art.

2.2 Religious and Ritual Functions

Puppetry was closely connected to religious life. In many regions, puppet shows were performed during temple festivals and seasonal rituals.

Shadow puppetry in the South, such as *Tholu Bommalatta* and *Togalu Gombeyaata*, formed part of temple traditions where stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata were enacted throughout the night.

Puppeteers were seen as storytellers (*kathaka* or *bhagavathar*) carrying religious narratives to the masses.

Thus, puppetry served both spiritual and educational purposes.

3. Major Forms of Ancient Indian Puppetry

Indian puppetry developed in diverse forms shaped by local materials, regional aesthetics, and cultural narratives. The four major types are string, shadow, rod, and glove puppets.

3.1 String Puppets (Kathputli of Rajasthan)

Kathputli is one of India's most iconic puppet forms. Made of carved wood and controlled by strings, *Kathputlis* depict warriors, queens, fakirs, village women, and legendary heroes. The *Bhats*—traditional puppeteer

communities—performed these shows in royal courts and rural fairs. Their stories emphasized bravery, honour, loyalty, and justice, reinforcing social values.

3.2 Shadow Puppets (*Tholu Bommalata* and *Togalu Gombeyaata*)

Shadow puppetry, made from translucent leather and illuminated against a screen, is among India's oldest theatre.

Puppetry, the art of animating objects to communicate stories and emotions, has played a central role in India's cultural and social evolution. Long before the rise of modern theatre, cinema, and print media, puppeteers travelled across regions performing myths, legends, epics, and moral tales in village squares, temple courtyards, and festive gatherings. As a result, puppetry became an informal yet powerful institution of social learning and cultural transmission.

Ancient Indian puppetry is not simply entertainment; it is a complex cultural technology combining craftsmanship, music, narrative arts, religious symbolism, and public communication. This paper explores the origins and development of Indian puppetry and critically analyses its social impact from historical, cultural, educational, and philosophical perspective

Indian puppetry developed in diverse forms shaped by local materials, regional aesthetics, and cultural narratives. The four major types are string, shadow, rod, and glove puppets

Shadow puppetry, made from translucent leather and illuminated against a screen, is among India's oldest theatre forms. *Tholu Bommalata* of Andhra Pradesh and *Togalu Gombeyaata* of Karnataka feature beautifully coloured puppets with intricate patterns. These puppets often depict characters from epics and Puranas, while the performances include music, dance, humour, and philosophical discussions.

3.3 Rod Puppets (*Putul Nach* of Bengal)

Putul Nach puppets are large and controlled with one or more rods. These puppets resemble classical dancers or village figures and are used to perform tales of social life, family dynamics, and moral lessons.

3.4 Glove Puppets (*Pavakoothu* of Kerala)

Glove puppets are smaller and worn like gloves by the puppeteer. In Kerala, *Pavakoothu* evolved under the influence of Kathakali dance, using colourful costumes and expressive facial designs. Each form reflects the artistic innovation and cultural identity of its region.

4. Craftsmanship and Aesthetic Dimensions

4.1 Design and Construction

Puppet-making is a sophisticated craft involving wood carving, leather processing, natural dyeing, textile work, and miniature ornamentation. Shadow puppets, for example, are carved from goat or deer skin, perforated with designs, and coloured with vegetable dyes.

4.2 Music and Performance Techniques

Puppetry integrates music, rhythm, percussion, and folk singing. Instruments like the dholak, harmonium, cymbals, and regional strings accompany performances. Puppeteers often provide multiple voices, shifts in tone, and sound effects, displaying great vocal skill.

4.3 Narrative Structure

Stories follow a mix of recitation, dialogue, improvisation, and humour. Traditional shows include: An invocation segment, A main narrative (epic episode or folklore), Satirical interludes, Moral or social message at the end. These flexible structures allowed puppeteers to insert contemporary issues into traditional storylines, thereby making it more interesting in all aspects.

5. Social Impact of Ancient Indian Puppetry

Ancient puppetry had wide-ranging social functions and served as a major communication channel in pre-literate societies.

5.1 Moral and Ethical Education

Puppetry reinforced values drawn from epics, Puranas, and folklore. Audiences learned about:

Truthfulness and honesty, Respect for elders, Duty (*dharma*), Courage and humility, Justice and compassion

Social harmony

Puppets made complex moral concepts accessible to both children and adults.

5.2 Social Critique and Reform

Puppetry often carried subtle criticism of social evils. Through humour, irony, and satire, puppeteers commented on:

Caste prejudice

Exploitation of the poor

Gender biases

Alcoholism and gambling

Corruption in local leadership

Misuse of religious authority

Because puppets could "speak truth" without offending individuals, puppetry became a safe channel to question social injustice.

5.3 Cultural Preservation

Puppetry safeguarded oral traditions by transmitting:

Local myths and legends

Heroic tales

Folk songs and dialects

Ritual practices and community memory

Regional identities

As stories were performed continuously across generations, puppetry acted as a living archive of Indian cultural heritage.

5.4 Community Bonding and Collective Identity

Puppet shows drew entire villages together, strengthening community ties. Performances during festivals, marriages, and harvest celebrations encouraged shared cultural experiences and reinforced collective belonging.

5.5 Educational Communication

Before formal schools existed, puppet theatre served as an informal educational system. Children learned:

Language and oral expression

Logical thinking through stories

Ethical reasoning

History and mythology

Social conduct

Thus, puppetry contributed to foundational learning and cultural literacy.

5.6 Political and Administrative Awareness

Some puppet narratives explained duties of rulers, principles of justice, or consequences of tyranny. This allowed villagers to understand ideas of governance, leadership, and civic responsibility.

5.7 Economic and Occupational Impact

Puppetry supported multiple occupational groups:

Puppet makers

Leather artisans

Painters

Musicians

Costume makers

Storytellers

Entire communities survived on this artistic economy, making puppetry a contributor to local livelihoods.

6. Philosophical and Symbolic Perspectives

Puppetry embodies profound philosophical concepts in Indian thought.

The metaphor of humans as puppets controlled by destiny appears in literature, expressing reflections on fate and free will.

Puppet performances often explore themes of karma, moral consequence, and human duty.

The duality of the puppet (lifeless object) and puppeteer (source of life) mirrors classical Indian metaphors of the body and soul, or the individual and universal consciousness.

Thus, puppetry is both an artistic medium and a philosophical expression.

7. Decline of Traditional Puppetry in the Modern Era

Despite its historical importance, traditional puppetry faces decline due to:

Competition from cinema, TV, and mobile media

Loss of patronage from royal courts and rural elites

Migration of puppeteer families to other occupations

Lack of financial sustainability

Disinterest among younger generations

Erosion of intergenerational knowledge transfer

Without institutional support, many puppet forms have become endangered

8. Revival and Contemporary Relevance

Efforts are ongoing to revitalise puppetry:

Cultural academies and universities document puppet traditions.

NGOs use puppetry for awareness campaigns on health, sanitation, gender equality, and environmental protection.

Tourism and cultural festivals promote puppet performances.

Schools incorporate puppetry in art education and life-skills training

Today, puppetry remains relevant because it is cost-effective, emotionally engaging, and easily adaptable to modern social issues.

CONCLUSION

Ancient Indian puppetry stands as one of the most meaningful cultural traditions of the subcontinent. It combined artistic creativity, craftsmanship, music, and storytelling to shape social understanding, cultural identity, and public morality. The ancient Indian puppetry is a source of inspiration in all aspects for the modern generation to get connected with the ancient heritage rich Indian culture. Infact, the ancient Indian puppetry is also the best recreation combined with moral stories and historical data which can be explained to the common masses in their own local languages and style. A lot deal of work is expected to be done on all levels to create awareness of the importance of puppetry in field of arts, commerce and science for making the subjects more interesting.

Therefore the ancient Indian Puppetry is gaining more popularity in the modern times at international platform,

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CHIPKO MOVEMENT: FROM THE LENSES OF DEMOCRATIC COLLECTIVISM AND ECOFEMINISM

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study

The Chipko Movement is a strong example of collectivism, where community interests were placed above individual gain which in turn brought about policy change. To understand the narrative of chipko movement in the context of democratic spirit leading to transformation and policy change, is the prime purpose of this micro secondary case study. Democracy is a system of government in which political power originates from the people and is exercised through representative institutions, free and fair elections, the rule of law, and the protection of fundamental rights. The movement highlighted the importance of citizen participation in decision-making and the empowerment of marginalized groups. It demonstrated that ethical, peaceful activism is a legitimate democratic tool for holding authorities accountable and influencing governance.

By organizing non-violent protests to protect forests, rural women and local communities influenced government decisions, leading to significant policy changes in forest conservation. This study adopts a qualitative research approach using secondary data sources, including academic journals, books, government reports, and credible online publications. This research on the Chipko Movement not only chronicles grassroots environmental resistance but also draws striking parallels to the ongoing Aravalli chipko protests, underscoring the enduring power of community-led conservation in India's ecological battles

Keywords: Chipko movement, Democracy, Ecofeminism, Ecology, Cultural Legacy, Sustainability, Gandhian principles.

INTRODUCTION

छायामन्यस्य कुर्वन्ति तिष्ठन्ति स्वयमातपे।
फलान्यपि परार्थाय वृक्षाः सत्पुरुषा इव॥

(Trees provide shade to others while enduring sun, offering fruits selflessly—like noble souls.)(*हितोपदेश (नीति-ग्रंथ)*)

Chipko movement represents a pivotal episode of grassroots environmental activism in India. This movement has driven the worldwide attention over a serious environmental issue. The word “Chipko” means “to stick” or “to embrace”. It is a movement that adopted the Gandhian principles of **Satyagraha** and **Non-violent resistance**, through the act of hugging the trees to protect them from being felled. Sunadarlal Baghuguna who is fondly known as Environmentalist Gandhi had emerged as the leading personality in this movement.

- **Research Methodology and Literature Review**

Purpose of the study

- **The Chipko Movement is a strong example of collectivism, where community interests were placed above individual gain which in turn brought about policy change.**

To understand the narrative of chipko movement in the context of democratic spirit leading to transformation and policy change, is the prime purpose of this micro secondary case study. Democracy is a system of government in which political power originates from the people and is exercised through representative institutions, free and fair elections, the rule of law, and the protection of fundamental rights.

Chipko movement highlighted democracy's commitment to **equality, non-violence, people's participation** and accountability of authorities. Hence holds extremely strategic position in the history post-independence satyagrahi movements of India. The movement highlighted the importance of citizen participation in decision-making and the empowerment of marginalized groups. It demonstrated that ethical, peaceful activism is a legitimate democratic tool for holding authorities accountable and influencing governance.

By organizing non-violent protests to protect forests, rural women and local communities influenced government decisions, leading to significant policy changes in forest conservation. The whole episode demonstrates that democracy is not only exercised through formal political institutions but also through active citizen engagement, where collective action and ethical participation can shape policies and uphold democratic values at the societal level. A democratic spirit cannot flourish in a country unless citizens are sensitive, committed, organized and actively cultivate democratic values.

The movement, led largely by women who hugged trees to prevent deforestation, demonstrates how ordinary citizens can engage ethically and non-violently to influence policy, protect their environment, and uphold democratic values at the grassroots level.

This shows democracy not just as a system of government, but as a way of life based on cooperation and shared responsibility

The movement also highlights the interplay of ecological concerns, gender dynamics and political mobilization in order to promote social equality and participation which will increase the power of collective service. Through collective service it safeguarded the forest while supporting sustainable livelihoods.

● Problem Statement and Hypothesis

The present study is based on the hypothesis that genuine democratic, non-violent effort can get converted into policy variations. On the basis of secondary evidence the authors would like to check the hypothesis in the context of Chipko movement. Grassroots social movements can influence government policies, but it is not always clear how community action leads to real policy changes. The Chipko Movement of the 1970s is an important example, villagers in the Himalayan region, especially women, used peaceful methods like hugging trees to stop commercial logging and protect their forests. While the movement successfully saved local forests, it also drew national attention and influenced forest conservation policies and recognition of community rights. However, there is limited research on how the movement's non-violent actions and community mobilization led to these policy changes.

This study aims to explore the ways in which the Chipko Movement turned local environmental activism into real policy outcomes, showing how peaceful social action can bring about meaningful changes in environmental governance and support sustainable development.

○ Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach using secondary data sources, including academic journals, books, government reports, and credible online publications.

A descriptive and analytical framework is applied to examine how the Chipko Movement mobilized communities, created social awareness, and influenced environmental policy in India. The analysis focuses on understanding the processes, strategies, and outcomes of the movement.

○ Library Research

The main tool for the present data construction is library research:

1. **Scholarly Articles and Research Papers:** Provided insights into the movement's strategies, leadership, and outcomes.
2. **Books and Historical Accounts:** Offered detailed narratives of community mobilization and the role of women in the movement.
3. **Government Reports and Policy Documents:** Helped assess the policy implications of the movement, such as bans on commercial logging and participatory forest management initiatives.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected through a thorough review of the above sources, prioritizing **authenticity, credibility, and relevance**. The selected sources provide comprehensive coverage of the Chipko Movement from the 1970s to the 1990s, capturing both social activism and policy outcomes.

DATA ANALYSIS:

A descriptive-analytical approach was employed to interpret the data. Key themes analyzed included:

- Community mobilization and participation
- Gender involvement and leadership roles
- Non-violent protest strategies and advocacy

□ Policy impact and environmental governance outcomes

The analysis focused on understanding how grassroots activism led to tangible policy reforms, examining the links between public engagement, societal pressure, and governmental response. Patterns, strategies, and outcomes were critically evaluated to illustrate the movement's effectiveness in influencing environmental legislation.

○ LITERARY REVIEW

The present project heavily pays on the following books :

1. **Staying Alive**, Vandana Shiva, (1988)

The book describes the Chipko Movement as a women-led resistance that protected forests essential for local survival. She frames it as an ecofeminist challenge to exploitative development models, linking environmental conservation with social justice and policy change.

2. **The Unquiet Woods**, Ramchandra Guha (1989)

This book examines the Chipko Movement as a grassroots environmental struggle rooted in local livelihoods and community resistance to state-controlled forest exploitation. The book highlights how peasant activism and non-violent protest shaped environmental consciousness and influenced forest policy in India.

3. **Ecofeminism**, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva

A foundational text that links feminist and environmental struggles.

4. **Environmental Democracy in India**, Sharachchandra Lele

The book discusses decentralized and local governance in environmental decision making

5. **Forest Rights Act (2006)**

It recognizes the traditional rights of forest-dwelling communities over land and resources, correcting historical injustices. It empowers local communities to manage and protect forests while securing their livelihoods and cultural heritage.

6. **The Forest Conservation Act of 1980**

It aimed to restrict the indiscriminate diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes, promoting sustainable management and ecological preservation. It empowered the central government to regulate and approve forest land use, strengthening legal protection for India's forest.

7. **Democracy and Dissent**, Meenakshi Thakur

The Chipko movement in the Himalayas a critical analysis of the movement's democratic aspects.

8. **Hind Swaraj**, Mahatma Gandhi (1909)

This foundational work on non-violence, self-rule (swaraj), village autonomy and critique of industrialism, widely used to theoretically frame movements like Chipko that embraced non-violent resistance and local control. Hind Swaraj can be cited to explain the philosophical roots of Chipko's tactics and goals (e.g., non-violent protest and village/community stewardship of resources).

9. **Encyclopedia Britannica**

Chipko movement (entry in Britannica) describes the origin, tactics (tree hugging), leaders, Gandhian non-violence, and outcomes of the movement.

10. **EBSCO Research Starters article "Chipko Movement Protects India's Forests"** (2018)

This article outlines the origins, strategies, and significance of the Chipko Movement as a non-violent grassroots protest against deforestation. It emphasizes the movement's role in raising environmental awareness and influencing forest conservation policies in India.

11. **Ecology and Equity** (1995), Gadgil and Guha

The book analyze how unequal access to natural resources leads to environmental degradation and social conflict in India. The book argues for equitable and community-based resource management as a foundation for sustainable environmental policy

● Descriptive Narrative of the movement

○ Historical Perspective

Before the advent of British colonial rule, forest management in the Himalayan region of present-day Uttarakhand was deeply embedded in community life and customary law.

Gandhi said that, Nature has enough for everybody's need but not for greed. The customary law was based on this guiding principle. Forests were regarded as common property resources essential for subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry, and daily household needs. Village communities collectively regulated access to forest resources through traditional institutions and village councils, which ensured sustainable use.

Sacred groves (*dev van or devrai*) were protected as spiritual spaces, and cutting trees in these areas was socially and morally prohibited. Importantly, this period was marked by local autonomy over natural resources, with minimal interference from centralized authorities. Tradition Indian village life was intertwined with ancient philosophy. Pantheism has been prevalent & very strong theme of Indian culture. The doctrine of Pantheism connotes that the divine spirit pervades this entire Universe.

It is the same spirit, consciousness which is the seen in all beings adhering to this philosophy village life, agriculture, & work dynamics seems to be designed. Trees were always regarded as Holy in Indian tradition especially for women. Trees and cattle were like their soulmates and guiding forces etc. Even today many Customs like worshipping Tulsi plant persists in the most parts India. The advent of British colonial rule in the nineteenth century brought major changes. Forests were increasingly treated as state property to meet imperial economic needs, such as timber for railways, shipbuilding, and construction.

The Indian Forest Acts of 1865, 1878, and 1927 legally institutionalized this control, criminalizing traditional practices such as grazing, shifting cultivation, and fuel collection. As Encyclopedia Britannica explains, these acts restricted local people's access to forests, criminalized traditional rights such as grazing, shifting cultivation, and fuel wood collection, and gave the state full control over forest resources (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Guha also emphasizes that colonial forest policy undermined centuries-old traditional community management of forests, leading to widespread ecological and social disruption (Ramchandra Guha's book **The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya (1989)**). The Chipko activists adopted non-violent methods of resistance that were grounded in Gandhi's concept of satyagraha, using peaceful protest and community solidarity to oppose commercial logging and defend their forests (Environmental Studies Institute, "The Chipko Movement: India's Iconic Tree-Hugging Protest"). The movement reflected growing awareness of the link between Champaran Satyagraha, led by Mahatma Gandhi, marked one of the earliest instances of organized, non-violent mass resistance in colonial India..

Like Champaran, Chipko relied on collective participation rather than individual leadership, reinforcing the principle that political change arises from grassroots unity. The symbolic act of hugging trees echoed Gandhian non-cooperation, transforming the human body into a tool of moral protest. Chipko Movement drew upon this Gandhian legacy of Satyagraha adapting it to environmental and ecological concerns. Both movements highlight the role of collectivism as a strategy of survival and resistance

In Champaran, peasants acted together to challenge exploitative agricultural practices, while in Chipko, villagers particularly women mobilized to protect forests essential for subsistence. The democratic spirit of both movements lay in their challenge to centralized authority and insistence on participatory decision-making. In this sense, the Chipko Movement can be seen as an extension of the Gandhian tradition inaugurated at Champaran, where non-violent resistance became a means of democratizing power relations.

While Champaran addressed agrarian exploitation and Chipko addressed environmental injustice, both articulated a vision of development rooted in human welfare, ecological balance, and collective dignity. Together, they demonstrate how Gandhian methods evolved over time to address changing forms of oppression while retaining their core democratic ethos. Guha observes, the Chipko movement marked the culmination of a century of protest against the state's expropriation of resources traditionally controlled by the village community. Through collective action, marginalized groups could assert their rights and protect resources essential for survival, transforming local grievances into broader struggles for ecological justice and participatory governance.

According to The Unquiet Woods, "Chipko was, first and foremost, a peasant movement in defence of community rights" (Guha, as cited in The Unquiet Woods). The Chipko ethos of moral responsibility, decentralized action, and grassroots participation parallels the earlier Bhodan Movement (1951) led by Vinoba

Bhave, which encouraged landowners to voluntarily give land to landless people, thereby building a more equitable rural society (Bhoodan movement, Wikipedia).

Both movements emphasized non-coercive reform and the ethical duty of individuals towards community welfare. These Gandhian foundations were further reinforced in the 1970s by Jayaprakash Narayan's Total Revolution (Sampoorna Kranti), which called for a holistic transformation of political, social, economic, and moral life through mass participation and ethical activism. JP articulated Total Revolution as a comprehensive struggle to change society and the individual through peaceful means, expanding Gandhian non-violence into broader socio-political reform (Transforming the Polity- Centenary Readings from Jayaprakash Narayan)

Thus, the Chipko Movement can be seen as part of a larger historical continuum of Gandhian-inspired activism in post independent India, linking environmental protection with social equity, decentralized action, and moral leadership, (drawn from the principles of Sarvodaya, Bhoodan, and Total Revolution) According to the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, the Chipko Movement "grew out of Gandhian nonviolent social action or satyagraha" and was advanced by activists who formed the Uttarakhand region Sarvodaya movement, applying Gandhian principles of self-reliance and collective welfare to environmental protection. (Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology)

○ **Sarvodaya perspective**

Sarvodaya is a Sanskrit term meaning Universal wellbeing or welfare for all. It is a philosophy and movement rooted in Gandhian thought, focusing on social and economic equality, nonviolence decentralized governance. The Sarvodaya tradition, carried forward by leaders like Vinoba Bhave who worked for equitable social reform, emphasized that true progress must benefit all members of society, not just the privileged, fostering an ethical foundation that helped villagers defend their forests as a shared social goods

○ **Ecological perspective**

After 1947, the Indian state continued the colonial forest regime promoting large scale commercial loggings to fund development plans. The Chipko Movement emerged as a direct response to the disturbance of ecological balance in the Himalayan region. In 1960, the government introduced the industrial forest policy which intensified timber harvesting in Himalayan region leading to severe soil erosion reduced water retention and heightened vulnerability to landslides.

The slogan "Jal, Jungle, Zameen" (Water, Forest, Land) became the rallying cry of the movement, encapsulating the interconnectedness of natural resources essential for survival in Himalayan villages. The "Jal, Jungle, Zameen" framework highlighted the integrated nature of natural resources and influenced future forest conservation policies in India, marking the movement as a pioneering example of community-led, environmentally sustainable activism in the post-independence era (Guha, 1989; Gadgil & Guha, 1995; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025). With the conclusion of the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1963, the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh experienced growth in development, especially in the rural Himalayan regions.

In 1964 environmentalist and Gandhian social activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt founded a cooperative organization, Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh to foster small industries for rural villagers, using local resources. The villagers, having been denied access to a small number of trees with which to build agricultural tools, were outraged when the government allotted a much larger plot to a sporting goods manufacturer. When their appeals were denied, Chandi Prasad Bhatt led villagers into the forest and embraced the trees to prevent logging.

Many of the commercial logging endeavors were mismanaged, and the clear-cut forests led to lower agricultural yields, erosion depleted water resources, and increased flooding throughout much of the surrounding areas.

Villagers acted as internal whistleblowers by documenting and protesting deforestation's impacts on livelihoods, mirroring modern whistleblowers who highlight ecological crimes despite risks. Gaura Devi's 1974 Reni village standoff amplified these revelations, halting 2,000 trees' felling and inspiring global activism. The Chipko movement thus began to emerge as a peasant and women's movement for forest rights, though the various protests

○ **Descriptive Narrative**

The Chipko Movement exemplified collectivism through rural Himalayan communities uniting to protect their forests from commercial logging. In the 1970s, villagers, especially women, embraced trees in nonviolent protests, prioritizing shared survival over individual gain. This grassroots effort highlighted how collective action addressed deforestation's threats to firewood, water, and livelihoods.

Democratic and Gandhian Perspective

The movement began in 1973 in Uttarakhand when locals, organized by groups like Dashikis Gram Swarajya Sangh, rejected outsider contractors who exploited forests for profit. Villagers collectively demanded sustainable resource use, low-cost materials for local industries, and minimum wages for forest workers, turning personal hardships into communal resistance.

Women played a pivotal role, linking ecological defense to social issues like alcoholism, broadening the collective agenda. The movement's core tactic—physically embracing trees—served both **symbolic and practical purposes**. Symbolically, it framed the forest as a living entity deserving of moral respect; practically, it created a non-violent barrier that was difficult for authorities to breach without violent confrontation.

The Chipko Movement can be understood within Indian democratic theory and **Gandhian philosophy**, which view democracy as ethical self-rule (*Swaraj*), grassroots participation, and moral responsibility rather than merely electoral governance. Rooted in the Gandhian ideals of **Gram Swaraj** and **Ahimsa**, the movement demonstrated decentralized democracy through village-level collective action and non-violent resistance against state-led commercial exploitation of forests. By asserting community control over natural resources, Chipko reflected the Gandhian principle of **trusteeship**, emphasizing environmental stewardship and social justice over profit.

The strategy of “**Satyagraha**” borrowed from Gandhi's anti-colonial movement lent legitimacy and attracted national media attention. **Satyagraha-inspired methods** helped the Chipko Movement gain national media attention. The peaceful yet symbolic nature of the protests generated public sympathy and transformed a localized environmental struggle into a national discourse on sustainable development. By relying on non-violent resistance and moral persuasion, the movement echoed Gandhian principles and enhanced its legitimacy within the public sphere. Thus, the Chipko Movement illustrates the enduring relevance of **Satyagraha as both a legitimizing and communicative strategy** in post-colonial India (Guha, 1989; Gadgil & Guha, 1995).

The central role of women further expanded democratic practice by incorporating inclusivity, care ethics, and lived experience into political participation. Thus, the Chipko Movement represents democracy in India as a participatory, moral, and ecological practices.

○ Contemporary. Movements

The Chipko Movement of the 1970s did not emerge in isolation but was part of a broader wave of grassroots resistance to state-led development policies in post-colonial India. It shared ideological, strategic, and organizational similarities with several contemporary social movements, particularly those concerned with environmental protection, livelihood security, and social justice. Chipko inspired a wave of forest protection movements across India, including the **Appiko Movement** in Karnataka and the **Save the River movements** in the Narmada basin and many more.

Internationally, the movement informed the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development** (1992) and contributed to the discourse on “**environmental justice**” The Chipko Movement illustrates how localized ecological grievances can evolve into a broader environmental consciousness when coupled with strategic framing and political opportunity. One significant contemporary movement was the **Appiko Movement** in Karnataka, which directly drew inspiration from Chipko. Adopting similar non-violent methods, villagers embraced trees to protest commercial logging, highlighting the diffusion of Chipko's Gandhian strategy across regions (Guha, 1989).

Both movements relied on moral persuasion, local participation, and symbolic protest to legitimize their demands and attract public attention. The Chipko Movement also shared common ground with struggles such as the **Silent Valley Movement** in Kerala, which opposed the construction of a hydroelectric project on ecological grounds; although their tactics differed, both movements framed environmental protection as essential to long-term development and mobilized scientific knowledge alongside popular protest (Gadgil & Guha, 1995).

Additionally, movements like the **Bhoomi Bachao Andolan** and early peasant struggles against displacement echoed Chipko's emphasis on livelihood, sustainability, and ethical resistance (Baviskar, 1995). In the 21st century, this legacy has continued to shape environmental activism in India. For example, the **Save Aarey Forest campaign** in Mumbai used Chipko-style tree-hugging protests and mass mobilization to oppose deforestation for infrastructure development—a direct invocation of non-violent grassroots resistance to protect ecological resources (Next IAS; Save Aarey Forest *movement*).

Similarly, citizen protests against mining and ecological degradation in regions such as the **Aravalli Hills** and rallies against expanded mining operations in Kodingamali hills reflect ongoing local resistance to state and

corporate environmental impacts, driven by concerns over biodiversity loss, water depletion, and climate resilience (Times of India reports on Aravalli and Kodingamali protests). Movements like these demonstrate that Chipko's emphasis on community-led, morally grounded activism continues to inspire contemporary struggles focused on environmental justice, sustainable development, and democratic participation.

Together, these movements represent a shift in Indian protest politics—from class-based or purely economic demands to concerns centered on ecology, equity, and democratic engagement. The Chipko Movement played a pioneering role within this broader constellation by demonstrating that non-violent, community-led action could influence public policy and national discourse. In this sense, Chipko both shaped and was shaped by its contemporaries, contributing to the emergence of environmentalism as a significant strand of social activism in India (Guha, 1989; Gadgil & Guha, 1995; Baviskar, 1995).

● Theoretical Perspective

The Chipko Movement transformed from local protests into national policy through direct government responses to its nonviolent activism in the 1970s. In 1974, women in Reni village, led by Gaura Devi, hugged trees to stop loggers, drawing widespread attention and leading Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to impose a 1980 ban on tree felling in the Himalayas above 1,000 meters. This pressure resulted in the **Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980**, which required central approval for using forest land for non-forest purposes, ending unchecked commercial logging.

This is a shift from community action to state control, with updates to the 1927 Indian Forest Act introducing joint forest management by 1990, where villages shared responsibility for forests. Overall, Chipko proves grassroots efforts can create lasting laws, but ongoing enforcement is key for real change. The success of the movement was contingent upon its ability to translate moral claims into tangible policy outcomes, a process facilitated by the Indian democratic framework that allowed for public protest and media scrutiny.

○ Cultural Legacy

The slogan "**Ecology is the permanent economy**," coined by **Sunderlal Bahuguna**, crystallized Chipko's philosophy **linking sustainability to livelihoods**, now etched in activist lore. Poet Ganshyam Raturi's verses, recited during vigils, portrayed forests as maternal guardians, embedding the movement in Himalayan oral traditions. **Sunderlal Bahuguna** and **Chandi Prasad Bhatt** became Chipko's premier cultural icons for their Gandhian activism and awards like Padma Vibhushan and Ramon Magsaysay. Gaura Devi symbolizes grassroots women's heroism in the iconic 1974 Reni tree-hug.

This iconography permeates cultural artifacts, from Raturi's protest poetry invoking trees as "sisters" to **Rakhi** rituals tying sacred threads around trunks, which research frames as syncretic Hindu eco-spirituality challenging anthropocentric modernity. The Chipko Movement was deeply rooted in the **cultural and spiritual legacy** of the Himalayan communities. Local folklore, rituals, and moral values shaped the way villagers related to forests, viewing trees as sacred and essential to life. This cultural legacy reflects a **syncretic eco-spiritual worldview**, combining Hindu religious beliefs, ecological knowledge, and social ethics. It emphasized respect for nature, stewardship of resources, and community responsibility, creating a moral and cultural framework that supported environmental activism.

By linking conservation to everyday life, survival, and spiritual values, this cultural heritage helped **mobilize communities**, especially women, and provided a strong foundation for grassroots resistance against commercial logging (Guha, 1989; Gadgil & Guha, 1995). In summary, the **cultural legacy of the region** played a central role in shaping the Chipko Movement, turning environmental protection into a practice deeply embedded in tradition, spirituality, and local identity (Shiva, 1988; Yale Forum on Religion & Ecology).

○ Ecofeminist Perspective

"Ecofeminism is about recognizing that women and nature are partners in the struggle for a just and sustainable world"- (quoted by Vandana Shiva). The women are seen to be ecological **guardians**. Chipko women as "**tree professors**" embodying indigenous knowledge, confronting male contractors and alcoholism to reclaim biodiversity from colonial forestry's reductionism, birthing "**survival feminism**" beyond gender binaries. From an ecofeminist perspective, the Chipko Movement challenged dominant development paradigms that prioritized commercial interests over ecological balance and community needs.

By using non-violent methods such as tree-hugging, women asserted moral authority and emphasized care, sustainability, and collective responsibility. The movement demonstrated how women's ecological knowledge and lived experiences can contribute to environmental conservation and influence policy change. Thus, ecofeminism helps explain the Chipko Movement as not only an environmental protest but also a struggle for

social justice, gender equity, and sustainable governance. Ecofeminism provides a critical lens to understand the Chipko Movement as more than an environmental protest. It highlights the movement as a gender-aware struggle against exploitative development, demonstrating how women's ecological knowledge and collective action can lead to sustainable practices and meaningful policy change.

In addition to its social and political impacts, the Chipko Movement inspired educational initiatives aimed at promoting ecological awareness. The establishment of “**forest schools**” in the Garhwal region reflected the movement's emphasis on environmental education and sustainable livelihoods. These schools combined formal learning with indigenous ecological knowledge, teaching children about conservation, local ecosystems, and responsible resource use (Shiva, 1988). Such initiatives facilitated the intergenerational transmission of environmental values and reinforced the movement's broader objective of sustainable, community-centered development.

Concluding Remarks

The Chipko Movement, emerging from the Garhwal Himalayas in the early 1970s, transcended its origins as a localized environmental protest to become a powerful social force with enduring impacts on governance, policy, and grassroots empowerment. At its core, Chipko demonstrated that sustained collective action by rural communities especially women could not only resist resource exploitation but also influence the policymaking apparatus of the state. The movement's immediate success in prompting the Government of India to impose a **15-year ban on commercial logging in the Uttarakhand Himalayas in 1980** reflects a clear instance of societal pressure translating into formal government policy (*Forest Conservation Act, 1980*.

Ministry of Environment and Forests). This policy, later reinforced through the **Forest Conservation Act of 1980**, marked a shift in forest governance from exclusive state control toward ecological preservation and community involvement (*Forest Conservation Act, 1980*. Ministry of Environment and Forests). Beyond these legislative actions, Chipko helped reframe national environmental governance by contributing to the emergence of **participatory forest management models** and influencing broader forest policy reforms.

The movement's emphasis on local stewardship and rights over forest resources foreshadowed elements that would later be codified in policies such as the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006**, a landmark law recognizing community rights over forest lands and resources (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. (2006). Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006). Today's struggles in the Aravalli hills echo Chipko's legacy, where local communities confront mining and development threats to vital green lungs. Residents rally to protect biodiversity and water security, much like Uttarakhand villagers hugged trees decades ago. As Chipko's triumphs remind us, reviving such community-led defiance in Aravalli can secure ecological justice, ensuring forests endure for future generations amid modern pressures.

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INTEGRATING COMMUNITY OUTREACH WITH HIGHER EDUCATION: A STUDY OF CEP UNDER NEP IN THANE

Kalpana Nayar¹ and Ipsita Datta²¹Assistant Professor, HoD Economics²Assistant Professor, VPM's Joshi Bedekar College, Autonomous, Thane**ABSTRACT**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic education, experiential learning, and social responsibility among students. One of its key academic innovations is the introduction of the Community Engagement Programme (CEP) as a credit-based course for undergraduate students. This research paper examines whether the CEP course implemented in degree colleges has enhanced students' outreach and engagement with the community in the Thane district of Maharashtra. Using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to undergraduate students, the study evaluates the nature, extent, and impact of student participation in community-based activities. The findings aim to assess the effectiveness of CEP in bridging the gap between academic learning and societal needs.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Community Engagement Programme, Student Outreach, Experiential Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century is expected to go beyond classroom teaching and contribute meaningfully to society. Recognizing this need, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced community engagement as an integral part of higher education. The Community Engagement Programme (CEP) course is designed to instill social awareness, civic responsibility, and practical understanding of societal issues among students.

In degree colleges, CEP encourages students to work directly with local communities through activities such as cleanliness drives, awareness campaigns, surveys, teaching underprivileged children, environmental initiatives, and collaboration with NGOs. Thane district, with its mix of urban, semi-urban, rural, and tribal areas, provides an ideal setting to study the outreach impact of CEP.

OBJECTIVES-

The present study aims to examine the role and effectiveness of the Community Engagement

Programme (CEP) under NEP 2020 in enhancing student outreach to the community. The specific objectives are:

1. To study the level of student participation in Community Engagement Programme activities in degree colleges of Thane district.
2. To identify the types of community engagement activities undertaken by students under the CEP course.
3. To assess the extent of student outreach to urban, rural, and tribal communities through CEP initiatives.
4. To examine the impact of CEP participation on students' social awareness, civic responsibility, and empathy towards community issues.
5. To evaluate the contribution of CEP to experiential and practical learning beyond classroom education.
6. To analyze students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of CEP in addressing local community needs.
7. To identify challenges and limitations faced by students while participating in CEP activities.
8. To suggest measures for strengthening CEP implementation in degree colleges under NEP 2020.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted by using a google form. The total respondents were 52. Data was collected from BA, BCOM students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Community engagement programs have increased as a valuable component of higher education, serving both educational and social purposes. Community engagement refers to the collaborative efforts between academic institutions and local communities to address societal issues, promote mutual learning, and foster civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1999). According to Astin et al. (2000), student participation in community programs enhances academic outcomes, personal growth, and a sense of civic duty.

Several studies emphasize the benefits of such programs on student development. For instance, Yorio and Ye (2012) found that structured community engagement activities significantly improve students' critical thinking, leadership skills, and self-efficacy. Similarly, Billig (2000) reported that students involved in community service demonstrate higher levels of social responsibility and reflective thinking compared to peers who do not participate.

Stanton (2008) noted that community engagement initiatives driven by college students often contribute to increased awareness of local issues, improved community-institution relationships, and greater community participation in development programs. These findings align with results from Chopra and colleagues (2015), who observed that community projects in rural areas led by college students increased public understanding of health, education, and environmental concerns.

Some scholars have also pointed out that some challenges also come with it. Furco (2002) argues that without proper planning, reflection, and faculty support, the intended benefits of community engagement may not be fully realized. Additionally, Butin (2010) raises concerns about the sustainability and ethical considerations of student-led initiatives, particularly when activities are short-term and lack community ownership.

Community engagement programs in higher education have gained importance as means to bridge academic learning with civic responsibility. Research generally shows positive effects on student outcomes across academic, interpersonal, and civic domains (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Kolb's *Experiential Learning Theory* (1984) is foundational; it positions community engagement as a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This framework explains how students integrate community work with academic knowledge.

Theories of civic engagement (Putnam, 2000) and social capital highlight how participation builds networks, trust, and community values among students. These theoretical lenses inform research on student identity transformation through engagement.

Numerous studies report that engagement programs improve academic achievement, critical thinking, and subject-specific skills.

For Example:

- Astin et al. (2000) found higher GPA and retention among service-learning participants.
- Seymour (2002) reported improved problem-solving and communication competencies. Reflection is critical to learning transfer. Research shows that structured reflection activities (journals, discussions) deepen connections between community experiences and academic content (Eyler et al., 2001).

Evidence suggests community engagement increases self-confidence and self-efficacy. Students often report greater belief in their capacity to effect change and navigate complex social settings (Colby et al., 2003).

Programs expose students to diverse populations, enhancing empathy, cultural competence, and ethical sensitivity. Students develop a deeper appreciation for social issues beyond textbook knowledge (Bringle & Clayton, 2012).

Engagement correlates with sustained civic behaviors such as voting, community volunteering, and advocacy post-graduation (Finlay & Faul, 2012).

Students report stronger community ties and a sense of belonging, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting social inclusion (Barker, 2004).

Research emphasizes that outcomes depend heavily on program structure:

Clear goals, faculty involvement, quality community partnerships, reflection opportunities, poorly designed programs may show minimal impact (Jacoby, 2015).

Faculty motivation and training influence program quality and student experiences. Support systems like workload recognition and resource allocation matter (Butin, 2010).

Most seminal research has emerged from Western contexts. However, studies in India, Asia, and Africa point to contextual differences—community expectations, institutional priorities, and cultural norms shape how students engage and benefit from programs. For example:

- In India, NSS and NCC programs influence social values and civic awareness but vary in academic integration (Singh & Kumar, 2018).

- In Africa, community engagement often centers on public health and education outcomes in collaboration with local stakeholders (Mukamurera & Kromberg, 2011).

Literature employs both **quantitative (surveys, pre-post tests)** and **qualitative (interviews, focus groups)** methods. Mixed-methods designs are increasingly common due to the complex, multi-dimensional nature of outcomes (Dunne, 2011).

Despite rich research, the following gaps persist:

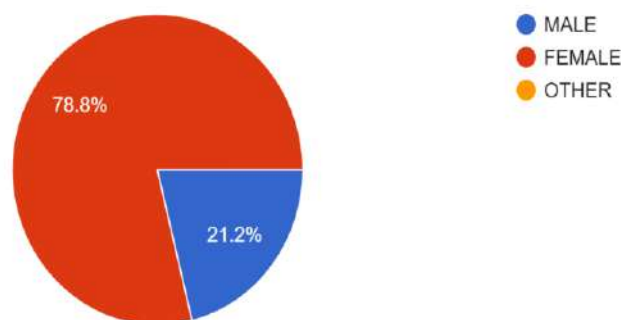
- **Longitudinal studies** on sustained effects are limited.
- **Standardized outcome measures** across studies are lacking.
- **Students' socio-economic background influences** on engagement outcomes are under-explored.
- Few studies examine **online or hybrid community engagement** models post-COVID-19.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the research paper are as follows:

1. Gender of the Participants

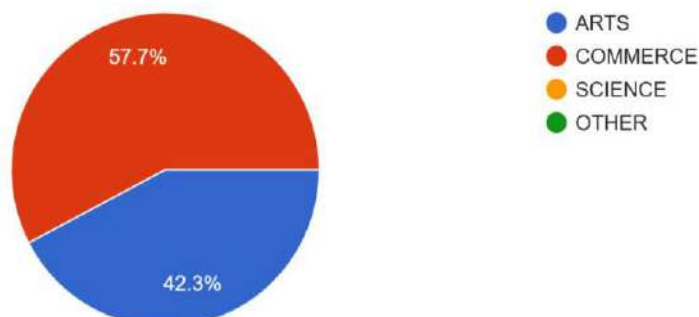
GENDER
52 responses



In the above pie chart it can be seen that out of the 52 participants, 41(78.8%) are male and 11(21.2%) are female.

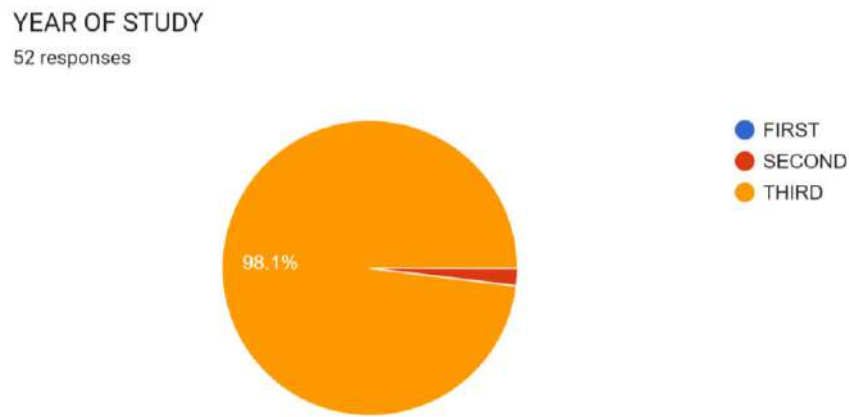
2. Course of Study of the Participants

COURSE OF STUDY
52 responses



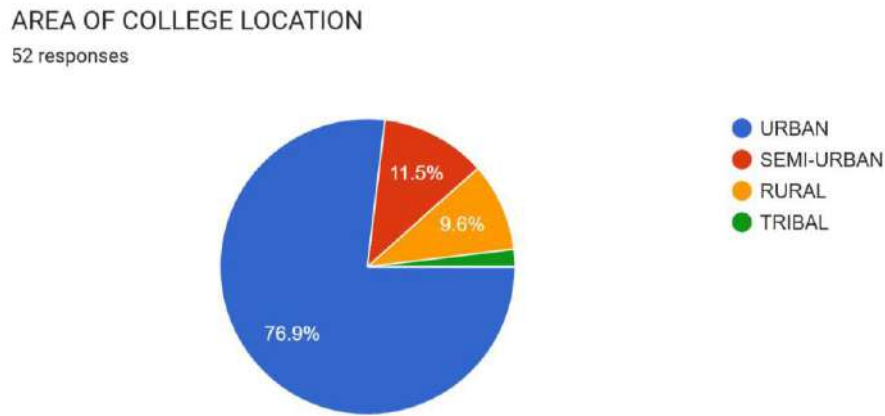
In the above pie chart, among the 52 respondents, 30 (57.7%) students are from Commerce and 22 (42.3%) are from Arts Course of study.

3. Year of Study of the Participants



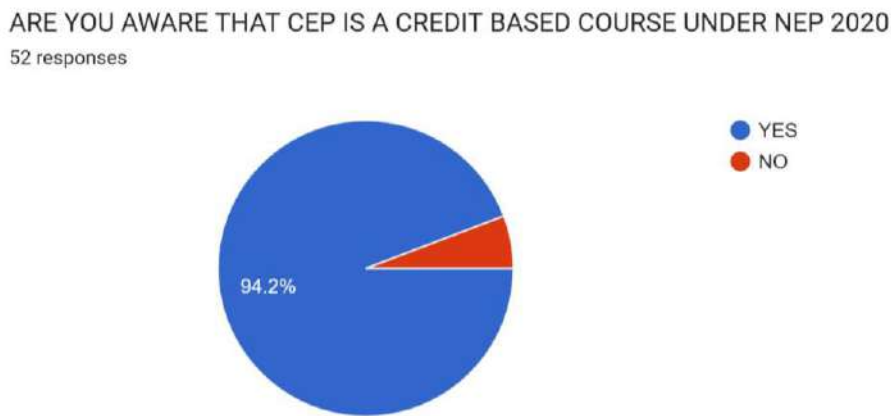
In the above pie chart, it can be seen that among the 52 participants 1 was from Second Year and 51(98.9%) were from third year.

4. Location area of Participants



From the above pie chart it can be observed that out of 52 respondents, 40 (76.9%) are from Urban area, 6 (11.5%) are from Semi-Urban area, 5 (9.6%) are from Rural area and 1 from tribal area.

5. Awareness of CEP as a Credit Course among the participants

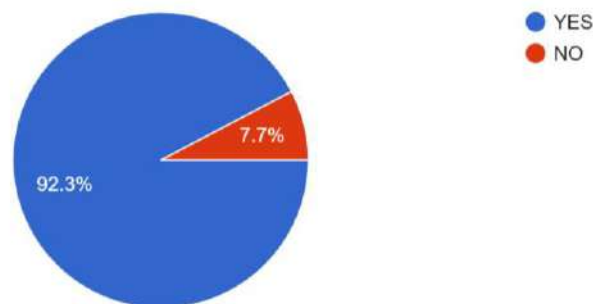


In the above pie chart, it can be seen that 49 students were aware that CEP is a Credit based course and 3 were not aware that CEP is a Credit based course, out of the 52 respondents

6. Participation rate in CEP among the respondents

HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN CEP ACTIVITIES OF YOUR COLLEGE CURRICULUM?

52 responses

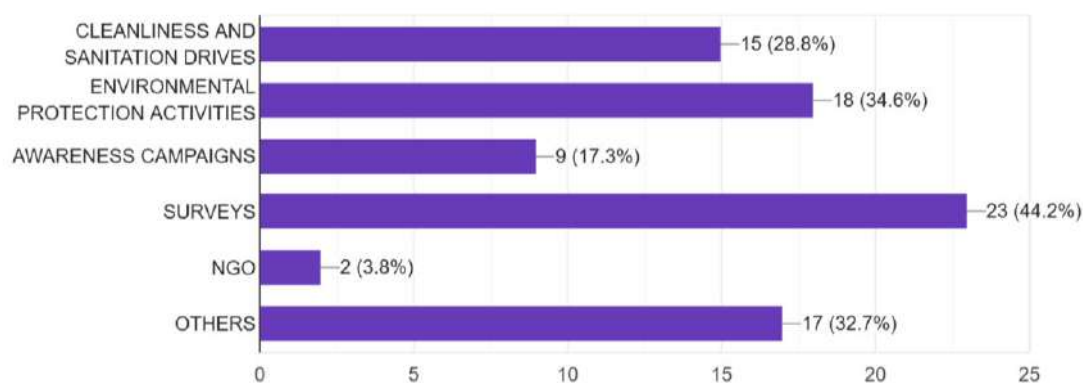


In the above pie chart it can be seen out of the 52 respondents 48 (92.3%) has participated in CEP program and 4 (7.7%) have not

7. Types of CEP Activities done by the respondents

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CEP ACTIVITIES DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN ?

52 responses

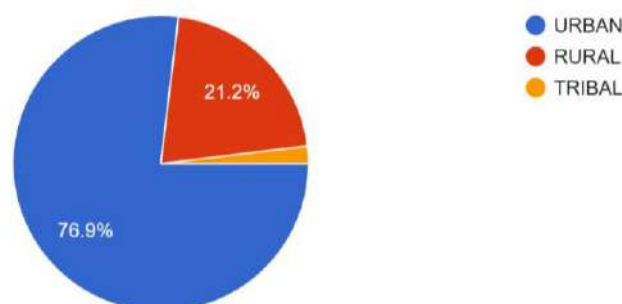


In the above chart, it can be seen that 15 (28.8%) respondents participated in Cleanliness and Sanitation Drive, 18 (34.6%) of the respondents participated in protection activities, 9 (17.3%) respondents participated in awareness campaigns, 23 (44.2%) of the respondents participated in surveys, 2 (3.6%) participated in NGO and 17 (32.7%) participated in other type of CEP program.

8. Community Engagement Area

AREA OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

52 responses

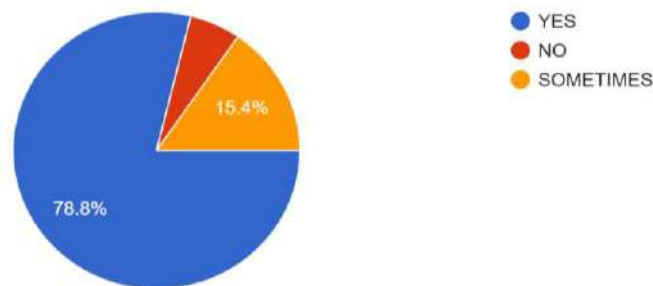


In the above pie chart, it can be seen that 40 students have done CEP in urban area, 11 in rural area and 1 in tribal area out of the 52 respondents.

9. Level of Cooperativeness of Community members

COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE COOPERATIVE DURING CEP ACTIVITIES

52 responses

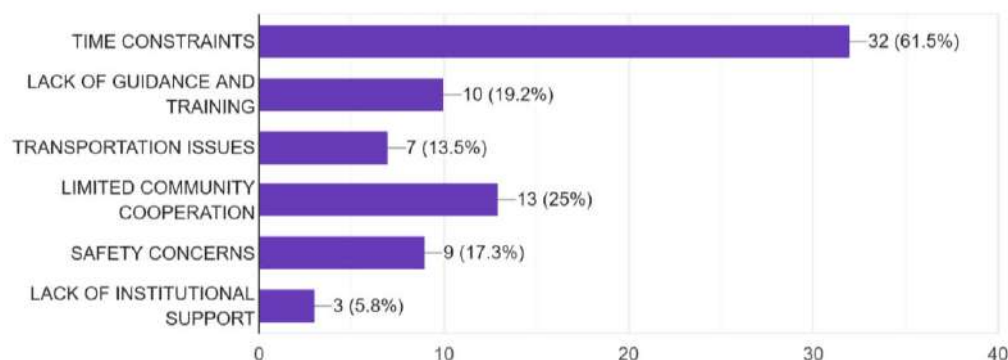


From the above pie chart it can be observed that 41 students agree that Community members were cooperative, according to 3 they were not cooperative and according to 8 they were sometimes cooperative.

10. Challenges Faced by CEP Participants

WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE DURING CEP PARTICIPATION

52 responses

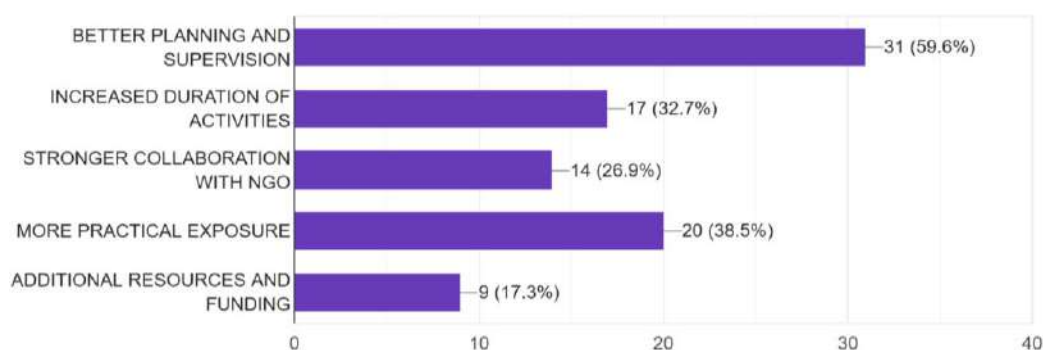


In the above graph, it can be observed that 32 (61.5%) had faced time constrain while participating in CEP, 10 (19.2%) faced an issue of lack of guidance, 7 (13.5%) faced issue of transportation, 13 (25%) faced limited community cooperation, 9 (17.3%) faced safety concerns, 3 (5.8%) faced lack of institutional support.

11. Ideas for making CEP more effective

IN YOUR OPINION HOW CAN CEP MADE MORE EFFECTIVE ?

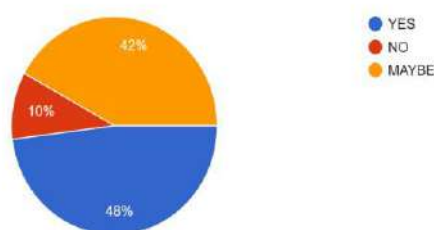
52 responses



In the above graph, 31 (59.6%) respondents were of the opinion that by better planning and supervision CEP can be more effective, 17 (32.7%) supported the idea of increased duration of activities can make CEP better, 14 (26.9%) were on the side of stronger collaboration with NGOs can make CEP more effective, according to 20 (38.5%) respondents with the help of more practical exposure CEP can be made more effective and according to 9 (17.3%), additional resources and funding can make CEP better.

12. Future CEP Volunteering ideas among the participants

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VOLUNTARILY IN THE FUTURE?
50 responses



In the above pie chart, it can be seen that 25 (48%) respondents agreed to continue the CEP program, 21 (42%) responded maybe and 5 (10%) responded no out of the total 52 respondents.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Enhancing Institutional–Community Collaboration-Colleges should develop sustained and structured collaborations with local communities, non-governmental organizations, self-help groups, civic authorities, and social agencies to ensure effective community engagement through the CEP.
2. Orientation and Capacity Building-Before undertaking fieldwork, students should receive proper guidance and training on community interaction, ethical practices, communication abilities, and basic research techniques to promote responsible and sensitive engagement.
3. Academic Integration of CEP-Community Engagement Programme activities should be closely aligned with disciplines such as Economics, Commerce, Sociology, and Environmental Studies, helping students to apply classroom concepts to practical, real-world situations.
4. Adequate Time Allocation and Credit Support-The academic schedule should provide sufficient time for CEP activities, and appropriate credit weightage should be assigned to encourage sincere and active student participation.
5. Focus on Local Needs and Issues-Community projects should be formulated based on an assessment of local socio-economic challenges, including poverty reduction, health awareness, financial inclusion, environmental conservation, and social equity.
6. Effective Monitoring and Evaluation-Continuous supervision, faculty mentorship, and a transparent assessment system through written reports, presentations, and viva-voce examinations should be implemented to ensure quality outcomes and accountability.
7. Promotion of Reflection and Documentation-Students should be motivated to maintain field journals, reflective records, and comprehensive project reports to strengthen learning outcomes and develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

According to the survey majority respondents were of the opinion that by better planning and supervision CEP can be more effective. Many were also of the opinion that increased duration of activities and stronger collaboration with NGOs can make CEP effective. According to some respondents, additional resources and funding can make CEP better.

The Community Engagement Programme (CEP) introduced under the National Education Policy is a significant initiative aimed at promoting experiential and comprehensive learning. By incorporating community outreach into the curriculum, CEP effectively connects academic instruction with real-life social contexts. It helps students cultivate values such as social responsibility, empathy, leadership, and problem-solving abilities while making meaningful contributions to community development. Moreover, the programme reinforces the role of higher education institutions as catalysts for social change. With systematic planning, institutional backing, and efficient execution, CEP has the potential to become a significant instrument for inclusive and sustainable development in alignment with the objectives of NEP 2020.

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EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS OF DISASTER-SPECIFIC RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

Annie Nirmal Rupla¹ and Dr. Anjali Vachhani²¹Assitant Professor²Professor, Research Centre, H.R. College of Commerce & Economics, Churchgate, Mumbai-400020.**ABSTRACT:**

Community resilience is pivotal in mitigating the impacts of disasters and fostering recovery. This study examines resilience strategies across different disaster types natural (floods, earthquakes), technological (industrial accidents), biological (pandemics), and man-made (conflicts) to identify key factors influencing community adaptive capacity. Through a mixed-methods approach combining literature review, case studies, and stakeholder interviews, the research maps resilience dimensions (physical, environmental, social, technical, health, security, psychological) against specific disaster contexts. Findings reveal that while social and environmental resilience are critical across all disaster types, technical and health resilience play pivotal roles in technological and biological disasters respectively. Man-made disasters highlight the importance of security and psychological resilience. The study underscores the need for context-specific resilience frameworks and community-centric preparedness measures. Results aim to inform policymakers, urban planners, and disaster management agencies on enhancing multi-dimensional resilience, ultimately reducing vulnerabilities and improving sustainability in disaster-prone regions.

Keywords: Resilience, Disaster Management, Community Adaptation.

INTRODUCTION:

Disasters, whether natural, technological, or human-induced, pose significant and recurring threats to societies across the globe. Climate change, rapid urbanization, population growth, environmental degradation, and technological dependence have intensified both the frequency and severity of disasters such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts, pandemics, industrial accidents, and cyber disruptions. These events not only result in loss of life and property but also disrupt livelihoods, social systems, governance structures, and long-term development trajectories. In this context, disaster management has evolved beyond mere emergency response to emphasize resilience, the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from disaster impacts while maintaining essential functions.

Resilience is increasingly recognized as a multi-dimensional concept encompassing physical, social, economic, institutional, and environmental components. However, disasters differ widely in their characteristics, impacts, and response requirements. A strategy effective for mitigating flood risks may not be suitable for earthquakes or pandemics, and approaches designed for urban settings may fail in rural or coastal regions. Consequently, disaster-specific resilience strategies, tailored interventions designed to address the unique risks, vulnerabilities, and recovery challenges associated with particular types of disasters, have gained prominence in disaster risk reduction (DRR) frameworks. These strategies include structural measures, policy instruments, early warning systems, community preparedness programs, livelihood diversification, and adaptive governance mechanisms specific to distinct disaster contexts.

Evaluating the effectiveness of such disaster-specific resilience strategies is critical for ensuring that resources are optimally allocated and that interventions genuinely reduce vulnerability and enhance adaptive capacity. Effectiveness, in this regard, goes beyond immediate disaster response outcomes and includes long-term sustainability, equity, inclusiveness, cost-efficiency, and the ability to strengthen systems against future shocks. Without systematic evaluation, resilience initiatives risk becoming symbolic or reactive, failing to deliver measurable improvements in safety, recovery speed, or socio-economic stability. Therefore, assessment frameworks that capture both quantitative outcomes and qualitative dimensions, such as community empowerment, institutional learning, and behavioral change, are essential.

Furthermore, resilience strategies operate across multiple scales, from households and communities to regional and national systems, making evaluation inherently complex. Disaster-specific interventions often involve diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, private sector actors, and community groups. Each stakeholder may have different priorities, capacities, and interpretations of success. Evaluating effectiveness thus requires an integrated approach that considers governance coordination, stakeholder participation, policy coherence, and the alignment of strategies with local socio-cultural and economic realities. Failure to incorporate these dimensions can lead to fragmented efforts and reduced impact despite substantial investments.

Another critical aspect in evaluating disaster-specific resilience strategies is the dynamic nature of risk itself. Hazards evolve over time due to environmental change, technological advancement, and socio-economic transformation. Strategies that were once effective may become inadequate or even counterproductive under new risk conditions. For instance, flood control infrastructure may reduce short-term exposure but increase long-term vulnerability if it encourages unsafe land use. Hence, evaluation must be adaptive and forward-looking, emphasizing learning, flexibility, and continuous improvement rather than static performance measurement.

In developing and emerging economies, the evaluation of disaster-specific resilience strategies assumes even greater significance due to constrained resources, high vulnerability, and uneven institutional capacity. Marginalized populations often bear a disproportionate share of disaster impacts, and poorly designed resilience interventions may inadvertently exacerbate social and economic inequalities. Evaluative studies help identify gaps in inclusiveness, accessibility, and effectiveness, thereby informing policy reforms that prioritize vulnerable groups and promote equitable resilience outcomes. Such evaluations also contribute to accountability and transparency in disaster governance.

In conclusion, evaluating the effectiveness of disaster-specific resilience strategies is a crucial component of contemporary disaster risk management and sustainable development. It enables evidence-based decision-making, supports learning across disaster contexts, and ensures that resilience initiatives translate into tangible and lasting benefits for societies at risk. As disasters become more complex and interconnected, rigorous evaluation frameworks are indispensable for refining strategies, strengthening adaptive capacity, and building resilient systems capable of withstanding future uncertainties.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Asadzadeh et.al (2017)**, In the research titled “Operationalizing a concept: The systematic review of composite indicator building for measuring community disaster resilience” conclude that community disaster resilience can be effectively operationalized through well-constructed composite indicators, provided that indicator selection, normalization, weighting, and aggregation are theoretically grounded and context-sensitive. Their systematic review highlights that while composite indices are powerful tools for comparing resilience across communities, methodological inconsistency remains a major limitation. The study emphasizes the need for transparency, stakeholder involvement, and validation in indicator construction to ensure that resilience measurements truly reflect local vulnerabilities and capacities rather than producing misleading rankings.
2. **Bruneau et.al (2003)**, In the research titled “A framework to quantitatively assess and enhance the seismic resilience of communities” conclude that seismic resilience can be quantitatively assessed by integrating technical, organizational, social, and economic dimensions into a unified framework. Their resilience model, based on robustness, redundancy, resourcefulness, and rapidity, provides a practical structure for evaluating how communities withstand and recover from earthquakes. The study establishes that resilience enhancement is not solely an engineering challenge but requires coordinated planning across infrastructure systems, governance mechanisms, and social institutions to minimize losses and accelerate recovery.
3. **Cai et.al (2018)**, In the research titled “A synthesis of disaster resilience measurement methods and indices.” conclude that disaster resilience measurement has evolved into a diverse field with multiple indices and methodological approaches, each serving different analytical purposes. Their synthesis demonstrates that no single measurement method is universally applicable across disaster types or geographic contexts. The study underscores the importance of aligning resilience measurement tools with specific hazards, scales, and policy objectives, while also calling for greater standardization to improve comparability and policy relevance across resilience assessments.
4. **Cutter et.al (2010)**, In the research titled “Disaster resilience indicators for benchmarking baseline conditions” conclude that benchmarking baseline resilience conditions is essential for tracking progress in disaster risk reduction and guiding targeted interventions. Their Disaster Resilience Indicators framework demonstrates that resilience is shaped by a combination of social, economic, institutional, infrastructural, and environmental factors. The study highlights that resilience disparities often reflect underlying social inequalities, and therefore resilience assessment should be used not only as a technical tool but also as a mechanism for identifying vulnerable populations and informing equitable policy design.
5. **Deelstra & Bristow (2023)**, In the research titled “Assessing the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction strategies on the regional recovery of critical infrastructure systems” conclude that disaster risk reduction strategies significantly influence the speed and stability of regional recovery, particularly in critical

infrastructure systems. Their findings show that proactive investment in resilience-oriented infrastructure planning leads to reduced service disruptions and faster post-disaster restoration. The study emphasizes that evaluating effectiveness should focus on recovery trajectories rather than single-point outcomes, reinforcing the importance of long-term, system-wide perspectives in resilience planning.

6. **Demir et.al (2025)**, In the research titled “Measuring disaster resilience in MENA countries and its impact on disaster losses” conclude that higher levels of disaster resilience are strongly associated with lower disaster-related losses across MENA countries. Their empirical analysis demonstrates that institutional quality, economic stability, and governance effectiveness play a critical role in reducing disaster impacts. The study provides evidence that resilience-building is a cost-effective development strategy, particularly for disaster-prone regions, and highlights the importance of integrating resilience indicators into national development and disaster management policies.

7. **Meerow et.al (2016)**, In the research titled “Defining urban resilience: A review. Landscape and Urban Planning” conclude that urban resilience is a concept marked by definitional diversity but unified by its focus on adaptation, learning, and transformation in the face of shocks and stresses. Their review reveals that resilience is increasingly framed as a dynamic and forward-looking capacity rather than mere resistance to disturbance. The study stresses the need for clarity in defining resilience to avoid conceptual ambiguity and to ensure that urban resilience strategies are actionable, measurable, and socially inclusive.

8. **Norris et.al (2008)**, In the research titled “Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness” conclude that community resilience is best understood as a set of adaptive capacities embedded within social systems rather than a fixed outcome. Their framework identifies key capacities, economic development, social capital, information and communication, and community competence, as central to disaster preparedness and recovery. The study emphasizes that strengthening these capacities before disasters occur is more effective than relying solely on post-disaster response mechanisms, positioning resilience as a proactive strategy for disaster readiness.

9. **Ostadtaghizadeh et.al (2015)**, In the research titled “Community disaster resilience: A systematic review on assessment models and tools” conclude that while numerous models and tools exist for assessing community disaster resilience, most lack comprehensive validation and contextual adaptability. Their systematic review highlights gaps in integrating qualitative and quantitative dimensions of resilience, particularly social and cultural factors. The study calls for more holistic and context-driven assessment frameworks that incorporate community participation and local knowledge to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of resilience evaluation.

10. **Patel et.al (2017)**, In the research titled “What do we mean by “community resilience”? A systematic literature review of how it is defined in the literature” conclude that the lack of a universally accepted definition of community resilience reflects its multidisciplinary nature but also poses challenges for measurement and policy implementation. Their review finds that resilience definitions vary significantly across disciplines, often emphasizing different capacities and outcomes.

The study argues for the development of flexible yet coherent conceptual frameworks that allow for contextual adaptation while maintaining conceptual consistency, thereby strengthening the application of resilience in disaster risk reduction practice.

RESEARCH GAP

The reviewed literature demonstrates substantial progress in conceptualizing, measuring, and operationalizing disaster and community resilience; however, several critical research gaps remain. First, while multiple frameworks and composite indices exist, there is no standardized, disaster-specific evaluation framework that integrates hazard characteristics with social, institutional, and infrastructural dimensions in a unified and context-adaptive manner. Most studies emphasize measurement and benchmarking, but limited empirical work evaluates the actual effectiveness of disaster-specific resilience strategies over time, particularly in terms of recovery trajectories and long-term adaptive capacity. Second, existing models often rely heavily on quantitative indicators, resulting in insufficient integration of qualitative factors such as local knowledge, governance dynamics, cultural context, and community participation. Third, comparative studies across different disaster types and regions, especially in developing and emerging economies, remain scarce, limiting the generalizability of findings. Finally, there is a notable gap in linking resilience measurement with policy feedback and implementation outcomes, as few studies assess how evaluation results influence decision-making, resource allocation, and equitable risk reduction. Addressing these gaps necessitates the development

of holistic, longitudinal, and disaster-specific evaluation frameworks that bridge measurement with practical resilience outcomes.

FINDINGS

The study finds that disaster resilience is inherently multi-dimensional and disaster-specific, with varying resilience components assuming different levels of importance across disaster types. Social and environmental resilience emerge as universally critical across natural, technological, biological, and man-made disasters, highlighting the central role of community cohesion, environmental management, and

collective preparedness. Technical resilience is found to be particularly significant in technological disasters such as industrial accidents, while health system resilience is pivotal in biological disasters like pandemics. Man-made disasters reveal the heightened importance of security and psychological resilience, reflecting the long-term social and mental health impacts of conflict and violence. The findings further indicate that community-centric approaches, stakeholder participation, and adaptive governance significantly enhance the effectiveness of disaster-specific resilience strategies, whereas generic, one-size-fits-all interventions often fail to address localized vulnerabilities.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that evaluating the effectiveness of disaster-specific resilience strategies is essential for strengthening adaptive capacity and reducing disaster-induced vulnerabilities in a sustainable manner. Resilience cannot be treated as a static or uniform concept; rather, it must be understood as a dynamic, context-dependent process shaped by the nature of hazards, socio-economic conditions, institutional capacity, and community engagement. The research establishes that resilience strategies are most effective when they integrate physical, social, environmental, technical, health, and psychological

dimensions in a coordinated framework tailored to specific disaster contexts. By emphasizing long-term recovery trajectories, inclusiveness, and system-wide learning, the study reinforces the need for evidence-based, adaptive, and community-oriented resilience planning as a core component of contemporary disaster risk management.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the study suggests the development of standardized yet flexible disaster-specific resilience evaluation frameworks that integrate both quantitative indicators and qualitative insights such as local knowledge and community perceptions. Policymakers and disaster management agencies should prioritize community participation, capacity building, and stakeholder coordination to enhance the relevance and sustainability of resilience strategies. Greater emphasis should be placed on longitudinal assessment of recovery trajectories rather than short-term performance indicators to capture true resilience outcomes. Additionally, resilience evaluation should be systematically linked with policy feedback mechanisms to ensure that assessment results directly inform planning, resource allocation, and equitable risk reduction. Future research is recommended to undertake comparative, cross-regional, and disaster-type-specific studies, particularly in developing and emerging economies, to strengthen empirical evidence and support scalable resilience solutions.

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A STUDY OF ROLE OF VOLUNTEERISM IN PROMOTING SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary society, increasing social diversity, urbanization, and socio-economic disparities have posed significant challenges to social integration. Volunteerism has emerged as an important mechanism for fostering social cohesion by encouraging active civic engagement and inclusive participation. The present study examines the role of volunteerism in promoting social integration in contemporary society, focusing on its contribution to social cohesion, trust, and community bonding. Adopting a descriptive and analytical research design, the study is based on primary data collected from individuals actively involved in volunteer activities across various social sectors. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire designed to assess dimensions such as social interaction, sense of belonging, mutual respect, and civic responsibility. Appropriate statistical tools, including descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, were employed to analyze the data. The findings indicate that participation in volunteer activities significantly enhances social integration by strengthening interpersonal relationships, promoting empathy, and fostering a sense of collective identity among individuals from diverse social backgrounds. The study further reveals that volunteerism plays a vital role in integrating marginalized groups by providing platforms for participation and social inclusion. Despite challenges such as time constraints and limited organizational support, volunteerism remains a sustainable and effective approach to addressing social fragmentation. The study concludes that strengthening institutional support, integrating volunteer programs within educational frameworks, and encouraging community-based initiatives can enhance the effectiveness of volunteerism as a tool for social integration. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, non-governmental organizations, and social institutions aiming to promote inclusive and cohesive societies.

Keywords: *Volunteerism, Social Integration, Social Cohesion, Civic Engagement, Inclusive Development.*

INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism has long been recognized as a vital expression of civic responsibility and collective action within societies. It refers to the voluntary contribution of time, effort, and skills by individuals or groups for the benefit of others without the expectation of monetary compensation. In contemporary society, volunteerism has evolved beyond traditional charity-based activities and has become an organized and strategic instrument for social development. Governments, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and community-based organizations increasingly rely on volunteer efforts to address complex social issues such as poverty alleviation, education, healthcare access, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. As societies become more diverse and complex, the relevance of volunteerism in strengthening social bonds and promoting collective well-being has gained renewed academic and policy attention.

Social integration, on the other hand, is a multifaceted concept that refers to the process through which individuals and groups from different social, cultural, economic, and demographic backgrounds are incorporated into the broader social structure. It encompasses dimensions such as participation in social life, a sense of belonging, mutual trust, shared norms, and access to opportunities. Effective social integration ensures that individuals feel connected to their communities and institutions, thereby reducing social exclusion, marginalization, and conflict. However, contemporary societies face significant challenges to social integration due to rapid urbanization, migration, globalization, technological change, and widening socio-economic inequalities. These forces have contributed to weakened community ties, increased social isolation, and growing divisions along class, caste, gender, religion, and ethnicity.

In this context, volunteerism emerges as a powerful mechanism for promoting social integration by fostering interaction and cooperation among diverse social groups. Volunteer activities provide structured spaces where individuals from varied backgrounds come together to work toward common goals, thereby facilitating meaningful social interaction and collective problem-solving. Through repeated engagement in volunteer work, individuals develop empathy, tolerance, and mutual understanding, which are essential components of social cohesion. Volunteerism thus functions as a form of social capital that strengthens networks of trust and reciprocity within communities, contributing to a more inclusive and integrated social environment.

Volunteer organizations and institutions play a crucial role in channelizing volunteer efforts toward social integration. Non-governmental organizations, community-based groups, faith-based institutions, and educational establishments serve as intermediaries that connect volunteers with social causes and community needs. These organizations not only provide opportunities for service but also promote values of cooperation, inclusiveness, and civic responsibility. In recent years, structured volunteer programs targeting youth, women, senior citizens, and marginalized groups have gained prominence, highlighting the potential of volunteerism as a tool for empowerment and social inclusion. By encouraging participation from diverse sections of society, such initiatives help bridge social divides and promote shared social identities.

The role of volunteerism in integrating marginalized and vulnerable populations is particularly significant. Volunteer-driven initiatives often focus on supporting groups such as women, migrants, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and economically disadvantaged communities. By involving both volunteers and beneficiaries in collective activities, volunteerism reduces social distance and fosters a sense of dignity, recognition, and belonging among marginalized groups. This inclusive engagement not only enhances individual well-being but also contributes to broader social harmony by challenging stereotypes and promoting mutual respect.

In the Indian context, volunteerism has deep historical and cultural roots. Traditional practices of community service, mutual aid, and collective responsibility have long been integral to social life. Social reform movements during the colonial and post-independence periods relied heavily on volunteer participation to address issues such as education, health, and social justice. In contemporary India, volunteerism continues to play a vital role through initiatives led by civil society organizations, educational institutions, and youth movements. Given India's vast social diversity and persistent inequalities, volunteerism holds significant potential for fostering social integration and strengthening democratic participation.

Despite the growing recognition of volunteerism as a catalyst for social integration, empirical research examining its direct impact on social cohesion and inclusion remains limited, particularly in developing societies. Much of the existing literature focuses on volunteer motivation and participation patterns, with comparatively less attention given to the social outcomes of volunteering. There is a need for systematic analysis of how volunteer engagement influences social interaction, trust, and a sense of belonging among individuals and communities. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to examine the role of volunteerism in promoting social integration in contemporary society by analyzing volunteers' experiences, perceptions, and the social outcomes of their participation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Wilson (2012)**, In the research titled "Volunteerism research: A review essay" The study concludes that volunteerism plays a critical role in strengthening social relationships and civic life by fostering trust, reciprocity, and community engagement. It emphasizes that volunteering is not merely an individual act of altruism but a socially embedded activity influenced by structural and cultural factors. The review highlights that sustained volunteer participation contributes significantly to social cohesion and integration, particularly in pluralistic societies.
2. **Wilson & Musick (1997)**, In the research titled "Who cares? Toward an integrated theory of volunteer work" This study concludes that volunteerism is shaped by a combination of individual resources, social networks, and cultural norms. It establishes that volunteering enhances social integration by connecting individuals to broader community networks and institutions. The authors assert that volunteer work reinforces civic attachment and strengthens collective social identity.
3. **Musick & Wilson (2008)**, In the research titled "Volunteers: A social profile" The authors conclude that volunteerism serves as a powerful mechanism for social integration by linking individuals across social boundaries. Their findings indicate that volunteers develop stronger community ties, higher levels of trust, and greater civic awareness. The study reinforces the idea that volunteering benefits both society and the individual by promoting inclusion and shared responsibility.
4. **Putnam (2000)**, In the research titled "Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community" Putnam concludes that declining civic participation weakens social capital and social integration in modern societies. He argues that volunteerism plays a vital role in rebuilding community bonds and fostering social cohesion. The study underscores volunteering as a key solution to counteract social isolation and strengthen democratic and social life.

5. **Greenspan (2018)**, In the research titled "Immigrant integration through volunteering: The importance of contextual factors" This study concludes that volunteering significantly contributes to immigrant social integration by facilitating interaction with host communities. It highlights that contextual factors such as organizational structure and community support influence integration outcomes. The findings suggest that volunteering can act as a bridge between migrants and mainstream society.
6. **Sveen et.al (2023)**, In the research titled "Volunteering: A tool for social inclusion and promoting the well-being of refugees? A qualitative study" The study concludes that volunteerism is an effective tool for promoting social inclusion and psychological well-being among refugees. Participation in volunteer activities enhanced social connectedness, reduced isolation, and improved feelings of belonging. The authors emphasize volunteerism as a complementary strategy for refugee integration.
7. **Carla et.al (2023)**, In the research titled "Volunteering as a means of fostering integration and intercultural relations: Evidence from six European contexts" This comparative study concludes that volunteering fosters intercultural dialogue and social integration across diverse European contexts. It finds that volunteer activities encourage mutual understanding and reduce social distance between groups. The study highlights volunteering as a practical mechanism for strengthening inclusive societies.
8. **United Nations Volunteers (UNV)**, In the research titled "(2014), In the research titled "Social inclusion and volunteerism" The report concludes that volunteerism is a vital driver of social inclusion and sustainable development. It emphasizes that volunteer engagement strengthens social bonds, empowers marginalized communities, and enhances civic participation. The UNV identifies volunteerism as a strategic policy tool for inclusive social integration.
9. **United Nations Volunteers (UNV)**, In the research titled "(2022), In the research titled "State of the world's volunteerism report 2022: Building equal and inclusive societies" The report concludes that volunteerism plays a central role in building equal, inclusive, and resilient societies. It highlights how volunteering strengthens social cohesion by promoting participation, solidarity, and collective action. The findings underscore the need to institutionalize volunteerism within development and integration policies.
10. **Alaref et.al (2019)**, In the research titled "The short-term impact of inter-community volunteering activities and soft skills training on self-reported social cohesion values: Quasi-experimental evidence from Lebanon" The study concludes that inter-community volunteering initiatives significantly improve social cohesion and trust among divided communities. The findings demonstrate that joint volunteer activities reduce prejudice and strengthen shared social values. Volunteerism is identified as an effective intervention for post-conflict social integration.
11. **Davies (2024)**, In the research titled "The causal relationship between volunteering and social cohesion: A large scale analysis of secondary longitudinal data" This large-scale longitudinal study concludes that volunteering has a causal and positive relationship with social cohesion. Individuals engaged in volunteering exhibited stronger community attachment and trust over time. The study provides robust empirical evidence supporting volunteerism as a tool for social integration.
12. **Abrams et.al (2023)**, In the research titled "Linking volunteering and social cohesion: Causal evidence in the UK and beyond" The authors conclude that volunteering strengthens social cohesion by fostering inclusive identities and cooperative norms. Their review highlights consistent evidence that volunteer engagement enhances interpersonal trust and social solidarity. The study emphasizes volunteering as a policy-relevant strategy for integrated communities.
13. **Jørgensen (2025)**, In the research titled "Uncovering social assimilation disparities: Immigrants' volunteering in organizations in Denmark" This study concludes that volunteering significantly supports immigrants' social assimilation and institutional integration. Participation in voluntary organizations helped immigrants build social networks and cultural familiarity. However, the study also notes disparities in access to volunteering opportunities, suggesting a need for inclusive volunteer frameworks.
14. **Zhang (2025)**, In the research titled "Internal migrants' social integration through community volunteering during the pandemic in China" The study concludes that community volunteering enhanced migrants' social integration during the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing social participation and trust. Volunteering served as a platform for migrants to connect with local communities. The findings highlight volunteerism's adaptability in times of crisis.
15. **Eimhjellen (2023)**, In the research titled "Capital, inequality, and volunteering" The study concludes that volunteerism contributes to social integration but is influenced by social inequality and access to resources.

While volunteering strengthens social capital, unequal participation can limit its integrative potential. The author stresses the importance of inclusive volunteer policies to maximize social integration outcomes.

RESEARCH GAP

The reviewed literature clearly establishes volunteerism as a significant contributor to social cohesion, civic engagement, and social integration across diverse social contexts, including immigrant, refugee, and post-conflict settings. However, several critical gaps remain. First, much of the existing research is concentrated in developed countries, particularly Europe and North America, with limited empirical evidence from developing and pluralistic societies such as India, where social diversity and structural inequalities are more pronounced. Second, while prior studies emphasize the positive outcomes of volunteerism, there is inadequate examination of the *mechanisms* through which volunteer participation translates into social integration, especially the role of frequency, type, and intensity of volunteering. Third, most studies focus on specific groups such as immigrants or refugees, leaving a gap in understanding volunteerism's integrative impact across broader community populations. Additionally, issues related to unequal access to volunteering opportunities and their implications for inclusive integration remain underexplored. Finally, there is a lack of comprehensive empirical models that simultaneously assess individual, organizational, and societal factors influencing the effectiveness of volunteerism as a tool for social integration. Addressing these gaps, the present study seeks to provide an empirical and context-specific analysis of volunteerism's role in promoting social integration in contemporary society, thereby contributing to both theory and policy discourse.

FINDINGS:

The study reveals that volunteerism plays a significant and positive role in promoting social integration in contemporary society. The findings indicate that individuals who actively participate in volunteer activities report higher levels of social interaction, trust, empathy, and a sense of belonging within their communities. Volunteer engagement was found to strengthen interpersonal relationships and encourage cooperation among individuals from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The study also highlights that volunteerism facilitates the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups by providing platforms for participation and collective engagement. Furthermore, regular involvement in volunteer initiatives enhances civic responsibility and community attachment, thereby contributing to social cohesion. Despite these positive outcomes, the findings also reveal certain challenges such as time constraints, limited organizational support, and unequal access to volunteering opportunities, which can affect the extent and continuity of volunteer participation.

CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that volunteerism is a powerful and sustainable tool for promoting social integration in contemporary society. By fostering meaningful social interaction, trust, and collective responsibility, volunteerism contributes significantly to strengthening social cohesion and inclusive development. The research confirms that volunteer activities not only benefit communities but also enhance volunteers' social awareness, civic engagement, and sense of belonging. In a context marked by social fragmentation and diversity, volunteerism emerges as an effective mechanism to bridge social divides and reduce exclusion. However, the integrative potential of volunteerism can be fully realized only when supported by inclusive institutional frameworks and sustained engagement. Overall, the study underscores the importance of recognizing volunteerism as a strategic social resource for building cohesive, inclusive, and resilient societies.

SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the findings of the study, several suggestions are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of volunteerism as a tool for social integration. Educational institutions should integrate volunteer programs into curricula to cultivate civic values and social responsibility among youth. Government agencies and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to design structured and inclusive volunteer initiatives that ensure wider participation across social groups. Providing recognition, training, and logistical support to volunteers can help sustain long-term engagement. Efforts should also be made to reduce barriers to participation, particularly for marginalized communities, to ensure equitable access to volunteering opportunities. Finally, policymakers should institutionalize volunteerism within social development strategies to maximize its contribution toward social integration and inclusive growth.

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A STUDY ON HOW CASTE STILL SHAPES MODERN INDIA

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(Autonomous), Thane**ABSTRACT**

Despite constitutional guarantees and legal reforms, caste continues to shape social relations, institutional practices, and everyday experiences in contemporary India. This study examines how caste is reproduced, denied, and normalized within social and digital discourse, and considers implications for awareness and remedial interventions. Using a qualitative research design grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis, primary data were collected through thirty-five semi-structured interviews with participants from diverse caste and social backgrounds, alongside forty digital texts including social media posts, opinion pieces, and online discussions. The analysis revealed persistent insider–outsider distinctions, dominant narratives of merit and deservingness, public denial of contemporary caste discrimination, and private acknowledgements unaccompanied by institutional action. Caste-based exclusion was evident across educational settings, workplaces, marriage practices, neighbourhoods, and everyday microaggressions. These findings demonstrate that discursive normalization sustains caste inequalities despite formal equality, underscoring the need for structured awareness programs, institutional training, and sustained public education initiatives.

Keywords: caste, critical discourse analysis, discrimination, social exclusion, India

INTRODUCTION

Caste remains a deeply embedded system of social stratification in India, shaping social relationships, access to resources, and the construction of individual and collective identities. Despite constitutional provisions promoting equality and decades of social reform, caste continues to influence everyday life in both explicit and implicit ways. While overt caste discrimination may appear reduced in urban and educated contexts, caste-based distinctions frequently persist through subtle social practices, language use, and normative expectations. These less visible forms of caste expression indicate that caste has not diminished but has instead adapted to contemporary social conditions, making it necessary to examine how it operates beyond formal structures.

The significance of studying caste lies in its enduring role in reproducing social inequality and influencing psychological experiences such as stigma, belongingness, and identity formation. Traditional approaches to studying caste have largely focused on structural dimensions such as policy, economic disparities, and institutional discrimination. However, such approaches often overlook the ways in which caste is sustained through discourse—everyday talk, narratives, silences, and symbolic expressions that normalize hierarchy and exclusion. In recent years, digital spaces have further expanded the reach of such discourses, allowing caste-based meanings to be reproduced, negotiated, and contested in new forms. Understanding these discursive processes is therefore crucial for comprehending the persistence of caste in modern social life.

The central research problem addressed in this study concerns the gap between formal commitments to caste equality and the continued presence of caste-based meanings in everyday interactions. While legal frameworks prohibit discrimination, discursive practices often sustain caste hierarchies in indirect and socially acceptable ways. These practices remain insufficiently examined, particularly through qualitative approaches that focus on language and meaning-making. There is a need to explore how caste is constructed through discourse, how it is implied or silenced in interaction, and how individuals position themselves within these discursive frameworks.

This study examines the discursive construction of caste using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how language reflects and sustains power relations. By analyzing spoken and written discourse, it seeks to uncover the ideological assumptions embedded in everyday representations of caste

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Within critical discourse traditions, caste is understood not merely as a social hierarchy but as a discursively produced and reproduced system of power. Drawing on Ambedkar's conceptualization of caste as a "state of mind," scholars argue that caste operates through everyday language, symbolic boundaries, and normalized narratives of purity, merit, and deservingness (Pal, 2024). From a critical psychological perspective, caste functions as a socio-psychological structure shaping meaning-making, identity formation, and intergroup relations primarily through discourse rather than overt coercion (Gorur & Forscher, 2024). Interdisciplinary scholarship further demonstrates that caste hierarchies are sustained through institutional talk, cultural narratives, and routinized practices that legitimize inequality despite constitutional reforms (Hoff, 2017). These

perspectives align with Fairclough's view of discourse as both constitutive of and constituted by social structures, positioning caste as a system maintained through language across social practices.

Qualitative research has been central in revealing how caste is enacted in professional, institutional, and interpersonal discourse. Sawariya's (2021) analysis of counselling psychology illustrates how Brahminical dominance is embedded within therapeutic language, training norms, and ethical silences, producing exclusionary practices that marginalize Dalit clients and practitioners. By examining therapist-client interactions, the study demonstrates how caste shapes discourses of empathy, neutrality, and professionalism, revealing how power operates subtly through interaction rather than explicit prejudice.

At the disciplinary level, Jogdand (2024) critiques psychology's limited engagement with indigenous anti-caste thought, arguing that dominant academic discourses erase Dalit epistemologies by privileging Western theoretical vocabularies. Earlier critiques similarly note that Indian psychology has relied heavily on imported constructs and laboratory paradigms that fail to capture caste as a lived discursive reality (Mitra, 1972; Pareek, 1981). These concerns echo broader critiques of WEIRD bias, wherein dominant knowledge systems universalize culturally specific assumptions through academic discourse (Henrich et al., 2010).

Recent conceptual work by Gorur and Forscher (2024) foregrounds discourse, arguing that caste differs from other intergroup categories because overt bias remains normatively acceptable. They identify a "survey paradox," wherein egalitarian self-reports coexist with persistent untouchability practices, highlighting the gap between explicit discourse and everyday social practice. Pal (2024) further demonstrates how dominant caste discourses of merit, karma, and neutrality function as ideological tools that legitimize hierarchy while framing inequality as natural.

Despite growing recognition of caste as a discursive system, empirical language-focused research remains limited. Existing studies are often conceptual or rely on self-report measures that obscure discursive power. Few studies systematically analyze textual features, discursive strategies, and broader social practices together, underscoring the need for Critical Discourse Analysis to examine how caste-based power and exclusion are constructed and normalized in contemporary India.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis grounded in Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to examine how caste is produced, legitimized, contested, and normalized through everyday language. Fairclough's model links micro-level linguistic practices to macro-level social structures, framing discourse as constitutive of and constituted by power relations.

Primary data comprised thirty-five semi-structured interviews with participants from diverse caste and social locations, recruited through purposive maximum-variation sampling to capture contrasting discursive positions. Interviews used open-ended prompts about caste in family life, education, workplaces, relationships, and online interaction. Conversations were audio-recorded with informed consent, transcribed verbatim, anonymized, and securely stored. Secondary data comprised forty digital texts, including short videos, comment threads, and online discussions from social media platforms, purposively sampled around themes such as merit, reservation, purity, inter-caste relationships, and modernity; these materials were archived and anonymized where required, available on request or in an appendix.

Data analysis followed Fairclough's three levels. At the textual level, close linguistic analysis examined vocabulary, metaphors, evaluative lexis, pronoun choice, hedging, disclaimers, narrative sequencing, and strategic silences that index caste ideologies. At the discursive-practice level, analysis considered production and reception processes, tracing how participants drew on dominant discourses of meritocracy, respectability, tradition, and neutrality, and how these discourses were reproduced, negotiated, or resisted across interview and digital contexts. At the social-practice level, discursive patterns were situated within broader social and historical structures, including caste hierarchy, endogamy, institutional exclusion, and digital casteism, enabling links between everyday language and enduring power relations.

Analytic rigor was supported through iterative coding, reflexive memoing, cross-checks and triangulation of interview and digital sources to ensure interpretive consistency. Ethical safeguards included informed consent, voluntary participation, withdrawal rights, secure data management, and the option to omit distressing questions. Archived datasets are available on request.

RESULTS

Primary data: lived realities and narrative polarization

Analysis of thirty-five interview transcripts revealed a pronounced imbalance in narrative space and discursive labour across social groups. Minority-caste participants occupied the majority of conversational time, reflecting substantial emotional labour and the "burden of proof" required to articulate systemic oppression and trauma. Majority-caste participants typically produced shorter, more detached accounts, frequently characterized by strategic brevity or a discursive pivot to individual merit. This pattern functions as strategic silence, allowing dominant groups to preserve social comfort and avoid engagement with structural privilege.

Linguistic analysis identified pervasive group polarization. The most recurrent linguistic marker was categorical pronoun use, producing a persistent we/they binary that indexed and reproduced social boundaries. Marginalized participants mobilized a lexicon of structural struggle, using terms such as "oppression" and "gaslighting." Dominant-caste interlocutors commonly employed spiritualized or individualistic frames, invoking karma, personal responsibility, or cultural tradition to account for social differences. Metaphor use further evidenced divergent framings: marginalized voices described barriers as "invisible walls" or being "cattle class," while dominant voices framed social order through metaphors of "standards," "discipline," and "order," and characterized resistance as "emotional drama" or social impropriety.

Reported incidents of discrimination indicated a multifaceted system of exclusion. Approximately one third of reported incidents involved general social exclusion, ranging from rural dehumanization to urban professional othering. Education-related discrimination emerged as particularly salient, manifesting in taunts about reservation, sustained questioning of academic capability, and subtle exclusion from mentoring and classroom dynamics. Workplace and institutional biases included denial of promotion, deliberate delays or sabotage of personnel records, and exclusion from informal professional networks. Persistent caste boundaries were also evident in housing segregation, marriage restrictions, and social boycotts, demonstrating that economic or educational advancement does not erase entrenched social stigma.

Microaggressions and coded insults operated as everyday mechanisms of "invisible violence." Comments about accents, jokes that smuggled casteist tropes, insinuations regarding hygiene or lineage, and reservation-based taunts accumulated to erode dignity and produce psychosomatic distress. Accounts of refusal to intermarry and social ostracism showed how caste continues to regulate belonging and social capital, constraining life choices even among highly educated individuals, including professionals who nevertheless reported denial of property ownership or social boycotts.

Secondary data: ideology, hegemony, and digital practice

Secondary analysis of forty digital texts situated interview narratives within broader ideological and institutional formations. Using Gramscian concepts of cultural hegemony, the data show how dominant groups manufacture consent by shaping common sense. Silence and omission in elite and mainstream digital discourse operate as mechanisms of complicity, naturalizing inequality and producing the appearance of castelessness. Strategic silence thus functions to erase structural advantage and to sustain everyday acceptance of hierarchy.

Foucauldian perspectives on power as disciplinary and productive were evident in participants' accounts and in digital discourse. Individuals described self-regulation and performative "worthiness" as prerequisites for social mobility, revealing how institutional norms produce compliant subjects. The "Ideological Square" operated across texts: dominant-caste discourse emphasized positive in-group qualities such as discipline and merit while attributing negative traits to marginalized groups and framing them as undeserving. A merit-privilege continuum emerged from the data, showing that rhetoric of neutral merit masks accumulated economic, cultural, and linguistic capital, and that access to elite coaching, polished language, and social networks contributes disproportionately to success in competitive selection processes. Discretionary evaluations and personality assessments functioned as gatekeeping mechanisms that reproduce advantage.

Structural violence, in line with Galtung, appeared in patterns of learned inferiority and intergenerational harm. Dalit women experienced compounded exclusion and targeted digital harassment; social media served both to amplify counternarratives and to host casteist abuse. Platform moderation frameworks frequently failed to identify casteist slurs and forms of contextualized abuse, while the digital divide—markedly unequal access to quality connectivity and resources—privileged dominant voices in public debate and reinforced informational inequality.

Contemporary mobilizations contesting affirmative action illuminated a "crisis of aspiration" among dominant communities. Debates over reservation became a focal arena for grievances about perceived decline, and

discourses of merit and entitlement circulated to naturalize exclusion and to resist redistributive measures. These dynamics demonstrate caste's adaptability: privilege is routinely reframed as neutral merit, and strategic silence is combined with explicit rhetoric to sustain exclusion.

Patterns across domains and illustrative instances

Across social domains the analysis identified consistent patterns: education, workplaces, housing, marriage networks, and everyday social interactions all reproduced exclusionary dynamics through language and practice. Workplace examples included sidelining, denial of mentorship, and administrative obstruction to promotions. Housing cases documented refusal to sell property and social boycotts. Digital platform failures included inconsistent moderation, brigading, and targeted amplification of casteist abuse. The Jarange–Patil agitation featured in secondary sources as an instance of dominant anxieties about affirmative action that reproduce exclusionary narratives in public discourse.

DISCUSSION

Using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, this study demonstrates that caste continues to operate as a discursively sustained system of power, reproduced through routine language practices rather than overtly discriminatory speech. Across interviews and digital texts, caste was rarely named directly; instead, it surfaced through normalized vocabularies of merit, respectability, neutrality, and tradition, along with hedging, disclaimers, and strategic silences. Consistent with Fairclough's argument, ideology was most effective when embedded in common-sense discourse, rendering caste power relations invisible and naturalized.

A key insight concerns the gap between legal frameworks and discursive realities. Although caste-based discrimination is constitutionally prohibited, participants frequently cited the existence of law to claim caste irrelevance while simultaneously reproducing casteist assumptions by individualizing inequality or framing privilege as deserved. This suggests that legal reform regulates behavior formally but does not necessarily transform underlying belief systems. A useful parallel can be drawn with traffic safety regulation: helmet laws establish compliance standards, yet sustained behavior change occurs only when legislation is accompanied by awareness campaigns, social norm reinforcement, and institutional accountability. Similarly, anti-caste laws risk functioning as symbolic safeguards when not supported by discursive and educational interventions.

Digital spaces further complicate this process, operating as sites where counter-discourses coexist with the normalization of casteist ideologies framed as opinion or humor. Overall, the findings underscore the need to address caste inequality through interventions that engage language, meaning-making, and everyday discourse alongside policy and law.

CONCLUSION

This study examined caste as a discursive system of power using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, demonstrating how caste hierarchies are reproduced through everyday language rather than overt discrimination. Across interviews and digital texts, caste was sustained through normalized discourses of merit, neutrality, and respectability, revealing a persistent gap between formal legal equality and lived discursive realities. The findings highlight that while legal frameworks prohibit caste-based discrimination, they are insufficient to address the underlying beliefs and interpretive practices through which caste continues to be legitimized.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The study is qualitative and context-specific, limiting the generalizability of findings across regions and social groups. Additionally, reliance on self-reported narratives and publicly available digital content may not capture all forms of covert caste practice. Despite these limitations, the study offers important insights into the ideological dimensions of caste.

Future research could adopt longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine how discursive patterns shift over time and in response to interventions. Expanding analysis to institutional texts such as curricula or policy documents may further illuminate discursive power. Overall, this study underscores that meaningful progress toward caste equality requires sustained engagement with language and discourse, alongside legal and institutional reform.

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CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES AS AN EXPRESSION OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY: EVIDENCE FROM NATIONAL SURVEYS AND PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Healthy food consumption is an important dimension of civic responsibility, as individual dietary choices play a crucial role in public health and sustainability outcomes. In India, government-led nutrition awareness and behaviour-change initiatives have been implemented to promote informed food choices and improve dietary practices among the population. This study uses secondary data from national surveys and public policy reports to understand consumer behaviour with the view of healthy food choices. Based on existing literature in consumer behaviour and public policy, this study explains the difference between what people know and how they act when it comes to food. The analysis shows that while people are becoming aware of healthy eating, the adoption of healthy eating habits varies across different socio-economic groups. This study contributes to both consumer research and policy discussions by integrating behavioural theory with national nutrition data, providing insights that are relevant for policy. The study highlights the significance of public health communication that is behaviourally informed. By emphasizing the importance of conscious consumer behaviour in promoting collective well-being, the study focuses on civic responsibility, public health policy, and sustainable consumption.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Healthy food choices, Awareness-behaviour gap, public policy, civic responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Food consumption pattern significantly impacts both public health and sustained economic performance. India is currently experiencing a rapid nutritional change, marked by a decrease in the consumption of traditional diets and a corresponding rise in the intake of processed and convenience foods (Gupta et al., 2025)/ these dietary changes have, in turn worsened the prevalence of non-communicable diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular conditions (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021).

Recent public policy and consumer research increasingly conceptualize consumption choices as socially embedded behaviors with collective consequences (Sheth et al., 2011, Shove, 2010). Healthy food choices can be viewed as an expression of civic responsibility, as individual dietary decisions contribute to broader public health outcomes and reduced societal healthcare burdens (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021; Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). From this perspectives, government-led awareness initiatives seek not only to inform consumers but also to foster norms of responsible and sustainable consumption (Grunert, 2011; Food Safety and Standards Authority of India [FSSAI], 2022)

Consumer behaviour research indicates that food choices are influenced by cognitive, emotional, social, and economic factors (Solomon, 2018). Even though awareness and nutritional knowledge are important for behaviour, research constantly shows that they are not enough to create long-term dietary changes (Grunert, 2011). In many cases, taste preferences, established eating habits, convenience, price, and cultural norms are more significant than health consideration.

Public policy studies suggest that interventions focused on awareness improve consumer knowledge, but they have limited effects on behavior unless supported by structural measures like nudging, changes to the food environment, and financial incentives (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Moreover, in India, social and economic inequalities make it difficult for awareness to lead to healthy eating habits (Gupta et al., 2025). National trends show shifts in dietary consumption in India, with increasing processed and energy-dense food intake among various population segments (Gupta et al., 2025). Dietary diversity remains low in many regions, indicating uneven adoption of healthy food choices (Gupta et al., 2025).

This difference between what people know and what they do highlights a common gap between awareness and behaviour, a topic often studied in studies of consumer behaviour and public policy (Sheth et al., 2011)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S. Gupta, A. Borah, and E. Kochhar (2025) authors have drawn this report on the Indian National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Household Consumer Expenditure Surveys (HCEs) (2011–12 and 2023–24) and studied regarding Indian households consumption of nutritious and diverse range of foods at home.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) (2022) outline national initiatives such as Eat Right India, aimed at promoting healthier dietary practices among consumers. The report indicates that while awareness levels regarding healthy eating have improved, behavioral adoption remains uneven across population segments.

Michael R. Solomon (2018) emphasizes that consumer behaviour is influenced by psychological, cultural, and situational factors. In this study author explains that food choices are affected by habits and emotions, suggesting that knowledge and awareness alone are inadequate to alter long-established consumption patterns.

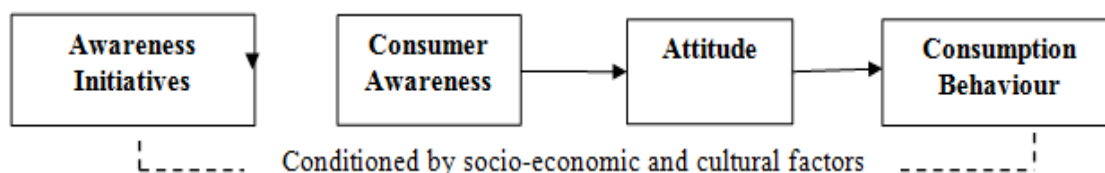
Klaus G. Grunert (2011) this study discusses about barriers that may prevent consumers from recognizing and choosing the more sustainable alternatives during their food choices. The study shows that even when consumers indeed have a positive attitude to sustainable food production, there are still many reasons why they do not buy the sustainable alternatives.

Elizabeth Shove (2010) conceptualises consumption as a socially embedded practice rather than an outcome of individual rational choice. The study argues that everyday consumption behaviour, including food choices, are shaped by routines, material contexts, and social norms. This perspective helps explain why increased awareness does not necessarily lead to behavioral change in dietary practices.

Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein (2008) in this author have studied about the behavioral economics which can inform public policy through the use of nudges that influence consumer decision-making without limiting choice. The study highlights that modifying choice architecture can be more effective than information-based interventions in promoting healthier food behaviors.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

The study adopts an **awareness–attitude–behaviour** framework to explain healthy food consumption behaviour (Solomon, 2018). The proposed conceptual framework links awareness initiatives to behaviour change. Consumer awareness of healthy eating guidelines influences attitudes toward healthy food, which subsequently affects consumption patterns. Socio-economic factors such as income, education, and urban–rural location act as contextual constraints. Awareness is therefore necessary but not sufficient for behaviour change (Grunert, 2011).



RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

RQ1: How do the national trends in dietary awareness compare against real food consumption in India?

RQ2: What behavioral and socio-economic factors account for the difference between awareness of healthy eating and actual consumption habits?

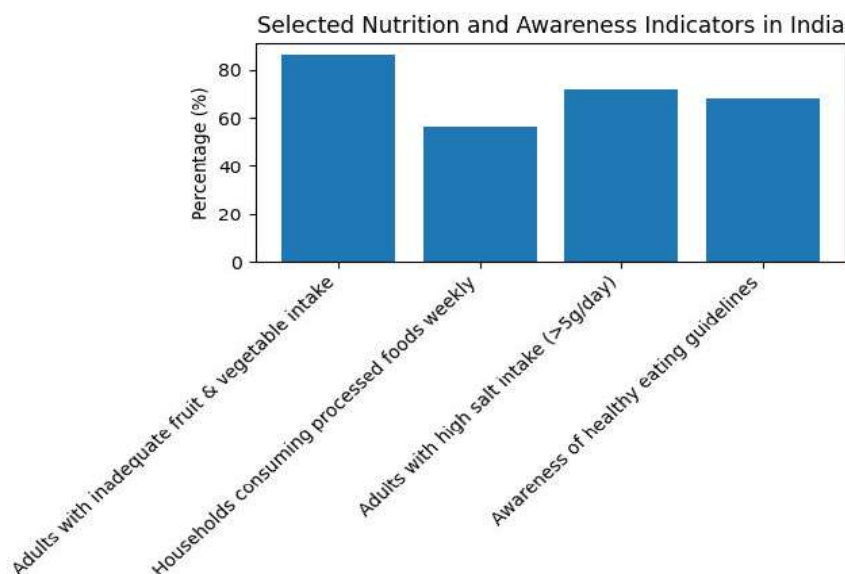
RQ3: How can understanding consumer behavior help create public policies that encourage healthy food choices?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study adopts a descriptive and conceptual research design based on secondary data analysis. Data sources specific to India encompass reports from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4 and NFHS-5), published by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS, 2021), household consumption surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Office/National Statistical Office (NSSO/NSO, 2022), and policy documents released by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI, 2022). Furthermore, global nutrition benchmarks provided by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) are incorporated to provide context for Indian dietary patterns. Data synthesis is achieved through descriptive interpretation and cross-source comparison, rather than through inferential statistical testing.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:**Table 1:** Selected Nutrition and Awareness indicators in India

Indicator	Percentage %	Source
Adults with inadequate fruit and vegetable intake	87.0	NFHS-5
Households consuming processed foods on a weekly basis	56.4	NSSO/NSO
Adults with high salt intake (>5 g/day)	72.0	WHO
Awareness of healthy eating guidelines	68.2	FSSAI

**Figure 1.** Selected nutrition and awareness indicators in India.

Source: NFHS-5; NSSO/NSO; WHO; FSSAI.

Figure 1 shows that a significant portion of the population still follows unhealthy eating habits, such as consuming too much salt and insufficient amounts of fruits and vegetables, despite comparatively high awareness of healthy eating guidelines.

Table 2: Awareness-Behaviour Gap in healthy Food Choices

Dimension	Awareness (%)	Behaviour Adoption (%)	Source
Reduced sugar intake	71.5	39.2	FSSAI; NFHS-5
Reduced salt intake	66.8	34.5	WHO; NFHS-5
Regular fruit consumption	62.4	41.1	NFHS-5
Preference for whole grains	58.0	36.7	FSSAI

Table 2 shows that there is difference between consumer awareness and actual adoption of healthy eating habits. For all dimensions, awareness levels are higher than the adoption levels. Behavioral adoption indicators are derived from national dietary and consumption surveys, awareness indicators are derived from FSSAI campaign reports.

Table 3: Socio-Economic Moderators of healthy Food Choice Behavior

Factors	Observed Pattern	Source
Income	Higher income – higher healthy food adoption	NSSO
Education	Strong positive association with awareness and behaviour	NFHS-5
Urban-rural divide	Urban consumers show higher awareness	NFHS-5
Cultural food norms	Mixed influence across regions	NSSO

Table 3 shows how socioeconomic factors influence healthy eating habits in India. The adoption of healthy eating habits is linked to higher income levels, highlighting the significance of accessibility and affordability. Both awareness and behavioral adoption are strongly related with education, indicating that knowledgeable consumers are more likely to put their knowledge into practice. There is a clear gap between urban and rural consumers, with urban consumers showing greater awareness due to better access to information and exposure to health campaigns. Food choices are socially embedded and context-specific, as evidenced by the varying

effects of cultural food norms. Overall, the results imply that structural and cultural limitations mediate awareness-based interventions.

National survey data discloses a complex consumer behaviour environment. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data shows that around 87% of adults fail to meet the suggested daily intake of fruits and vegetables (International Institute for Population Sciences [IIPS], 2021), and 70% surpass the World Health Organization's (WHO) suggested salt consumption limits (WHO, 2021). Also, household-level eating processed foods weekly (National Statistical Office [NSO], 2022). In contrast, awareness of healthy eating practices has improved, partly due to government programs like Eat Right India (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India [FSSAI], 2022).

Taken together, the three tables show that although there has been a rise in awareness of healthy food choices, actual dietary behaviour is still uneven and heavily influenced by socioeconomic and cultural factors. This persistent awareness-behavior gap limits the efficacy of information – based policy interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study draws attention to India's ongoing awareness-behavior gap regarding the consumption of healthy foods. The study highlights the shortcomings of information-based interventions and promotes behaviorally informed public policy approaches by fusing national survey data with consumer behavior theory. The data highlights the need for policy approaches that go beyond raising awareness and include behavioral insights, environmental nudges, and socio-economic factors. Closing the awareness-behavior gap is crucial for making real improvements in eating outcomes at the population level. The study offers a solid conceptual framework for upcoming empirical studies and policy formulation.

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YOGA AND EDUCATION IN BHARAT (INDIA)**Dr. Avinash S. Waghmare**

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ABSTRACT

In Bharat, yoga is the system of Bharatiya (Indian) Philosophy and it is also the Bharatiya Psychology. Bharatiya Sanskruti (culture) is formed through the systems of Bharatiya Tattvajnana (Philosophy) and Manashastra (Psychology). By the theory and practice of Vedas, Upanishad, Philosophy like Nyaya-Vaisheshika, Sankhya-Yoga, Mimamsa-Vedanta, Buddhism, Jainism, Charvakas, Sikhism, great literature like Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Puranas (myth) and so on formed our Indian education system. Right Yoga and Education Skills must be Developed at the Right Situation or Age. In our culture these skills can be developed through the social system. The intellectual and emotional yogic and educational skills are developed through the stories of Panchatantra, Birbal and Tenalirama.

When we are learning or educating about yoga means we are following / binding / yoking / uniting / connecting with the knowledge, behavior, habit of our elders – mother, father, Guru, society and so on. Which is mentioned above. We cannot achieve yoga and education by degree certificate of the university but by applying it practically to our self and others in the society in various forms like protecting, doing business and helping the human beings. The yoga and education of intellect and spirituality is received and understood by the learner only by practice and experience.

In Bharat, the great human beings who got the life on this earth with yoga and education (Guru) are Shri Ram, Shri Krishna and Shri Shivaji. (Sorry to give only few names) Swami Vivekananda says Shri Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj have both the characteristic of Shri Ram and Shri Krishna. They have learnt and exercise, yoga and education to conquer their self (spirit) and not the earth.

Keywords: Philosophy, Education, Culture, History, Psychology, Skills

INTRODUCTION

Yoga means Philosophy (Darshan Shastra). All the 12 philosophies, astika (theist) and nastika (atheist) are the educational system of Indian culture (Bhartiya sanskriti). These philosophical educational systems teach the students to become a good human being (manusha). Education of yoga philosophy teaches respect, gives practical knowledge, makes obedient and brings discipline and so on. Education of yoga philosophy can be learned from those who have all the knowledge of 12 philosophies of astika and nastika and have lived with the same knowledge and experience is known as 'GURU'.

200 years back Indian education system was very delight and rich. The gurukul teaching time table was divided into two parts. The first part was 'life-oriented yoga education' (jivan jaganyache yoga shastra) and 'job or business-oriented yoga education' (vayvasaya yoga shastra). The first part was from 8 am to 12 pm and the second part was from 12 pm to 4 pm. In 1835 Lord Macaulay of England introduces only 'job-oriented education'. Which destroyed the ancient educational system and culture of living? And introduce the western educational system and culture of competition of non-human beings and so on.

Today yoga education

Yogatattva Upanishad describes four kinds of yoga. They are Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga and Raja Yoga. Today all these four kinds of yoga are present in the text book (scripture) form. And they are also producing in minimum three to four languages or more. But still the teachers of yoga are lacking behind to teach their students. They are not introducing the body, mind and senses concepts. They are not connecting it to the Purushartha concept. But they are directly introducing them to asanas and pranayama. Therefore, the humans of this world are lacking behind in progress of yoga. Due to wrong knowledge and teaching they are not able to implement in their life, family, society and so on.

The Great Human Being Kings

Ramayan, Mahabharat, Maratha and so on are the main stories or epics, where yoga education is on the large scale. Ram, Krishna, Shivaji and so on are those human beings who have transformed themselves and their society at large with the education of yoga philosophy. Due to knowledge and education of yoga philosophy they were able to solve all physical, mental, intellectual, spiritual, social, economic problems and so on. (sorry for not giving any example)

How to Start Yoga Education?

According to Patanjali, “Yoga does not mean union but spiritual (atmicta) effort to attain perfection through the control of body, senses and mind and through right discrimination between purusha and prakruti”.¹

Yoga education advocates control over the body, the senses and the mind. We do not want to kill the body; on the other hand, it recommends its perfection. A sound mind needs a sound body. Sensual attachment and passions distract the body as well as mind. They must be conquered. To overcome them, yoga gives us various paths (marg) of discipline. The paths may be ashtanga yoga, shadanga yoga and so on.

The two basic important paths of yoga education are Yama and Niyama. These two transform the self and the society.

What Are Yama and Niyama?

Yama means to restraint or control. It is a social and ethical discipline. There are five yamas explained in Yoga and also by Jainism and four in Buddhism.

They are as follows: -

- 1) Ahimsa (non-injury)
- 2) Satya (Truth)
- 3) Asteya (non-stealing)
- 4) Brahmacharya (Self-control)
- 5) Aparigraha (Avarice)

Niyama means self-culture or giving respect and time to ourself. It is a personal and ethical discipline. There are five niyamas explained in Yoga.

They are as follows: -

- 1) Shaucha (Purification)
- 2) Santosha (Contentment)
- 3) Tapas (Austerity)
- 4) Svadhyaya (Self-study)
- 5) Ishvara pranidhana (Devotion to God)

Yama and Niyama being the principles of character building; it helps us to develop moral values and good sanskar (habits) to the human beings and the society.

Why Yama and Niyama Are Important in Yoga Education?

Without yama and niyama there will be no development in the self as well as in the society. This can be seen in our country. While comparing the life of the Bhartiya (Indians) before freedom and after freedom. There internal and external life of self and society. We are talking about yoga education to physical, mental, social, spiritual levels and on economic, financial, racism, classism and so on.

In yoga education all the five yama and niyama are taught to each and every individual. But they don't understand or they are not able to apply for self and the society. They must be taught on all the levels like physical, mental, social, spiritual and so on practically. The individual can follow this yamas and niyamas in every movement of life and in the society for progress, growth and success in life.

Yama Education

- 1) **Ahimsa:** - It is restraint or control from injury through thought, word and deeds. Jnanayashwer maharaj had used ahimsa as the biggest tool to get freedom from the Brahmanical rule. He got this yoga education from text like 'Prasthanatrayi' and his family sanskaras.
- 2) **Satya:** - It is restraint or control from falsehood through thought, word and deeds. There are two sentences, 'God is Truth' and 'Truth is God'. If one says 'Truth is God' it is ok/good. But if one says 'God is Truth' then there is a problem, because God can say anything he wants. Who knows is there any God? Truth is Truth. Learning Philosophy means coming closer to the reality of truth.

- 3) **Asteya:** - It is restraint or control from stealing through thought, word and deeds. One must train the body and mind with yoga education that it will use only things which belong to his earning. It means not to take others things for granted. One must train his body, mind and senses to do charity. If a student is copying in the exam, it is stealing or cheating (asteya). The yogi (student) who has done will never have success in life.
- 4) **Brahmacharya:** - It is restraint or control from passion and lust through thought, word and deeds. It is a student life. It must be pure and correct living. It teaches to have control over our desires and to build up a good character. The student life is to give seva to the 'GURU', society and nation. Brahmacharya means doing duties according to your age at right time, right space, right knowledge and right path (marg) for success.
- 5) **Aparigraha:** - It is restraint or control from avarice / greed through thought, word and deeds. Parigraha means hoarding or collecting and aparigraha means non-hoarding or free from hoarding. It teaches us to live with contentment and satisfaction. The yogi (human being) who have material wealth is always in fear, worry and how to use it. By holding parigraha he loses his own wealth the spirit which is eternal.

Niyama Education

- 1) **Shoucha:** - It is self-discipline duty and culture which includes internal and external purification. This yoga education of shoucha keeps one's body clean and mind pure. Therefore, all the thoughts, words and deeds are also pure. Shri Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was one of the self-discipline human beings in his words, thoughts and deeds.
- 2) **Santosa:** - It means satisfaction. It refers to mental contentment. If one has to remain happy and live a good life, it is necessary that one remain contented with what one has. One always seems to want more than what one has. If one has, one house, one car, one bike still one may want more. So, there is no end for one's desires. The more one have the more one seem to go after wants. Today those who are not satisfied they are struggling and suffering in their life. This is not yoga education. If the yogi wants to relax and live spiritual life, then he has to accept whatever he has.
- 3) **Tapas:** - It means austerity. It is a process to discipline one's body, mind and senses for cultivation of good behavior. Tapas means to take action devotedly with burning desire to do what one decides. It is to work hard with sincerity and determined effort. It is a burning effort made under all circumstances to achieve a goal in life. Without tapas no one will have perfection i.e. Tapas make the man perfect.
- 4) **Svadyaya:** - It means to learn to study one's own nature, one's own body, mind and senses functions, one's behavior and character in order to improve one self. It also means study of the scriptures. Svadyaya is self-study. If we fail to do svadyaya we will never progress in our life. There is no concept of readymade svadyaya.
- 5) **Ishvara Pranidhana:** - It means complete dedication / surrender / devoted / committed to the God. It is to have faith in God. This concept of Ishvara Pranidhana is highly spiritual. One can dedicate one's life for the sake of others who are in need of help, that can be friend, parent, animal, place and so on. Because one can find God in any of these.

In yoga education Yama and Niyama are the only two steps of ashtanga yoga philosophy of Patanjali. The remaining anga's are Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Mudra, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Yama and Niyama education must be applied practically while practicing all the remaining anga's.

The main aim of yoga education is to bring liberation of the self as a result. Yama and Niyama remove five kinds of suffering (Klesha). These are 1) Ignorance (avidya) 2) Egoism (asmita) 3) Attachment (raga) 4) Aversion (dvesa) and 5) Fear of death (abhinivesh).

"Yoga Education to Social Transformation through Yoga"

The Yama and Niyama are the basic foundation for the social transformation through yoga education. Yama and Niyama training helps to attain liberation (moksha) of the self as a result.

In Hathapradipika, Svatiarama says, to get success in yoga the yogi must get pure water to drink, food to eat and air to breathe. i.e. without following the Yama and Niyama it is not possible to get pure water, food and air. That is, we have to earn it. We must not get it free.

In Bharat (India), if yoga education manages to clean water, earth and air and maintain it. Our country will be the most prosper country in this world on all levels. All the Bhartiya's (Indian's) will be free from diseases and illness. We all will be free from all kinds of bondages of this sansarika and adyatmika world. Therefore, Yoga

education must not be developed only for the purpose of National or International Yoga Day. But it must be developed for the purpose of individual progress, growth and success, social transformation and global environment.

CONCLUSION

The yoga education must be taught by the 'GURU' who is trained in all the 12 philosophies and must have at least 25 years of experience. The Indian (Bhartiya) education system must not only be job or business-oriented education but also social and personal life-oriented education. The Yama and Niyama of yoga education will solve most of the problems of self and society. The yoga education helps to transform social thoughts through practical yoga, where our country will prosper in this world on all levels. This country has number of leaders who have yoga education in their life, like Shri Ram, Shri Krishna, Shri Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Swami Vivekananda, Subhash Chandra Bose and so on and so forth. Those humans who not follow the rules and regulation of the yoga i.e., yama and niyama, they become Ravana, Kansa or destroyer of the human cultural society like the Mughal, British and so on and so forth.

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FAITH AND SERVICE: MAPPING CATHOLIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL WELFARE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In India, the Roman Catholic Church occupies a unique sociological position, functioning as a significant provider of social welfare despite its demographic minority status. This study maps these contributions to understand how the Church navigates the intersection of religious identity and secular development. Utilizing a Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design, the research triangulates longitudinal quantitative data (2000–2024) with qualitative case studies of Caritas India and Diocesan Social Service Societies. The results confirm a subsidiary state phenomenon where Church infrastructure effectively substitutes for public incapacity, particularly in marginalized tribal and rural belts. Crucially, findings reveal a strategic operational shift from traditional charity to rights-based advocacy, empowering subaltern communities to claim constitutional entitlements rather than merely receiving aid. The Church's rapid mobilization during the COVID-19 crisis further validated its role as a resilient first responder capable of vast grassroots engagement. Ultimately, the study concludes that the Church has evolved beyond a colonial legacy into a dynamic instrument of nation-building, where service (diakonia) acts as a transformative vehicle for social equity and civic legitimacy, filling critical voids in the country's development architecture.

Keywords: Catholic Social Welfare, Faith-Based Organizations, Rights-Based Approach, Subsidiary State, Social Development.

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of religious faith and social development has long been a subject of sociological inquiry, particularly within the context of the Global South where religious institutions often function as parallel welfare states. In India, the Roman Catholic Church occupies a unique position in this landscape. While constituting a demographic minority, approximately 2.3% of the population when combined with other Christian denominations (Census of India, 2011), the Church's footprint in social welfare, education, and healthcare is disproportionately vast. This paradox of minority presence, majority impact is rooted in a theological mandate that views *diakonia* (service) not merely as a philanthropic addendum but as central to the expression of faith (Robinson, 2003). The history of Catholic social contributions in India is a trajectory that has evolved from the colonial-era civilizing mission to a post-colonial engagement with nation-building, and finally, to a contemporary focus on rights-based empowerment for marginalized communities such as Dalits and Tribals (Mosse, 2012).

The genealogy of Catholic social service in India challenges the simplistic narrative of it being solely a colonial import. While the Portuguese Padroado in the 16th century, spearheaded by figures like St. Francis Xavier, initiated organized institutional charity (Phiri, 2017), the indigenous St. Thomas Christians of Kerala had already integrated themselves into the local socio-economic fabric for centuries prior. However, the systematic institutionalization of social welfare, specifically the mission compound model of schools and hospitals, solidified during the 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, the Church utilized education as a primary vehicle for social mobility, a legacy that persists today. As scholars note, the missionary enterprise introduced a western educational model that, while initially intertwined with proselytization, eventually became a secularized instrument for modern citizenship (Frykenberg, 2008). By the time of India's independence in 1947, the Catholic Church had established a robust infrastructure of colleges and infirmaries that the nascent Indian state relied upon to supplement its limited public resources.

To understand the motivation behind these services, one must examine the evolution of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The promulgation of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) provided the early intellectual architecture for engaging with the social question, advocating for the rights of workers and the poor (Massaro, 2011). However, the watershed moment for the Church in India was the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) and its document *Gaudium et Spes*. This marked a theological pivot from an other-worldly salvation to a deep engagement with "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor" (Paul VI, 1965, para. 1). This shift catalyzed the formation of Caritas India in 1962. Originally established to assist refugees during the Indo-China war, Caritas India evolved into the official development arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). Unlike earlier charity models that

focused on relief, Caritas and diocesan social service societies began adopting professional social work standards, moving towards development and structural change (Caritas India, 2024).

In the post-independence era, the Church aligned itself with the Nehruvian vision of nation-building. The statistics regarding this contribution are significant. It is estimated that the Catholic Church in India manages over 17,000 educational institutions, with nearly 70% located in rural areas, and operates approximately 5,500 healthcare facilities (CBCI, n.d.; Global Catholic Education Report, 2021). These institutions have often served as the primary access point for healthcare in remote tribal belts and education for the rural poor, filling critical gaps left by state incapacity. However, this engagement has not been without complexity. Sociologist Rowena Robinson (2003) argues that while the Church has been a mediator of development, it also navigates internal caste dynamics and external political pressures. The service aspect of the Church has increasingly become a site of political negotiation, where the Church asserts its legitimacy as a national actor through its contribution to the public good, countering narratives that frame Christianity as foreign (Robinson, 2003).

In recent decades, the focus of Catholic social welfare has shifted from a welfare approach to a rights-based approach. This involves moving beyond the mere provision of services to the empowerment of subaltern groups to claim their constitutional rights. This is evident in the Church's heavy involvement in the Right to Food campaign, labor rights for unorganized workers, and anti-human trafficking initiatives (Caritas India, 2025). This paper maps these multifaceted contributions, analyzing how the Catholic Church in India has navigated the tension between its religious identity and its secular service mandate. By examining historical records, theological documents, and contemporary developmental data, this study aims to provide a holistic view of how faith-based organizations contribute to the welfare architecture of a pluralistic democracy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarship on Catholic social welfare in India is characterized by a fundamental tension: the Church is simultaneously viewed as a foreign colonial remnant and an indispensable indigenous provider of public goods. This review synthesizes three distinct bodies of literature, Historical-Missiological, Sociological-Anthropological, and Developmental-Political, to map how the academic understanding of Catholic welfare has evolved from civilizing mission to rights-based empowerment.

Early historiography of the Catholic Church in India often focused on the missionary encounter. Scholars like **Frykenberg (2008)** argue that while colonial-era missions were intertwined with proselytization, they inadvertently laid the secular foundations of modern Indian education and healthcare. The mission compound model, an ecosystem of school, hospital, and church, was not merely a tool for conversion but a mechanism for social uplift that the post-independence Indian state co-opted for nation-building. However, **Phiri (2017)** provides a critical corrective to this narrative, noting that while the institutional impact was vast, it was often top-down, focusing on elite education (the convent school phenomenon) rather than structural equity. This created a paradox where Catholic institutions produced the secular elite of India while ostensibly serving the poorest of the poor, a tension that persists in contemporary debates on the commercialization of minority education.

A significant shift in literature occurred with the sociological turn, led by scholars like **Rowena Robinson (2003)** and **David Mosse (2012)**. Moving beyond the missionary lens, **Robinson (2003)** in *Christians of India* argues that Catholic social service cannot be understood without analyzing the internal caste dynamics of the Church. She posits that service (diakonia) acts as a unifying public face for a community deeply fractured by caste divisions (Dalit Christians vs. Elite Syrian Christians). **David Mosse (2012)**, in his seminal work *The Saint in the Banyan Tree*, takes this further. He demonstrates how the Church in Tamil Nadu historically secularized caste, treating it as a social custom rather than a religious barrier, to maintain social order. However, he argues that in the late 20th century, a radical shift occurred: Catholic spaces became sites of Dalit assertion. The Church's developmental infrastructure (NGOs, social centers) began to be used by Dalit Christians not just for welfare, but as platforms to demand secular rights from the state. This marks the transition from charity to political contestation.

The motivation for this transition is grounded in the evolution of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). **Massaro (2011)** notes that post-Vatican II theology (*Gaudium et Spes*) compelled the Church to move from almsgiving to addressing structural sin. In the Indian context, this operational shift is best understood through the theory of the Subsidiary State, where Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) do not merely supplement the state but actively substitute it during systemic failures (**Fernandes, 2022**). Policy literature corroborates this; the Strategic Plan for Malaria Control (**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare [MoHFW], 2012**) explicitly identifies Caritas India as a critical non-state partner in national health goals. This subsidiary function was strikingly validated

during the COVID-19 pandemic. While earlier collaborations were often bureaucratic, the pandemic necessitated an immediate, frontline mobilization of the Church's vast grassroots network. This crisis efficacy was publicly acknowledged when Caritas India was conferred the 'Best NGO for Healthcare Services' at the Healthgiri Awards (**India Today, 2020**). As noted in the award citation, the Church's ability to mobilize Corona Warriors in remote geographies highlighted a resilience that state machinery often lacked in the initial phases of the lockdown (**India Today, 2020**). This recognition by a mainstream secular media house signals a shift in the public transcript, from viewing the Church as a conversion machine to recognizing it as a critical pillar of national health security.

LITERATURE GAPS

Despite this rich scholarship, critical lacunae remain. There is a scarcity of research on how Catholic welfare has adapted to the neoliberal turn (post-1991), where the state increasingly outsources welfare to NGOs. Additionally, there is an organizational void; while scholars analyze villages or encyclicals, there is little organizational analysis of how entities like the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) strategically navigate the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and rising majoritarian nationalism to sustain their work. Finally, existing literature is often qualitative; there is a lack of mixed-methods studies that quantify the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of Catholic welfare in a manner comparable to secular development metrics. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the Service-Faith nexus through the lens of organizational resilience and constitutional rights.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite the extensive institutional footprint of the Catholic Church in India, a critical gap remains in the academic literature regarding the functional mechanics and sociological impact of these contributions in the contemporary era. Existing scholarship has largely bifurcated into two distinct streams: historical hagiographies that chronicle missionary zeal without critical analysis (Phiri, 2017), or anthropological studies focused primarily on conversion, caste dynamics, and inculturation (Mosse, 2012; Robinson, 2003). Consequently, there is a paucity of empirical research that maps Catholic social welfare not merely as a religious imperative, but as a critical component of India's non-state welfare architecture. This gap is particularly glaring in the context of the Turn to Religion in development studies (Clarke, 2006). While global discourse acknowledges Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) as vital development partners, the specific trajectory of the Indian Catholic Church, navigating a secular constitutional framework while managing minority rights, remains under-theorized. Furthermore, the recent tightening of regulatory frameworks governing foreign contributions and the socio-political scrutiny of minority institutions present a new existential challenge (Chaudhry, 2021). The problem, therefore, is to understand how the Church sustains its option for the poor amidst these shifting political sands and how its transition from charity to rights-based advocacy impacts its efficacy and social legitimacy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address these lacunae, this study frames the following core inquiry:

How has the Catholic Church in India reconfigured its social welfare strategies in the post-liberalization era to address the dual demands of theological fidelity (Catholic Social Teaching) and secular constitutional compliance?

Sub-questions guiding this inquiry include:

1. What is the quantitative and qualitative scope of Catholic contributions to education and healthcare in marginalized geographies (specifically Tribal and Dalit belts)?
2. How has the operational philosophy of key agencies like Caritas India evolved from service delivery to rights-based empowerment, and what are the measurable outcomes of this shift?
3. In what ways do Catholic welfare institutions function as subsidiary actors to the Indian state, and how does this relationship influence the Church's social standing?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research contributes to the field of Religion and Development by offering a Global South perspective on how FBOs operate within a pluralistic democracy. Unlike Western models where FBOs often act as contractors for the state, the Indian Catholic experience offers a unique model of parallel welfare provision born out of minority identity (Heredia, 2007). Second, the study holds policy relevance; as India strives to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in education (SDG 4) and health (SDG 3), understanding the capacity and reach of non-state actors like the Church is crucial for effective public-private partnerships. Finally, this study addresses the sociology of organizations, analyzing how a hierarchically structured,

transnational religious institution (the Church) localizes its operations to meet indigenous developmental needs, often mediating between global funding and local grassroots realities (Bétéille, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) to effectively triangulate quantitative reach with qualitative impact. By simultaneously collecting quantitative and qualitative data and analyzing them independently, the study subsequently merges the results to generate a comprehensive, multi-dimensional understanding of the research problem.

In the quantitative phase, the study draws upon longitudinal data spanning from 2000 to 2024, primarily from the Catholic Directory of India (CBCI) and annual audited reports of Caritas India. Institutions are categorized according to Type (Educational, Healthcare, Social Service), Geography (Urban versus Rural/Tribal), and Target Beneficiary (General versus Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe) to generate descriptive statistics that visualize the density of service provision relative to India's demographic heat maps. The qualitative phase complements this through document analysis and purposive case study selection. A systematic review of pastoral letters and strategic plan documents from the CBCI is conducted to trace the organizational semantic shift from Charity to Empowerment. Additionally, a purposive sampling strategy selects Caritas India (representing national, macro-engagement) and a Diocesan Social Service Society (DSSS) in a tribal belt (representing grassroots implementation) for deeper analysis.

Qualitative data is subjected to rigorous coding using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, identifying codes related to Secularism, Rights, Minority Status, and Nation-Building. The theoretical lens of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) is applied to analyze how Catholic institutions have adapted their organizational structures to mirror secular NGOs to ensure survival and funding compliance. Limitations include potential self-reporting bias in Church data and the treatment of the Church as an institutional monolith, despite the internal diversity of religious orders as highlighted by Mosse (2012).

RESULTS

The analysis of longitudinal data and qualitative case studies yields three significant findings regarding the operational mechanics and social impact of Catholic welfare in India.

1. The Subsidiary State Effect: The quantitative mapping confirms the trends queried in Research Question 3, revealing a distinct geographical stratification in service delivery. While the Catholic community is demographically concentrated in South India and Tribal belts, the distribution of services operates inversely to state capacity. Analysis of CBCI institutional data indicates the Church operates approximately 25,000 distinct educational and social service entities. The data reveals a Rural Bias in healthcare and social interventions, contrasting with an Urban Bias in tertiary education. Specifically, Healthcare focuses 75% on Rural & Tribal belts targeting uninsured/BPL populations; Social Service (DSSS) focuses on Scheduled Tribes and Dalits in rural hinterlands via Self-Help Groups; K-12 Education remains hybrid; while Higher Education centers on urban elites. In regions with low Human Development Indices (HDI), such as the Chotanagpur plateau, Catholic healthcare facilities often function as the *sole* providers of primary care, effectively substituting for the state infrastructure.

2. The Empowerment Turn: Qualitative analysis of Caritas India's strategic documents (2010–2024) directly answers Research Question 2. There is a measurable semantic and operational shift from welfare terminology (aid, relief) to rights-based terminology (entitlement, advocacy). This transition is visible in the evolution of the Diocesan Social Service Society (DSSS) model, which has moved from distributing foreign aid to prioritizing the formation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs). For example, the Roshni program forms Child Parliaments and women's collectives to petition local *Panchayats* for state funds rather than building schools directly. This acts as a survival strategy against the restrictive Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), allowing the Church to act as a facilitator of government schemes, thereby reducing reliance on foreign capital.

3. Crisis Response as a Legitimacy Multiplier: The COVID-19 response period (2020–2021) validated the Church's role as a first responder. Textual analysis of media coverage, including the India Today Healthgiri Awards (2020), indicates a spike in the Church's social capital. While state machinery was overwhelmed, the Church's hierarchical yet decentralized structure allowed for rapid mobilization. The Caritas India network utilized its 170+ DSSS partners to launch Mission Sanjeevani, assisting over 10 million individuals (Caritas India, 2024). The conferment of the 'Best NGO for Healthcare Services' award by a mainstream media house (India Today, 2020) suggests a temporary suspension of anti-minority narratives, leveraging *diakonia* to reinforce the Church's status as a national entity.

In summary, Catholic contributions have evolved into a dual-track system: Track A (Institutional) serves the general public and elite to generate goodwill, while Track B (Grassroots) engages in low-visibility, high-impact rights advocacy for marginalized groups, often operating in the shadows to avoid political backlash.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that the Church has transitioned from a colonial-era provider of charity to a contemporary facilitator of rights, a shift necessitated by both theological renewal and socio-political survival.

The results validate the premise of Research Question 3, demonstrating that in India's tribal hinterlands, the Church does not merely support the state; it effectively *constitutes* the welfare infrastructure, creating a complex shadow partnership. While political rhetoric often frames the Church as foreign (Robinson, 2003), the data reveals a pragmatic reliance by the state on Catholic infrastructure for last-mile delivery. The *Healthgiri Award* serves as a public transcript acknowledging this dependency (India Today, 2020). In moments of crisis, the ideological suspicion of the minority institution is suspended in favor of its logistical utility, affirming Fernandes' (2022) argument that in the periphery, the Church possesses a moral legitimacy that the state often lacks.

The shift to rights-based advocacy is an organizational survival strategy. Stringent FCRA regulations have curtailed foreign aid for brick-and-mortar charity; thus, by pivoting to empowerment, the Church achieves economic efficiency (advocacy requires less capital) and political insulation. By helping Dalits and Tribals access *government* schemes, the Church positions itself as a patriotic enabler of state welfare, neutralizing accusations of using foreign money for conversion (Mosse, 2012). This directly addresses Research Question 2, suggesting that development has become the primary language through which the Church negotiates its citizenship in modern India.

Findings align with Mosse's (2012) observation that Catholic spaces function as sites of subaltern assertion. The Rural Bias indicates that for Dalit and Tribal communities, the Church is a vehicle for social mobility. Institutional isomorphism is evident as DSSS units mirror secular NGOs in structure and language, effectively secularizing their operations to remain viable partners for the state and donors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

CONCLUSION

This research challenges the reductionist view of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) as mere relics of a colonial past, establishing the Catholic Church as a critical non-state actor within India's development architecture, characterized by minority presence, majority impact.

The Church functions as a subsidiary state in healthcare and education, filling voids left by public incapacity. It exhibits adaptive resilience, successfully navigating the transition from a Charity Model to a Rights-Based Model despite regulatory tightening (FCRA) and majoritarian political pressure. Through crisis interventions (e.g., COVID-19), the Church continuously renews its social license to operate, proving that faith-motivated service remains a vital component of civil society.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Policymakers must recognize the pragmatic necessity of integrating FBOs into national development frameworks, particularly for reaching the last mile in healthcare (SDG 3), as viewing minority institutions solely through a regulatory lens risks dismantling essential welfare infrastructure. Future research should employ econometric methods to calculate the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of these interventions and conduct comparative studies between Catholic, Hindu, and Islamic welfare organizations. Ultimately, the story of Catholic social service in India is one of inculturation through service, where a global faith has rooted itself in local soil through a sustained engagement with "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties" of the Indian people.

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FINDING MEANING THROUGH SERVICE- EXPLORING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERISM AMONG YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, youth across the globe have been experiencing psychological concerns such as anxiety, loneliness, emotional distress and a diminished sense of purpose in life. This is due to rapid social changes, increased individualism and limited opportunities for meaningful social engagement. It has created an urgent need for effective psychosocial interventions that promote well-being and resilience among young people. Within this context, volunteerism can emerge as a promising avenue for psychological growth, offering opportunities for social connection, value-based action and purposeful engagement. This research aims to explore the psychological impact of volunteerism among youth by examining the processes and outcomes through which service contributes to a sense of purpose and meaning in life. By examining both the internal processes such as values and emotional fulfillment and outcomes such as well-being, self-esteem and life satisfaction, this research seeks to understand volunteerism as a pathway to positive psychological growth. The study adopts a mixed-methods research design which includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. This comprehensive approach provides a nuanced understanding of how volunteerism functions as a meaningful and transformative experience, highlighting its potential as a tool for enhancing youth mental health and development.

Keywords: *volunteerism, youth, psychological impact, service, meaning in life*

INTRODUCTION

निःस्वार्थता, करुणा, सेवा, त्यागः च संवेदना ।

यत्र पञ्च गुणाः सन्ति, तत्कर्म स्वयंसेवा॥

The above sanskrit subhashit puts light on qualities of action that transform action into volunteering. It states that where five virtues Selflessness, compassion, service, sacrifice and empathy are present, that action is called volunteering.

Volunteerism is a process in which individuals dedicate their time, skills and efforts for the welfare of others. (Clary and Snyder,1999). Volunteerism is not only a mechanism for social change but also a significant contributor to individual psychological development. By engaging in service oriented activities, individuals not only support community well-being but also experience personal growth, enhanced self worth and improved psychological functioning.

In recent years, concerns regarding youth mental health have risen. According to World Health Organisation(WHO) report, approximately one in seven adolescents experiences a mental disorder with anxiety, depression and loneliness. Academic, work pressure and weakened social bonds are the prominent reasons for this. This highlights the need to explore holistic and sustainable solutions that can support youth to find a sense of meaning or purpose in life, thereby enhancing their mental well-being. Volunteerism is a promising psychosocial intervention, capable of developing a stronger sense of purpose and having a positive psychological impact on youth. (Gronlund and Falk,2019). Through meaningful engagement in service, individuals may develop greater self-awareness, social connectedness, emotional resilience and a feeling of usefulness and contribution. (Nichol et al,2024)

According to author, Volunteerism can be defined as -

Volunteerism is the practice of giving or serving for the welfare of society in the pursuit of greater good, motivated by multiple intrinsic and extrinsic factors while also contributing to one's personal development, skill enhancement and psychological well-being.

IMPORTANCE

This research is important because it provides deeper insight into the psychological impact that Volunteerism can have on individuals. It helps to understand how Volunteerism can reduce stress, anxiety, loneliness and a feeling of purposelessness by enhancing self-esteem, empathy, emotional resilience and overall mental being among youth. From an academic perspective, the study contributes to the growing field of positive psychology. Furthermore, recognizing these benefits can encourage more individuals to engage in Volunteerism which will

create a positive cycle of personal and social growth. The findings can guide educational institutions, NGOs and governments in building volunteer initiatives which will support communities while also having a positive impact on volunteer's mental well-being. It will also augment emotional awareness and mental well-being among individuals.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To explore the psychological impact of Volunteerism among youth.
- 2) To examine the role of Volunteerism in enhancing a sense of meaning and purpose in life.
- 3) To compare the psychological impact of Volunteerism among youth with differing levels of pre-existing emotional and psychological distress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on Volunteerism highlights its multifaceted psychological benefits, particularly in relation to emotional and psychological well-being, meaning-making and overall well-being. By examining it critically, following impact of Volunteerism can be analysed.

1) Reduction in Stress and Psychological distress

In Indian Culture, Volunteerism is often rooted in the concept of Seva (Selfless Service) which is associated with inner peace and emotional balance in Indian Culture and various scriptures such as Bhagvat Geeta and Upanishads. Helping others activates positive emotions and can shift attention away from stress. Acts of Service stimulate the release of dopamine and oxytocin which promotes calmness and emotional regulation. Helping others is also linked to lower cortisol levels contributing to physiological stress reduction along with psychological relief. "Stress, Social Support and the Buffering hypothesis by Cohen, Wills (1985)" states that social engagement has a beneficial effect on well-being irrespective of stress which leads to stability, recognition of self-worth. "Volunteer work and Well-being" by Thoits, P.A. and Hewitt, L.N. (2001) highlights that individuals engaged in voluntary service reported lower psychological distress compared to non-volunteers. However the theory can be criticized on grounds that stress reducing effect may decrease if Volunteerism becomes over-demanding or compulsory. It can also lead to over-exhaustion or burnout of volunteers.

2) Reduction in loneliness

Through Volunteerism social networks develop which helps to reduce loneliness as a feeling of inclusion develops among volunteers. Volunteerism is also a way for migrant and urban youth to overcome social isolation, by integrating into community based networks. A sense of being a part of something good develops which also creates a positive impact. It aims to fulfill the Social Needs which is an important need according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs in order to later reach ego and esteem and self-actualisation. Self-Determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) emphasises relatedness as a core psychological need for well-being which can be fulfilled through Volunteerism. Wilson (2012) in his volunteerism research argued that Volunteerism is linked to lower loneliness and higher social connectedness especially among youth and adults. However it can be criticised on grounds that it underconsiders task-oriented Volunteerism which has very little interpersonal interactions. Also if collective Volunteerism work is not properly organised, some volunteers can feel left out which may augment loneliness. Also hierarchical organisational structures common in many institutions may marginalize volunteers, reinforcing feelings of exclusion.

3) Enhanced sense of meaning and purpose in life

Philosophical texts like Shrimat Bhagvat Geeta elaborates the concept of "Niskaam Karma" which signifies doing action or service without any expectations. Such actions of service enhances meaning in everyone's life. Gita presents niskama karma as a path to self-realisation and moksha (liberation) which gives life existential meaning beyond material success. Volunteerism helps us to find meaning beyond self. While contributing to society, it strengthens life's purpose. Exposure to social issues encourages existential reflection, helping individuals to reassess life priorities, enabling them to get a clarity of purpose in life. Service reinforces the belief that one's actions contribute to a larger societal good or greater good, enhancing meaning to life. Health benefits of Volunteerism in the Wisconsin longitudinal study by Pillavin and Siegl (2007) found that volunteers obtain higher life satisfaction and a sense of purpose. However, critical analysis reveals that there is a possibility that individuals who already possess a strong sense of purpose are more likely to volunteer. Similarly volunteers often differ from non-volunteers in terms of personality traits such as altruism, optimism etc which influences psychological well-being. So, it makes it difficult to attribute positive outcomes solely to Volunteerism.

4) Improvement in Self-esteem and self-worth

Feeling useful and capable increases self-esteem. When an individual is able to see a contribution in some kind of transformation or change, an individual feels worthy. Successfully helping others strengthens self-efficacy and improves confidence. In study "Is Volunteerism rewarding in itself" by meier and stutzer (2008) it is observed that self-esteem and emotional well-being is higher among regular volunteers. Critical analysis reveals that self esteem gains may depend heavily on external appreciation which may make it unstable. Over-identification with the helper role without validation can create vulnerability.

5) Development of empathy and prosocial behaviour

Direct exposure to other's difficulties enhances to understand different perspectives and problems. Emotional engagement in service increases moral sensitivity and compassion towards others. It helps to develop altruistic values. Concepts like karuna, Daya are central to Indian values which are cultivated through service and exposure to suffering. Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis proposed by psychologist C.Daniel Batson states that feeling empathetic concern for someone in need produces genuine altruistic motivation. But a limitation of this perspective is that higher empathy is generally developed in long term Volunteerism programs. Also empathy may not develop among volunteers who volunteer for tangible rewards.

6) Increased psychological well-being and life satisfaction

In Indian culture, Seva is considered a means to supreme bliss (lasting contentment) rather than momentary happiness, aligning with sustained life satisfaction. Volunteerism satisfies multiple psychological needs simultaneously like relatedness, competence and purpose which leads to holistic well-being. Social appreciation and belonging enhances positive self-evaluation, contributing to life satisfaction. A strong relationship is demonstrated between Volunteerism and psychological well-being in the study "stress and health- major findings and policy implications" by Thoits (2010). The theory can be criticised as well-being effects may reduce if Volunteerism becomes a daily routine or obligatory. Service devoid of bhava (intention) can reduce its transformative potential.

RESEARCH

Despite extensive research and studies on motivations for Volunteerism, fewer studies have examined the psychological outcomes of Volunteerism among youth, particularly in relation to meaning-making and emotional well-being. Moreover, existing research and studies largely relies on Western theoretical models, with limited attention to Indian cultural frameworks. Additionally, there is a lack of study that examines whether the psychological impact of Volunteerism differs based on youths' pre-existing emotional and psychological states. The present study seeks to address these gaps.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS-

- 1) Does Volunteerism have a positive psychological impact on youth ?
- 2) Does Volunteerism influences youth's sense of meaning and purpose in life?
- 3) Does the psychological impact of Volunteerism differ between youth with higher and lower levels of emotional and psychological distress prior to Volunteerism?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively explore the psychological impact of Volunteerism on youth. The quantitative component seeks to explore the impact of Volunteerism on youth's well-being. The qualitative component provides deeper insight into how Volunteerism gives a sense of purpose. By engaging both approaches, study provides a holistic understanding of the psychological outcomes of Volunteerism.

Sample Size- A survey was conducted of 65 participants to do basic statistical analysis.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

A structured questionnaire was prepared to analyse volunteers' well-being. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Data was collected using google form.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which includes mean, standard deviation, frequency.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure reliability, reverse coded questions were added in google form. It helps to avoid response and acquaintance biases.

LIMITATIONS

Potential limitations include self-report bias in survey responses and a non-random sample that may limit generalizability.

RESEARCH PARADIGM-**Pragmatism-**

The study is grounded in a pragmatic paradigm. Pragmatism allows the integration of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine the psychological impact of Volunteerism among youth. By combining measurable indicators of well-being with subjective experiences of meaning and purpose, the study adopts a holistic and flexible approach to understand how service contributes to youth development.

Ontological Assumption

The study is based on pragmatic ontological stance, which recognises reality is both objective and subjective. While psychological well-being can be measured statistically, meaning derived from Volunteerism is shaped by individual experiences and social contexts.

Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemologically, the study adopts a pragmatic approach to knowledge, acknowledging that understanding is generated through multiple ways of knowing. Knowledge about the psychological impact of Volunteerism is obtained by integrating quantitative data with qualitative insights, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Axiological assumptions

From an axiological perspective, ethical sensitivity, reflexivity and respect for participants' perspectives are maintained throughout the research process.

Observation and Analysis

To assess the psychological impact of Volunteerism, data was collected from 65 participants using a structured questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire were coded on a 5 point likert scale, where-

1-Strongly Disagree

2- Disagree

3- Neutral

4- Agree

5- Strongly agree

Pre-Volunteerism Psychological State of Participants

In the first section, the questionnaire assessed the mental and emotional state of volunteers prior to engagement in Volunteering activities across four constructs i.e. loneliness and social disconnection, stress and mental overload, lack of sense of purpose, social support and belonging. Additionally, one reverse coded item was included to ensure reliability and reduce acquaintance bias. For data analysis, mean scores were calculated for each participant by averaging responses across all four constructs, to reflect participants' general emotional and psychological state prior to Volunteering. Prior to statistical analysis, reverse coded items were reversely marked as per scale to ensure consistent directional interpretation.

Participant	Loneliness and Social Disconnection	Stress and Mental Overload	Lack of Sense of purpose	Social Support and Belonging	Reverse coded	Mean Score
P1	2	2	2	2	1	1.8
P2	3	3	3	3	3	3
P3	3	2	2	2	3	2.4
P4	1	3	3	2	1	2
P5	2	3	2	2	5	2.8
P6	3	3	3	3	3	3
P7	1	2	2	2	1	1.6
P8	2	4	3	4	2	3
P9	4	4	4	4	3	3.8

P10	4	4	4	4	2	3.6
P11	2	4	2	2	3	2.6
P12	2	3	2	3	2	2.4
P13	1	1	2	1	1	1.2
P14	2	3	2	1	1	1.8
P15	3	4	4	5	3	3.8
P16	2	3	3	2	3	2.6
P17	1	1	2	1	1	1.2
P18	3	3	4	3	2	3
P19	2	1	1	1	3	1.6
P20	4	4	4	4	3	3.8
P21	3	3	4	3	2	3
P22	2	3	4	3	2	2.8
P23	5	3	5	3	3	3.8
P24	2	3	2	3	2	2.4
P25	4	4	1	1	4	2.8
P26	3	3	3	1	2	2.4
P27	2	2	2	2	2	2
P28	1	3	3	4	3	2.8
P29	3	2	3	2	2	2.4
P30	2	2	2	2	1	1.8
P31	1	1	2	2	2	1.6
P32	5	5	4	4	3	4.2
P33	3	3	3	4	3	3.2
P34	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
P35	3	2	2	1	3	2.2
P36	2	1	3	3	3	2.4
P37	3	4	4	2	3	3.2
P38	4	3	2	3	3	3
P39	1	3	3	3	3	2.6
P40	4	2	2	2	1	2.2
P41	4	4	5	3	2	3.6
P42	3	2	2	3	2	2.4
P43	1	1	3	1	1	1.4
P44	2	5	4	3	1	3
P45	4	3	4	4	2	3.4
P46	3	4	1	2	3	2.6
P47	1	1	1	1	3	1.4
P48	3	3	1	1	4	2.4
P49	3	3	2	2	3	2.6
P50	5	1	5	1	1	2.6
P51	3	3	3	3	3	3
P52	1	1	2	2	2	1.6
P53	2	3	4	3	3	3
P54	4	2	2	4	2	2.8

P55	3	1	1	4	1	2
P56	3	2	3	4	3	3
P57	3	4	2	3	4	3.2
P58	2	3	4	2	3	2.8
P59	1	2	3	2	5	2.6
P60	4	4	5	2	4	3.8
P61	3	2	1	3	5	2.8
P62	2	5	2	2	5	3.2
P63	2	3	4	2	3	2.8
P64	1	5	2	1	4	2.6
P65	3	5	1	3	5	3.4
	2.6	2.830769231	2.738461538	2.507692308	2.6	2.655384615

This analysis revealed the mean score across constructs:

Loneliness and Social Disconnection :2.6

Stress and mental overload :2.83

Lack of Sense of Purpose :2.74

Social Support and Belonging :2.51

The overall mean psychological score was 2.65 which is slightly above the midpoint of the scale 2.5 . This reveals that on average participants reported moderate emotional and psychological challenges prior to Volunteering.Among assessed participants ,stress and mental overload emerged as the most prominent concern, registering the highest mean score 2.83 . This indicates that many participants experienced notable academic, emotional or cognitive pressure before participating in service activities.

Overall, these findings indicate that youth participants entered Volunteering with a moderately strained psychological state, particularly characterized by stress, mental overload and partial social disconnection.This might have drawn volunteers to engage in service activities to foster social bond, emotional regulation and a renewed sense of purpose.

This observation of psychological profile prior to Volunteering leads us to examine what psychological impact is seen on volunteers after engaging in service.

Post-Volunteering Psychological Outcomes

Partici pant	Meaning and purpose in life	Psychological Well-being and emotional strength	Social Connectedness and Belonging	Reverse coded item	Mean Score
P1	3	3	4	4	3.5
P2	5	4	3	3	3.75
P3	5	5	5	5	5
P4	4	4	3	4	3.75
P5	4	4	4	4	4
P6	4	4	4	3	3.75
P7	5	5	5	5	5
P8	4	5	4	5	4.5
P9	4	5	5	4	4.5
P10	4	4	4	2	3.5
P11	5	5	5	1	4
P12	5	5	5	5	5
P13	3	2	2	3	2.5

P14	3	3	3	4	3.25
P15	5	5	5	3	4.5
P16	4	5	5	5	4.75
P17	4	4	4	3	3.75
P18	4	4	3	4	3.75
P19	3	3	3	4	3.25
P20	3	3	3	3	3
P21	3	4	4	4	3.75
P22	3	3	3	3	3
P23	4	3	3	4	3.5
P24	4	4	4	3	3.75
P25	1	4	4	4	3.25
P26	3	4	4	4	3.75
P27	4	5	5	5	4.75
P28	4	4	3	5	4
P29	3	3	3	3	3
P30	4	4	4	4	4
P31	4	5	5	4	4.5
P32	3	3	3	3	3
P33	4	4	4	4	4
P34	3	3	2	3	2.75
P35	5	5	5	3	4.5
P36	3	4	4	3	3.5
P37	4	4	4	4	4
P38	4	4	4	4	4
P39	3	3	4	3	3.25
P40	3	5	4	5	4.25
P41	4	4	4	4	4
P42	4	4	4	5	4.25
P43	5	5	5	5	5
P44	5	3	4	4	4
P45	4	5	5	5	4.75
P46	5	5	5	5	5
P47	4	3	3	4	3.5
P48	4	4	4	2	3.5
P49	3	4	3	5	3.75
P50	1	1	1	1	1
P51	2	2	2	2	2
P52	4	4	4	4	4
P53	4	3	3	4	3.5
P54	2	4	2	4	3
P55	5	5	5	5	5
P56	3	4	3	4	3.5
P57	3	3	3	4	3.25
P58	4	4	4	4	4

P59	4	5	4	5	4.5
P60	3	2	2	4	2.75
P61	4	4	4	4	4
P62	5	5	5	5	5
P63	3	4	4	4	3.75
P64	5	5	5	5	5
P65	5	5	5	5	5
	3.769230769	3.953846154	3.815384615	3.876923077	3.846153846

Participant	Emotional strain and burnout	Lack of Recognition/Perceived Partiality	Lack of clarity of purpose	Cross Coded item	Mean Score
P1	2	2	3	2	2
P2	3	3	3	3	3
P3	3	3	3	3	3
P4	3	3	3	2	2.5
P5	4	2	4	2	3
P6	3	3	3	1	2
P7	3	3	2	3	3
P8	4	4	4	1	2.5
P9	4	4	4	1	2.5
P10	4	4	4	2	3
P11	3	3	3	1	2
P12	2	1	3	2	2
P13	3	1	2	1	2
P14	4	3	2	3	3.5
P15	2	3	3	3	2.5
P16	2	1	1	1	1.5
P17	4	1	1	2	3
P18	2	3	2	3	2.5
P19	2	2	1	2	2
P20	3	3	3	3	3
P21	3	3	3	3	3
P22	3	3	3	5	4
P23	3	3	3	2	2.5
P24	2	3	3	3	2.5
P25	2	2	4	2	2
P26	3	3	3	3	3
P27	2	4	3	1	1.5
P28	2	3	3	2	2
P29	3	3	3	3	3
P30	3	3	4	2	2.5
P31	2	2	3	2	2
P32	3	3	3	3	3
P33	4	4	3	3	3.5
P34	3	3	2	2	2.5

P35	4	3	3	2	3
P36	4	3	3	2	3
P37	4	4	5	2	3
P38	3	3	3	2	2.5
P39	4	1	3	3	3.5
P40	1	1	3	2	1.5
P41	3	3	4	2	2.5
P42	3	3	4	3	3
P43	3	3	3	1	2
P44	3	1	4	1	2
P45	1	2	3	1	1
P46	3	3	2	1	2
P47	3	3	3	3	3
P48	2	4	5	2	2
P49	3	2	3	1	2
P50	1	4	1	1	1
P51	4	4	2	3	3.5
P52	1	1	4	2	1.5
P53	3	3	3	3	3
P54	4	2	4	2	3
P55	2	2	3	2	2
P56	3	3	3	1	2
P57	2	2	2	3	2.5
P58	4	2	4	2	3
P59	3	2	3	1	2
P60	4	2	3	2	3
P61	3	3	3	2	2.5
P62	3	2	2	2	2.5
P63	4	4	4	2	3
P64	1	1	1	1	1
P65	3	3	3	1	2
	2.8769230 77	2.661538462	2.969230769	2.07692307 7	2.476923 077

After engaging in Volunteering activities, psychological impact was assessed. Both positive and negative outcomes were examined through a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire measured positive psychological constructs like meaning and purpose in life, psychological well-being and emotional strength and social connectedness and belonging. Descriptive Statistics revealed a substantial improvement in overall well-being. The overall mean score across participants was 3.85 indicating a shift toward agreement with positive psychological statements.

The construct-wise mean scores were as follows-

Meaning and Purpose in Life- 3.77

Psychological Well-being and Emotional Strength- 3.95

Social Connectedness and belonging- 3.82

Among these psychological well-being and Emotional strength recorded the highest mean score, suggesting that Volunteering contributed significantly to emotional resilience, self-confidence and inner stability among youth. Overall these findings suggest that Volunteering has positively influenced youth psychological well-being by

fostering purpose, emotional strength and social integration. Also, it was examined whether any psychological difficulties persisted. Constructs measuring emotional strain and burnout, lack of recognition or perceived partiality, lack of clarity of purpose were administered. The overall mean score for this scale was 2.48, which lies below the midpoint of the scale, indicating a reduction in negative psychological experiences after Volunteering.

Construct-Wise mean scores were-

Emotional strain or burnout- 2.88

Lack of recognition/Perceived Partiality- 2.66

Lack of clarity of purpose- 2.97

While most negative indicators remained low to moderate, emotional strain and lack of clarity of purpose showed comparatively higher mean values, suggesting that a small section of participants continued to experience fatigue or uncertainty despite overall improvement. However, overall a mean score below the midpoint of the scale confirms a general decline in negative emotional states.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Volunteering is associated with enhanced psychological well-being among youth. The contrast between high post-Volunteering positive scores and low negative scores indicates that service participation may act as a protective and meaning generating mechanism. It helps youth to regulate emotions, develop purpose and feel socially connected. These results strongly support the central premise of the study that engagement in service enables youth to find meaning while simultaneously improves their mental health.

Comparison Based on Pre-Existing Psychological Distress

To examine whether the psychological impact of Volunteering differs based on participants' initial emotional and mental state, participants were divided into two groups based on mean score. Group-1 includes participants with a mean score more than 2.5 which exhibits higher levels of loneliness, anxiety and psychological distress prior to Volunteering. Group-2 includes participants with mean score less than 2.5 with lower psychological distress and comparatively better emotional well-being. This classification enabled a comparative analysis of post-Volunteering psychological outcomes across differing baseline emotional states.

Group-1

Participants	Emotional and Psychological state prior to Volunteering mean score	Positive psychological impact of Volunteering mean score	Negative Psychological impact of Volunteering mean score
P2	3	3.6	3
P5	2.8	4	3
P6	3	3.8	2
P8	3	4.6	2.5
P9	3.8	4.6	2.5
P10	3.6	3.6	3
P11	2.6	4	2
P15	3.8	4.6	2.5
P16	2.6	4.4	1.5
P18	3	3.6	2.5
P20	3.8	3	3
P21	3	3.8	3
P22	2.8	3.2	4
P23	3.8	3.4	2.5
P25	2.8	3.4	2
P28	2.8	3.8	2
P32	4.2	3	3
P33	3.2	4	3.5
P34	2.8	2.8	2.5
P37	3.2	4	3
P38	3	4.2	2.5
P39	2.6	3	3.5
P41	3.6	4	2.5
P44	3	3.6	2

P45	3.4	4.8	1
P46	2.6	5	2
P49	2.6	3.8	2
P50	2.6	1.8	1
P51	3	2.2	3.5
P53	3	3.6	3
P54	2.8	3.2	3
P56	3	3.4	2
P57	3.2	3.2	2.5
P58	2.8	4	3
P59	2.6	4.6	2
P60	3.8	2.8	3
P61	2.8	4	2.5
P62	3.2	5	2.5
P63	2.8	3.4	3
P64	2.6	5	1
P65	3.4	5	2
Total Mean Score	3.073170732	3.775609756	2.5

Group-2

Participants	Emotional and Psychological state prior to Volunteering mean score	Positive psychological impact of Volunteering mean score	Negative Psychological impact of Volunteering mean score
P1	1.8	3.6	2
P3	2.4	5	3
P4	2	3.6	2.5
P7	1.6	5	3
P12	2.4	5	2
P13	1.2	2.2	2
P14	1.8	3.2	3.5
P17	1.2	3.6	3
P19	1.6	3.4	2
P24	2.4	3.8	2.5
P26	2.4	3.8	3
P27	2	4.8	1.5
P29	2.4	3	3
P30	1.8	4	2.5
P31	1.6	4.4	2
P35	2.2	4.6	3
P36	2.4	3.6	3
P40	2.2	4.2	1.5
P42	2.4	4	3
P43	1.4	5	2
P47	1.4	3.4	3
P48	2.4	3.2	2
P52	1.6	3.8	1.5
P55	2	5	2
Total Mean	1.941666667	3.966666667	2.4375

Both groups reported substantially higher positive psychological impact scores than negative impact scores. It indicates that Volunteering was generally experienced as a meaningful and psychologically beneficial activity, regardless of initial mental state. However, a slightly higher positive impact mean score was observed among Group-2 which involves less psychologically distressed participants compared to Group-1. This suggests that participants who entered Volunteering with better emotional well-being may have been more psychologically prepared to engage deeply with service activities and derive a stronger sense of meaning and purpose from their experiences. At the same time, Group-1 participants also demonstrated notable gains in positive psychological outcomes, despite higher pre-existing distress. This indicates that Volunteering may serve as an effective

psychosocial intervention that promotes well-being among youth even for psychologically vulnerable youth, though the nature and intensity of meaning derived may differ.

Measures to Improve Volunteering among Youth

Based on the findings, following measures can be suggested to be adopted by NGOs or institutions to promote Volunteering among Youth.

- Ensure clear role, definition and purpose clarity in volunteer programs to avoid any confusions.
- Incorporate structured reflection activities to enhance meaning-making through service.
- Maintain balanced workloads to prevent emotional strain and volunteer burnout.
- Provide flexible time schedules to accommodate academic and personal commitments of youth.
- Establish peer support and mentoring systems for volunteers so that volunteers don't lack emotional support.
- Provide regular recognition and constructive feedback to volunteers. Integrate structured Volunteering or service-learning into educational curricula through various verticals like CEP, CC, FP.
- Align volunteer roles with individual interests, skills and values.
- Encourage value-based Volunteering rooted in cultural concepts such as *Seva*.
- Create inclusive, participatory, and non-hierarchical volunteer environments to avoid demotivation among volunteers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In today's world, with rising levels of depression, anxiety, loneliness, Volunteering emerges as a promising psychosocial intervention with psychological benefits. This study demonstrates that Volunteering has a positive psychological impact on youth by enhancing meaning in life, emotional well-being, and social connectedness, while reducing psychological strain. Both psychologically vulnerable and emotionally stable youth benefited from Volunteerism, indicating its potential as a meaningful developmental experience as well as a supportive psychosocial intervention. Overall, the study highlights Volunteerism as a valuable pathway for promoting youth mental health and fostering purpose-driven engagement. By fostering mentally healthy, socially responsible and engaged youth, Volunteerism contributes directly to national prosperity and societal development. In a nation like India with maximum youth population, Volunteerism can serve as a strategic pathway toward achieving the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" through empowered and mentally resilient young citizens.

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A STUDY ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP AS A SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP APPROACH IN STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

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In the present era, leadership is increasingly viewed beyond authority and control with greater emphasis on service, ethics and sustainability. Servant leadership which focuses on serving others and promoting collective well-being has emerged as an effective and sustainable leadership approach. This study examines servant leadership within student volunteer programs with special reference to the National Service Scheme (NSS). The main objective of the study is to analyze how servant leadership contributes to leadership development, teamwork, ethical behavior, inclusiveness and sustained commitment to community service among students. The study is based on primary data collected through a structured close-ended questionnaire administered to students participating in various volunteer programs. A descriptive research design was adopted. The findings reveal that servant leadership is positively perceived by student volunteers and plays a significant role in developing service-oriented leadership skills. The study concludes that servant leadership serves as an effective and sustainable leadership approach and supports the development of socially responsible future leaders through volunteer programs.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Sustainable Leadership, Student Volunteer Programs, Collective Service, NSS

INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a vital role in shaping individuals, institutions and society. In recent years, there has been a growing shift from traditional authority-based leadership models to approaches that emphasize ethics, service and sustainability. Servant leadership which focuses on serving others and prioritizing collective well-being has emerged as an effective and sustainable leadership approach. This leadership style encourages empathy, ethical behavior, teamwork and long-term commitment to social responsibility.

Student volunteer programs such as the National Service Scheme (NSS) provide an ideal platform for nurturing servant leadership qualities among students. Through active participation in community service, students develop leadership skills grounded in service, inclusiveness and ethical values. From a commerce and management perspective, servant leadership is highly relevant as it prepares future professionals to lead responsibly and sustainably. This study aims to examine servant leadership as a sustainable leadership approach in student volunteer programs and to understand its role in developing socially responsible and ethically driven future leaders through collective service.

Problem Statement: Although student volunteer programs like NSS aim to promote social responsibility and collective service, limited research has examined the leadership styles practiced within these programs. In particular, there is a lack of empirical studies on servant leadership as a sustainable leadership approach and its role in developing ethical and service-oriented leadership qualities among students.

Scope of the Study: The study examines servant leadership practices in student volunteer programs, focusing on leadership development, ethical behavior, teamwork and sustainability from a commerce and management perspective with special reference to NSS participants in higher education institutions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the concept of servant leadership in student volunteer programs.
2. To analyze the role of servant leadership in developing sustainable leadership qualities among students.
3. To examine the impact of servant leadership on teamwork, ethical behavior and inclusiveness in volunteer activities.
4. To assess the relevance of servant leadership skills for students' future professional and managerial roles.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The study is limited to a specific group of students participating in volunteer programs and may not represent all student populations.

2. The findings are based on self-reported data, which may be subject to personal bias. 3. The study uses a limited sample size of 94 due to time and resource constraints.
4. The study focuses mainly on student volunteer programs and does not include corporate or organizational leadership settings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

1. **Research Design:** The study adopts a descriptive research design to examine servant leadership as a sustainable leadership approach in student volunteer programs. This design is appropriate for understanding perceptions, attitudes and leadership outcomes among student volunteers. The research is empirical in nature and focuses on analyzing real-time responses collected from participants involved in volunteer activities. A convenience sampling method was used due to accessibility of respondents and time limitations. Students actively participating in volunteer programs were selected as respondents.
2. **Sources of Data:** The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from students participating in volunteer programs. Secondary data were obtained from research journals, conference papers, reports and online academic sources related to servant leadership and volunteerism.
3. **Sample Size:** The study was conducted with a sample size of 94 students. The questionnaire was administered using online survey tools (Google Forms) and direct distribution where applicable. A structured close-ended questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of demographic questions and Likert-scale statements focusing on servant leadership, ethical behavior, teamwork and sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. **Saavedra, S., Ruiz-Palomino, P., & Pérez-Contreras, R. (2025):** The authors examine the influence of servant leadership on organizational climate and employee behavior. The study finds that servant leadership fosters a positive work environment by emphasizing ethics, empathy, collaboration and service to others. Its findings highlight that leaders who prioritize the growth and well-being of their teams create sustainable and motivated workforces. In the context of student volunteer programs, this research supports the idea that servant leadership can develop ethical, service-oriented and inclusive leadership skills among volunteers.
2. **Richardson, K. M., & Karickal, R. (2022):** This study investigates how servant leadership influences volunteer attitudes and engagement in faith-based volunteer organizations. Results indicate that servant leadership positively affects volunteer motivation, commitment and satisfaction. Volunteers respond more actively when leaders practice empathy, ethical guidance and participative decision-making. For student volunteer programs, this research underscores that servant leadership can enhance volunteer participation, cooperation and the overall effectiveness of collective service initiatives.
3. **Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2021):** The article examines the development of servant leadership literature, focusing on its ethical, relational and service-based foundations. It highlights key dimensions including empathy, stewardship, community building and empowerment and demonstrates the applicability of servant leadership across diverse sectors. The findings support the relevance of servant leadership in student volunteer programs for fostering sustainable leadership skills and socially responsible leadership.

Data Analysis & Interpretation:

1. Gender:

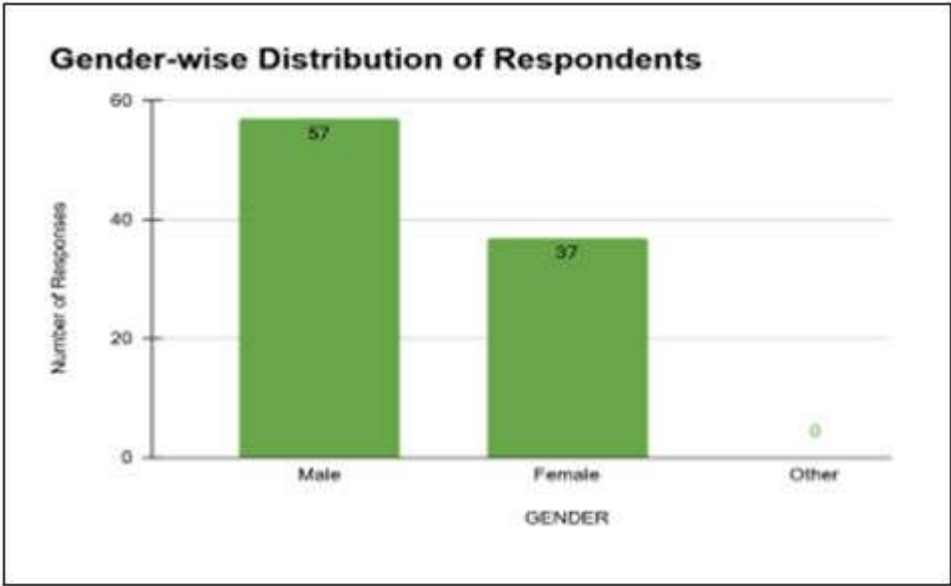


Figure 1

In **Figure 1**, out of 94 respondents, 60.6% were male and 39.4% were female, with no responses under the “Other” category. This indicates a fairly balanced gender representation, allowing diverse perspectives on servant leadership within student volunteer programs.

2. Type of Student Volunteer Program:

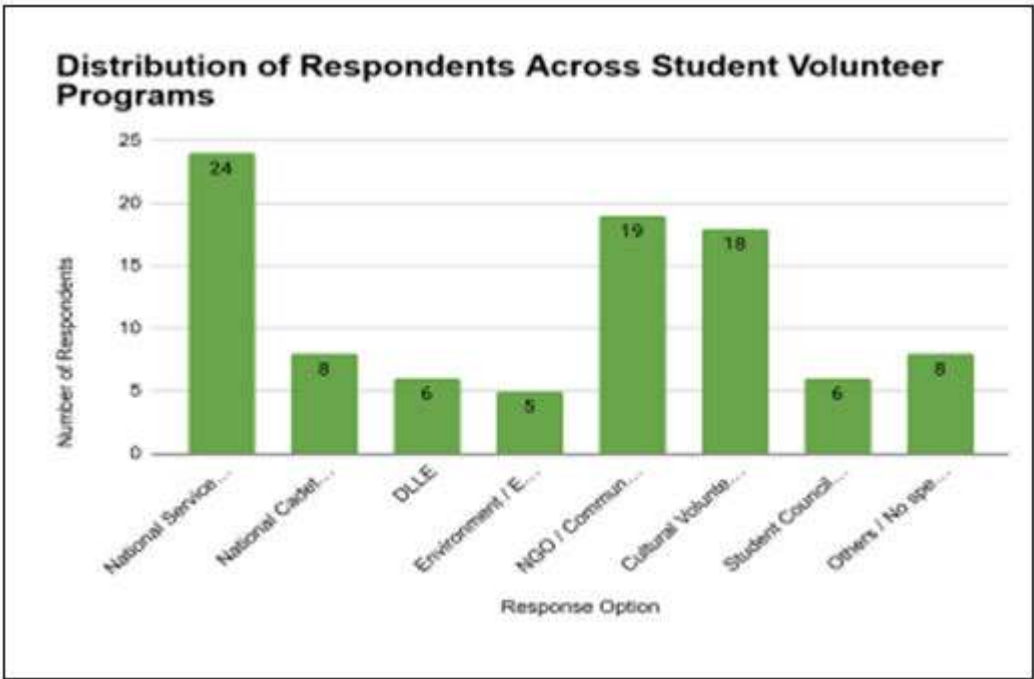


Figure 2

In **Figure 2**, the respondents were drawn from multiple volunteer programs with higher participation from NSS, NGO/Community-Based Organisations and Cultural Volunteer Programmes. Participation was also noted from NCC, DLLE, Eco Clubs and Student Council activities. This diversity strengthens the applicability of the study across different volunteer contexts.

3. Do student leaders in volunteer programs demonstrate a strong commitment to serving the needs of others?

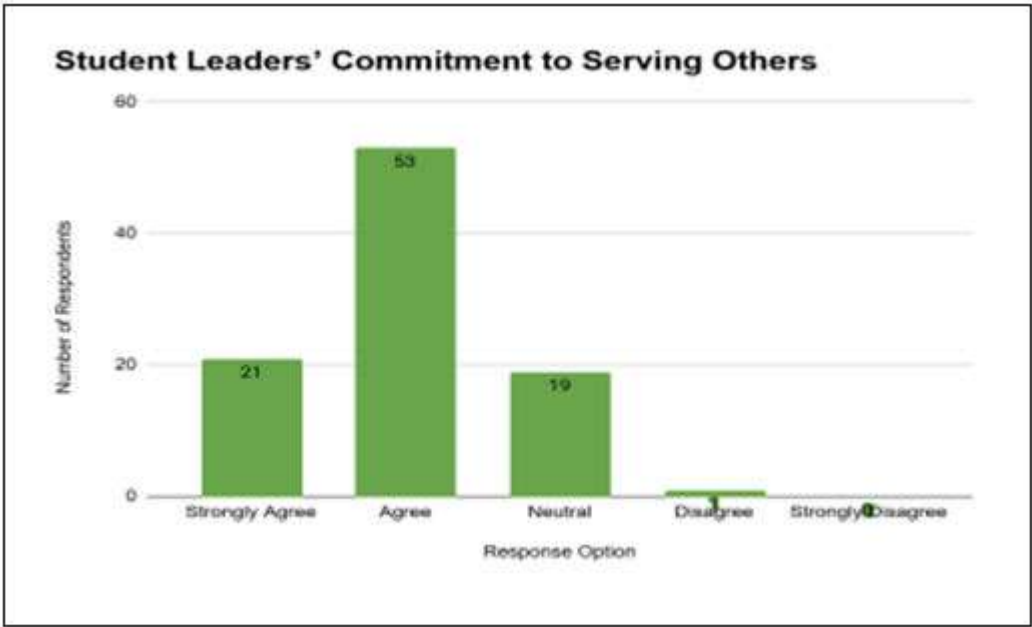


Figure 3

In **Figure 3**, a majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that student leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to serving others. This reflects the presence of service orientation as a dominant leadership characteristic in student volunteer programs.

4. Do servant leadership practices promote ethical behavior and fairness in volunteer activities?

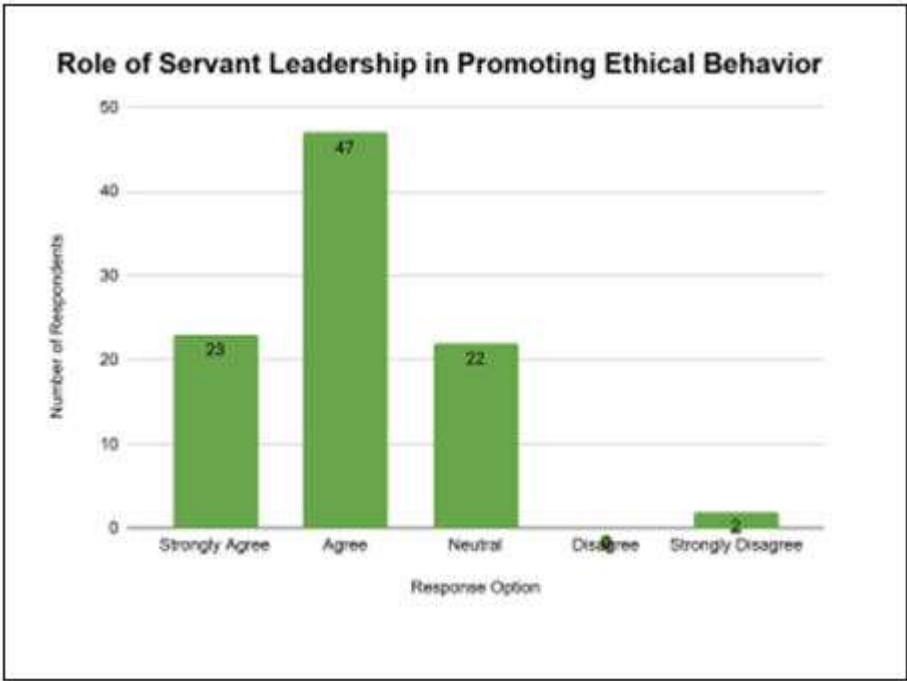
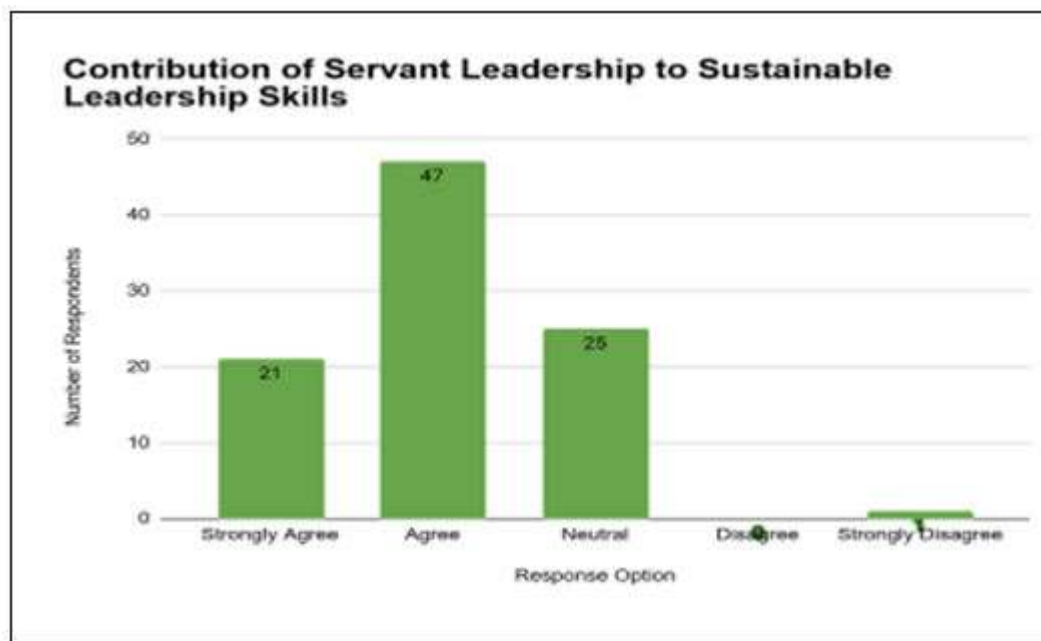


Figure 4

In **Figure 4**, most respondents perceived that servant leadership practices promote ethical behavior and fairness in volunteer activities. Minimal disagreement suggests a positive ethical climate influenced by servant leadership principles.

5. Does servant leadership contribute to the development of sustainable leadership skills among students?**Figure 5**

In **Figure 5**, the findings indicate that servant leadership is perceived to contribute positively to the development of sustainable leadership skills among students. Although some respondents expressed neutrality, overall responses support servant leadership as an effective long-term leadership approach.

Overall Interpretation: The analysis of both demographic and leadership-related questions indicates that servant leadership is actively practiced across diverse volunteer programs and is positively associated with service orientation, ethical behavior and sustainable leadership development among students.

CONCLUSION

- This study finds that student leaders demonstrate a strong service orientation and ethical behavior, reflecting the core principles of servant leadership.
- This study reveals that servant leadership encourages teamwork and supports the development of sustainable leadership skills among students.
- This study indicates that empathy is the most commonly observed leadership quality, while improved teamwork is the key benefit of servant leadership.
- This study shows that ethical decision-making and service-oriented leadership are essential for individual leadership growth and program sustainability.
- This study concludes that servant leadership is perceived as an effective and sustainable leadership approach in student volunteer programs.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that educational institutions integrate servant leadership training into student volunteer programs through workshops, orientation sessions and structured leadership development activities that emphasize service, ethics and empathy. It is also recommended that student leaders adopt a service-first leadership approach rather than authority-based practices to strengthen teamwork, inclusiveness and ethical conduct. Further, continuous institutional support through mentorship, recognition and sustained engagement opportunities can enhance the long-term sustainability of volunteer programs and leadership development.

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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT-LED INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE WILDFLOWER TOURISM: EVIDENCE FROM DHAK PLATEAU, KARJAT, MAHARASHTRA

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Research Scholar, Prof Ramkrishna More College, Akurdi, Pune.**ABSTRACT**

The Dhak Plateau in Karjat, Maharashtra, is characterized by diverse seasonal wildflowers, attracting tourists, students, and ecotourism practitioners. Unmanaged visitation, negligence however, can threaten local biodiversity and habitat integrity. This study examines how community participation with student-led initiatives can promote sustainable wildflower tourism while conserving the plateau's ecology. Using a mixed-methods approach—including ecological surveys, participatory observation, interviews, and digital media analysis—the research documented wildflower species, monitored invasive plants, designed low-impact trekking routes, and engaged local stakeholders through guided treks, workshops, and outreach content. Findings indicate that combining local knowledge, youth engagement, and educational interventions enhances ecological stewardship, visitor experience, and community benefits, offering a model for adaptive, participatory management of nature-based tourism in fragile ecosystems.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Wildflower tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism in fragile ecosystems requires collaborative efforts that balance conservation with community benefit. The Dhak Plateau of Karjat, Maharashtra, hosts a rich assemblage of wildflowers that bloom extensively during the monsoon and post monsoon season, generating interest from tourists, students, and ecotourism practitioners. However, unmanaged visitation may harm local biodiversity, promote invasive species, and degrade habitat. This study investigates how community participation and student-led initiatives can develop *wildflower tourism* while protecting the plateau's ecology.

The focus is on engaging local residents, educational institutions, and youth groups to map, document, and interpret wildflower diversity, develop low-impact tourism pathways, manage invasive species, and produce outreach content (blogs, social media, guided treks) across all seasons. This paper presents objectives, detailed methodology, results, challenges, and implications for sustained ecotourism.

2. OBJECTIVES

To assess how community involvement and student leadership can support sustainable wildflower tourism at Dhak Plateau.

- Biodiversity Documentation: To name and locate the wildflower species present on Dhak Plateau.
- Invasive Species Identification: To detect and monitor invasive plants threatening native flora.
- Tour Activity Planning: To organize guided treks, volunteer events, and seasonal activities highlighting wildflowers.
- Outreach & Media: To produce educational blogs, Instagram reels, and interpretive materials to raise awareness.
- Community Participation: To involve local stakeholders in decision-making, guiding, and benefit sharing.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable tourism increasingly emphasizes integrating local communities in planning to ensure ecological conservation and socio-economic benefits (Sharpley, 2009). Community participation in eco-tourism fosters stewardship, livelihoods, and cultural preservation (Scheyvens, 1999). In India, rural tourism initiatives highlight the role of local involvement in maintaining ecological integrity and regional identity (Bhattacharya & Momaya, 2015). Youth and student engagement in conservation and tourism projects has emerged as a strategy to promote environmental awareness and leadership (Rickinson, 2001), with student-led biodiversity monitoring, awareness campaigns, and guided eco-tours enhancing sustainable tourism practices (Orams, 1999). Wildflower tourism, a niche nature-based segment, emphasizes seasonal visitation, aesthetic appreciation, and ecological sensitivity (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Hill plateaus and biodiverse grasslands in India attract eco-conscious tourists but pose conservation challenges (Rawat & Adhikari, 2012). Community-led interventions integrating traditional knowledge, hospitality, and participatory governance help mitigate

ecological degradation (Tosun, 2000). Awareness programs, guided tours, and workshops led by students can positively influence visitor behavior (Weiler & Ham, 2001). The Dhak Plateau, part of the Western Ghats, offers unique floral diversity that can be leveraged through participatory models combining community knowledge and academic initiatives for adaptive management and sustainable tourism (Gadgil et al., 1993). Overall, literature underscores that integrating community participation with student-led initiatives enhances conservation, socio-ecological resilience, and experiential learning in biodiversity-rich landscapes.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Dhak Plateau, near Karjat, Maharashtra, is characterized by mountain soils supporting seasonal wildflowers during monsoon and post-monsoon. The main village around the plateau include Dhak with only two houses. (15 years back it has more than 24 households)

The research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, integrating ecological surveys, participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and digital content analysis. Data collection will involve five field walks from June to December to identify and map wildflowers using observation, mobile apps, and photographic records, documenting species' local and scientific names, and habitats. Pathways will be planned to minimize ecological impact, marking waypoints, natural resting spots, and educational signage were also displayed. Invasive species will be monitored, with students participating in removal or mitigation where feasible. Trek and event organization will include four seasonal treks coinciding with peak blooms, supported by safety protocols and local guides. Media outreach will feature blog posts, Instagram Reels highlighting field observations and identification tips, and community workshops in colleges and villages to engage the public with local biodiversity.

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Wildflower Diversity and Distribution Patterns

- **Total Species Recorded:** 69 species of flowering plants.
- **Most Dominant wild flowers** Phagostemon Deccanensis /Manjiri in winter Senecio bombayensis(Sonki) in Monsoon.
- **Species Richness Per Habitat:**

Grasslands host early-blooming annuals, while rocky areas with basaltic caps support perennials and climbers adapted to poor soil. Woodland edges contain shade-tolerant species.

5.2 Seasonal Bloom Patterns of major wildflowers

Category	Scientific Name(s)	Habitat	Uses
Herbs	<i>Asystasia gangetica</i> , <i>Abelmoschus manihot</i> , <i>Striga gesnerioides</i> , <i>Eriocaulon decangulare</i> , <i>Zingiber cernuum</i> , <i>Senecio bombayensis</i> , <i>Cyathocline purpurea</i> , <i>Pogostemon deccanensis</i> , <i>Barleria prionitis</i> , <i>Cynarospermum asperrimum</i> , <i>Eranthemum roseum</i> , <i>Cosmos sulphureus</i> , <i>Lepidagathis trinervis</i> , <i>Impatiens balsamina</i> , <i>Celosia argentea</i>	Fields, forest floor, marshy land	Medicinal, ornamental, weeds
Shrubs	<i>Tricholepis glaberrima</i> , <i>Justicia santapau</i> , <i>Vitex negundo</i> , <i>Ixora pavetta</i> , <i>Lantana camara</i> , <i>Callicarpa tomentosa</i> , <i>Barleria cristata</i>	Roadsides, scrub forest	Medicinal, ornamental
Trees	<i>Psydrax dicoccos</i> , <i>Careya arborea</i>	Forests, village outskirts	Timber, medicinal
Climbers	<i>Trichosanthes tricuspidata</i> , <i>Vigna vexillata</i>	Hedges, forest margins	Medicinal, edible roots

5.3 Seasonal Pattern of wild fruits

No.	Scientific Name	Local/Common Name	Fruiting Season	Uses
1	<i>Carissa carandas</i>	Karonda	Mar–Jun	Raw fruit, pickles, jams
2	<i>Syzygium cuminii</i>	Jamun	May–Jul	Fresh eating, juice, medicine

3	Mangifera indica (wild)	Wild Mango	Apr–Jun	Pickles, raw fruit
4	Phyllanthus emblica	Amla / Indian Gooseberry	Oct–Feb	Raw, pickle, Ayurvedic uses
5	Aegle marmelos	Bael	Mar–Jun	Sherbet, digestive medicine
6	Madhuca longifolia	Mahua	May–Jul	Eaten, fermented food
7	Spondias pinnata	Amra / Wild Mango	Jun–Aug	Chutney, souring agent
8	Ziziphus rugosa	Ber / Jharber	Jan–Mar	Sweet ripe fruit
9	Limonia acidissima	Wood Apple / Bel	Feb–May	Chutney, digestive
10	Flacourtia montana	Indian Plum / Kundal	Apr–Jul	Raw fruit
11	Syzygium heyneanum	Heyne's Jamun	Apr–Jun	Raw fruit
12	Ficus racemosa	Cluster Fig / Gular	Summer peak	Vegetable, medicine
13	Ficus hispida	Hairy Fig / Pipla	Summer	Cooked fruit
14	Diospyros melanoxylon	Tendu / Kendu	Apr–Jun	Ripe fruit eaten
15	Ficus palmata	Wild Fig / Pilkhan	Feb–May	Raw or cooked
16	Garcinia indica	Kokum	Apr–Jun	Cooling drinks, curry
17	Ficus religiosa	Peepal	Summer	Eaten by locals & wildlife
18	Atalantia racemosa	Wild Orange / Satkudi	Jun–Aug	Sour fruit, medicine

5.4 Invasive Species Patterns

- Identified 4 invasive species (e.g., *Lantana camara*, *Chromolaena odorata* (L.)  *Acacia auriculiformis*). *Cuscuta reflexa* Roxb..
- **Spatial pattern:** Most invasive species clustered along human-access points and trails.i.e.Vadap to Dhak trial route and near Dhak settlement.
- **Seasonal pattern:** Invasives bloom slightly later than native monsoon species, potentially outcompeting perennials in the dry season.

5.5 Visitor Engagement Patterns

- Trek participation varied by season:
 - Peak Monsoon: 60% of annual visits
 - Post-Monsoon: 25%
 - Early Monsoon: 10%
 - Pre-Winter: 5%

5.6 Media and Digital Engagement Patterns

- **Blogs:** posts reached nearly 200 views; most read posts focused on rare species and habitat conservation.
- **Instagram Reels:** Peak engagement during monsoon bloom videos by travellers. reels stars on Instagram can be used to popularise destination. On average more than 300 views observed.
- **Trend:** Visual media influences visitor interest more than text blogs alone.

6. Role of Students in Promoting Sustainable Wildflower Tourism

Students were uniquely positioned to drive conservation and ecotourism initiatives due to their energy, creativity, academic knowledge, and technological skills. At Dhak Plateau, students contributed across fieldwork, community engagement, tourism management, and digital promotion.

6.1 Biodiversity Documentation

Students surveyed and identified wildflowers, creating species inventories supported by photographs. They recorded flowering times, habitats, and seasonal patterns, producing valuable scientific data for conservation planning. *Example:* Students mapped the occurrence of rare species such as *Cassia fistula* and *Zingiber Cernuum Dalz.*

6.2 Trail Development and Eco-Tourism Planning

Students designed 3 trekking paths that minimized ecological disturbance, marking viewing points and rest areas. They assisted in installing interpretive signage explaining wildflower species, habitats, and conservation rules. Their participation in seasonal trek organization ensured safety, coordination, and educational guidance.

6.3 Invasive Species Monitoring and Habitat Management

Students identified invasive plant species, mapped their spread, and assisted in low-impact removal campaigns. They conducted awareness programs to prevent the introduction of exotic species, targeting both visitors and local residents. Banner with names and photographs were displayed in village.

6.4 Digital Promotion and Awareness

Students produced blogs, social media posts, reels, and educational videos showcasing the plateau's biodiversity, and eco-tourism opportunities. Interactive guides and digital maps for visitors can be developed in future.

6.5 Research and Academic Contribution

Students conducted scientific studies on identification, habitat health, and the impacts of tourism on biodiversity. Findings were presented at Avishkar Research Convention at university level and may be published in academic journals, increasing visibility of the plateau. Long-term monitoring programs will be facilitated in future through the Community Engagement Programme and Project work under NEP 2020 ensuring sustainability beyond traditional teaching and learning process.

6.6 Seasonal Coordination

Students scheduled treks, Exhibition, and media campaigns according to seasonal bloom patterns. Tourist influx can be distributed in future across months to prevent overloading sensitive habitats during peak flowering periods.

CHALLENGES:

- Field Access: Monsoon rain made terrain slippery and difficult.
- Species Identification: Some taxa required expert verification.
- Visitor Management: Higher than anticipated visitor numbers strained guides.
- Resource Constraints: Limited funding for signage and safety equipment.
- Invasive Control: Physical removal was labour-intensive.
- New proposed hydro power project may cause threat to existence of wild flowers.

CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that the integration of community participation and student-led initiatives at Dhak Plateau plays a vital role in promoting sustainable wildflower tourism. This collaboration supports biodiversity conservation, enhances environmental awareness, and provides socio-economic benefits to local communities. Strengthening structured partnerships and responsible management practices can help ensure the long-term sustainability of wildflower tourism in ecologically sensitive regions like Dhak Plateau

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A STUDY ON EVALUATING THE EFFICACY OF INDIAN DIGITAL MOGHULS (INFLUENCERS) IN MOBILIZING ONLINE FOLLOWERS FOR SOCIOCULTURAL CAUSE CAMPAIGNS

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ABSTRACT

In India, a new kind of hero has emerged not from cinema screens, but from smartphone screens. These are the Digital Moghuls—social media influencers who use their vast followings not just for entertainment, but to rally people behind social causes, from cleaning the Himalayas to advocating for mental health. This study investigates the role of Indian digital influencers—termed "Digital Moghuls"—in transforming passive social media followers into active participants for sociocultural cause drives. The study adopted mixed method approach for finding out the efficacy of the digital creators and Findings reveal that influencers who employ cultural storytelling, vernacular communication, and hyper-localized call-to-actions (CTAs) achieve a much higher conversion rate from follower to participant compared to those using globalized, English-dominant templates. The study introduces the "Trust-Alignment-Actionability" framework, highlighting how influencers bridge traditional Indian values with contemporary activism. The paper concludes with strategic recommendations for NGOs, policymakers, and content creators to foster sustainable, inclusive digital participation for social good in India.

Keywords: Digital Influencers, Social Cause Mobilization, Indian social media, Participatory Culture, Online Activism, Sociocultural Campaigns.

INTRODUCTION

India is going through a massive digital revolution. Thanks to cheap mobile data and smartphones, millions of Indians are now active online, using apps like Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp every day. In this fast-growing digital space, a new kind of celebrity has emerged: the social media influencer, often called a "Digital Moghul."

These influencers have huge followings—sometimes in the millions. They are not traditional movie stars or politicians, but ordinary people who have built an audience by sharing their lives, opinions, or talents online. Brands pay them to promote products, but recently, many have also started using their influence for a different purpose: to support social and cultural causes.

These causes include important issues like:

- Preventing discrimination based on caste or gender
- Promoting mental health awareness
- Supporting environmental protection
- Raising funds for disaster relief
- Advocating for farmers, students, or marginalized communities

But does their support actually make a difference? When an influencer posts about a social issue, do their followers just click 'like' and scroll away, or do they take real action—like donating money, signing petitions, or changing their attitudes?

This is an important question for India today. In the past, social campaigns were usually led by NGOs, activists, or well-known social workers. Now, influencers are stepping into that role. They can reach young people in a way that traditional campaigns sometimes cannot. Their tone is often more personal, casual, and relatable.

However, there are also concerns. Some people feel that influencers might use social causes just to improve their own image—a practice sometimes called "woke-washing." Others worry that complex issues get oversimplified into catchy slogans or trendy hashtags without leading to real change.

India's diversity also adds another layer. Influencers create content in many languages—Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, English, and more—and what works in one region may not work in another. Cultural sensitivity is key, and a misstep can backfire.

This study aims to find out: How effective are Indian social media influencers in actually mobilizing their followers for social causes? The research aims to look at:

- How many people they reach
- Whether their followers take meaningful action
- What kind of content works best
- What challenges influencers face

By answering these questions, the research hopes to provide useful insights for influencers who want to make a positive impact, for NGOs looking to collaborate with them, and for the public to better understand the power—and limits—of online influence in today's India.

RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT: -

The rise of digital Moghuls (influencers) in India has transformed social media into a powerful space for sociocultural advocacy. Although these influencers command large and engaged online followings, there is limited empirical evidence on their actual effectiveness in mobilizing followers for sociocultural cause campaigns. Existing research largely focuses on influencer marketing and consumer behavior, overlooking influencer-led social mobilization. Additionally, India's diverse sociocultural context may shape follower trust, engagement, and participation in unique ways. This study addresses the gap by examining how and to what extent Indian digital moghuls influence online followers to support and participate in sociocultural cause campaigns.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH: -

This study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the role of Indian digital moghuls in mobilizing online followers for sociocultural cause campaigns.
2. To assess the effectiveness of influencer-led sociocultural campaigns in generating follower engagement and participation.
3. To analyze the factors influencing follower trust, credibility, and responsiveness toward Indian digital moghuls.
4. To identify communication strategies employed by digital moghuls in sociocultural advocacy.
5. To evaluate the relationship between online engagement metrics and participatory sociocultural outcomes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: -

Joshi, Y., Lim, W. M., Jagani, K., & Kumar, S. (2025)¹. In their paper titled "*Social Media Influencer Marketing: Foundations, Trends, and Ways Forward*" published in *Electronic Commerce Research*, 25(2), 1199–1253, the authors explored the evolving role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior and engagement, emphasizing that credibility, authenticity, and content relevance are key determinants of follower trust and response.

Handranata, Y. W., & Kalila, S. (2025)². In their paper titled "*Attitude toward Fashion Influencers and Its Impact on Purchase Behavior: The Roles of Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention*" published in *Frontiers in Communication*, 10, the study examined how influencer credibility and relatability affect consumer attitudes and behavior, concluding that personal narratives and authentic content increase both engagement and purchase intention.

Sharma, P., & Subherwal, D. (2024)³. In their paper titled "*Role of Social Media Influencers in Promoting Sustainable Products and Practices and Their Potential to Drive Positive Change*" published in *Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, the authors highlighted that influencer can raise awareness about sustainable practices, but their actual impact on offline behavioral change depends on audience trust and engagement strategies.

Rashid, R., Melton, J., Ghorbani, O., Krishnan, S., Reid, S., & Terejanu, G. (2024)⁴. In their paper titled "*Quantifying Influencer Impact on Affective Polarization*" published on *arXiv*, the study investigated the social and psychological influence of digital content creators, concluding that influencers can significantly shape opinions and social discourse, though the effect varies based on perceived credibility and audience demographics.

Łaszkiewicz, Anna (2023)⁵. In their paper titled "*The Use of Influencer Marketing in Marketing Communication of Places*" published in *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization & Management / Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej. Seria Organizacji i Zarządzanie*, the study analyzed the role of content created and shared on social media by tourism destination stakeholders and concluded that the content should be skillfully integrated into destination promotion strategies to maximize audience engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of study, qualitative and quantitative approaches are used. Primary data is collected by floating a questionnaire to the respondents. The sample size is 200 residents of Mumbai Metropolitan region. Sampling method adopted for the study is simple random sampling

The responses are analysed using simple statistical tables. Secondary data is collected through various research papers, articles and other related sources.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is confined to examining the role and efficacy of Indian digital moghuls in mobilizing online followers for sociocultural cause campaigns on social media platforms. The research focuses on influencers who actively engage in advocacy related to sociocultural issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, mental health awareness, and social justice. The study primarily analyzes follower engagement, trust, credibility, and participatory responses within the Indian socio-cultural context. The investigation is limited to major social media platforms commonly used in India, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY: -

The data is collected from 200 respondents based in the MMR region, due to paucity of time and resources using the simple statistical tools for analysis.

HYPOTHESIS: -

H1: Indian digital moghuls have a significant influence on mobilizing online followers for sociocultural cause campaigns.

H2: Influencer-led sociocultural campaigns significantly enhance follower engagement on social media platforms.

H3: Perceived authenticity and credibility of Indian digital moghuls have a positive effect on follower trust and responsiveness toward sociocultural campaigns.

H4: Narrative-driven and collaborative advocacy strategies employed by digital moghuls generate higher levels of follower engagement than purely informational strategies.

H5: Higher levels of online engagement with influencer-led sociocultural campaigns are positively associated with increased sociocultural participation among followers.

RESEARCH FINDINGS: -

Sample Distribution (n = 200) Sample Area: MMR

Hypothesis 1 (Role of Digital Moghuls)

H1: Indian digital moghuls have a significant influence on mobilizing online followers for sociocultural cause campaigns.

Perceived Role	Respondents	Percentage
Very Significant Role	88	44%
Moderately Significant Role	64	32%
Limited Role	30	15%
No Significant Role	18	9%
Total	200	100%

Source: - Primary data

Analysis

The majority of respondents (76%) perceive Indian digital moghuls as playing a significant or moderately significant role in sociocultural mobilization. This indicates strong acceptance of influencers as contemporary opinion leaders in sociocultural advocacy within the MMR.

Hypothesis 2 (Campaign Effectiveness)

H2: Influencer-led sociocultural campaigns significantly enhance follower engagement on social media platforms.

Effectiveness Level	Respondents	Percentage
Highly Effective	82	41%
Moderately Effective	70	35%
Slightly Effective	28	14%
Not Effective	20	10%
Total	200	100%

Source: - Primary data

Analysis

A combined 76% of respondents acknowledge influencer-led campaigns as effective in generating engagement. However, the presence of 24% indicating low or no effectiveness suggests that high engagement does not always translate into participatory depth.

Hypothesis 3 (Trust and Credibility)

H3: Perceived authenticity and credibility of Indian digital moghuls have a positive effect on follower trust and responsiveness toward sociocultural campaigns.

Influencing Factor	Respondents	Percentage
Authenticity & Personal Values	72	36%
Consistency in Cause Advocacy	54	27%
Transparency & Honesty	42	21%
Celebrity Status	32	16%
Total	200	100%

Source: - Primary data

Analysis

Authenticity and value alignment emerge as the most influential factors shaping trust, outweighing celebrity status. This reinforces the importance of perceived genuineness in sociocultural influencer advocacy, aligning with parasocial interaction theory.

Hypothesis 4 (Influencer Strategies)

H4: Narrative-driven and collaborative advocacy strategies employed by digital moghuls generate higher levels of follower engagement than purely informational strategies

Strategy Used	Respondents	Percentage
Storytelling & Personal Narratives	80	40%
Hashtag & Trend-Based Campaigns	48	24%
Collaborations with NGOs/Activists	42	21%
Informational & Educational Content	30	15%
Total	200	100%

Source: - Primary data

Analysis

Storytelling is identified as the most impactful strategy, indicating that emotionally driven narratives resonate more strongly with followers than purely informational approaches. Collaborative advocacy also enhances perceived legitimacy.

Hypothesis 5 (Engagement–Participation Relationship)

H5: Higher levels of online engagement with influencer-led sociocultural campaigns are positively associated with increased sociocultural participation among followers.

Participation Outcome	Respondents	Percentage
Online Engagement Only	94	47%
Occasional Offline Participation	58	29%
Active Participation in Causes	32	16%

No Participation	16	8%
Total	200	100%

Source: - Primary data

Analysis

While nearly half of the respondents restrict their involvement to online engagement, only 16% report active sociocultural participation. This highlights a **participation gap**, indicating that digital moghuls are more effective in awareness-building than in driving sustained offline action.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Across all objectives, findings demonstrate that Indian digital moghuls significantly influence sociocultural awareness and online engagement among urban audiences in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. However, the transition from digital interaction to sustained participatory action remains limited. Credibility, authenticity, and narrative-driven strategies play a decisive role in influencer efficacy, underscoring the need for structured calls to action and institutional collaboration to enhance sociocultural impact.

TAA FRAMEWORK (TRUST- ALIGNMENT-ACTIONABILITY) FRAMEWORK



Source: - Author

The above conceptual framework illustrates a sequential process through which **Indian digital influencers mobilize online followers for sociocultural cause campaigns**. The model begins with **Influencer Trust**, which establishes credibility and follower confidence. This trust facilitates **Value Alignment** between the influencer, the sociocultural cause, and the audience’s beliefs. When such alignment exists, followers are more receptive to campaign messaging, leading to **Actionable Engagement**, where online interactions translate into concrete actions. Ultimately, these actions culminate in **Sociocultural Mobilization**, reflecting collective participation and meaningful social impact.

In short, Trust builds acceptance, alignment strengthens resonance, actionability drives engagement, and together they enable sociocultural mobilization.

SOME RELEVANT CASES

1. Prajakta Koli (@Mostlysane)

- **Platform:** YouTube, Instagram
- **Cause:** Mental health awareness, women empowerment
- **Example:** Prajakta has used her platform to raise awareness about mental health, encourage therapy, and destigmatize emotional well-being.
- **Impact:** She mobilized her millions of followers to participate in online discussions, awareness campaigns, and collaborations with NGOs like *YourDOST*.

2. Bhuvan Bam (@BB Ki Vines)

- **Cause:** Swachh Bharat Abhiyan awareness
- **Example:** Bhuvan Bam created humorous, relatable content around cleanliness and sanitation to target youth audiences.
- **Impact:** Followers engaged by sharing content, participating in cleanliness initiatives, and discussing the social responsibility of citizens.

3. Indian NGO + Influencer Collaborations

- **Example:** CRY (*Child Rights and You*) and influencers like Shraddha Kapoor collaborated to raise awareness about children's education rights.
- **Impact:** Campaigns like #EveryChildMatters led to increased online engagement, petition signatures, and donations.

SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The study highlights that Indian digital moghuls are not merely online entertainers but **agents of sociocultural change**, capable of shaping awareness, behaviors, and values. While their influence is strongest in awareness and online engagement, strategic partnerships and sustained campaigns can translate this digital power into tangible societal benefits.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

1. The study is based only in MMR so the same study can be carried out on the respondents of other regions.
2. Research can explore differences in influencer effectiveness across diverse social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, X, Facebook, Threads) to identify platform-specific engagement strategies.
3. Further investigation can assess how factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and regional cultural differences influence follower perception, trust, and participation.
4. Future studies could measure offline behavioral changes and policy-level impacts to evaluate the real-world effectiveness of digital influencer advocacy.
5. The role of AI-driven content, virtual influencers, and algorithmic amplification in enhancing sociocultural mobilization can be explored.

CONCLUSION

Influencers in India are not just entertainment creators—they act as agents of social change. Effective campaigns combine storytelling, credibility, and interactive engagement to mobilize followers. Online engagement is strong but translating it to offline action remains a challenge—a point your research can explore.

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CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AMONG YOUTH (AGE 18–27): A PRIMARY STUDY OF PARTICIPATION, VALUES, AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the nature and extent of civic responsibility among youth aged 18–27 through a primary-data-based study conducted in Thane, India. Using a mixed-method descriptive design, the study integrates survey data (n = 100) and semi-structured interviews (n = 5) to analyse youth civic awareness, participation, institutional trust, digital engagement, and socio-economic constraints. Findings reveal a paradox of relatively high civic awareness alongside limited offline participation, shaped by structural barriers, educational exposure, and cautious trust in democratic institutions. Digital platforms emerge as significant spaces for civic expression among youth. The study contributes India-specific empirical insights to debates on youth civic engagement and democratic participation.

Keywords: Civic responsibility, youth, democracy, participation, digital engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth constitute a critical demographic group in democratic societies, representing both present stakeholders and future custodians of civic and political life. Civic responsibility among youth extends beyond electoral participation to include community involvement, respect for public institutions, social responsibility, and democratic values. Despite increased access to information and digital platforms, concerns persist regarding political apathy, declining institutional trust, and uneven civic participation among young citizens.

This paper examines how youth aged 18–27 understand and practice civic responsibility in everyday life. While existing studies often rely on voter turnout data or secondary sources, there remains a need for ground-level, youth-centric primary research that captures lived civic experiences, especially in the Indian context.

Civic responsibility is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct involving **awareness, values, participation, and accountability**. Active citizenship among youth is understood to include both **formal participation** (voting, student councils) and **informal engagement** (volunteering, digital activism, community initiatives).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**● Background and significance**

Young adults (ages 18–27) occupy a crucial life stage for the formation and enactment of civic responsibility. Habits, values, and civic skills established during this period often predict later-life patterns of democratic participation, volunteering, and community involvement (IFES, 2024). Global and regional evidence also indicates that youth civic activity increasingly spans both formal political avenues (e.g., voting, party membership) and informal or digital forms (e.g., online campaigns, virtual mutual aid). These shifts matter for democratic resilience and policy design because youth participation can both sustain democratic norms and signal emerging civic priorities (IFES, 2024; UN, n.d.).

● Definitions and conceptual scope

Researchers use overlapping concepts—**civic responsibility, civic engagement, and political/democratic participation**—so it helps to be explicit about operational definitions.

Contemporary literature emphasizes the **multi-dimensional** nature of participation—ranging from formal (voting, party membership) to informal and online forms (digital activism, slacktivism)—and values (normative orientations such as tolerance, public-mindedness, and civic duty) that underlie behaviour (IFES, 2024).

● Theoretical frameworks used in youth civic studies

Theoretical approaches to youth civic engagement commonly draw on civic culture and political socialisation frameworks, which emphasise the role of family, education, and institutions in transmitting democratic norms. Social capital theory further underscores the importance of networks, trust, and associational life in fostering civic competencies. More recent literature highlights the role of digital and networked publics, noting that online platforms reshape how youth access information, express civic identities, and mobilise around social issues.

Empirical studies identify education, political awareness, and civic efficacy as key predictors of youth participation. At the same time, structural constraints, including limited time, economic pressures, and lack of accessible opportunities, continue to restrict sustained participation. Indian studies further point to high social media use among youth but relatively

lower levels of organised civic or political action, indicating a gap between awareness and participation. Policy instruments such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasize experiential and holistic education, citizenship education, and skills that can underpin civic competencies (Government of India, 2020). Established programs (e.g., the National Service Scheme, Model UNs, youth wings of civil society) provide avenues for civic learning, yet researchers identify gaps in meaningful institutional access and systematic civic curricula across states and institutions (Delhi Univ. case study; ResearchGate studies of Indian youth digital activism).

Overall, the literature underscores the need for context-specific, mixed-method research that simultaneously examines civic values, participation patterns, institutional trust, and emerging digital forms of engagement. This study responds to this gap by providing primary empirical evidence on youth civic responsibility in an Indian urban setting.

Research Questions

1. How do youth (18–27) perceive civic responsibility?
2. What forms of civic and democratic participation are prevalent among youth?
3. What values shape youth civic behaviour?
4. What factors encourage or hinder active citizenship among youth?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design:

The study adopts a mixed-method descriptive research design, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights. Quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms to youth aged 18–27 ($n = 100$), using purposive and snowball sampling. The survey captured socio-demographic characteristics, civic awareness, participation, trust in institutions, digital engagement, educational exposure, and perceived constraints.

- **Study Population and Sampling Sample Size**
- **Quantitative Survey:** Approximately $N = 100$ respondents
- **Qualitative Interviews:** 5 *semi-structured interviews*, conducted

3.2 Data Collection:

Quantitative Data Collection

Qualitative data were analysed using a descriptive qualitative approach, involving question-wise summarisation and the use of illustrative quotations. Qualitative data were gathered through five semi-structured interviews conducted with selected respondents from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds. Interviews explored perceptions of civic responsibility, political awareness, institutional trust, and barriers to participation.

Qualitative Data Collection (Interviews)

Qualitative data were gathered through five semi-structured interviews conducted with selected respondents from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds. Interviews explored perceptions of civic responsibility, political awareness, institutional trust, and barriers to participation. Both datasets were integrated in the Results section.

4. RESULTS

(Quantitative and Qualitative Findings)

This section presents the findings of the study based on quantitative survey data collected from 100 respondents and qualitative insights from five semi-structured interviews.

SECTION A: Basic Information (Demographic Profile)

This section illustrates the demographic profile of participants.

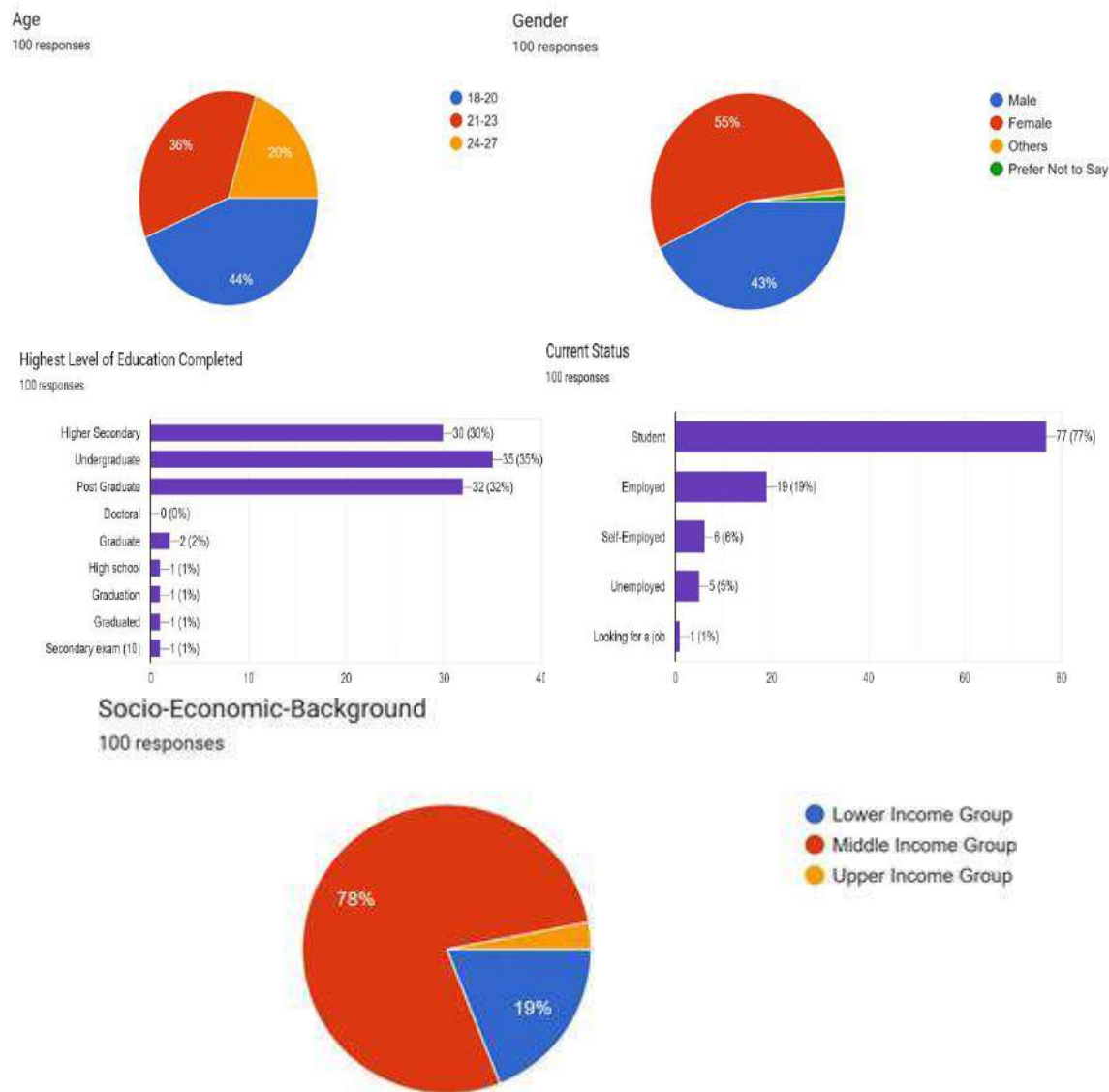


Figure 1. Demographic profile of youth respondents by age, gender, educational level, and occupational status (n = 100).

● **Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Figure 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents by age, gender, educational level, and occupational status. The sample included students, professional aspirants, and early-career professionals, providing a diverse socio-educational context.

SECTION B: Voting Behaviour & Political Awareness (*Variable: “Civic responsibility means...” Likert statements*)

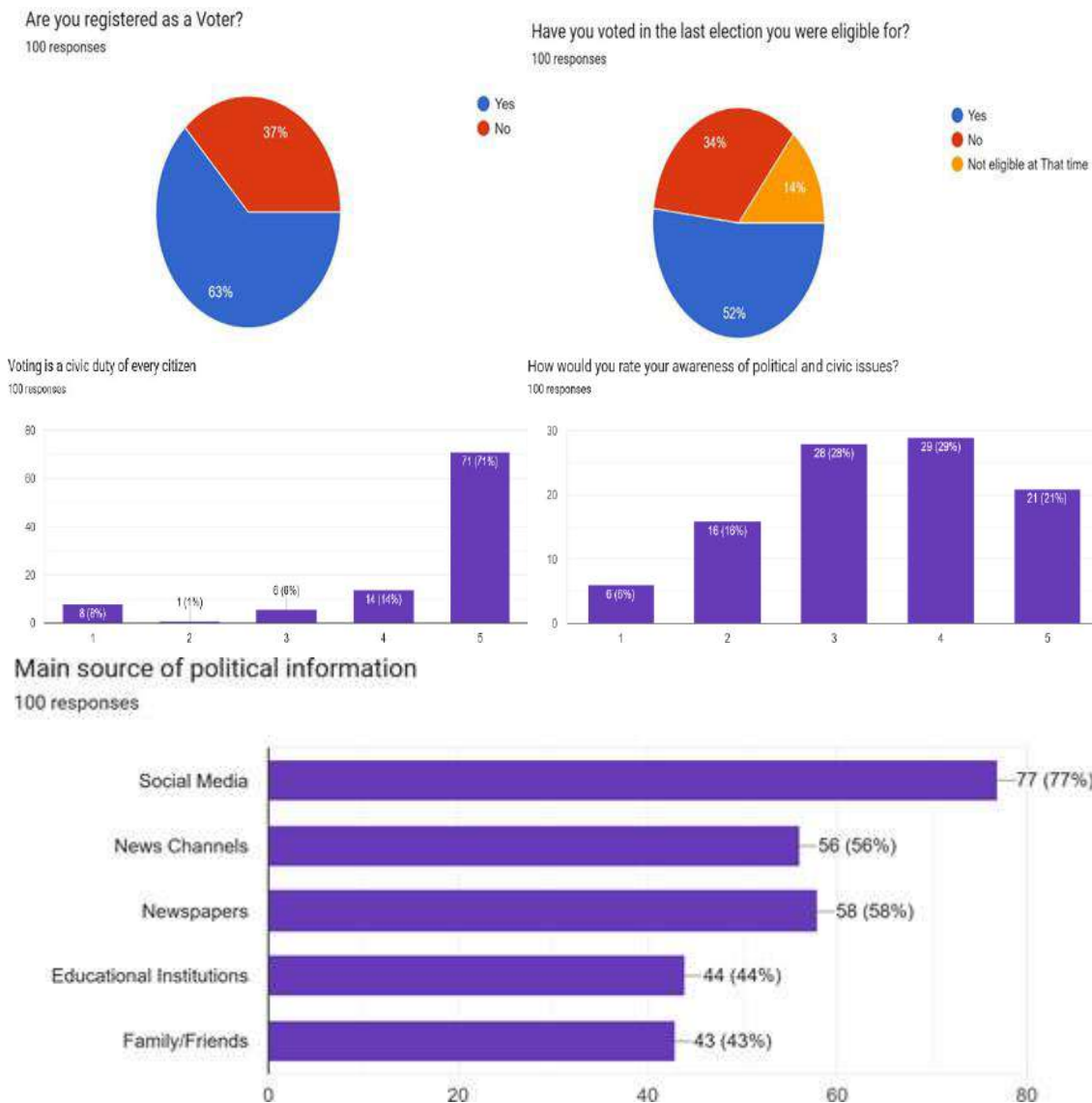
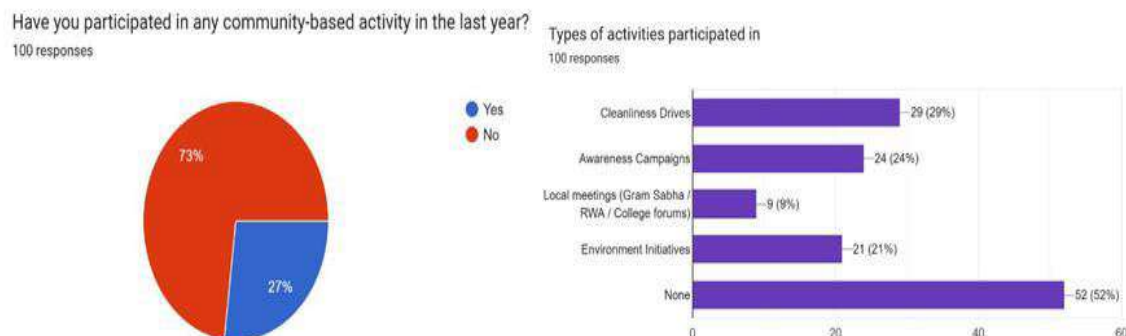


Figure 2. Self-reported understanding of civic responsibility among youth (n = 100).

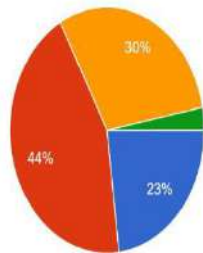
● **Civic Responsibility among Youth**

Figure 2 shows that most respondents agreed that civic responsibility involves awareness of how individual actions affect society. Interview responses echoed this understanding.

SECTION C: Participation in Community Activities (*Variables: participation items, volunteering questions*)



Frequency of participation in community activities
100 responses



I feel a personal responsibility to contribute to my community.
100 responses

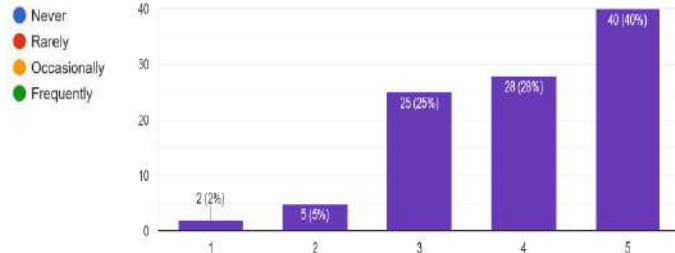


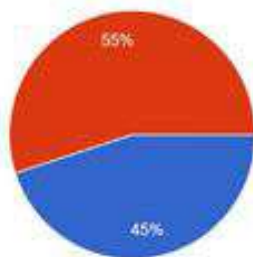
Figure 3. Participation in community activities and local initiatives among youth (n = 100).

● Youth Participation in Civic and Community Activities

As illustrated in Figure 3, participation in community activities and volunteering was limited among respondents. Interviews indicated that time constraints, lack of opportunities, and economic pressures were major barriers.

SECTION D: Volunteering & Social Responsibility (*Variable: awareness-related Likert items*)

Have you volunteered for any social cause?
100 responses



Areas of volunteering
100 responses



Main reason for not volunteering (if applicable)
89 responses

Volunteering helps in becoming a responsible citizen.
100 responses

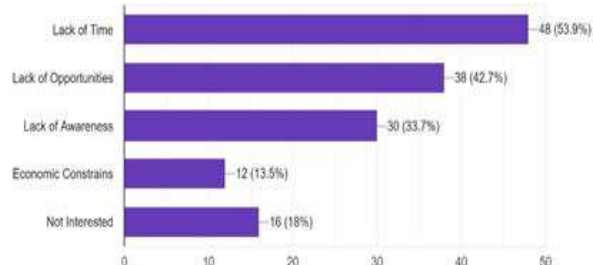
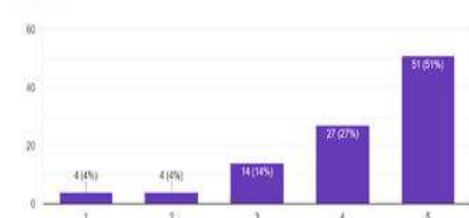


Figure 4: Level of awareness of political and public issues among youth (n = 100).

● Political Awareness and Voting Behaviour

Figure 4 indicates moderate levels of political and public issue awareness. Interviewees reported relying on news and social media, often verifying information through multiple sources, with greater attention to grassroots-level issues.

SECTION E: Trust in Democratic Institutions (Variables: Parliament, Judiciary, Election Commission, Local Government)

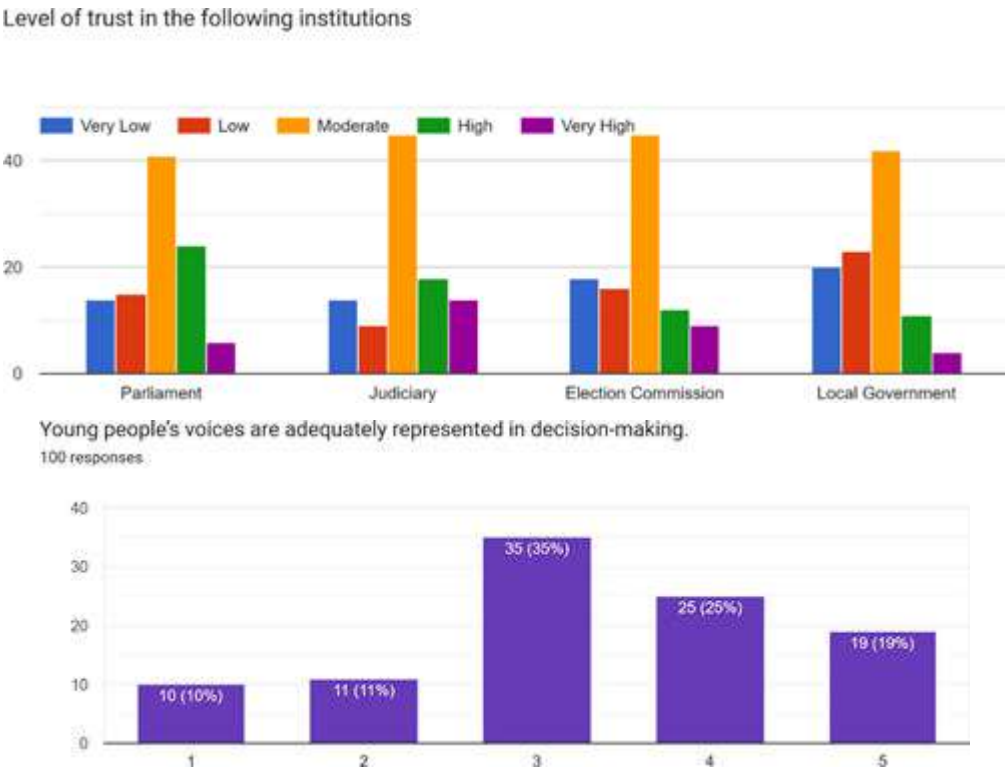


Figure 5. Trust in democratic institutions among youth respondents (n = 100).

● Trust in Democratic Institutions

Figure 5 shows predominantly moderate trust in democratic institutions. Interview respondents expressed cautious confidence, citing concerns about politicisation and polarisation.

SECTION F: Digital Activism & Civic Engagement (Variables: use of digital platforms, forms of engagement, ease of participation)

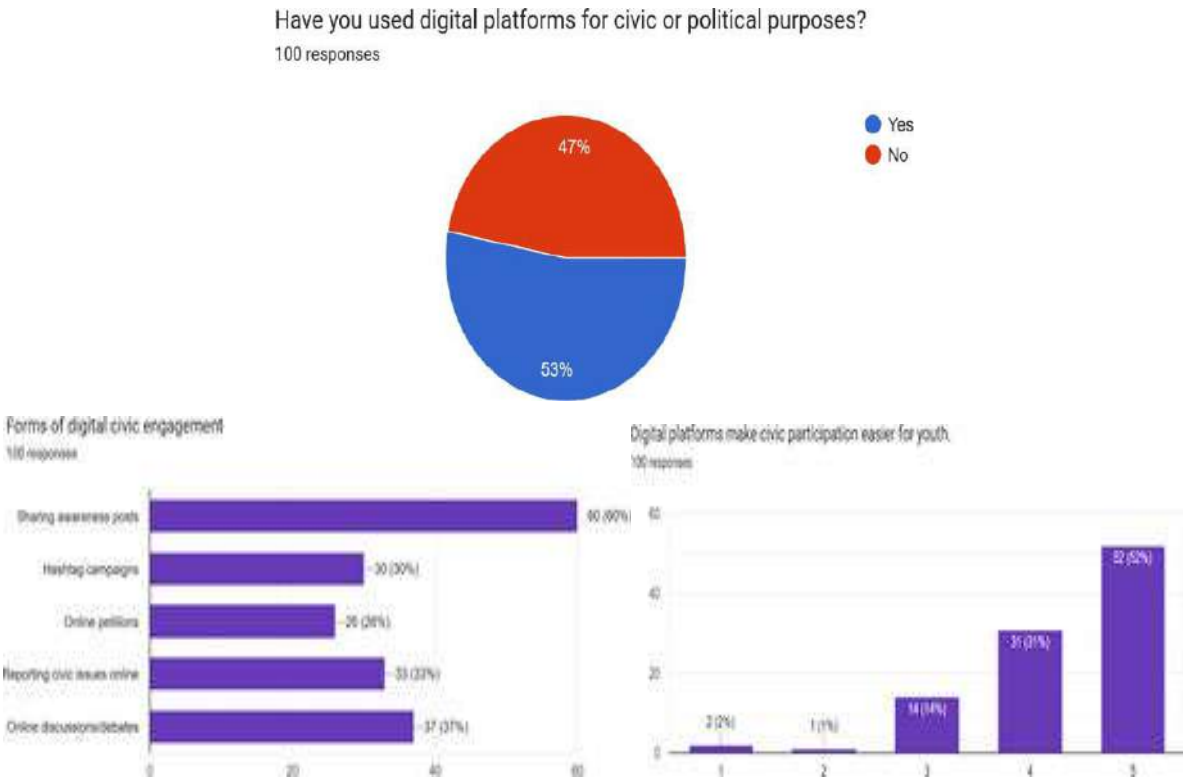


Figure 6. Use of digital platforms for civic and political engagement among youth (n = 100).

● Digital Civic Engagement

Figure 6 highlights widespread use of digital platforms for civic expression, including sharing information and supporting social causes. Digital engagement was viewed as accessible and flexible.

SECTION G: Educational Exposure to Civic Learning (Variables: education, student/working status × participation)

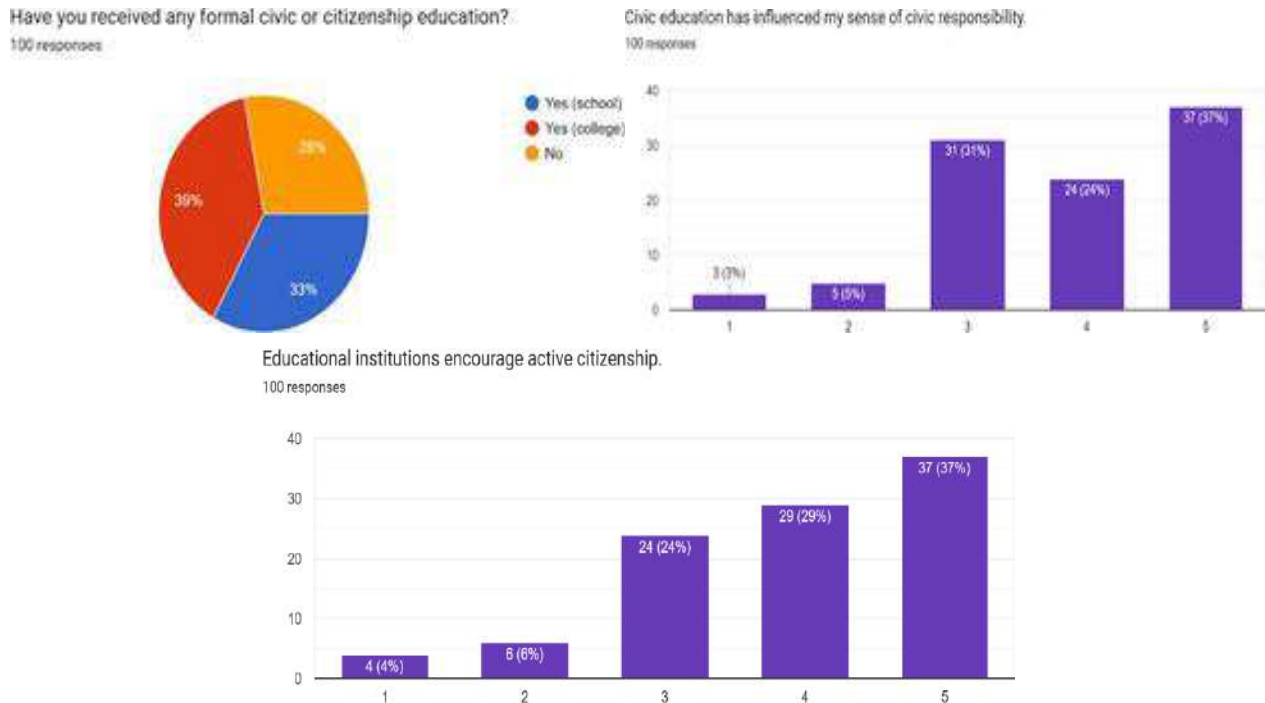


Figure 7: Civic participation across educational and occupational categories (n = 100).

● Socio-economic and Educational Variations in Participation

Figure 7 demonstrates variations in participation across educational and occupational categories. Interviewees highlighted the role of education and early institutional exposure, such as student councils, in shaping civic awareness.

SECTION H: Socio-Economic Constraints (Variables: economic/social constraints, major constraints faced)

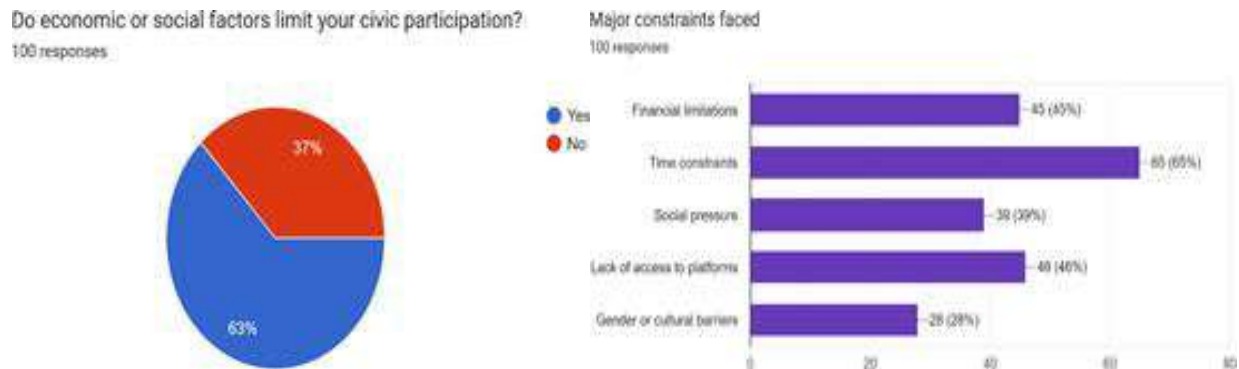


Figure 8. Perceived barriers to civic participation among youth (n = 100).

● Constraints to Civic Participation

As illustrated in Figure 8, lack of time, limited awareness of opportunities, and economic constraints emerged as the most commonly reported barriers to civic participation.

Interviewees echoed these constraints, emphasising that limited participation was not due to lack of interest but rather to structural and contextual barriers. These constraints were frequently described as overlapping, reinforcing their cumulative impact on youth engagement.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five youth respondents aged 18–27 from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds, including students, professional aspirants, and early-career engineers. The

interviews explored perceptions of civic responsibility, political awareness, institutional trust, and youth participation. A **descriptive qualitative approach** was adopted, focusing on summarising responses question-wise and using illustrative quotations to contextualise the findings.

Perceptions of Civic Responsibility

Respondents commonly understood civic responsibility as awareness of how individual actions affect others and society. Civic responsibility was perceived as extending beyond formal political participation to include ethical conduct, social awareness, and responsible citizenship. As one respondent noted:

“People think civic responsibility is only for elders, but youth also have a role in shaping society.” (Respondent 2)

Political Awareness and Information Sources

Interviewees reported **moderate awareness** of political and public issues. News media and social media platforms served as primary information sources, with respondents emphasising the importance of verifying information through multiple channels.

Trust in Democratic Institutions

Most respondents expressed **moderate trust** in democratic institutions. While recognising their significance, participants raised concerns about increasing politicisation and polarisation, which influenced their cautious outlook. This critical engagement reflects neither complete distrust nor unquestioning acceptance but a balanced assessment of institutional functioning.

Civic Participation and Constraints

Participation in community activities and local initiatives was reported to be **low or absent** among most respondents. Key constraints included time limitations, lack of awareness about opportunities, economic pressures, and academic or professional commitments.

Digital Civic Engagement

In contrast to limited offline participation, respondents actively engaged in civic expression through digital platforms. Common activities included sharing informational posts, using hashtags, posting stories, and circulating messages related to social and political issues. Digital engagement was viewed as a convenient and accessible means of participation for youth.

Role of Education and Future Outlook

Education was identified as an important factor shaping civic opinions and political understanding. Some respondents cited participation in school or college initiatives, such as school sansad, as early exposure to democratic practices. All participants expressed optimism about the future of democracy and the role of youth, emphasising young people's capacity to address contemporary challenges.

ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

Overall, the findings indicate that youth possess awareness, critical perspectives, and optimism regarding democracy, but **actual civic participation remains constrained** by structural and socio-economic factors. Civic responsibility is largely understood as a social and ethical obligation, with digital platforms emerging as key spaces for civic engagement.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study relies on descriptive analysis using Google Forms-generated visualizations, which limits the scope for advanced statistical testing such as correlation or regression analysis. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as indicative trends rather than statistically generalizable conclusions. Future research may employ inferential statistical tools to examine relationships between variables in greater depth.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study reveal a clear distinction between **civic awareness and civic participation** among youth. While respondents demonstrate awareness, critical perspectives, and optimism regarding democracy, structural and socio-economic constraints limit sustained engagement. Moderate trust in democratic institutions reflects cautious but continued democratic commitment rather than disengagement.

Digital platforms have emerged as significant spaces for youth civic expression, compensating to some extent for limited offline participation. However, such engagement remains largely expressive rather than organisational. Educational exposure appears to strengthen civic orientations, underscoring the role of institutions in fostering active citizenship. Overall, the findings suggest that youth possess awareness, optimism,

and potential for democratic engagement, but require enabling environments to translate these capacities into sustained participation.

CONCLUSION

This study examined civic responsibility among youth aged 18–27 using a mixed-method descriptive approach. This study demonstrates that youth possess awareness and potential for democratic participation but face significant barriers in translating these capacities into consistent civic action.

Digital platforms have emerged as important spaces for civic expression, while education plays a critical role in shaping civic attitudes. The study underscores the need for institutional support, accessible civic opportunities, and youth-inclusive governance mechanisms to bridge the gap between awareness and participation.

Given its descriptive and exploratory scope, the study contributes to understanding contemporary youth civic engagement patterns and highlights areas for future research employing longitudinal or inferential designs.

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TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY SERVICES: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF ARTHRITIS AMONG YOUTH IN THANE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Arthritis, commonly associated with older adults, is increasingly affecting youth in Thane City. This study examines the prevalence, risk factors, and impact of arthritis among individuals aged 13–25 years. Using a mixed- method approach, data were collected from 100 young residents through surveys and from healthcare professionals through interviews. The findings show that 12% of respondents reported symptoms of arthritis, with major risk factors including sedentary lifestyle, obesity, and genetic factors. Arthritis was found to negatively affect daily activities, mental health, and overall quality of life. Key challenges include lack of awareness, delayed diagnosis, and limited support for lifestyle changes. The study recommends awareness programs, early screening, and promotion of physical activity to reduce the impact of arthritis among youth in Thane City.

Keywords: Arthritis, youth, Thane City, risk factors, quality of life, healthcare interventions, public health , community service.

INTRODUCTION

Arthritis, a chronic condition characterized by inflammation of the joints, is traditionally associated with older adults. However, in recent years, an alarming trend has emerged, with a growing number of young individuals being diagnosed with various forms of arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile idiopathic arthritis. The impact of arthritis on the youth population is substantial, not only because of the physical limitations it imposes, such as pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility, but also due to its broader effects on mental health, academic performance, work productivity, and overall quality of life. Young people living with arthritis often face emotional stress, social isolation, and difficulties in maintaining normal daily routines.

In Thane City, a rapidly urbanizing area in Maharashtra, India, these challenges are further intensified by changing lifestyles, increased screen time, reduced physical activity, unhealthy dietary habits, limited public awareness, and gaps in healthcare services specifically designed for younger patients. The term *arthritis* refers to a group of disorders that affect the joints, which are the points where bones meet, such as the knees, wrists, fingers, toes, and hips. These conditions fall under the broader category of rheumatic diseases, which are characterized by inflammation—manifested through symptoms such as redness, heat, swelling, pain, and stiffness—and a progressive loss of function in the affected structures. Rheumatic diseases can involve not only the joints but also tendons, ligaments, muscles, bones, and, in some cases, internal organs.

Globally, more than 100 different rheumatic diseases have been identified, affecting millions of people across all age groups [1–3]. In India, arthritis is a major public health concern, affecting approximately 15% of the population, which translates to nearly 180 million individuals. This growing burden highlights the need for increased awareness, early diagnosis, and effective management strategies, particularly among the younger population who face the condition during crucial years of physical, emotional, and social development.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To determine the prevalence of arthritis among the youth population (13–25 years) in Thane City in order to support community health awareness and planning.
2. To evaluate the impact of arthritis on the daily lives of young people, with the aim of highlighting their needs and challenges within the community.
3. To contribute to the development of more effective and community-based solutions for improving the quality of life of young individuals affected by arthritis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early research on arthritis, particularly in young populations, has focused on various aspects such as prevalence, etiology, and treatment approaches. Here are some key points from the literature:

Prevalence and Incidence: Research has documented the prevalence of conditions like Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) in specific populations. For instance, a study highlighted that the prevalence rates for JIA in certain countries were around 133-167 per 100,000 population among children aged 2- 15 years (BioMed

Central). This emphasizes the importance of understanding how common these conditions are in different regions, which can guide healthcare policies.

Etiological Factors: Early investigations into the causes of arthritis in youth have pointed to a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Studies indicate that infections, maternal smoking, and vitamin D deficiency may increase the risk of developing arthritis (BioMed Central). The genetic predisposition varies with different subtypes of JIA, showing associations with specific HLA genes and non-HLA-related genes (BioMed Central).

Global Burden: Research also addresses the global burden of rheumatoid arthritis among adolescents and young adults (AYAs), providing data on incidence and disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). For example, a comprehensive analysis found trends in RA among individuals aged 10-24 years across multiple countries, which could inform preventive strategies and resource allocation (PLOS).

Treatment Approaches: The literature highlights that therapeutic strategies have evolved significantly, focusing on both pharmacological treatments and lifestyle modifications. Early research has paved the way for understanding the effectiveness of biologics and DMARDs in managing symptoms and improving quality of life (Bio Med Central). Overall, these studies underscore the importance of targeted research in understanding arthritis in youth populations, addressing both the biological and social determinants of health.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining primary and secondary data through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to understand the challenges faced by young individuals with arthritis and identify ways to improve their quality of life.

Population and Sample

The target population includes youth aged 13–25 years diagnosed with arthritis in Thane City. Participants will be selected from rheumatology clinics, support groups, and online platforms. A sample of about 40 respondents will be used to ensure diverse representation.

Data Collection

Secondary Data: Information will be collected from academic journals, books, theses, local news articles, and interviews or personal accounts of young people and healthcare professionals to understand trends, challenges, and management of arthritis.

Primary Data

Quantitative Method: A structured questionnaire will be used to collect data on demographics, medical history, quality of life, physical functioning, and social support. Surveys will be distributed online and through visits to Jupiter Hospital, Thane.

Qualitative Method: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected participants to explore their experiences, coping methods, challenges, and available support.

Expected Outcomes The study aims to identify the key challenges faced by young people with arthritis and suggest effective strategies to improve their quality of life through better support and interventions.

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

● Prevalence of Arthritis among Youth in Thane City

The analysis of primary data reveals that 12% of the surveyed youth population in Thane City is affected by arthritis. This finding clearly indicates that arthritis is no longer confined to older age groups and is emerging as a significant health concern among youth. The prevalence reflects changing urban lifestyle patterns and highlights the need for early screening and preventive healthcare measures at the community level.

Interpretation:

The presence of arthritis among a considerable proportion of youth emphasizes the urgency for awareness programs and early medical intervention. Community-based health initiatives can play a crucial role in identifying symptoms at an early stage and reducing long-term complications.

● Major Causes of Arthritis among Youth

Data analysis indicates that the primary causes contributing to arthritis among youth include: Sedentary lifestyle

Obesity Genetic factors

Among these, sedentary lifestyle and obesity emerge as dominant factors, reflecting the impact of reduced physical activity and unhealthy habits associated with urban living.

Interpretation:

The findings suggest that lifestyle-related factors significantly influence the occurrence of arthritis among youth. This underlines the importance of community health education, physical activity promotion, and preventive lifestyle interventions to reduce disease prevalence.

• Awareness of Juvenile Arthritis among Stakeholders

The study reveals low levels of awareness regarding juvenile arthritis among youth, parents, and teachers. Many respondents were unaware of early symptoms, causes, and the need for timely medical consultation. This lack of awareness contributes to delayed diagnosis and inadequate support for affected individuals.

Interpretation:

Insufficient awareness among key stakeholders highlights a critical gap in health education. Schools and families, as primary support systems for youth, must be actively involved in awareness campaigns to ensure early detection and appropriate care.

• Community and Institutional Role

The data analysis indicates that limited awareness within educational institutions and the community results in insufficient academic accommodations and social support for youth suffering from arthritis.

Interpretation:

These findings stress the need for collaborative community efforts involving healthcare professionals, schools, parents, and local organizations. Such collective action can reduce stigma, improve access to care, and enhance the overall quality of life of affected youth.

CONCLUSION

Juvenile arthritis is an emerging health concern in urban areas like Thane City, affecting the physical, emotional, and social well-being of youth. Limited healthcare access, social stigma, and inadequate educational support often delay early intervention. Community-driven strategies—such as telemedicine services, awareness campaigns, tailored educational support, and counseling or peer networks—can foster a more inclusive environment, reduce stigma, and empower affected youth to manage their condition effectively. Encouraging healthy lifestyles and ensuring a smooth transition from pediatric to adult care further support independence and quality of life. By combining healthcare, education, and community engagement, it is possible to build a compassionate, supportive framework that enables young individuals with arthritis in Thane to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

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**THE ROLE OF NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME (NSS) IN NATION BUILDING: A
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW**

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ABSTRACT

The National Service Scheme (NSS) started in 1969 by the Government of India gets young people involved in community service to promote social responsibility, civic engagement, and national integration. This review brings together empirical studies, policy documents, and qualitative data to look at NSS's various contributions to nation building. It highlights the scheme's effects on social development, education, youth empowerment, and the challenges it faces going forward.

INTRODUCTION

NSS reflects Mahatma Gandhi's idea of building a nation through youth involvement. It seeks to connect higher education with community efforts. Its motto, "Not Me but You," encourages selfless service. This helps bridge gaps between urban and rural areas and empowers marginalized groups. The main goals are personality development through service, promoting national unity, and fostering active citizenship.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Inspired by the Kothari Commission from 1964 to 1966, NSS started on September 24, 1969. It grew from pilot programs to include millions of volunteers in educational institutions. Over the years, it has become a platform for tackling issues in health, education, the environment, and disaster management.

OBJECTIVES

1. To look at NSS's contributions to social development through community projects that tackle issues like poverty, health, and education.
2. To assess the effects on youth personality development, including leadership skills, democratic attitudes, and emergency response ability.
3. To evaluate NSS's role in promoting national integration, social cohesion, and harmony through awareness campaigns and bridging rural and urban areas.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Adopt a systematic literature review approach that is qualitative to provide a thorough overview of NSS's complex role in nation building. This design combines existing studies, policy documents, and qualitative data without collecting new data. It enables analysis of impacts on social development, education, and civic engagement.

DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION

Primary Sources: Official NSS handbooks, Ministry of Youth Affairs reports, such as annual reports from 2020 to 2021, Kothari Commission documents.

Secondary Sources: Peer-reviewed journals, including IJFMR and IJAHSS, empirical studies from IIPA, NCERT, NIRDPR, and UGC evaluations.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

NSS connects campuses and communities. It promotes civic responsibility based on Gandhian ideals. This work supports nation-building goals, including social harmony and human resource development. It tackles gaps in understanding how volunteerism leads to real results, like skill-building and disaster response. This enriches the academic discussion on public service programs.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATION BUILDING

NSS instils civic duty, bridging knowledge with action for holistic development.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COHESION

Activities such as gender sensitization, women's empowerment programs, and campaigns against social evils promote equality and harmony. NSS helps close the urban-rural divide by linking educated youth with marginalized communities.

EDUCATIONAL AND SKILL ENHANCEMENT

Participation improves academic performance, soft skills like teamwork and empathy, and employability. Eighty percent of volunteers report gains in leadership. It also connects classroom knowledge to real-world issues, which helps develop critical thinking.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH

Trained volunteers help with relief, evacuation, first aid, and spreading awareness about hygiene, immunization, and wellness. They work to build community resilience.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Tree plantations, waste management, and village adoption support sustainability and improve infrastructure.

CHALLENGES

Resource shortages limit program scale. Inconsistent training and low motivation reduce effectiveness. Urban-focused participation often ignores lasting rural impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase funding through public-private partnerships. Improve practical training and include NSS in curricula to boost motivation. Use technology for broader outreach and monitoring.

CONCLUSION

NSS transforms youth into responsible citizens. This significantly advances social cohesion, education, and inclusive growth, which are essential for building India as a nation. Continued improvements will strengthen its role in creating a united, skilled population.

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ROLE OF COMMERCE STUDENTS IN NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME THROUGH COLLEGES OF MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the active engagement of commerce students in Maharashtra with national initiatives implemented through their colleges. Initiatives such as the Skill India Mission, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Digital India, Start-Up India, Stand-Up India, Make in India, and the National Service Scheme (NSS) offer opportunities for students to cultivate entrepreneurial, social, digital, and leadership competencies. The study analyzes the level of student participation, significant advantages, obstacles, and suggestions for enhancing their contributions.

Keywords: National service scheme, commerce students, Participation in NSS, NSS Volunteers

1. INTRODUCTION

Commerce education is crucial in molding the professionals of tomorrow, not only for the business sector but also for the advancement of our nation. In Maharashtra, colleges are actively promoting student involvement in national development initiatives. These opportunities not only provide students with hands-on experience but also align with government objectives. National schemes are initiatives launched by the Government of India aimed at fostering socio-economic development. Some notable examples include: - Skill India Mission - Digital India - Swachh Bharat Abhiyan - Start-Up India / Stand-Up India - Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) Students pursuing commerce are equipped with essential skills in management, finance, marketing, digital technologies, and entrepreneurship, positioning them perfectly to take on active roles in the implementation and advocacy of these national schemes.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

This research paper seeks to:

Gauge commerce students' awareness of national schemes.

Investigate how students participate in college activities.

Assess the contributions made by students toward achieving national objectives.

Identify the skills gained through participation in these schemes.

Provide recommendations for enhancing student engagement.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW :

Numerous studies underscore the significant impact of higher education on national development: - Higher education institutions serve as crucial platforms for fostering national values and civic duties. - Student involvement in public initiatives promotes the development of leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities. - Active participation in practical programs boosts employability and fosters entrepreneurship. Research indicates that students engaged in government programs often achieve better academic and social outcomes than those who do not participate.

4. NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME AND COMMERCE STUDENTS**A) Role of Commerce Students in NSS**

By using their academic knowledge to address social and economic issues in the real world, commerce students make a substantial contribution to NSS.

Their participation aids in closing the knowledge gap between academic study and real-world social application.

B) Important Roles Consist of:

Financial literacy initiatives for impoverished people in rural and urban areas
Campaigns to raise awareness about digital payments, banking, insurance, GST, and taxes
Assistance with accounting, budgeting, and expense control for Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

Data collecting and surveying for socioeconomic research support for government programs such as PMJDY, PMFBY, and Jan Dhan Yojana
Advice about entrepreneurship for young people and small business owners

C) NSS's Significance for Commerce Students

Students studying commerce benefit academically and personally from participation in NSS. enhances teamwork and leadership abilities,enhances managerial and communication skills, gives real-world exposure to social and economic challenges, fosters moral principles and social responsibility,increases professional confidence and employability skills

D) NSS Tasks Appropriate for Students in Commerce

Adoption programs in villages,Workshops on budgeting for families,Awareness among consumers motivates, Camps for tax awareness, Programs for skill development, Sustainability initiatives and environmental accounting

E) Representative NSS Participation by Colleges (Commerce-Related)**1. Thakur College of Science & Commerce**

NSS Volunteers (2024–25): ~200 students (98 male, 102 female).

2. MB Patel College of Arts, Commerce & Science

NSS Volunteers: ~100 students annually.

3. .Lala Lajpatrai College of Commerce & Economics

NSS Unit Strength: ~200 volunteers (2 NSS units).

4. Dr. C. D. Deshmukh Commerce & Arts College (Roha)

NSS Participants: ~300 students across 3 units.

5. JSSP Arts, Commerce & Science College (Goveli)

NSS Volunteers: ~200 students regularly participating.

6. V.P.M Joshi Bedekar College (Autonomous) (Thane)

NSS Volunteers: ~200 students regularly participating.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design: This study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

5.2 Population and Sampling-Target Group: Commerce students from various colleges throughout Maharashtra. - Sample Size: A total of 500 students were selected using stratified random sampling.

5.3 Data Collection Tools : - Structured questionnaires - Focus group discussions - Interviews with college coordinators

5.4 Data Analysis :Data analysis involved: - Descriptive statistics including frequency and percentages - Thematic analysis for qualitative responses

6. FINDINGS

6.1 Awareness Level - A significant portion of students (78%) recognize at least three national schemes. - Awareness tends to be greater among final-year students when compared to their first-year counterparts.

6.2 Participation in National Schemes Commerce students showed the highest level of participation in the following initiatives: - Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (68%) - Skill India/PMKVY (54%) - Digital India (49%) - Entrepreneurship activities under Start-Up India (42%)

6.3 Role of Colleges Colleges contributed through various means, including: - Workshops - NSS/BVC (Bharat Vikas Parishad) camps - Skill development courses - Creating model business plans as part of Start-Up India

7. BENEFITS:

Engagement in national programs,

- Enhances hands-on learning outside of the classroom.
- Promotes future entrepreneurs and social innovators from academic institutions;

-
- Increases students participation to sustainable development goals;
 - Closes the gap between industry and academia, particularly in commerce education.

But the investigation also discovered issues such as:

FirstYear students' lack of knowledge; smaller colleges' limited resources; and the absence of institutional incentives for active engagement

8. CONCLUSION

Through active college support, Maharashtra's commerce students are contributing significantly to national initiatives.

In addition to enhancing their own skills, their participation advances government objectives like entrepreneurship, digital adoption, skill development, and hygiene.

Their involvement can be further enhanced by improved college structures, awareness campaigns, and ongoing motivational techniques.

9. SUGGESTIONS

Include national scheme courses in the curriculum for commerce., Plan first- year student orientation programs, Create specialized clubs or cells for pertinent programs (e.g., Start-Up Cell, Digital India Cell), Provide rewards or credits for involvement. Encourage industry collaborations to improve the execution of the plan.

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**CROWDFUNDING FOR SOCIAL CAUSES: AN ACCOUNTING PERSPECTIVE ON
TRANSPARENCY, TRUST, AND DONOR DECISION-MAKING**

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ABSTRACT

Crowdfunding functioned as an effective mechanism for financing social causes, with accounting transparency playing a key role in shaping donor trust and decision-making. The research targeted individual donors residing in the Mumbai suburban region. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The analysis examined the relationship between financial disclosure practices, clarity of fund utilisation reporting, and donor confidence. Findings indicated that transparent and timely accounting information positively and significantly influenced donors' willingness to contribute and their intention to make repeat donations, while inadequate financial reporting weakened donor trust regardless of the perceived importance of the social cause. These results highlighted accounting transparency as a critical factor in enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of social crowdfunding initiatives, providing empirical evidence to the limited literature on accounting practices in crowdfunding and offering practical insights for social organisations and crowdfunding platforms seeking to strengthen donor engagement.

Keywords : Crowdfunding; Social Causes; Accounting Transparency; Financial Disclosure; Donor Trust; Donor Decision-Making; Social Finance; Accountability

1. INTRODUCTION

Crowdfunding has emerged as an important alternative financing mechanism that enables individuals to collectively support projects and causes through small financial contributions. While early crowdfunding research primarily focused on entrepreneurial ventures and commercial outcomes, recent years have witnessed growing use of crowdfunding for social causes such as healthcare, education, disaster relief, and community development. This shift reflects the increasing role of collective financial participation in addressing social challenges, particularly in contexts where traditional funding sources are limited.

Despite its growing relevance, social crowdfunding faces persistent concerns related to trust, misuse of funds, and lack of accountability. Donors typically rely on limited information provided by campaign organisers and crowdfunding platforms, which creates information asymmetry between fundraisers and contributors. In such settings, accounting transparency and financial disclosure assume critical importance in influencing donor confidence and donation behaviour. Prior studies have highlighted that transparent reporting and credible information signals positively affect funding outcomes in crowdfunding campaigns (Mollick, 2014; Agrawal et al., 2015).

From an accounting perspective, crowdfunding for social causes remains an underexplored area. While financial reporting and accountability have been extensively studied in corporate and non-profit settings, limited empirical evidence exists on how accounting information shapes donor decision-making in social crowdfunding contexts. This study addressed this gap by examining the role of accounting transparency in building donor trust and influencing contribution decisions. By focusing on individual donors, the study contributed to understanding how collective financial services can be strengthened through effective accounting practices to support social transformation.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

Crowdfunding is generally defined as an open call for financial resources from a large number of individuals, typically through online platforms, to support specific projects or initiatives (Belleflamme et al., 2014). In the context of social causes, crowdfunding serves not only as a fundraising mechanism but also as a tool for social engagement and collective action. Platforms facilitating social crowdfunding enable individuals to participate directly in social development efforts, thereby extending the scope of financial inclusion and community involvement.

However, the success of social crowdfunding initiatives largely depends on donor trust. Unlike traditional charitable organisations, many crowdfunding campaigns operate without established governance structures or formal reporting standards. This increases donor reliance on voluntary disclosures related to fund utilisation, progress updates, and financial accountability. Prior research has indicated that transparency acts as a signalling

mechanism that reduces information asymmetry and enhances perceived credibility (Spence, 1973; Mollick, 2014).

Accounting literature emphasises transparency and disclosure as key elements of accountability, particularly in environments involving stewardship of funds (Gray et al., 1996). In non-profit and social finance contexts, clear financial reporting has been associated with improved donor confidence and sustained funding support (Saxton & Guo, 2011). Applying these principles to crowdfunding, studies have found that detailed financial information, frequent updates, and clarity regarding the use of funds positively influence donor participation and campaign success (Courtney et al., 2017).

In emerging economies such as India, social crowdfunding has gained prominence due to increased digital access and rising social awareness. Nevertheless, concerns regarding misuse of funds and lack of standardised financial reporting remain significant barriers to donor participation. Against this backdrop, examining crowdfunding through an accounting lens becomes particularly relevant. Understanding how donors perceive and respond to accounting transparency can provide valuable insights for platforms, social organisations, and policymakers seeking to strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of crowdfunding for social causes.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Ebrahim (2003) examined accountability mechanisms within non-governmental organisations and demonstrated that financial reporting and disclosure functioned as central instruments for establishing stewardship of entrusted resources. The study showed that donors relied heavily on transparent accounting information to evaluate whether funds were utilised responsibly, particularly in contexts characterised by limited direct oversight. The findings underscored that upward accountability to fund providers was largely discharged through credible and accessible financial reporting, a concern that closely paralleled donation-based crowdfunding environments where contributors exercised minimal control over fund utilisation.

Behn, DeVries, and Lin (2010) analysed the association between financial transparency and donor support in nonprofit organisations and found that donors responded favourably to clear financial disclosures and detailed reporting of program expenditures. Their empirical evidence indicated that enhanced transparency strengthened donor confidence and positively influenced contribution behaviour. The study reinforced the role of accounting information as a critical determinant of donor decision-making in social and charitable funding contexts.

Sargeant and Lee (2004) investigated the relationship between trust and relationship commitment in charitable giving and found that donor trust was significantly shaped by perceptions of organisational honesty, accountability, and transparency. The study concluded that transparent financial communication contributed to stronger donor relationships and increased the likelihood of sustained financial support. These findings were particularly relevant to social crowdfunding, where trust served as a key mediator between information disclosure and donor participation.

Gerber and Hui (2013) explored motivations and deterrents influencing participation in crowdfunding and found that contributors systematically evaluated the credibility and transparency of campaign information prior to making funding decisions. Their study indicated that clarity regarding fund usage and campaign objectives reduced perceived uncertainty and encouraged participation. The findings supported the view that transparent disclosure practices played a significant role in shaping donor engagement in crowdfunding initiatives directed toward social causes.

Prior studies demonstrated that transparency, accountability, and trust influenced donor behaviour in nonprofit and crowdfunding contexts. Financial reporting and credible disclosure enhanced donor confidence and engagement, while trust mediated the relationship between information and contribution decisions (Ebrahim, 2003; Behn, DeVries & Lin, 2010; Sargeant & Lee, 2004; Gerber & Hui, 2013). However, these studies rarely examined crowdfunding from an accounting perspective, particularly regarding how financial transparency shaped donor decision-making. Consequently, empirical evidence on the role of accounting information in fostering trust and guiding contributions in social crowdfunding remained limited. This study addressed this gap by focusing on accounting-based transparency, trust, and donor behaviour in social crowdfunding campaigns.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- a. To examine the relationship between financial disclosure practices and donor confidence in social crowdfunding campaigns.
- b. To assess the impact of clarity in fund utilisation reporting on donor trust and contribution behaviour.
- c. To investigate the influence of accounting transparency on donors' willingness to contribute and their intention to make repeat donations.

5. HYPOTHESIS:

H1: Transparent and timely accounting information positively influenced donor trust and significantly increased their willingness to contribute and intention to make repeat donations in social crowdfunding campaigns.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study adopted a quantitative research design. Primary data were collected from individual donors residing in the Mumbai suburban region using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire measured variables related to financial disclosure practices, clarity of fund utilisation reporting, donor trust, and contribution behaviour using a 5 -point Likert scale. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with prior experience in social crowdfunding. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise donor characteristics and responses, and inferential statistical techniques, including correlation and regression analysis, to test the hypothesised relationships between accounting transparency and donor behaviour

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**Table no. 1:** Descriptive Statistics of Respondents (n = 120)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25	30	25
	26–35	50	42
	36–45	25	21
	46 and above	15	12
Gender	Male	65	54
	Female	55	46
Education Level	Undergraduate	40	33
	Graduate	55	46
	Postgraduate	25	21

Previous Crowdfunding Experience	Yes	85	71
	No	35	29

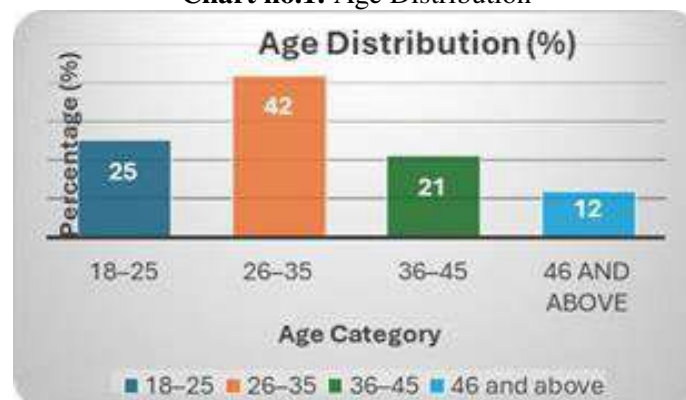
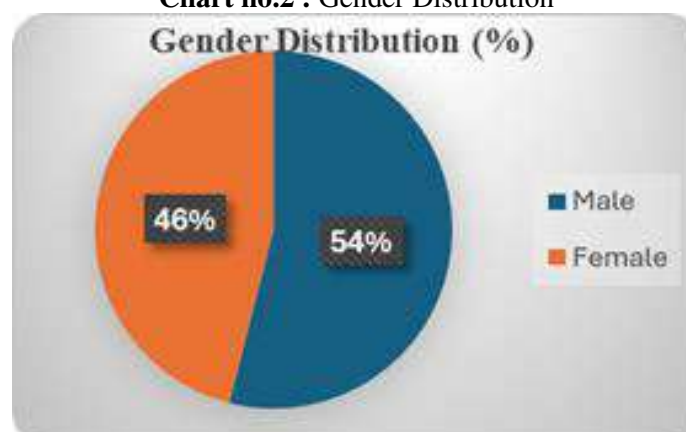
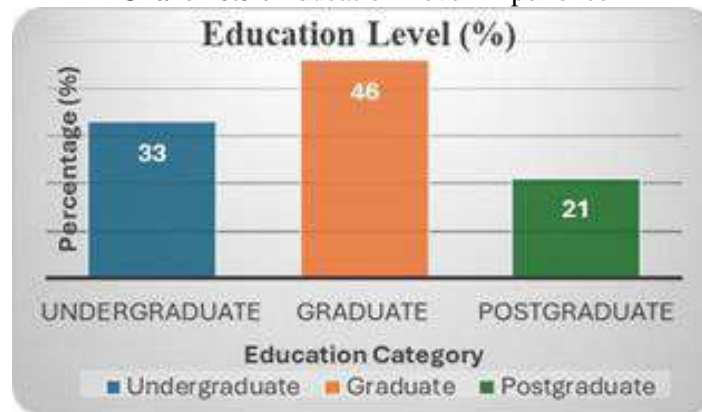
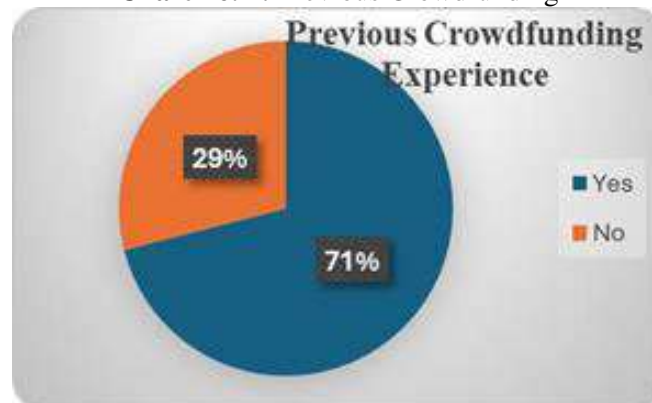
Chart no.1: Age Distribution**Chart no.2 :** Gender Distribution

Chart no.3 : Education Level Experience**Chart no.4 : Previous Crowdfunding****Interpretation**

The respondents were largely between 26–35 years old, with a relatively balanced gender distribution. A majority had prior experience with crowdfunding, suggesting familiarity with online donation processes. This demographic profile reflected the typical donor base in the Mumbai suburban region, aligning with prior studies that identified urban millennials as active participants in donation-based crowdfunding (Gerber & Hui, 2013).

Table no. 2: Mean Scores of Key Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Financial Disclosure Practices (FDP)	4.21	0.52
Clarity of Fund Utilisation (CFU)	4.05	0.61
Donor Trust (DT)	4.12	0.57
Willingness to Contribute (WC)	4.18	0.54
Repeat Donation Intention (RDI)	4.03	0.60

Interpretation

Respondents consistently rated financial disclosure and clarity of fund utilisation highly, indicating that transparent information played a key role in shaping donor perceptions. Donor trust, willingness to contribute, and intention to make repeat donations also scored above 4 on a 5-point Likert scale, supporting the hypothesised positive relationship between accounting transparency and donor behaviour.

Table no. 3: Correlation Matrix

Variables	FDP	CFU	DT	WC	RDI
FDP	1	0.68**	0.65**	0.61**	0.59**
CFU	0.68**	1	0.62**	0.57**	0.55**
DT	0.65**	0.62**	1	0.71**	0.69**
WC	0.61**	0.57**	0.71**	1	0.74**
RDI	0.59**	0.55**	0.69**	0.74**	1

**p < 0.01

Interpretation:

All correlations were positive and statistically significant, confirming that financial disclosure and clarity of fund utilisation were strongly associated with donor trust, willingness to contribute, and repeat donation intention. Donor trust exhibited the highest correlation with willingness to contribute ($r = 0.71$), highlighting its mediating role in the relationship between accounting transparency and donor behaviour, consistent with findings of Sargeant and Lee (2004).

Table no. 4: Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Willingness to Contribute)

Predictor Variables	B	SE	β	t	p
Financial Disclosure (FDP)	0.35	0.08	0.33	4.38	0.000
Fund Clarity (CFU)	0.28	0.09	0.26	3.11	0.002
Donor Trust (DT)	0.40	0.07	0.37	5.71	0.000

$R^2 = 0.62$, $F = 63.42$, $p < 0.001$

Interpretation:

The regression results demonstrated that financial disclosure, clarity of fund utilisation, and donor trust were significant predictors of donors' willingness to contribute, collectively explaining 62% of the variance. Donor trust emerged as the strongest predictor, confirming its mediating effect. These results aligned with the hypothesis that accounting transparency positively influenced donor behaviour in social crowdfunding campaigns

8. Hypothesis Testing

H1: Transparent accounting information positively influenced donor trust and increased willingness to contribute and repeat donation intention. Table no.5 : Correlation of Key Variables

Table no.5: Correlation of Key Variables

Predictor	WC	RDI	DT
FDP	0.61**	0.59**	0.65**
CFU	0.57**	0.55**	0.62**

$p < 0.01$

Table no. 6 : Regression Results (WC as DV)

Predictor	β	p	Significance
FDP	0.33	0.000	Significant
CFU	0.26	0.002	Significant
DT	0.37	0.000	Significant

$R^2 = 0.62$, $F = 63.42$, $p < 0$.

Interpretation:

H1 is supported. Financial disclosure and fund clarity enhanced donor trust, which increased both willingness to contribute and repeat donation intention.

9. CONCLUSION

This study examined crowdfunding for social causes through an accounting perspective, focusing on the role of financial disclosure, clarity of fund utilisation, and donor trust in influencing contribution behaviour. The findings demonstrated that transparent and timely accounting information significantly enhanced donor trust, willingness to contribute, and intention to make repeat donations. Donor trust emerged as a key mediator between accounting transparency and funding behaviour, confirming that clear financial reporting strengthened confidence and engagement even when donors lacked direct control over fund utilisation. The results contributed empirical evidence to the limited literature on accounting practices in social crowdfunding and reinforced the relevance of stewardship and accountability frameworks in online fundraising. Practically, the study highlighted that crowdfunding platforms and social organisations could improve donor participation and retention by providing transparent financial information, regular updates, and clear reporting on fund usage. Overall, accounting transparency was shown to be a critical determinant of the effectiveness, credibility, and sustainability of social crowdfunding initiatives, offering actionable guidance for both practitioners and policymakers seeking to promote trust-based donor engagement.

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**“UNITY IN DIVERSITY: CONTRIBUTION OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME TO
COMMERCE STUDENTS’ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT”**

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ABSTRACT

Unity in diversity is one of India’s foundational socio-cultural principles, promoting harmony among people from different backgrounds. The National Service Scheme (NSS), a government-sponsored youth outreach program, plays a pivotal role in fostering national integration and social development among students. This research paper explores how participation in NSS contributes to commerce students’ social development by enhancing their exposure to diverse communities, promoting social responsibility, leadership, and unity. Drawing upon scholarly studies, official NSS objectives, and empirical insights, this paper argues that NSS participation equips commerce students with the social awareness, skills, and values necessary to thrive in India’s pluralistic society.

Keywords: *Unity in Diversity, National Integration, Social Development, Civic Responsibility, Leadership in NSS, etc*

INTRODUCTION

India is widely celebrated for its unity in diversity - a societal fabric woven from a multitude of religions, languages, cultures, and social traditions. This principle forms a cornerstone of Indian national identity and is emphasized in various educational and social programs. Among these, the National Service Scheme (NSS) stands out as a structured mechanism through which students engage in community service, fostering mutual respect, national integration, and social development.

The NSS was launched in 1969 by the Indian government to involve students in voluntary community service and promote civic responsibility. It aims to develop character, leadership, empathy, and social consciousness among youth through purposeful engagements outside academic curricula. While NSS participation spans disciplines, the focus on commerce students is particularly significant given their future roles in business, finance, and entrepreneurship - sectors where social understanding and ethical consciousness are increasingly critical.

This research critically examines how NSS contributes to commerce students’ social development, particularly in promoting unity in diversity, empathy, leadership, and civic awareness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on NSS impacts have primarily focused on engineering, education, or general student populations. For instance, research on engineering graduates indicated that NSS participation significantly fosters social skills, leadership, teamwork, and community engagement (Lobo et al., 2025). These outcomes echo wider claims that NSS inculcates social norms and values such as empathy, responsibility, and civic awareness among higher education students (Mudi & Samanta, 2024). Additionally, NSS activities have been linked to national integration and social cohesion by breaking social barriers and encouraging inclusive development (IJFMR, 2025). Although limited in direct commerce student context, the broader literature establishes a foundation: NSS functions as an experiential education platform that contributes meaningfully to students’ social development and values.

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME: OBJECTIVES AND FRAMEWORK

The NSS is overseen by the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, and involves millions of student volunteers nationwide. Its core objectives include developing social responsibility, understanding community needs, promoting national integration, and enhancing leadership and teamwork skills among youth (Central University of Gujarat, 2026). Participation involves community projects, social surveys, awareness rallies, cultural exchange programs, and national service camps.

The NSS motto, “Not Me But You”, encapsulates its ethos of selfless community service. Through these structured activities, students are encouraged to step out of campus life and engage directly with social realities — a process that lays the groundwork for unity in diversity and social empathy.

COMMERCE STUDENTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH NSS

Although much NSS research focuses on STEM or general higher education cohorts, the principles are equally applicable to commerce students. Here's how NSS impacts commerce students' social development:

1. Enhancing Social Awareness and Empathy

Commerce curricula often emphasize accounting, finance, marketing, and management skills. However, understanding societal needs and consumer diversity requires more than technical acumen. NSS exposes students to real-world issues - poverty, health disparities, education gaps, environmental concerns - which enhances their social awareness and empathy (Sharma & Mohapatra, 2024). For instance, community surveys and awareness campaigns allow commerce students to interact with underprivileged groups, understand socio-economic barriers, and develop deeper human empathy essential for socially responsible business practice.

2. Promotion of Unity in Diversity

One of the central contributions of NSS is promoting national integration and unity among students from diverse backgrounds. The program encourages interactions among participants from different states, cultures, and linguistic groups through inter-community events, cultural exchange programs, and national integration camps (IJFMR, 2025). These interactions foster mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding — critical components of social development in pluralistic societies.

Moreover, NSS emphasizes respect for India's cultural plurality through planned activities that celebrate diversity and reinforce shared citizenship values. Such exposure helps commerce students appreciate diversity not only as cultural richness but as a socio-economic asset in globalized business environments.

3. Development of Leadership and Teamwork Skills

Leadership and teamwork are essential for professional success — particularly for commerce students who are future managers, entrepreneurs, and business leaders. NSS activities often require organizational planning, team coordination, and leadership in outreach campaigns. Students lead projects, mobilize community participation, and execute service initiatives, thereby developing decision-making and leadership skills. These competencies translate into improved confidence, communication, and collaborative abilities that benefit their professional and personal development.

4. Civic Responsibility and Ethics

NSS fosters civic responsibility by engaging students in activities such as literacy campaigns, health awareness drives, environmental projects, and disaster relief efforts. These engagements reinforce ethical values such as fairness, justice, accountability, and service to society. Studying commerce without such ethical grounding can lead to a narrow perspective focused on profit rather than societal impact. NSS encourages a broader ethical lens by linking academic knowledge with civic participation.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE AND CASE EXAMPLES

Empirical research and program reports corroborate the qualitative impacts of NSS. For example, Lobo et al. (2025) found that NSS participation among engineering graduates significantly enhanced social competence, communication, and community engagement skills, suggesting similar potential outcomes for commerce students.

Furthermore, official NSS objectives and reports stress community engagement and national integration as core outcomes. NSS activities have been documented to promote unity among diverse students, breaking social barriers and encouraging inclusive development (IJFMR, 2025).

These documented outcomes affirm that NSS contributes tangibly to student social development through structured, experiential learning opportunities.

INTEGRATION WITH COMMERCE EDUCATION

Commerce education traditionally emphasizes analytical and quantitative skills. However, in an interconnected world, soft skills like empathy, cultural sensitivity, social awareness, and ethical leadership are equally vital. NSS acts as a complementary experiential platform that helps bridge this gap by embedding students in diverse community contexts.

Integrating NSS reflections into commerce curricula - such as reflective journals, service-learning credits, or community project reports - can further enhance academic and social learning. Such integration ensures that students not only engage in service activities but also critically reflect on their experiences in relation to societal issues and business ethics.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Despite its benefits, NSS participation might face challenges such as limited recognition in commerce academic credit systems, student time constraints, or variable quality of community projects. To maximize the impact, institutions could establish structured support systems - including mentorship, assessment frameworks, and integration with academic goals - to ensure NSS efforts align with students' educational path.

CONCLUSION

The National Service Scheme significantly contributes to commerce students' social development by promoting unity in diversity, social awareness, leadership, and civic responsibility. Through community engagement and experiential learning, NSS transforms students from passive learners to socially conscious individuals capable of understanding and addressing real-world complexities. This transformation not only enriches students' personal growth but also prepares them to operate ethically and empathetically in diverse professional arenas.

As India continues to navigate challenges related to social inequality and multicultural coexistence, programs like NSS are invaluable in shaping future business leaders who respect diversity, uphold ethical standards, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

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CROWDFUNDING AND DIGITAL TOOLS IN SOCIAL SERVICE INITIATIVES: AWARENESS AMONG GENERATION Z IN THANE CITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the level of awareness among Generation Z in Thane City regarding local crowdfunding agencies and digital crowdfunding portals supporting social service initiatives, using primary data analysis. The study explores the role of digital tools and crowdfunding platforms in enhancing funding mobilization, public awareness, and community participation in social welfare programs. It also identifies key challenges associated with these mechanisms, including the digital divide, issues of trust and transparency, and regulatory constraints. The findings highlight the transformative potential of crowdfunding and digital technologies in strengthening social impact and engagement among Generation Z, while emphasizing the need to address these challenges to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth of social service initiatives.

Keywords: Crowdfunding, Digital Tools, Social Service Initiatives, Opportunities, Challenges, Secondary Data, Youth Engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

“Digital technology is empowering young people to become active contributors to social change.”-World Economic Forum (2017)

Social service initiatives play a crucial role in addressing societal challenges such as poverty alleviation, healthcare access, education, and disaster relief. Traditionally, these initiatives have depended on government funding, institutional donors, and charitable organizations, which often face limitations related to funding adequacy and outreach. In recent years, crowdfunding has emerged as an innovative and participatory funding mechanism, enabling individuals and organizations to mobilize resources through digital platforms.

Globally, the growth of crowdfunding reflects increasing digital engagement in social causes. The social impact crowdfunding market was valued at approximately USD 3.9 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 11.1 billion by 2033 (DataIntel, 2024). Platforms such as GoFundMe have facilitated over USD 30 billion in donations, highlighting the expanding role of digital tools in supporting social initiatives. In India, the shift toward digital philanthropy is evident, with around 70 percent of donors preferring online modes of donation, driven by increased internet penetration and digital payment adoption (Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2022).

While crowdfunding and digital tools enhance funding access, transparency, and public participation, challenges such as the digital divide, trust concerns, and regulatory constraints remain. Understanding these opportunities and limitations is essential for leveraging crowdfunding as a sustainable support mechanism for social service initiatives.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of awareness among Generation Z in Thane City regarding local crowdfunding agencies and digital platforms used in social service initiatives..
2. To analyze the factors that make crowdfunding and digital platforms appealing to Generation Z in Thane City for participation in social service initiatives.
3. To evaluate the extent of personal exposure of Generation Z in Thane City to crowdfunding through their social circles.
4. To identify the challenges and barriers faced by Generation Z in Thane City in using crowdfunding and digital tools for social service initiatives.

3. METHODOLOGY**3.1 Research Design:**

This study used a quantitative approach, with a survey as the primary data collection method.

A structured questionnaire used to collect data from a representative sample of Generation Z consumers in Thane. The questionnaire is circulated among the respondent using social media applications.

3.2 Sampling:

Target Population: Gen Z individuals (ages 18-26) residing in Thane city.

Sampling Technique: Stratified random sampling will be employed to ensure diversity in terms of gender, socio-economic background, and education levels.

Sample Size: 230 respondents have filled the questionnaire.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

4.1 Awareness of Local and Digital Crowdfunding Platforms for Social Service Initiative

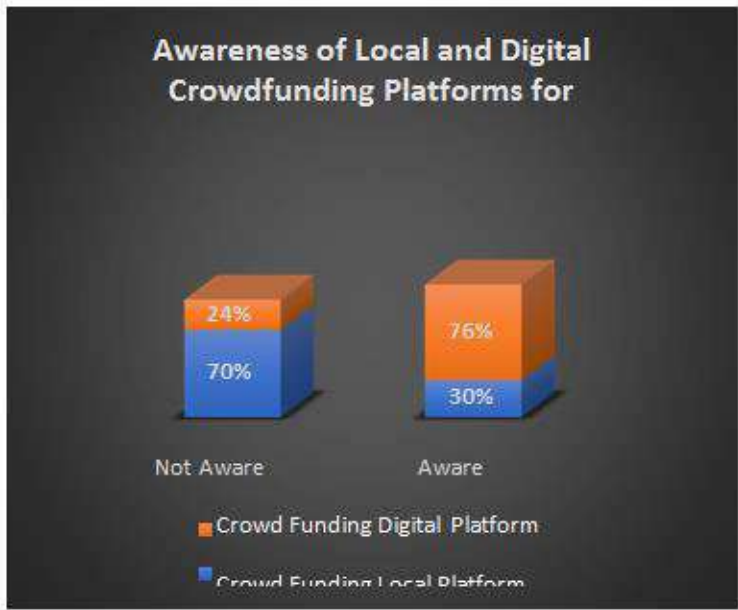


Fig 4.1 : Awareness of Local and Digital Crowdfunding Platforms for Social Service Initiatives

Most Generation Z respondents (70%) are unaware of local crowdfunding platforms, but a majority (76%) are familiar with digital crowdfunding platforms, showing stronger recognition of digital over local options.

4.2 Channels through Which Respondents Learned About Crowdfunding

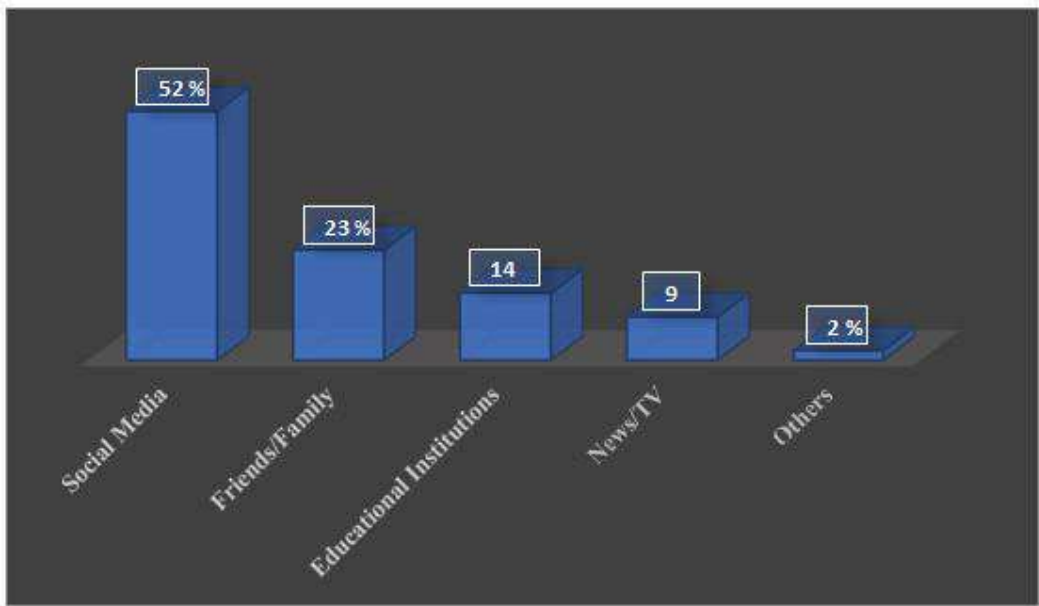


Fig 4.2 Channels through Which Respondents Learned About Crowdfunding

The data indicates that social media (52%) is the primary source through which respondents became aware of crowdfunding, followed by friends and family (23%). Educational institutions (14%) and news/TV (9%) play a comparatively smaller role, while other sources (2%) contribute minimally to awareness. This highlights the dominant influence of digital and interpersonal channels in spreading information about crowdfunding.

4.3 Participation in Crowdfunding Campaigns for Social Causes

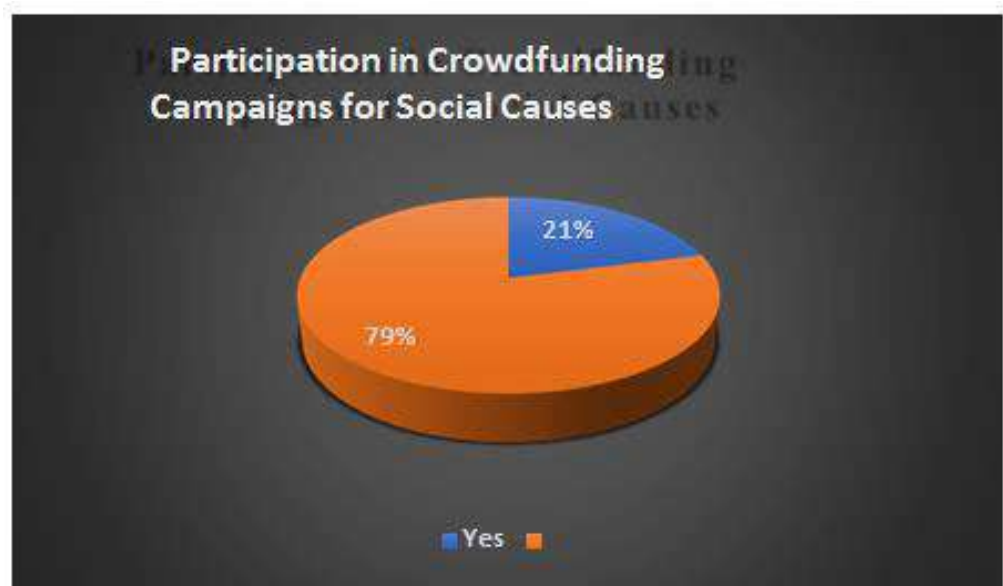


Fig 4.3 Participation in Crowdfunding Campaigns for Social Causes

The findings show that only 21% of respondents have participated in crowdfunding campaigns for social causes, while a large majority (79%) have not. This indicates low active engagement in crowdfunding for social initiatives, despite growing awareness of such platforms.

4.4 Challenges and Concerns Related to Crowdfunding and Digital Tools

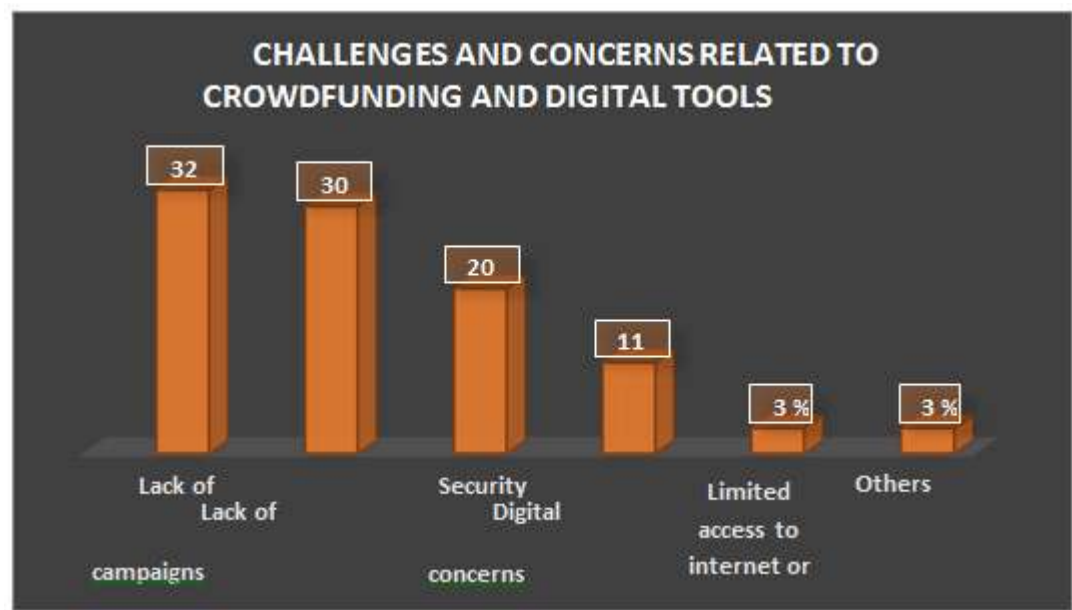


Fig: 4.4 Challenges and Concerns Related to Crowdfunding and Digital Tools

The data indicates that the major challenges faced by respondents are lack of awareness about campaigns (32%) and lack of trust in fund utilization (30%), highlighting informational and credibility gaps. Security concerns with digital payments (20%) also remain significant, while digital literacy issues (11%) and limited access to the internet or devices (3%) affect a smaller proportion of respondents. Other challenges (3%) were reported by very few participants, suggesting that awareness and trust are the primary barriers to participation.

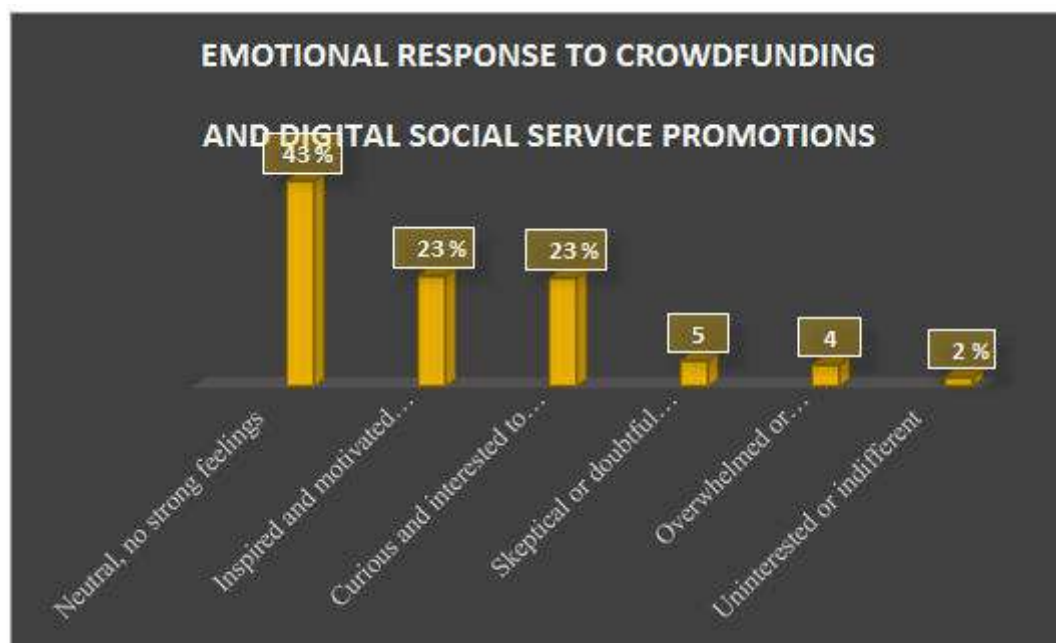


Fig : 4.5 Emotional Response to Crowdfunding and Digital Social Service Promotions.

The findings show that the largest proportion of respondents (43%) felt neutral toward advertisements for crowdfunding and digital social service initiatives, indicating limited emotional impact. However, a notable share felt **inspired to contribute (23%)** or **curious to learn more (23%)**, reflecting positive engagement among nearly half of the respondents. Only a small percentage expressed **scepticism (5%)**, felt **overwhelmed (4%)**, or were **uninterested (2%)**, suggesting generally low negative reactions to such advertisements.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Strengthen Awareness and Outreach:

Social service organizations should actively use digital platforms to increase visibility of crowdfunding campaigns, especially targeting youth and digitally active populations such as Generation Z.

2. Enhance Transparency and Accountability:

Implementing clear reporting mechanisms, real-time fund tracking, and regular updates can improve donor trust and reduce concerns related to fund misuse.

3. Promote Digital Inclusion:

Efforts should be made to bridge the digital divide by improving access to technology and offering digital literacy programs, particularly for underprivileged communities.

4. Encourage Youth Participation:

Educational institutions and social organizations should collaborate to engage young people through workshops, campaigns, and digital volunteering opportunities.

5. Ensure Regulatory Compliance:

Policymakers should work toward creating clear and supportive regulatory frameworks that facilitate safe and effective digital fundraising.

6. Generation Z's Emotional Response to Crowdfunding Ads :

The study reveals that a substantial proportion of Generation Z respondents exhibit a neutral or no strong emotional response (43%) toward advertisements related to crowdfunding and digital social service initiatives. This suggests that while such promotions are visible, they often fail to create a strong emotional connection, indicating the need for more engaging and relatable communication strategies to effectively motivate youth participation.

6. SUGGESTIONS

The study concludes that while Generation Z in Thane City shows growing awareness of digital crowdfunding platforms, active participation in crowdfunding for social causes remains limited. Social media and educational institutions play a key role in spreading awareness; however, low trust, lack of campaign awareness, and security concerns act as major barriers. Additionally, the largely neutral emotional response of Gen Z toward

crowdfunding advertisements indicates a need for more engaging and trustworthy promotional strategies. Strengthening transparency, improving digital literacy, and targeted youth-focused outreach can enhance the effectiveness of crowdfunding and digital tools in supporting social service initiatives.

The study highlights that educational institutions and government agencies play a crucial role in enhancing awareness and trust in crowdfunding and digital tools for social service initiatives among Generation Z in Thane City. Educational institutions can act as key platforms for digital literacy, ethical awareness, and youth engagement, while government involvement through regulation, endorsement, and monitoring can strengthen transparency and credibility. Active collaboration between educational bodies, government agencies, and digital platforms is essential to increase participation and ensure the sustainable growth of crowdfunding for social development.

Social media platforms should be strategically utilized to increase awareness of crowdfunding initiatives by regularly sharing successful stories and real-life impact narratives. Highlighting transparent outcomes and beneficiary testimonials can build trust, create emotional engagement, and motivate Generation Z to actively participate in crowdfunding for social service initiatives.

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A STUDY ON TRANSFORMING LIVES: USING MODERN ICT & AI TECHNICAL TOOLS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCORDING TO NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India emphasizes the integration of modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technical tools in education to enhance quality, accessibility and equity in Higher Education (HE). NEP 2020 also explores global and Indian literature, practical implementations, challenges, benefits, limitations, future directions, and best practices. Empirical evidence suggests that modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can significantly transform lives and enhance personalized education, data-driven decision making, digital inclusion, and lifelong learning when effectively integrated and aligned with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's visions.

This study investigates how modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are being leveraged to transform teaching, learning, administration, and student outcomes in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The role of ICT and AI tools, focusing on its benefits, challenges and future potential with a special focus on National Service Scheme (NSS) students, including both male and female learners. Research also examines how ICT and AI tools influence Transforming Lives - The Power of Collective Services in the education sector with NEP 2020 in the Indian context.

Keywords: NEP 2020, ICT, AI tools, Digital Transformation, Educational Technology, Higher Education, NSS Students, Digital Learning Skills

INTRODUCTION

In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes technology-driven, inclusive, flexible, and multidisciplinary education. The rapid integration of modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools has significantly transformed the higher education ecosystem across the world. Higher education plays a pivotal role in national development by nurturing skilled, responsible, and socially aware citizens.

The integration of modern ICT and AI tools has reshaped teaching – learning processes, research methodologies, assessment systems, and institutional governance. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly advocates the use of digital platforms, adaptive learning systems, and emerging technologies to improve access, equity, and quality in education. For National Service Scheme (NSS) students, who actively engage in community service and nation-building activities, ICT and AI tools act as catalysts for social awareness, leadership development, financial literacy, and psychological resilience. This study explores how these technologies transform lives by enhancing learning outcomes and socio-economic preparedness.

The inclusion of National Service Scheme (NSS) students - both male and female - represents socially active and community-oriented learners. NSS students are expected to develop leadership qualities, financial responsibility, psychological resilience, and social awareness. ICT and AI tools have the potential to support these objectives by providing digital literacy, financial planning knowledge, and exposure to real-world problem-solving platforms. However, limited empirical research exists that directly connects ICT and AI adoption with the holistic development of NSS students, highlighting the relevance of the present study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To analyze modern ICT and AI tools used in higher education
- ✓ To study the key features, benefits, and limitations of ICT and AI tools
- ✓ To examine the impact of ICT and AI tools on NSS students' academic, financial, psychological, and social development
- ✓ To evaluate adoption challenges in educational institutions and society, assess alignment with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 policies
- ✓ To suggest strategies for effective implementation and future transformation

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have highlighted the growing importance of ICT tools in improving teaching and learning processes in higher education. Sharma and Gupta (2021) found that Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Moodle and Google Classroom significantly enhance student engagement, academic performance, and teacher–student interaction. Their study emphasized that ICT tools promote flexibility and self-paced learning, which is particularly beneficial for diverse learner groups. Rao (2020) analyzed the technological vision of *National Education Policy* (NEP) 2020 and concluded that digital transformation is central to achieving inclusive and quality education in India. The study highlighted the need for teacher training and institutional readiness for the successful integration of ICT and AI tools, particularly in rural and semi-urban institutions.

Kumar et al. (2022) examined the role of Artificial Intelligence in personalized learning environments. The study revealed that AI-based adaptive learning platforms and analytics tools help identify individual learning gaps and provide customized feedback, thereby improving student retention and success rates. However, the authors also raised concerns regarding data privacy and the ethical use of AI technologies. Singh and Kaur (2023) focused on digital literacy among NSS students and found that exposure to ICT tools increased students' social awareness, leadership skills, and community engagement. Their research suggested that integrating digital tools into NSS activities enhances students' psychological confidence and civic responsibility. Collectively, these studies establish the importance of ICT and AI in higher education while revealing gaps that the present study seeks to address.

Modern ICT & AI Tools in Higher Education Modern ICT Tools:

1) **Cloud Computing Tools** (Platforms providing cloud storage, collaboration, hosting, and computing services):

Amazon Web Services (AWS) Educate /Academy, Dropbox Education - Cloud file storage and sharing service, GitHub Education - Cloud-based code hosting and collaboration platform, Google Cloud Platform (GCP), Google Drive, Google Workspace for Education - Collaborative cloud productivity suite, Microsoft 365 for Education - Cloud-based productivity tools, Microsoft Azure - Microsoft's cloud computing platform, Microsoft OneDrive - Cloud storage service by Microsoft.

2) **Digital Libraries & Library Management Systems** (Platforms for digital content access, storage, and library automation):

CodeAchi - Library Management Software, DSpace - Open-source digital repository software, EBSCO Digital Library Services - Online research databases, Ex Libris Alma - Cloud-based Library Services Platform, Ex Libris Primo - Discovery and search interface, INFLIBNET - Information and Library Network Centre (India), Koha ILS - Koha Integrated Library System, Librarika - Cloud-based Integrated Library System, NDLI - National Digital Library of India.

3) **E-Content Development Platforms** (Tools for creating interactive digital learning content): Adobe Captivate - E-learning authoring tool, Articulate 360 - E-learning content development suite, Buncee - Multimedia content creation tool, DIKSHA - Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing, H5P - Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) 5 Package (Interactive content creation), iSpring Suite Max - E-learning content creation toolkit, Pear Deck - Interactive presentation platform, SWAYAM - Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds, Synthesia - AI-based video content generation platform.

4) **Learning Management Systems (LMS)** (Course delivery, assessment, and learner management platforms):

Blackboard Learn LMS by Anthology, Canvas LMS - Learning Management System by Instructure, Chamilo LMS - Open-source learning management system, D2L Brightspace - Desire2Learn Brightspace, Edmodo - Social learning platform, Google Classroom management, Moodle - Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, Nearpod - Interactive lesson delivery platform, Schoology - LMS by PowerSchool.

5) **Mobile Learning Applications** (Learning platforms optimized for mobile access):

Canvas Student App - Mobile LMS access, Coursera - Online course and certification platform, edX - Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Google Classroom App - Mobile learning management, Kahoot! - Game-based learning platform, Khan Academy - Free online education platform, LinkedIn Learning - Professional skill development platform, Udemy - Online learning marketplace, Zoom Mobile App -Virtual learning and meetings.

6.Smart Boards & Interactive Teaching Tools (Enabling interactive and visual learning): Educreations - Interactive whiteboard and screen casting tool, Explain Everything - Interactive teaching platform, GeoGebra - Dynamic mathematics software, IWB - Interactive Whiteboard, Jamboard - Google's digital whiteboard, Miro - Online collaborative whiteboard, Padlet - Digital collaboration wall, PhET Simulations - Physics Education Technology simulations, SMART Board - Interactive display technology.

7.Virtual Classroom Platforms (Live online teaching and collaboration tools):

Adobe Connect - Web conferencing software, BigBlueButton - Open-source virtual classroom system, Brightspace Virtual Classroom - D2L live learning tools, Google Meet - Video conferencing tool by Google, Microsoft Teams - Collaboration and virtual classroom platform, Moodle Virtual Classroom

- LMS-based live teaching, Schoology Conferencing - Virtual classroom integration, Webex - Cisco Webex virtual meeting platform, Zoom - Video conferencing platform.

Modern AI Tools in Education:

1. **AI Proctoring Tools** (AI-based online examination monitoring systems):

Examity - Live and automated proctoring service, Honorlock - Online proctoring and exam integrity tool, Inpsera Assessment - Digital assessment platform, Mercer/Metl - Online assessment and proctoring solution, Proctorio - AI-powered remote exam proctoring, ProctorU - Remote exam invigilation platform, Respondus Monitor - Automated exam proctoring, Talview - AI-enabled assessment and proctoring platform, TestReach - Secure online examination system.

2. **AI-Based Adaptive Learning Platforms** (Systems that personalize learning using AI): 360Learning - AI-powered collaborative learning platform, Adaptemy - Personalized learning platform, ALEKS - Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces, Century Tech - AI-based personalized learning, Cognii - Conversational AI for learning feedback, EdApp - Mobile-first AI-enabled LMS, Khanmigo - AI tutor by Khan Academy, Knewton - Adaptive learning platform by Wiley, Squirrel AI - AI-driven adaptive tutoring system.

3. **Automated Assessment Systems** (Grading, feedback, and evaluation):

ClassMarker - Online testing platform, Cognii - AI-powered assessment and feedback, ExamSoft - Secure digital exam management, Gradescope - AI-assisted grading for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and handwritten work, MagicSchool.ai - AI-powered teacher assessment tools, Proctorio - Remote exam monitoring, Questionmark - Enterprise assessment software, Socrative - Real-time assessment tool, Turnitin - Plagiarism detection and writing feedback.

4. **Chatbots & Virtual Assistants** (Supporting learning, writing, and research):

Canva AI - AI-assisted design platform, ChatGPT (OpenAI) - Generative Pre-trained Transformer, Dialogflow - Google's conversational AI platform, Google Gemini for Education, IBM Watson Assistant - AI conversational platform, Microsoft Copilot - AI assistant by Microsoft, NotebookLM - AI research and note-taking tool, Perplexity AI - AI-powered search and research assistant, QuillBot - AI writing and paraphrasing tool.

5. **Learning Analytics Tools** (Tracking learner performance and engagement):

Brightspace Insights - D2L analytics suite, Canva for Education Analytics - Engagement and design insights, Canvas Analytics - LMS-based performance tracking, Dropout Detective - Student retention analytics tool, Learning Locker - Learning Record Store (LRS), Moodle Analytics - Built-in LMS analytics, MS Power BI - Business Intelligence, Quizlet Analytics - Learning progress insights, Tableau - Data visualization and analytics platform.

6. **AI Recommendation Systems** (Personalized learning and content suggestions):

Absorb LMS - Intelligent learning platform, D2L Brightspace - AI-driven content recommendations, Docebo - AI-powered corporate LMS, Grammarly - AI writing assistant, LearnUpon - AI-enhanced LMS, NotebookLM - AI-based learning summaries, Notion AI - AI-powered workspace and content assistant, Paradiso LMS - AI-driven LMS, QuillBot - AI language enhancement tool.

7. **Speech-to-Text & Text-to-Speech Tools** (Voice recognition and audio learning):

MS Azure AI Speech - Speech services, Google Docs Voice Typing - Speech recognition, Hume AI - Emotional intelligence voice AI, MirrorTalk - Speech therapy and voice learning tool, Parlay Genie - AI discussion and speech analysis tool, Snorkl - Audio-based student response platform, SpeechTexter

- Online speech-to-text tool, Twee - AI-powered language learning tool, Visme - AI-enabled presentation and voice tools.

Key Features

Modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools support anytime-anywhere learning, real-time collaboration, multimedia-rich content, scalability, and cost-effective knowledge dissemination. ICT and AI tools further enable personalized learning pathways, data-driven decision-making, predictive analytics for student performance, automation of administrative tasks, and intelligent feedback systems.

Benefits

Many modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools enhance accessibility and inclusivity, improve student engagement, and support personalized learning experiences. They promote multidisciplinary and experiential learning, enhance teacher effectiveness, encourage lifelong learning, and support skill development for future employment.

Limitations

Despite their advantages, modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools face challenges such as digital divide, unequal access, high initial implementation costs, data privacy and security concerns, over-dependence on technology, reduced human interaction, infrastructural gaps in rural areas, the need for teacher training, policy-practice mismatch, and ethical issues related to AI usage.

Findings

The study reveals that modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools positively impact the quality of higher education. National Service Scheme (NSS) students demonstrate improved social responsibility, digital competence, and financial awareness. Male and female students benefit equally when access to technology is ensured.

Learning Management Systems (LMS) improve academic organization and engagement, while virtual classrooms enhance communication and continuity of learning. AI-based tools significantly improve personalized learning outcomes, psychological confidence, and social engagement when used responsibly and inclusively.

Challenges and Risk Tolerance of ICT and AI Tools

Major challenges include limited skill development, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of subsidies, policy gaps, limited collaboration, and insufficient awareness regarding the effective use of modern technologies:

- ✓ Data privacy risks
- ✓ Cyber security threats
- ✓ Algorithmic bias
- ✓ Technological dependency
- ✓ Ethical and regulatory challenges

NSS Students: Savings Behavior and Financial Planning

- ✓ Digital finance apps encourage budgeting and saving
- ✓ AI tools support financial literacy programs
- ✓ Increased awareness of long-term financial security

Psychological and Social Dynamics for NSS Students

- ✓ Enhanced self-esteem and confidence
- ✓ Improved teamwork and communication skills
- ✓ Stronger sense of social responsibility
- ✓ Better stress management through digital support tools

Future of modern ICT & AI Tools for higher education

The future of higher education lies in intelligent, technology-enabled learning ecosystems that prioritize inclusivity, flexibility, and lifelong learning. Modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools will play a central role in reshaping curricula, assessment methods, and institutional governance in alignment with *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020*. For National Service Scheme (NSS) students, these technologies offer enhanced opportunities for digital leadership, social innovation, and community development. Advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), including predictive analytics and immersive technologies, will further personalize learning experiences and improve employability skills.

Ultimately, the transformative power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools lies in their ability to empower students academically, psychologically, socially, and economically. With ethical governance and inclusive policies, modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can truly transform lives and fulfill *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020*'s vision of holistic, equitable, and future-ready higher education.

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FROM SHOW TO SUBSTANCE: HOW GEN Z IN MUMBAI IS TORN BETWEEN CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION AND THE QUIET POWER OF VOLUNTEERISM

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Mumbai has always been a city of contrasts. A luxury car stops at a signal beside a barefoot child selling flowers. A glass-walled café overlooks a crowded local train platform. For Generation Z growing up in this city, contradiction is not an abstraction—it is daily reality. And perhaps that is why Gen Z in Mumbai is constantly negotiating two powerful but opposing impulses: the urge to *display* success and the longing to *find meaning*.

On one hand, conspicuous consumption—visible lifestyle choices, branded identities, curated experiences—has become a dominant language of youth culture. On the other, a quieter but growing movement of volunteerism is offering young people an alternative form of empowerment, one rooted not in display but in contribution. These are not unrelated trends. In fact, they are deeply connected responses to the same urban pressures, emotional needs, and social realities. Understanding this connection helps us understand Gen Z itself.

The City That Teaches You to Be Seen

Mumbai does not merely reward ambition; it showcases it. Success here is loud, visual, and public. From billboards to social media feeds, achievement is constantly performed. For Gen Z—raised in a digital-first world—this performance has become second nature.

Conspicuous consumption among Mumbai's Gen Z is not always about luxury in the traditional sense. It is about *visibility*. A particular café becomes a symbol of taste. A fitness routine becomes content. A phone, a sneaker brand, a travel story—each becomes a marker saying, *I belong here. I am keeping up*.

In a city where opportunity feels scarce and competition relentless, consumption becomes a shortcut to confidence. It allows young people to project stability even when their lives feel uncertain. Many Gen Z individuals are still studying, freelancing, or navigating unstable job markets. Financial independence is often delayed. Yet the pressure to appear “sorted” is immediate.

Consumption fills that gap—at least on the surface.

Social Media: The New Public Square

If Mumbai is the stage, social media is the spotlight. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube have blurred the line between private life and public performance. For Gen Z, experiences are not fully real until they are shared.

This has intensified conspicuous consumption in subtle ways. It is no longer just about owning things, but about owning *shareable moments*. The logic is simple: if it looks good online, it counts. And if it counts, it must be repeated.

But this cycle comes at a cost. Constant comparison creates anxiety. The curated lives of others make ordinary realities feel inadequate. Consumption becomes both the cause of pressure and the proposed solution—a loop that is hard to escape.

What Lies Beneath the Display

It would be easy to dismiss this behavior as superficial. That would be a mistake. Beneath conspicuous consumption lies something deeply human: the search for identity, belonging, and self-worth.

Gen Z in Mumbai is navigating a world where traditional markers of adulthood—stable jobs, affordable housing, long-term security—are increasingly out of reach. In this uncertainty, material symbols offer temporary grounding. They say, *I exist. I matter. I am moving forward*. But temporary grounding is not the same as empowerment.

Over time, many young people begin to feel the emptiness behind constant display. The thrill fades quickly. The next purchase, the next upgrade, the next post becomes necessary. And somewhere along the way, a quiet question emerges: *Is this all there is?*

It is often at this point that volunteerism enters the picture—not as an ideological choice, but as an emotional one.

The Unexpected Turn Toward Volunteerism

Mumbai's Gen Z is increasingly visible in spaces that rarely make headlines: teaching underprivileged children on weekends, cleaning beaches at dawn, organizing mental health support groups, working with NGOs, responding to floods, or simply giving time where it is needed most.

What draws them there is not just compassion. It is something deeper: a craving for *real impact* in a world that often feels performative.

Volunteerism offers what conspicuous consumption cannot—a sense of usefulness. When a young person sees their time make a tangible difference, it changes how they see themselves. Identity shifts from “how I look” to “what I do.”

This shift is quietly transformative.

From External Validation to Inner Strength

One of the most powerful ways volunteerism empowers youth is by changing the source of validation. Instead of likes and comments, validation comes from trust, gratitude, and shared effort. It is slower, less glamorous—but far more lasting.

For Gen Z, raised on instant feedback, this kind of validation feels grounding. It builds confidence that is not dependent on appearance or spending power. It tells them they have value even when no one is watching.

Interestingly, many young volunteers still use social media—but differently. They share stories of impact, not just aesthetics. In doing so, they begin to redefine what is “worth showing.”

Belonging Without a Price Tag

Conspicuous consumption often comes with invisible barriers. Not everyone can afford the right clothes, devices, or experiences. Volunteer spaces, by contrast, tend to be more inclusive.

Belonging is earned through participation, not purchasing power.

For many Gen Z individuals, this is liberating. It offers community without competition. Purpose without performance. In a city as stratified as Mumbai, such spaces are rare—and deeply needed.

Volunteer groups become alternative social circles where values matter more than visibility. This does not erase the desire for consumption, but it balances it with something sturdier.

A Healthier Relationship with Success

One of the most important impacts of volunteerism is how it reshapes the idea of success. Exposure to social realities—inequality, resilience, collective struggle—forces young people to rethink narrow definitions of achievement.

Success begins to look less like accumulation and more like contribution. Less like display and more like responsibility.

This does not mean Gen Z abandons ambition. On the contrary, many become more driven—but their motivation shifts. Careers are chosen not just for income, but for impact. Consumption becomes more conscious, less compulsive.

Two Paths, One Generation

Conspicuous consumption and volunteerism are not enemies. They are two paths Gen Z walks—often simultaneously—while trying to make sense of a complex world. One offers visibility. The other offers meaning.

The problem is not consumption itself, but when it becomes the only language of worth. Volunteerism expands that language. It tells young people: *You are more than what you display.*

In a city like Mumbai, this balance matters deeply. The future of the city depends not just on economic growth, but on the values of those who inherit it.

Toward a More Grounded Youth Culture

If Mumbai's Gen Z can learn to integrate aspiration with empathy, ambition with service, visibility with substance, it can redefine youth culture in powerful ways. Institutions— educational, civic, cultural—have a role to play in encouraging this integration, not by moralizing, but by creating spaces where purpose feels accessible and meaningful.

The shift from show to substance does not happen overnight. But it begins the moment a young person realizes that the most empowering thing they can display is not what they own—but what they contribute.

And in that realization lies the quiet power to transform not just individual lives, but the city itself.

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF INDIAN FILMS IN SHAPING AND GUIDING YOUTH BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS COMMUNITY SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

Indian cinema has long served as a powerful medium of social communication, influencing attitudes, values, and behavioural patterns, particularly among youth. This study examines the impact of Indian films in shaping and guiding youth behaviour toward community service and social responsibility. The research is based on secondary data collected from selected socially relevant Indian films and existing academic literature. Using descriptive analysis and qualitative content analysis, the study identifies recurring themes such as civic duty, unity, social justice, and youth activism. Films like Swades, Lagaan, Lakshya, Article 15, and Rang De Basanti demonstrate how cinematic narratives and role models motivate young audiences to develop awareness and positive behavioural intentions toward community participation. The findings suggest that emotionally engaging storytelling and realistic portrayals of social issues significantly influence youth perceptions and attitudes. The study concludes that cinema can function as an effective informal educational tool and recommends the strategic use of socially relevant films to promote community service and civic engagement among youth.

Research Methodology: *The study adopts a descriptive research design based on secondary data. Data are collected from selected Indian films, scholarly articles, journals, and reports. Content analysis is used to examine themes related to community service and their influence on youth behaviour.*

Keywords: *Indian cinema, Youth behaviour, community service, Civic engagement, Nation building, etc.*

INTRODUCTION

Indian cinema has a big impact on behavioural patterns and societal norms, especially among young people, who make up a sizable portion of the nation's population. Indian films frequently feature themes like social responsibility, community welfare, patriotism, and collective action because of their broad popularity and potent emotional resonance. Young audiences may be motivated by these stories to consider social issues and embrace pro-social behaviours, such as community service. Youth participation in community-focused activities promotes social development and sustainable progress, and they are an important force in nation- building. By raising awareness and influencing attitudes toward social responsibility, movies that feature real-life problems, positive role models, and social change agents can serve as potent motivators. Youth may internalize principles that promote empathy, volunteerism, and civic involvement through affiliation with on-screen characters and narratives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mr Sandeep (2023), in their research paper titled **The Influence of Bollywood Films on Youth Social Awareness** concluded that Cinema has influenced society since its inception by shaping social values, behaviours, and opinions. Beyond entertainment, films educate audiences and address social taboos such as menstruation, sanitation, and sexual health. By portraying sensitive issues, cinema encourages awareness, acceptance, and dialogue, demonstrating its role as a powerful medium for social change alongside commercial objectives.

Anshu Sharma, Damini Bitoria (2025), In their research paper **Understanding Social Influences in Cinema Managing Culture, Society, and Peer Influence** concluded that how social factors such as culture, community, and peer influence shape audience movie preferences in a globalized context. It examines cultural nuances, shared viewing experiences, and community engagement, while highlighting the role of technology and social media in reaching diverse audiences and promoting inclusive, informed, and autonomous viewing choices.

Mehak Jonjua (2025), in their research paper titled **Role of Films in Waste Management Advocacy** concluded that Films play a powerful role in shaping youth perceptions and behaviours toward waste management. This study highlights a research gap on the effectiveness of cinematic narratives in promoting environmental responsibility. Using film content analysis and surveys, it finds that Indian films can motivate sustainable habits, supporting the use of cinema as an educational tool in environmental education programs.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To understand the role of cinematic narratives in creating awareness about community service among youth
- To study the impact of Indian films on youth attitudes toward community service activities
- To examine the relationship between film-viewing habits and youth participation in community-oriented activities
- To understand how community service and social responsibility are portrayed in Indian film

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on selected Indian films that depict community service and social responsibility and examines their influence on youth attitudes and behavioural intentions. It is based on secondary data, including films and existing literature, and aims to understand how cinematic narratives shape awareness and perceptions toward community service among young audiences.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data interpretation in this study examines secondary evidence from selected Indian films and existing literature to understand how cinematic narratives influence youth attitudes and behaviour toward community service. The analysis focuses on identifying key themes, patterns, and motivational elements that shape social awareness and civic engagement among young audiences. Below are some movie examples that influence youth.

Swades: This movie motivates youth by portraying an educated individual using knowledge and skills for rural development. The film demonstrates how personal initiative can address community problems, inspiring young audiences to engage in grassroots development, civic responsibility, and nation-building activities through meaningful community service.

Lagaan: It influences youth by highlighting unity, leadership, and collective resistance against injustice. The narrative motivates young viewers to value teamwork and social cooperation, showing that community participation and shared effort can overcome social challenges and promote solidarity and collective responsibility.

Lakshya: It motivates youth through its depiction of personal transformation achieved through discipline and service. By linking purpose with national duty, the film encourages young audiences to adopt responsible behaviour, develop commitment, and contribute to society through service-oriented and disciplined roles.

Article 15: It influences youth by exposing social inequality and institutional discrimination. The film motivates young viewers to develop ethical awareness and social sensitivity, encouraging them to support inclusive practices and participate in community service initiatives aimed at social justice and equality.

Rang De Basanti: This movie motivates youth by connecting patriotism with civic responsibility. Through emotional storytelling and youth-led activism, the film inspires young audiences to move from passive awareness to active participation in community service and collective efforts for social and political reform.

Film-wise Impact on Youth Behaviour

Film	Dominant Social Theme	Narrative Focus	Influence on Youth Attitudes	Community Service Orientation
Swadesh	Grassroots development & civic duty	Rural upliftment through education, infrastructure, and collective effort	Develops sense of responsibility toward local communities	Encourages participation in rural development and social initiatives
Lagaan	Unity & collective resistance	Community solidarity against injustice	Strengthens belief in teamwork and social cooperation	Inspires collective action for common social causes
Lakshya	Discipline & national service	Personal transformation through service to the nation	Instills purpose, discipline, and commitment	Motivates youth toward service-oriented and nation-building roles
Article 15	Social justice & equality	Addressing caste and institutional bias	Raises ethical sensitivity and social awareness	Encourages advocacy, inclusion, and justice-driven community engagement
Rang De Basanti	Youth activism & civic responsibility	Political awareness and resistance to corruption	Promotes critical thinking and civic consciousness	Motivates active participation in social reform movements

The table indicates that Indian films act as social learning tools, where emotionally driven narratives and relatable characters translate abstract social values into actionable youth behaviour. Themes of unity, justice, and responsibility consistently align with increased inclination toward community service.

FINDINGS

The study finds that Indian films play a significant role in shaping youth attitudes toward community service by portraying strong moral values, social responsibility, and collective action. Films such as *Swades*, *Lagaan*, and *Rang De Basanti* create emotional engagement and provide relatable role models, which motivate youth to reflect on social issues. Repeated exposure to socially relevant narratives enhances awareness, ethical sensitivity, and positive behavioural intentions among young audiences. The findings indicate that cinema functions as an effective informal educational medium influencing youth perceptions and civic-minded behaviour.

SUGGESTIONS

Filmmakers should consciously integrate community service themes into mainstream cinema without compromising entertainment value. Educational institutions can incorporate socially relevant films into curricula to encourage discussions on social responsibility. Government bodies and NGOs may collaborate with filmmakers to promote awareness campaigns. Youth clubs and volunteer organizations can use films as motivational tools to inspire participation in community service, civic initiatives, and nation-building activities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Indian films play a vital role in shaping and guiding youth behaviour toward community service and social responsibility. Through powerful storytelling, relatable characters, and socially relevant themes, cinema influences youth attitudes, awareness, and moral values. Films such as *Swades*, *Lagaan*, and *Rang De Basanti* demonstrate how cinematic narratives can motivate young individuals to engage in community-oriented activities. The study highlights cinema's potential as an effective medium for social learning and emphasizes its role in promoting civic engagement and positive behavioural change among youth.

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THE ROLE OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS IN INFLUENCING GEN-Z ON SOCIAL SERVICE

Mr. Laksh Poojary, Ms. Sanadi Nathi, Ms. Shaheen Gouri and Ms. Sejal Pal

ABSTRACT

This research explores the transformative role of digital influencers—transitioning from "Mega- Celebrities" to "Niche Experts"—in mobilizing Generation Z toward social service and civic engagement in 2026. Utilizing a descriptive research design and primary data collected from 150 respondents via a structured online questionnaire, the study examines how influencers build a "parasocial bridge" through radical transparency and authenticity to bypass the traditional "bullshit detector" of Gen Z. The findings reveal an "Action Funnel" where digital content moves youth from awareness to education and finally to measurable real-world mobilization, rebranding social service as a trendy, aspirational lifestyle habit rather than a chore. The study concludes that the democratization of activism through smartphones has made digital relevance inseparable from social responsibility, establishing a decentralized and participatory future for community impact.

Keywords: Gen Z, Digital Influencers, Community Service, Online Credibility, Social Impact, Digital Engagement

INTRODUCTION**BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

In the year 2026, the digital landscape has undergone a radical transformation, shifting from a space of passive consumption to one of active, decentralized participation. For Generation Z, social media is no longer just a communication tool; it is a "digital playground" where they seek identity, community, and purpose. Unlike older generations who viewed digital content like a traditional television broadcast, Gen Z utilizes these platforms as the primary search engine for discovering social causes. This has led to the rise of "Niche Experts" and "Impact Creators" who have replaced traditional mega-celebrities as the primary voices of authority. These influencers—ranging from environmental activists to spiritual mentors—bridge the gap between online awareness and real-world civic engagement through relatable, transparent storytelling.

RESEARCH PROBLEM OR GAP

While the popularity of digital influencers is well-documented, there remains a critical gap in understanding the specific mechanism that converts a "like" or "share" into measurable social service action among youth. Traditional activism often relies on "shaming" or formal institutional calls to action, which Gen Z frequently rejects due to a highly developed "bullshit detector" against performative gestures. There is a need to investigate how influencers utilize "Radical Transparency" and "Actionable Hope" to overcome skepticism and mobilize this generation for social causes. This study seeks to address how the "Parasocial bridge" transforms digital content into a habit-forming lifestyle choice rather than a traditional chore.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze how digital influencers shape the thoughts, values, and lifestyle choices of Gen Z regarding social responsibility.
- To examine the role of platforms like Instagram and YouTube in building trust and perception toward social service content.
- To assess the extent of behavioral change, such as the adoption of volunteering as a daily habit.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- **Demographics:** The study is focused on the age group of 18 to 30 years, who are the most active consumers of digital spiritual and motivational content.
- **Geography:** It targets urban and semi-urban youth in India, representing the largest segment of digital media consumers.
- **Content:** The research is limited to the impact of online content created by selected motivational, bhakti, and social service influencers.
- **Exclusions:** This study focuses on observable attitudinal and behavioral changes rather than deep psychological treatments or financial impacts.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is vital for social scientists, educators, and policymakers who aim to understand the constructive role of digital media in shaping an ethically aware youth community. By identifying the factors that build trust—such as "showing the work" and authenticity—the study provides a roadmap for organizations to engage with the next generation effectively. Furthermore, it highlights how the democratization of activism through smartphones allows for a decentralized future where impact is transparent and participatory. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that social service is no longer optional but a requirement for digital relevance in the modern era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Digital platforms have become primary spaces where Gen Z seeks spiritual and moral guidance, moving beyond traditional religious institutions.
- Social media influencers are more effective than traditional celebrities in driving real-world behavioral changes and community engagement among youth.
- Visual-first platforms like Instagram act as powerful "mobilization engines," making social causes viral and accessible to the younger demographic.
- Digital "Bhakti" and motivational content help young adults manage academic stress and develop a value-driven lifestyle.
- For digital influence to be effective, creators must utilize radical transparency to bypass the inherent skepticism Gen Z holds toward performative activism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design using a quantitative approach. The goal is to describe the current trends and behaviors of Generation Z regarding social service, specifically looking at how digital influencers shape these perceptions.

Data Collection Tool

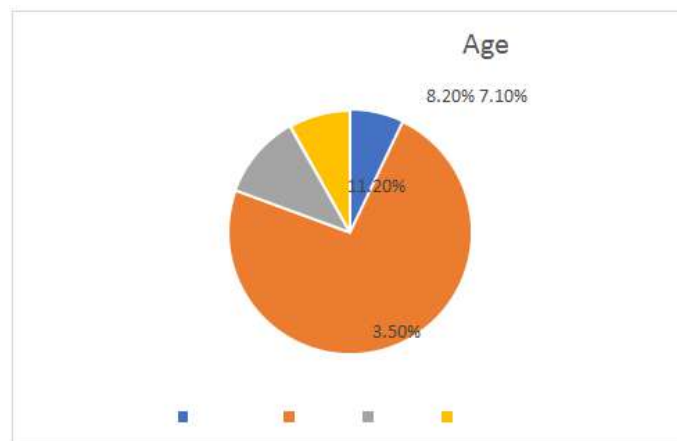
The primary data for this research was collected using Google Forms. This tool was selected for its accessibility, ease of distribution, and ability to reach a wide range of Gen Z participants across different geographic locations.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A convenience sampling technique was used to gather responses. The survey was shared digitally via social media platforms and messaging apps (WhatsApp, Instagram). A total of **150** respondents belonging to the Gen Z age group (typically born between 1997 and 2012) participated in the survey.

DATA INTERPRETATION

1. Age of the respondents



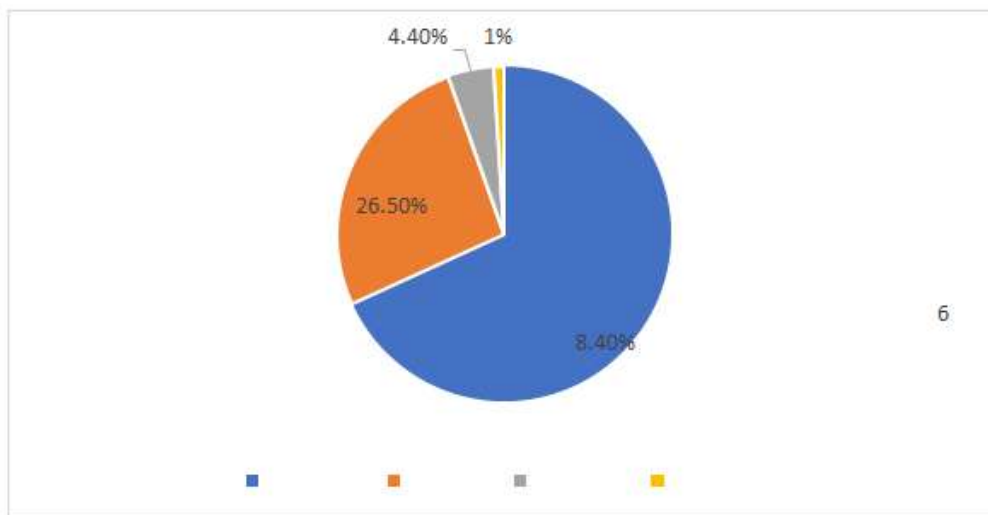
The age profile of the 150 respondents shows a concentrated focus on core digital natives:

- **19–21 Years (73.5%)**: The primary demographic, consisting mostly of college-going Gen Z students.
- **22–25 Years (11.2%)**: A secondary group of older Gen Z individuals.

- **Above 25 Years (8.2%):** A small segment of older participants.
- **Below 18 Years (7.1%):** The youngest segment of the sample.

Interpretation: With nearly 74% of respondents in the 19–21 age bracket, the data accurately reflects the perceptions of the generation most active in using social media for social service mobilization.

2. Most used social media platform by the respondents to consume content related to social issues

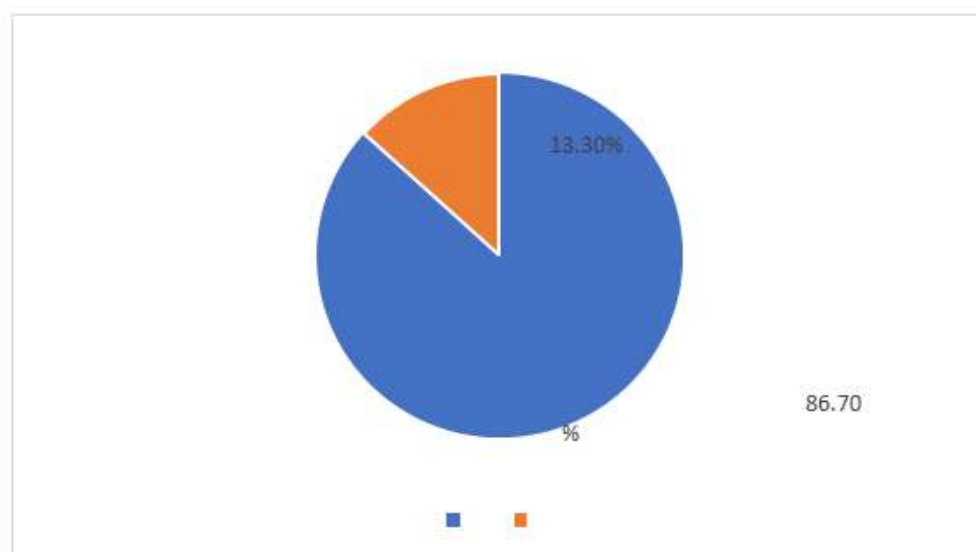


The platform distribution among the 150 respondents highlights a dominant reliance on visual-driven media:

- **Instagram (68.4%):** The primary platform used by the vast majority for consuming social issue content.
- **YouTube (26.5%):** The secondary source, favored by over a quarter of the sample.
- **Facebook & X (5.1% Combined):** Minor segments with very low engagement levels.

Interpretation: With nearly 95% of respondents concentrated on Instagram and YouTube, the data confirms that visual and video-based content is the most effective medium for reaching and mobilizing this demographic on social issues.

3. Social media influencers promoting social service activities seen by respondents

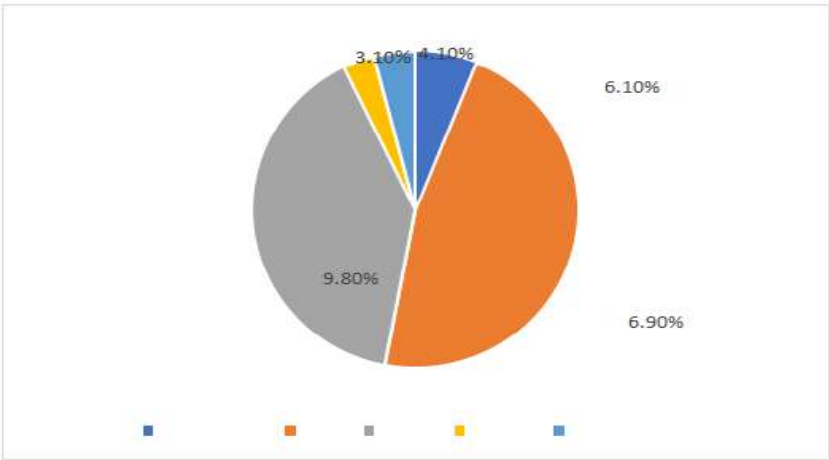


The responses from the 150 participants indicate a high level of awareness regarding influencer-led social initiatives:

- **Yes (86.7%):** The vast majority of respondents who have witnessed influencers promoting social service activities.
- **No (13.3%):** A small minority who have not encountered such content on their social feeds.

Interpretation: With nearly 87% of respondents acknowledging exposure to social service promotion, the data demonstrates the significant reach and impact of influencers. This confirms that social media personalities serve as a primary and effective vehicle for mobilizing awareness and driving social service engagement among users.

4. Digital influencers increase respondents awareness about social issues

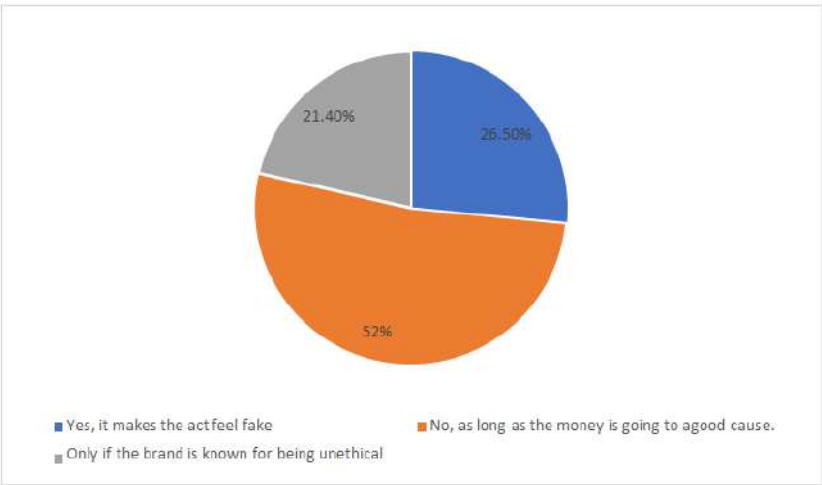


The responses from 150 participants indicate the extent to which digital influencers affect their personal awareness of social issues:

- **Agree (46.9%):** The largest segment of respondents, who believe influencers successfully increase their awareness.
- **Neutral (39.8%):** A significant portion of the sample that remains undecided or indifferent to the educational impact of influencers.
- **Strongly Agree (6.1%):** A small group with a high level of conviction regarding the positive role of influencers.
- **Disagree & Strongly Disagree (7.2% Combined):** A minor segment that does not perceive an increase in awareness through influencer content.

Interpretation: With a combined 53% of respondents in agreement, the data suggests that more than half of the surveyed demographic views digital influencers as a valid source for social awareness. However, the high "Neutral" percentage indicates that while influencers are visible, their ability to deeply educate or move the entire audience remains a work in progress.

5. Would respondents unfollow an influencer if they found out their social service was "sponsored" by a brand?



The feedback from 150 respondents reflects the effectiveness of influencers in spreading awareness:

- **Agree/Strongly Agree (53%):** Over half the participants feel influencers successfully increase their awareness of social issues.

- **Neutral (39.8%):** A large segment remains undecided regarding the educational value of influencer content.
- **Disagree (7.2%):** A small minority does not believe influencers impact their understanding of social causes.

Interpretation: While most respondents view influencers as a valid information source, the high neutral response suggests that high visibility has not yet translated into deep educational impact across the entire audience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Summary of Key Findings

The research confirms that digital influencers have moved beyond entertainment to become primary catalysts for social mobilization among Generation Z. Data from the 150 respondents reveals several critical insights:

- **The Instagram Engine:** 68.4% of youth identify Instagram as their primary platform for consuming content related to social issues, confirming that visual-first storytelling is the most effective mobilization tool.
- **High Visibility:** An overwhelming 86.7% of respondents have observed influencers promoting social service activities, proving that these "Impact Creators" have successfully entered the mainstream digital experience.
- **Awareness vs. Action:** While 53% of youth agree that influencers increase their awareness of social issues, a large 39.8% remain neutral, indicating that awareness does not always immediately translate into deep conviction.
- **Institutional Trust:** Despite the power of social media, 29.6% of respondents prefer getting future service information from School/College seminars, highlighting a continued trust in academic institutions like Bedekar College.

Implications for Practice and Policy

- **For Practice (Content Creators):** Influencers must adopt "Radical Transparency"—showing the behind-the-scenes work—to satisfy Gen Z's skepticism toward "performative activism".
- **For Institutions (Academic Policy):** Colleges should leverage their high credibility (29.6% preference) by partnering with digital influencers to bridge the gap between digital "scroll-stopping" awareness and structured, real-world community action.
- **For Social Organizations:** Policy should shift toward a "Hybrid Approach", where Instagram is used for awareness and institutional portals or college seminars are used for credible, formal mobilization.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Long-term Behavioral Studies:** Future research could investigate if the "Volunteering Edition" vlogs lead to long-term community commitment or if the impact is limited to one-time participation.
- **Platform-Specific Effectiveness:** Further studies could compare the effectiveness of TikTok/Reels (Short-form) versus YouTube (Long-form) in changing deep-seated moral beliefs.
- **Demographic Variance:** Research could be expanded to include rural youth populations to see if the "Instagram Effect" remains consistent outside of urban and semi-urban Indian centers.

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DIGITAL PAYMENT APPS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON FUNDING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THANE CITY

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Autonomous, Thane**ABSTRACT**

The rapid growth of digital payment applications has significantly changed the way financial transactions are carried out, especially among young users. College students increasingly use digital payment apps not only for personal expenses but also for supporting social and volunteer activities. This research paper examines the influence of digital payment apps on funding youth empowerment through volunteerism among college students, with special reference to Thane City. The study focuses on understanding students' awareness, usage patterns, and perceptions regarding the use of digital payment platforms for supporting volunteer-based initiatives. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire from college students in Thane City. The findings indicate that digital payment apps have made fundraising and small donations easier, faster, and more transparent, thereby encouraging greater participation in volunteer activities. However, challenges such as security concerns, technical issues, and limited awareness of donation-related features were also observed. The study concludes that with improved digital literacy, enhanced security measures, and institutional support, digital payment apps can play a vital role in strengthening youth empowerment through volunteerism.

INTRODUCTION

Digital payment applications have become an integral part of everyday life in India, especially after the rapid expansion of mobile internet and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) services. These platforms have transformed traditional cash-based transactions into quick, convenient, and contactless digital payments. College students, being technologically aware and adaptable, are among the most active users of digital payment apps for various purposes such as shopping, bill payments, transfers, and online services.

In recent years, youth empowerment through volunteerism has gained importance as young individuals actively participate in social, environmental, and community development initiatives. Funding plays a crucial role in the success of such volunteer activities, and digital payment apps have emerged as an effective tool for collecting small donations, managing funds, and ensuring transparency. These platforms allow students to contribute financially with ease, thereby promoting collective responsibility and social engagement.

Thane City, being a rapidly developing urban area with a large student population and strong digital infrastructure, provides an appropriate setting to study this phenomenon. This research aims to explore how digital payment apps influence the funding of youth empowerment initiatives through volunteerism among college students in Thane City. By analyzing students' usage patterns, perceptions, and challenges, the study seeks to understand the role of digital payments in encouraging social participation and supporting youth-led volunteer programs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the usage and awareness of digital payment apps among college students in Thane City.
- To examine the role of digital payment apps in funding volunteerism and youth empowerment activities.
- To analyze the impact and challenges of digital payment apps in supporting student-led social initiatives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The following earlier studies have been conducted by various researchers in the area of the role of digital payment apps in enhancing financial management.

Das, S., & Mishra, P. (2024): Examined how digital payment apps influence college students' financial habits, budgeting, and economic independence. Their survey of 620 students found that 89% believed these apps improved financial control through spending analysis and budgeting tools. However, 38% admitted to increased impulsive spending, and 30% raised concerns about cybersecurity risks. The study highlighted the impact of promotional incentives on app usage and noted higher adoption in metropolitan areas due to better digital infrastructure. The authors emphasized the need for financial education to promote responsible digital payment usage.

Roy and Mukherjee (2024): Studied how digital payment apps affect college students' financial decision-making and spending habits. Their survey of 590 students found that 85% believed these apps improved financial awareness through transaction tracking and budgeting tools. However, 35% admitted to impulsive spending, and 28% raised concerns about security risks. The authors emphasized the need for financial literacy programs to encourage responsible digital payment usage and prevent overspending.

Nair And Pillai (2025): Examined how digital payment apps enhance financial literacy and spending habits among college students. Their survey of 610 students found that 88% believed these apps improved financial control through budgeting tools and real-time tracking. However, 37% admitted to impulsive spending, and 31% raised security concerns. The authors emphasized the need for financial education in colleges to encourage responsible digital payment usage and prevent overspending.

Owen, T., & Johnson, E. (2025): Studied the impact of digital payment apps on college students' financial independence and spending behavior. Their survey of 630 students found that 90% believed these apps improved financial awareness through budgeting tools and real-time tracking. However, 39% admitted to impulsive spending due to the ease of transactions, and 33% raised security concerns. The authors emphasized the need for financial literacy programs in colleges to ensure responsible digital payment usage and prevent financial mismanagement.

Kumar and Sahu (2021) highlight that digital payment apps play a crucial role in enabling micro-donations and quick fund transfers for social causes. These platforms reduce transaction barriers and make it easier for students to contribute small amounts towards volunteering activities, thereby promoting a culture of collective participation and social responsibility.

Ravi and Goyal (2020) studied the Digital payment applications have significantly transformed financial transactions, especially among youth and students. They widespread adoption of mobile wallets and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in India has enhanced financial inclusion and encouraged cashless transactions among young users. College students, being technologically adept, are among the most active users of digital payment platforms for both personal and social purposes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine how digital payment apps enhance financial management among college students. A sample of 70 respondents from the Thane district will be selected using random sampling, with data collected through an unstructured questionnaire, focus group discussions, and interviews. Statistical and thematic analyses will assess adoption, usage patterns, and financial behaviors. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, will be ensured. The study acknowledges limitations like response bias and digital literacy variations, aiming to provide insights for improving financial tools for students.

LIMITATIONS:

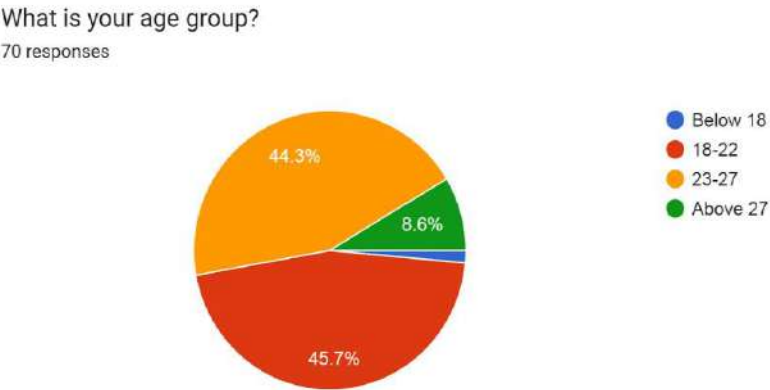
- The study is limited to college students in Thane City, so the findings may not be applicable to other regions.
- The research relies on self-reported data, which may be affected by personal bias or inaccurate responses.
- Limited awareness and varying usage of digital payment apps among students may restrict the generalization of results.

Data Analysis and Interpretations:

1: AGE:

AGE	PERCENTAGE
Below 18	1.4%
18-22	45.7%
23-27	44.3%
Above 27	8.6%

Table 1: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



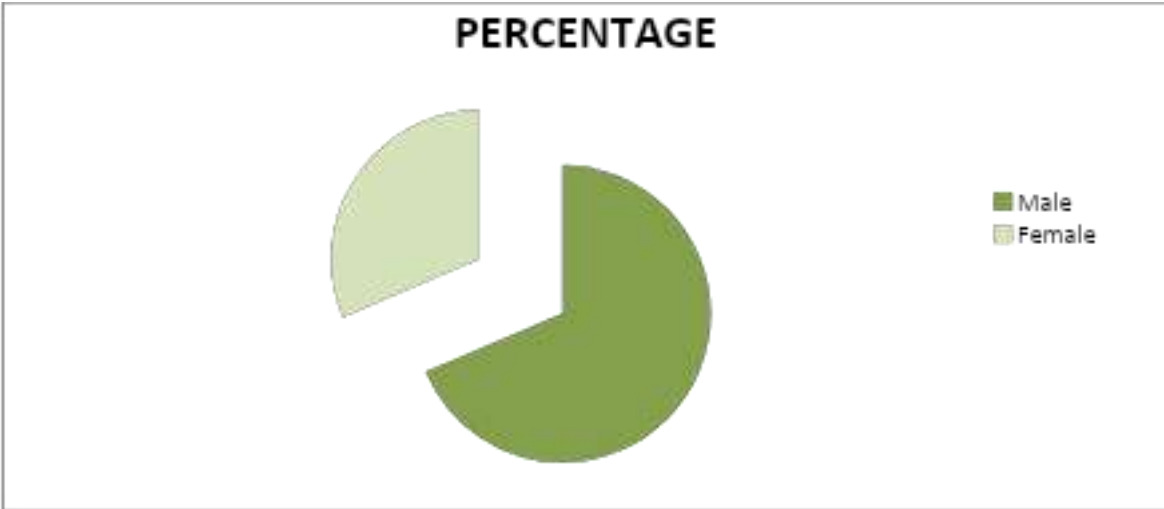
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (45.7%) are aged 18-22, followed by 44.3% in the 23-27 group, indicating high adoption among young adults. Only 1.4% are below 18, showing limited usage among minors, while 8.6% are above 27, representing a smaller yet notable segment.

2: What is your Gender?

Gender	PERCENTAGE
Male	68.6%
Female	31.4%

Table 2: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



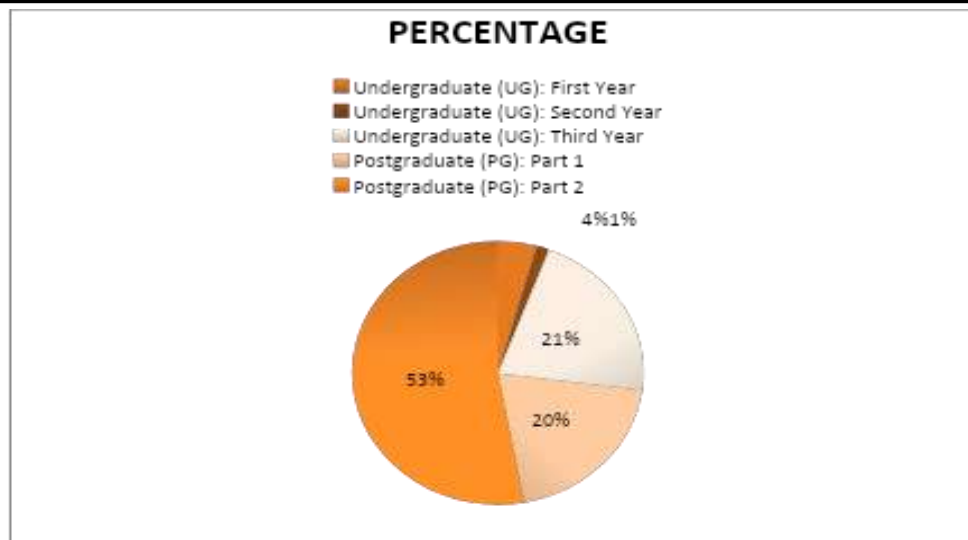
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (68.6%) are male, indicating a higher adoption of digital payment apps among men. Female respondents make up 31.4%, suggesting a comparatively lower participation in digital transactions. This may reflect differences in financial habits, access to technology, or digital literacy between genders.

3: What is your current educational level?

Educational Level	PERCENTAGE
Undergraduate (UG): First Year	4.3%
Undergraduate (UG): Second Year	1.4%
Undergraduate (UG): Third Year	21.4%
Postgraduate (PG): Part 1	20%
Postgraduate (PG): Part 2	52.9%

Table 3: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



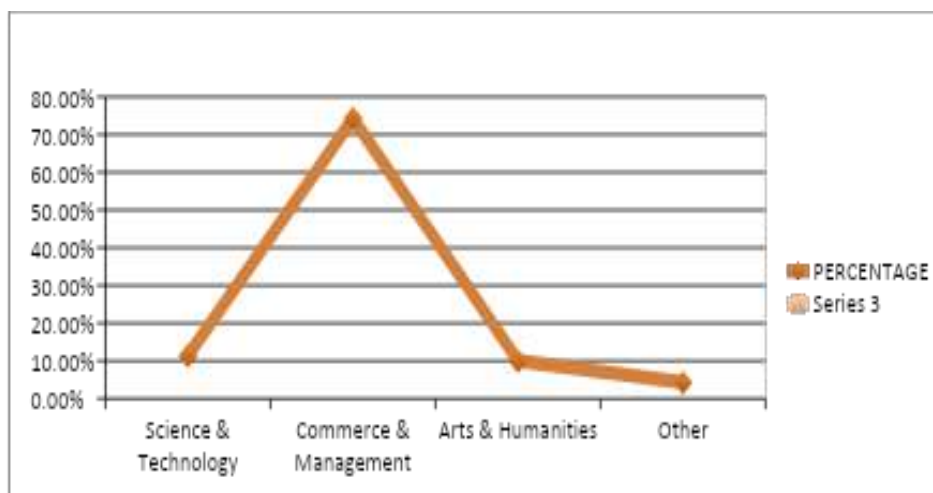
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (52.9%) are in their final year of postgraduate studies, followed by 21.4% in the third year of undergraduate studies. First- and second-year UG students have lower representation at 4.3% and 1.4%, respectively. Additionally, 20% of respondents are in the first year of their postgraduate studies.

4: Which Stream do you Belong to?

Stream	PERCENTAGE
Science & Technology	11.4%
Commerce & Management	74.3%
Arts & Humanities	10%
Other	4.3%

Table 4: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



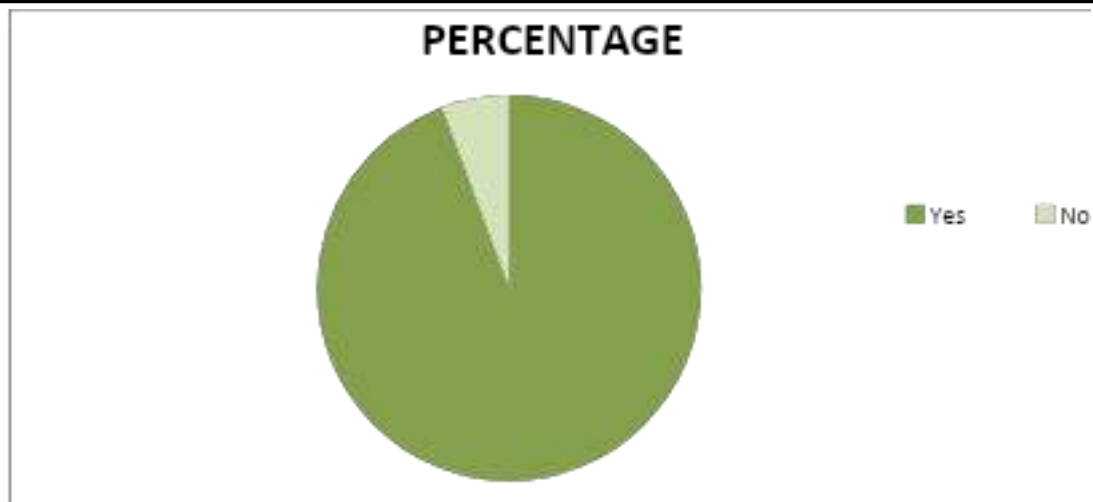
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (74.3%) belong to the Commerce & Management stream, indicating a strong representation from this field. Science & Technology and Arts & Humanities streams have similar participation, with 11.4% and 10%, respectively. A small percentage (4.3%) belongs to other academic streams.

5: Do you use digital payment apps?

Use Apps	PERCENTAGE
Yes	94.3%
No	5.7%

Table 5: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



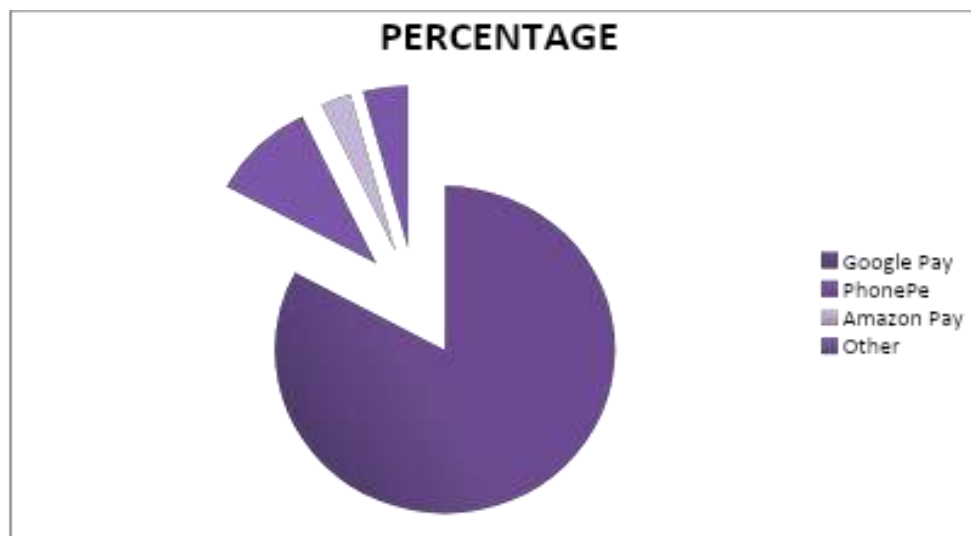
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through google forms.

INTERPRETATION: A significant majority of respondents (94.3%) use digital payment apps, highlighting their widespread adoption among students. Only a small percentage (5.7%) do not use these apps, indicating minimal resistance to digital transactions.

6: Which digital payment app do you use the most?

Payment Apps	PERCENTAGE
Google Pay	82.9%
PhonePe	10%
Amazon Pay	2.9%
Other	4.3%

Table 6: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



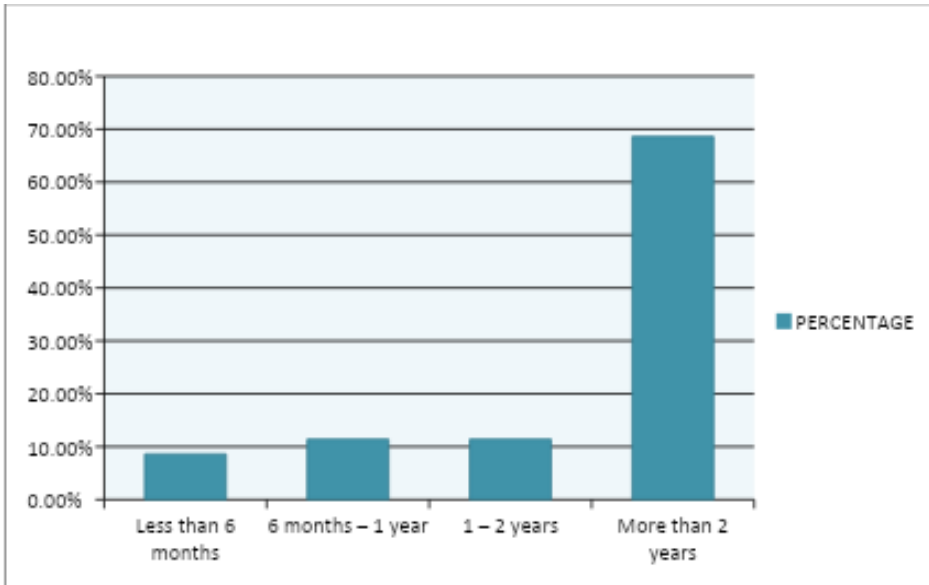
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: Google Pay is the most preferred digital payment app among respondents, with 82.9% using it the most. PhonePe follows at 10%, while Amazon Pay is used by 2.9% of respondents. A small percentage (4.3%) prefer other digital payment apps.

7: How long have you been using digital payment apps?

Using Apps	PERCENTAGE
Less than 6 months	8.6%
6 months – 1 year	11.4%
1 – 2 years	11.4%
More than 2 years	68.6%

Table 7: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



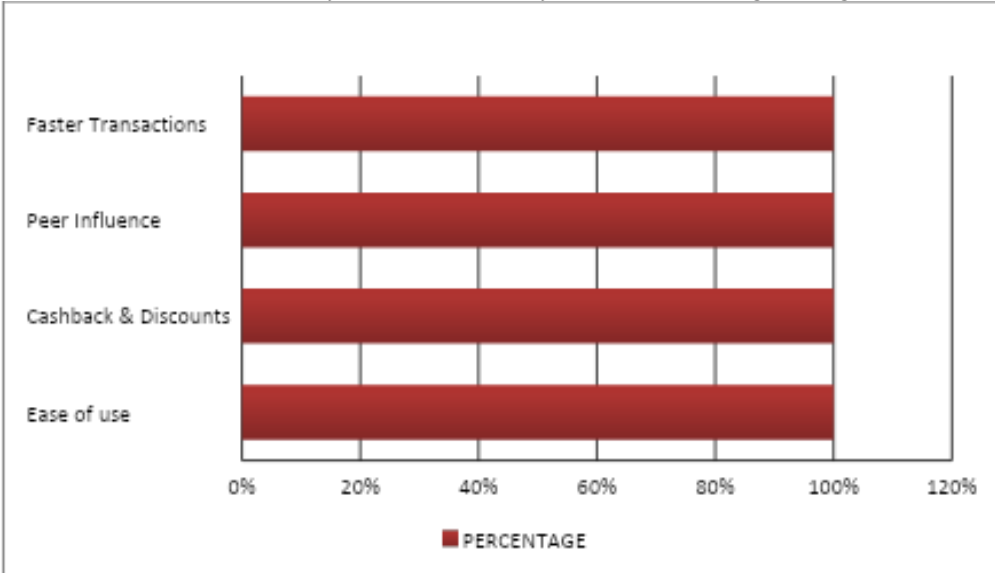
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (68.6%) have been using digital payment apps for more than two years, indicating widespread adoption and familiarity. A smaller percentage (11.4%) have used them for 1–2 years, while another 11.4% have experience between 6 months to 1 year. Only 8.6% of respondents have been using these apps for less than six months.

8: What influenced you to start using digital payment apps?

WHAT INFLUENCED	PERCENTAGE
Ease of use	50%
Cashback & Discounts	7.1%
Peer Influence	4.3 %
Faster Transactions	38.6%

Table 8: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



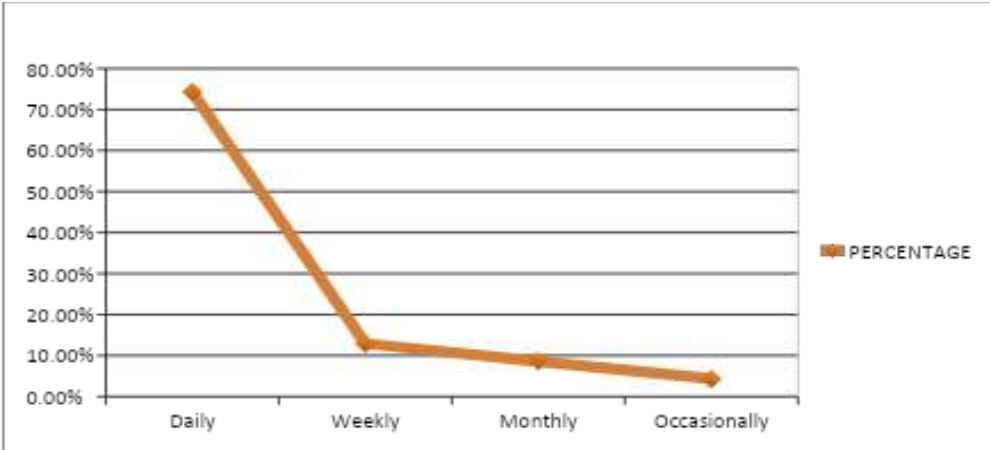
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The primary reason for adopting digital payment apps among respondents is ease of use (50%), highlighting the convenience factor. Faster transactions influenced 38.6% of users, emphasizing the efficiency of digital payments. Cashback and discounts attracted 7.1% of respondents, while peer influence played a minor role at 4.3%.

9: How frequently do you use digital payment apps?

HOW FREQUENTLY USE	PERCENTAGE
Daily	74.3%
Weekly	12.9%
Monthly	8.6 %
Occasionally	4.3 %

Table 9: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

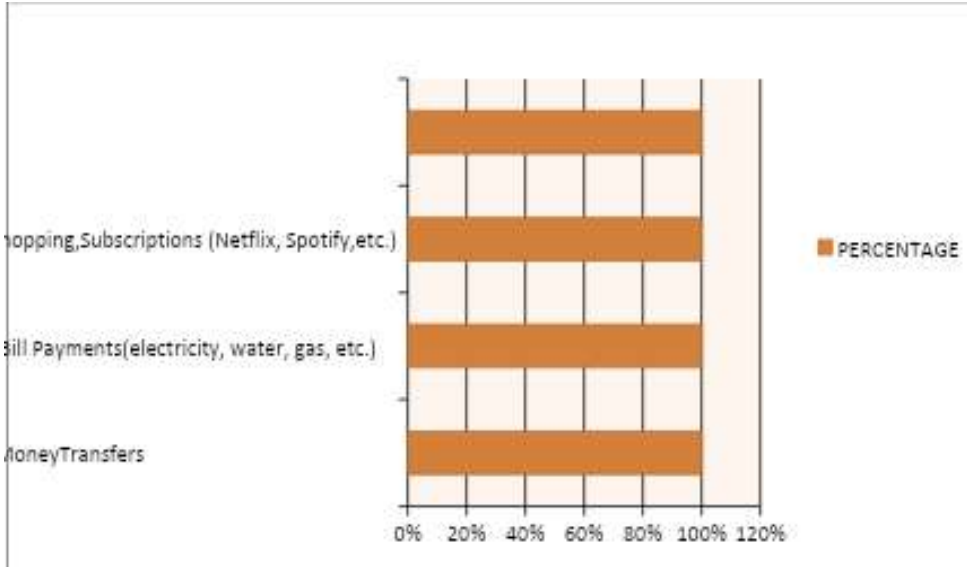


Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (74.3%) use digital payment apps daily, indicating high dependence on digital transactions. Weekly users account for 12.9%, while 8.6% use them monthly. Only 4.3% of respondents use digital payment apps occasionally.

10: For what purpose do you use digital payment apps the most?

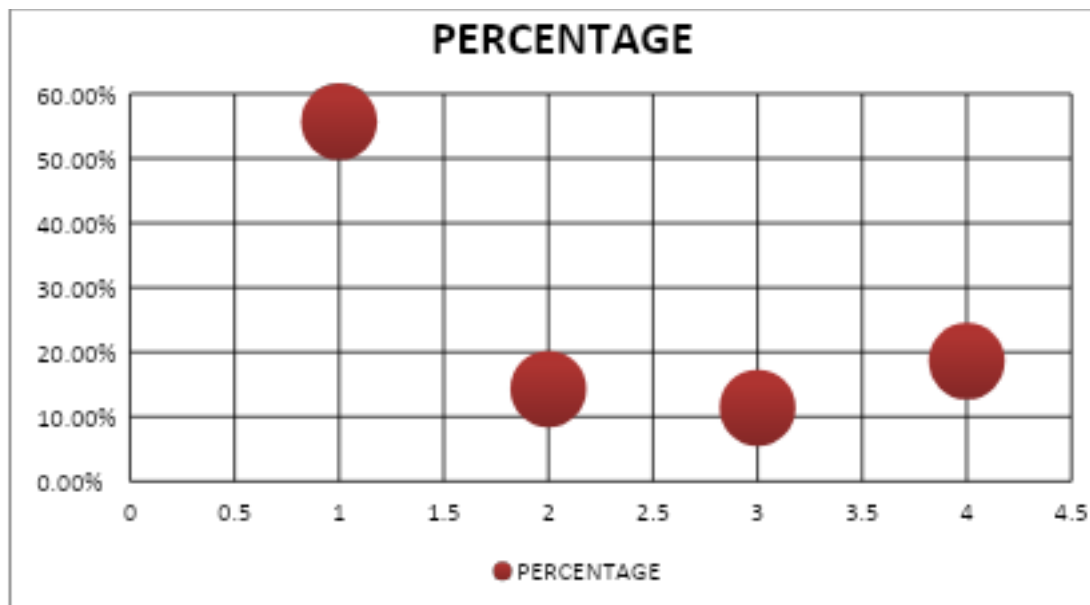
FOR WHAT PURPOSE	PERCENTAGE
Online Shopping, MoneyTransfers	35.7%
Mobile Recharge, Bill Payments(electricity, water, gas, etc.)	25.7%
Grocery & Retail Shopping,Subscriptions (Netflix, Spotify,etc.)	21.4%
All Of The Above	75.7 %



INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (75.7%) use digital payment apps for multiple purposes, including shopping, bill payments, and subscriptions. Around 35.7% primarily use them for online shopping and money transfers, while 25.7% rely on them for mobile recharges and utility bill payments.

11: Which type of transaction do you prefer using digital payment apps for?

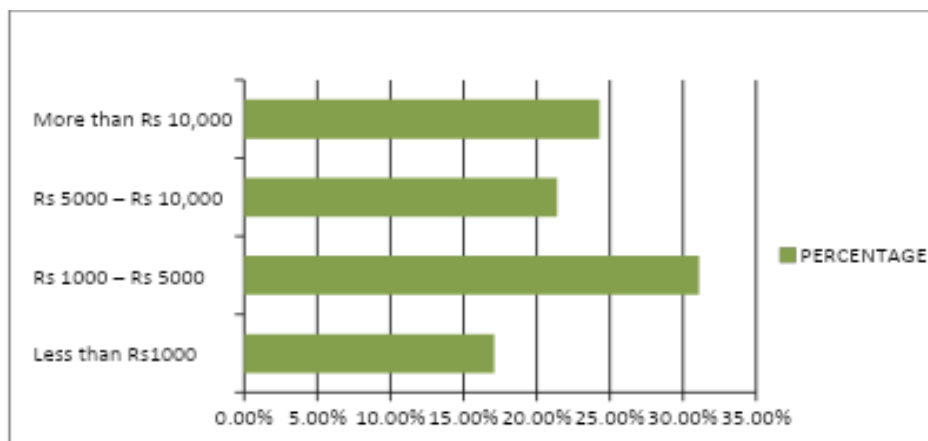
TYPE OF TRANSACTION	PERCENTAGE
Small Daily Transactions (Less than Rs500)	55.7%
Large Purchases (Above Rs5000)	14.3%
Monthly Bill Payments	11.4 %
Other	18.6 %

Table 11: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.*Source:* Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (55.7%) prefer using digital payment apps for small daily transactions below Rs. 500. About 14.3% use them for large purchases exceeding Rs. 5000, while 11.4% rely on them for monthly bill payments. Additionally, 18.6% use digital payment apps for other types of transactions.

12: How much do you usually spend per month using digital payment apps?

HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND	PERCENTAGE
Less than Rs1000	17.1%
Rs 1000 – Rs 5000	31.1%
Rs 5000 – Rs 10,000	21.4%
More than Rs 10,000	24.3%

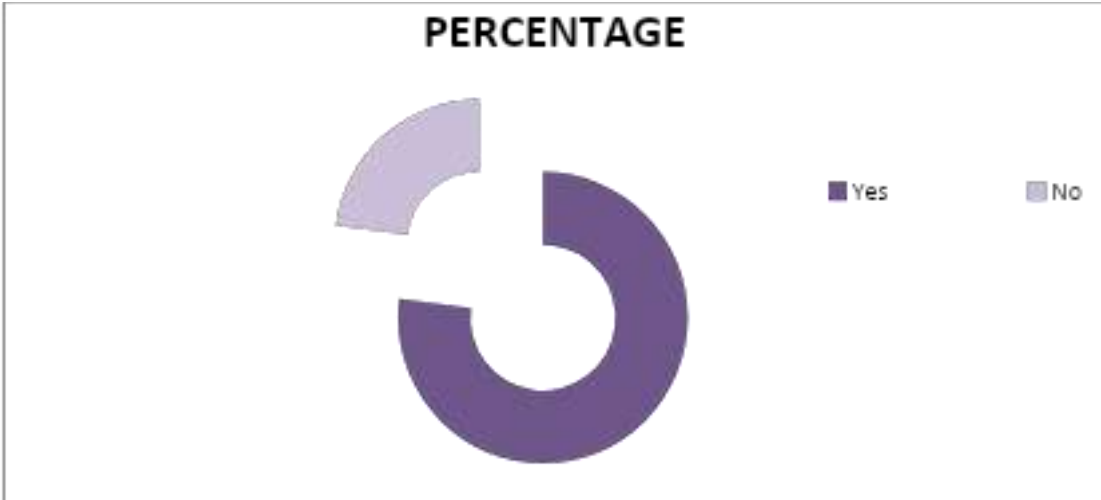
Table 12: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.*Source:* Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: Around 31.1% of respondents spend between Rs. 1000 – Rs. 5000 per month using digital payment apps. About 24.3% spend more than Rs. 10,000, while 21.4% fall in the Rs. 5000 – Rs. 10,000 range. Additionally, 17.1% of users spend less than Rs. 1000 monthly.

13: Have you ever faced issues while using digital payment apps?

FACED ISSUES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	77.1%
No	22.9%

Table 13: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



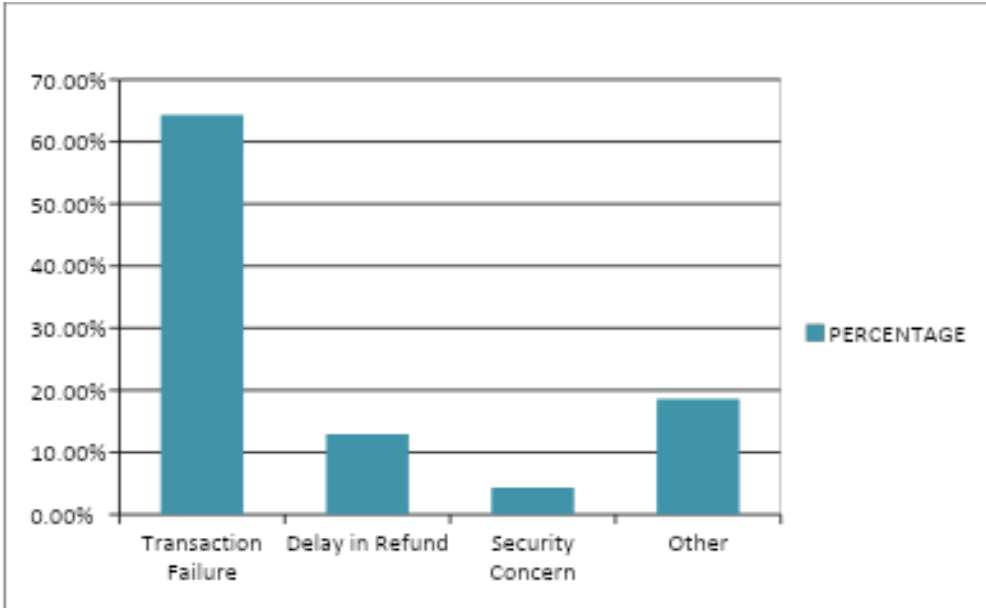
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: A significant 77.1% of respondents have faced issues while using digital payment apps, indicating common challenges in transactions. Meanwhile, 22.9% reported having a smooth experience without any problems.

14: If yes, what kind of issue did you face?

ISSUES	PERCENTAGE
Transaction Failure	64.3%
Delay in Refund	12.9%
Security Concern	4.3%
Other	18.6%

Table 14: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



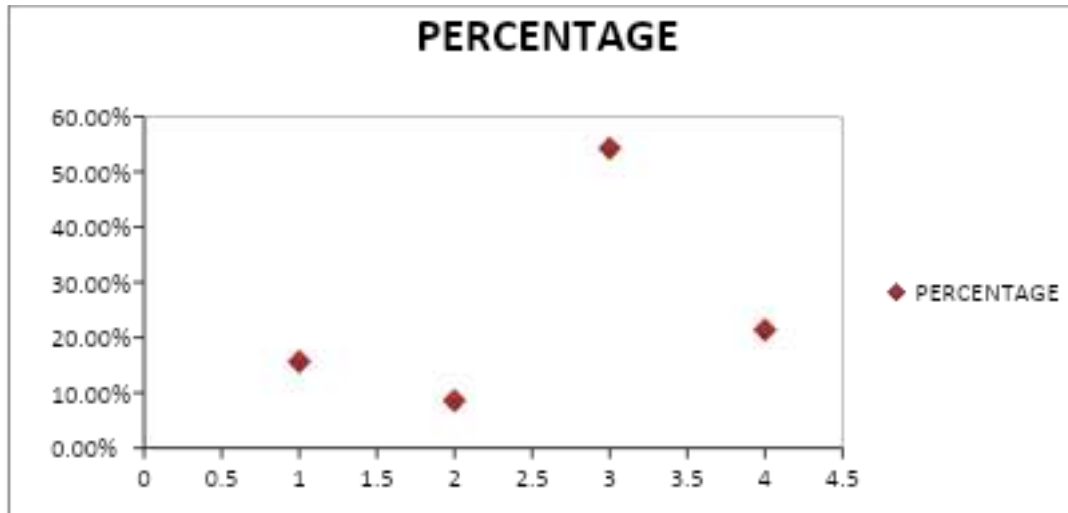
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The most common issue faced by users is transaction failure, affecting 64.3% of respondents. Delay in refunds was reported by 12.9%, while 4.3% expressed security concerns. Additionally, 18.6% faced other issues related to digital payment apps.

15: How has using digital payment apps impacted your financial management?

APPS IMPACTED	PERCENTAGE
Helped in Budgeting	15.7%
Increased Savings	8.6%
Made Transactions Convenient	54.3%
No Significant Impact	21.4%

Table 15: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



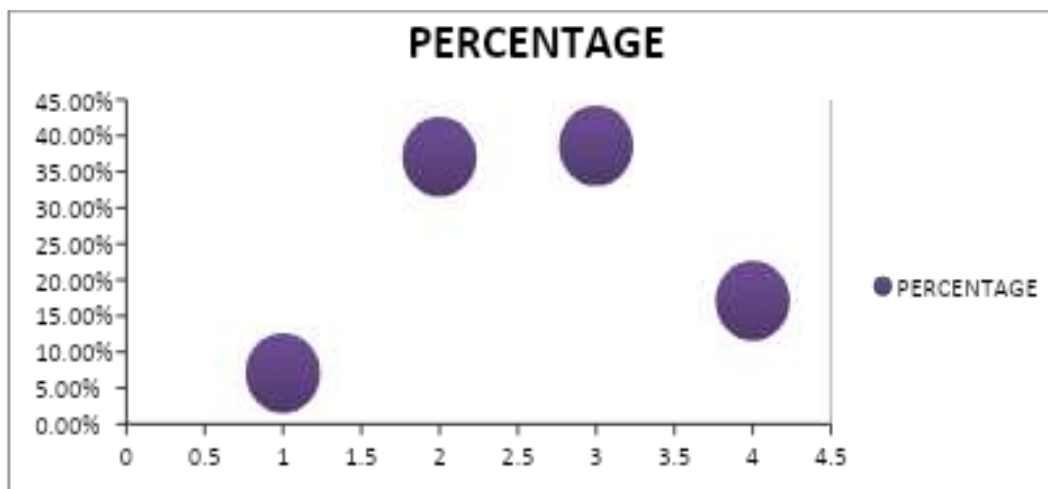
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (54.3%) found digital payment apps most beneficial for transaction convenience. Around 15.7% stated that these apps helped in budgeting, while 8.6% reported an increase in savings. However, 21.4% felt that these apps had no significant impact on their financial management.

16: How secure do you feel while using digital payment apps?

HOW SECURE	PERCENTAGE
Not Secure	7.1%
Somewhat Secure	37.1%
Secure	38.6%
Highly Secure	17.1%

Table 16: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



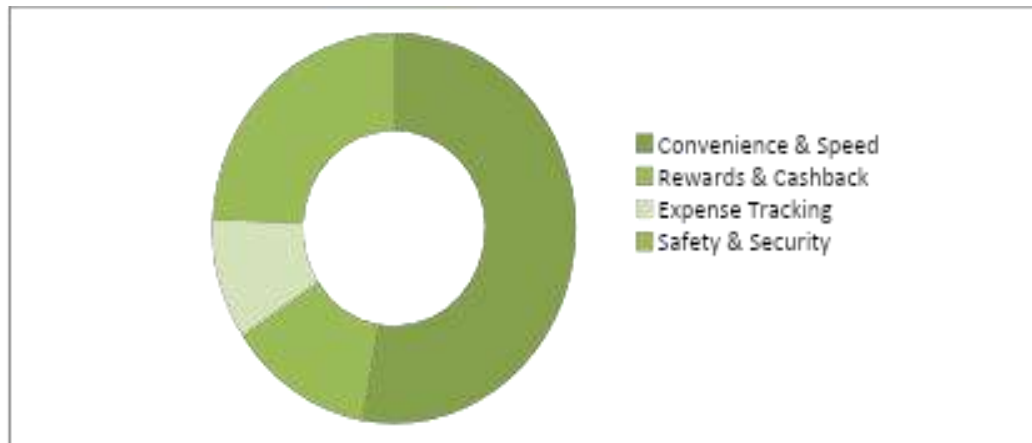
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: Most respondents (38.6%) feel secure while using digital payment apps, while 37.1% feel only somewhat secure. A smaller percentage (17.1%) consider these apps highly secure, whereas 7.1% do not feel secure at all.

17: What is the biggest advantage of using digital payment apps?

ADVANTAGE	PERCENTAGE
Convenience & Speed	52.9%
Rewards & Cashback	12.9%
Expense Tracking	10%
Safety & Security	24.3%

Table 17: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



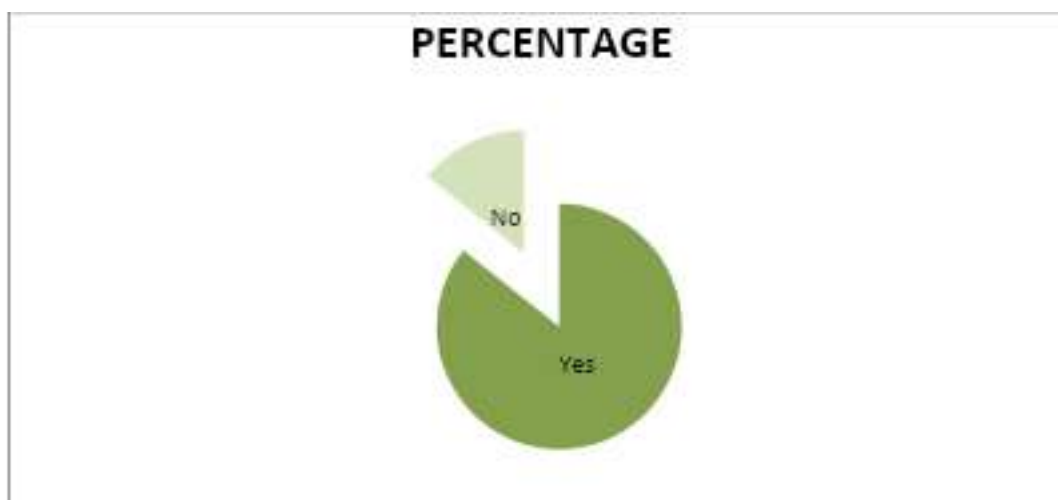
Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The majority of respondents (52.9%) consider convenience and speed as the biggest advantage of using digital payment apps. Safety and security are valued by 24.3%, while 12.9% appreciate rewards and cashback. Only 10% see expense tracking as the primary benefit.

18: Would you Recommend Digital Payment Apps to others?

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND	PERCENTAGE
Yes	85.7%
No	14.3%

Table 18: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

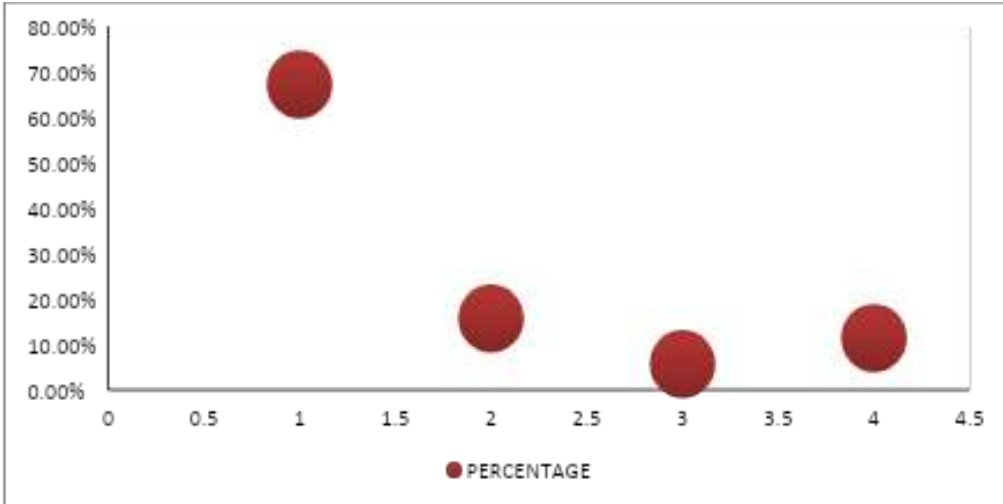
INTERPRETATION: A significant majority (85.7%) of respondents would recommend digital payment apps to others, highlighting their positive experiences and perceived benefits. However, 14.3% of users are hesitant, possibly due to security concerns or personal preferences.

19: What challenges do you face while using digital payment apps?

CHALLENGES	PERCENTAGE
Network/Server Issues	67.1%
High Transaction Fees/Limited	15.7%

Acceptance by Vendors	
Lack of Awareness/Security Risks	5.7%
Other	11.4%

Table 19: Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.



Source: Primary Data collected by researcher through Google forms.

INTERPRETATION: The most common challenge faced by users is network or server issues, reported by 67.1% of respondents, which can disrupt transactions. High transaction fees and limited vendor acceptance were concerns for 15.7% of users. Additionally, 5.7% cited a lack of awareness and security risks, while 11.4% faced other unspecified challenges.

SUGGESTIONS

1. To enhance the reliability and security of digital payment apps to ensure smooth and safe funding of volunteer and youth empowerment activities.
2. To promote wider acceptance of digital payment apps for student-led social initiatives by reducing transaction costs and offering incentives.
3. To increase financial awareness and responsible usage of digital payment apps among college students through budgeting and control features.
4. To integrate digital payment systems within colleges and universities to support seamless transactions for volunteerism and empowerment programs.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that digital payment apps have become an important support system for youth empowerment through volunteerism among college students in Thane City. These apps make it easy for students to donate small amounts, collect funds, and support social activities quickly and transparently. Because of this convenience, more students feel encouraged to take part in volunteer and community-based programs. The study also finds that digital payment apps help students develop a sense of responsibility, teamwork, and financial awareness. However, issues like security concerns, lack of proper awareness, and occasional technical problems can limit their effective use. If colleges promote digital payment systems, improve awareness, and ensure safer platforms, these apps can strongly contribute to student volunteerism and overall youth empowerment in the future.

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A STUDY ON EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN UMBERMALI, THANE

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ABSTRACT:

West India represents a unique dichotomy as one of the world's largest emerging economies that is also home to the second-largest tribal concentration globally. These communities often remain isolated from the mainstream, grappling with systemic poverty, infrastructural deficits, and a lack of access to quality healthcare and education. This study creates a socio-economic profile of the underprivileged population in Umbermali, a village in the Shahapur taluka of Thane district. Despite Thane being the third most industrially developed district in Maharashtra, significant regional disparities persist, with talukas like Shahapur showing higher densities of tribal populations living below the poverty line compared to the coastal regions.

Utilizing the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)—which assesses deprivation across health, education, and standard of living—this research evaluates the extent of poverty in Umbermali. Primary data was collected using Simple Random Sampling via structured interview schedules translated into Marathi to ensure accurate responses from the local population. The findings reveal a stark reality: basic necessities are scarce, malnutrition is prevalent among children, and women face severe social and economic marginalization. The study highlights that despite government schemes, the benefits have not sufficiently trickled down. It concludes that true "Inclusive Growth" and the realization of development goals cannot be achieved without addressing the specific needs of these excluded regions.

Keywords: Umbermali, Thane District, Under Privileged, Government Schemes.

INTRODUCTION

Located in the Northern Konkan division, Thane District stands as one of Maharashtra's most industrially advanced regions. With a geographical area of 4,214 sq. km—accounting for 1.37% of the state's total area—it ranked third in population according to the 2011 Census. The district's proximity to Mumbai has deeply influenced the development of industrial hubs in talukas such as Thane, Kalyan, Ulhasnagar, Ambernath, Bhiwandi, and Shahapur. Economically, the region benefits significantly from its strategic location; it possesses a 27 km coastline along with 7,642 hectares suitable for inland fishing. This sector thrives due to high demand from domestic markets like Mumbai as well as export opportunities to Gulf nations. The catalyst for this rapid development is the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), which has established eight industrial estates, primarily concentrated in the southern and western parts of the district. Benefiting from excellent communication networks and access to ports, the district is a major producer of chemicals and pharmaceuticals, alongside medium and small-scale manufacturing of plastics, iron goods, and powerloom textiles. Whereas Umbermali is a small village coming under Shahapur taluka under Thane District. Umbermali is a small Village in Shahapur Taluka in Thane District of Maharashtra State, India. It comes under Shirol Panchayath. It belongs to Konkan region. It is located 80 KM towards East from District head quarters Thane where as 23 KM from Shahapur. Most of the population belonging to farmers background and household ladies. Many of them are not aware

The socio-economic landscape of a village reflects its unique characteristics shaped by history, geography, and cultural ethos. Umbermali village, situated within the Thane district, serves as a microcosm of rural India, showcasing the challenges and opportunities inherent in the rural economy. This study aims to critically analyse the interplay of various factors shaping the village's socio-economic profile.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE**1. Theoretical Frameworks**

A mere 70 kilometers separates the industrial hubs of Thane from the village of Umbermali, yet the developmental distance is vast. The study indicates that the district's economic growth has not permeated this tribal pocket. Umbermali remains trapped in a cycle of underdevelopment, characterized by poor healthcare access and a lack of diverse livelihood options. The educational landscape is equally bleak, restricted to one primary school that caps education at the 8th standard. Thus, the narrative of Thane's development is incomplete without acknowledging the persistent socio-economic stagnation of villages like Umbermali.

- **Human Ecology and Socio-Economic Mapping:** Park and Burgess (1925) introduced the human ecology framework, emphasizing the spatial distribution of social and economic systems. Recent studies extend this framework to rural India, focusing on how natural resources and community interactions shape socio-economic patterns (Deshpande, 2019).
- **Sustainable Livelihood Framework:** Chambers and Conway (1992) proposed the sustainable livelihood approach, which examines household assets, vulnerabilities, and opportunities. This framework is frequently applied to understand rural communities' dependence on agriculture and natural resources (Scoones, 1998).

2. Socio-Economic Studies in Indian Villages

- **Economic Structures in Rural India:** Mukherjee (1975) provided foundational insights into Indian rural economies, identifying agriculture as the cornerstone. However, contemporary studies emphasize diversification into non-agricultural sectors, especially in villages experiencing urban spillovers (Sharma et al., 2016).
- **Social Stratification and Economic Mobility:** Studies such as Srinivas (1952) explore caste dynamics and their impact on economic opportunities. Recent research highlights increasing mobility due to education and migration, though entrenched inequalities persist (Jodhka, 2020).

3. Methodological Approaches

- **GIS and Spatial Mapping:** Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are increasingly employed to create detailed maps of socio-economic variables. Studies by Bhatta (2010) demonstrate how GIS can integrate demographic, economic, and spatial data to offer actionable insights for policy.
- **Mixed-Method Approaches:** Combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys provides a holistic understanding of rural socio-economic landscapes (Kumar & Corbridge, 2002). Such methods have proven particularly useful in capturing gendered experiences and informal economies.

4. Key Findings from Case Studies

- **Agriculture and Livelihoods:** Case studies in Maharashtra by Patil (2015) reveal a heavy dependence on rain-fed agriculture, leading to seasonal vulnerabilities. Diversification into horticulture and dairy farming is observed as a coping strategy.
- **Migration Patterns:** Research by Deshingkar and Farrington (2009) highlights migration as a significant factor in rural socio-economic transformation. Seasonal labour migration to urban centres contributes to income but disrupts local community structures.
- **Education and Healthcare:** Rural education studies emphasize the importance of accessible schooling for socio-economic upliftment (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Similarly, healthcare access remains a critical determinant of well-being in rural India, with studies noting the lack of adequate facilities (Rao, 2014).

Gaps in Literature

- **Limited Focus on Micro-Level Studies:** Many studies generalize findings at a district or state level, overlooking the unique characteristics of individual villages.
- **Underrepresentation of Tribal Communities:** Research often neglects the socio-economic conditions of tribal populations, a critical demographic in villages like Umbermal.
- **Dynamic Impact of Urbanization:** While the influence of urbanization on rural socio-economic landscapes is acknowledged, its nuanced effects on specific villages remain underexplored.
- **Gendered Analysis:** Studies seldom focus on the distinct socio-economic roles and challenges faced by women in rural communities.

METHODOLOGY

1. **Survey Techniques:** Household surveys were conducted using structured questionnaires.
2. **Field Observations:** Direct observations provided insights into daily life and community interactions.
3. **Interviews:** In-depth interviews with key informants, including local residents, farmers, household ladies and upsarpach of the village

4. **Data Analysis:** Statistical tools were employed to analyze quantitative data, while qualitative data were thematically coded.

Hypothesis:

H0: Social Economic status of Umbermali village has proper literacy rate, Income Level, Health care.

H1: Social Economic status of Umbermali villae has improper literacy rate, Income Level, Health care.

Objectives

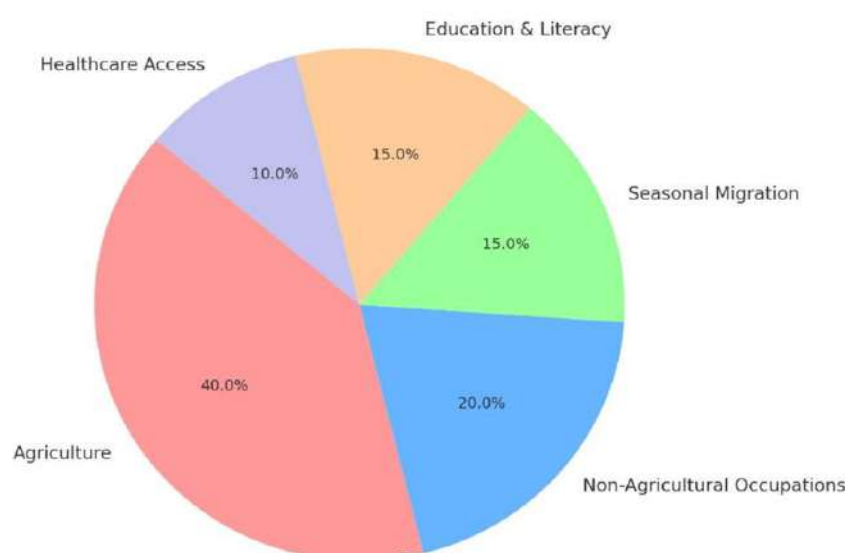
1. **Demographic Analysis:** To evaluate the population distribution, literacy rate, and gender ratio.

2. **Economic Assessment:** To examine the primary and secondary sources of income, employment trends, and land usage.

3. **Social Dynamics:** To explore the influence of caste, community networks.

4. INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Socio-Economic Components in Rural Landscapes



The pie chart illustrates the distribution of key livelihood and socio-developmental factors within the surveyed community. Agriculture emerges as the dominant sector, engaging **40%** of the population, indicating that the local economy is primarily agrarian and heavily dependent on farming-related activities for income and sustenance.

Non-agricultural occupations account for **20%**, reflecting a moderate diversification of employment opportunities beyond farming, possibly including small businesses, labor work, and service-related activities. However, the proportion suggests limited industrial or service-sector penetration within the community.

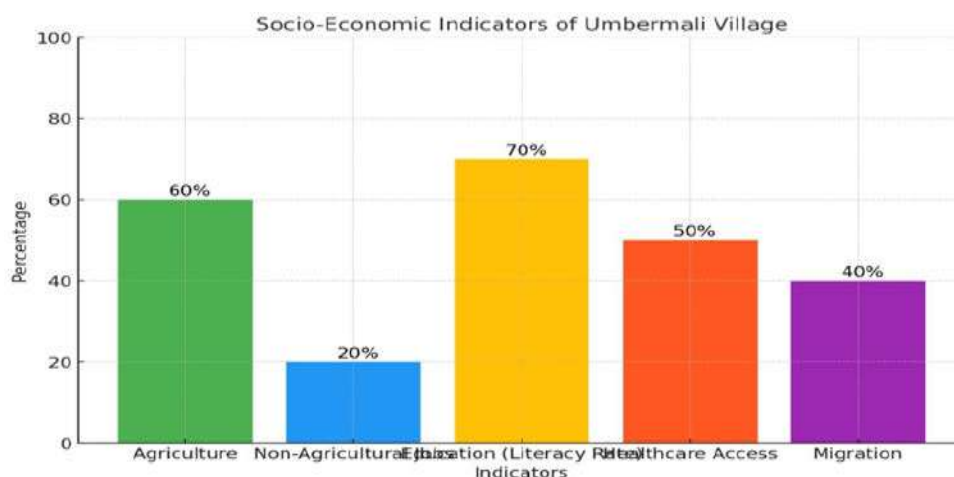
A notable **15% of the population engages in seasonal migration**, highlighting economic vulnerability and insufficient local employment opportunities, which compel households to seek temporary work elsewhere during off-agricultural seasons.

Similarly, **education and literacy concerns represent 15%**, suggesting ongoing challenges related to educational access, retention, or quality, which may influence long-term socioeconomic mobility.

Finally, **healthcare access constitutes 10%**, indicating comparatively lower but still significant concerns regarding availability or accessibility of medical services in the area.

Overall, the data reflects a rural economy predominantly dependent on agriculture, accompanied by employment diversification challenges, migration pressures, and ongoing developmental needs in education and healthcare. These findings underscore the importance of integrated rural development strategies focusing on livelihood diversification, improved educational support, and strengthened healthcare infrastructure to ensure sustainable community progress.

4.2 Socio-Economic Indicators of Umbermali Village



The bar chart representing key socio-economic indicators for Umbermali Village. The chart highlights components such as agriculture, non-agricultural jobs, literacy rate, healthcare access, and migration, with their respective percentages as example data.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- Demographic Trends:** The village population is predominantly composed of tribal communities with a literacy rate of approximately 65%. Youth migration to urban areas for employment is a notable trend.
- Economic Activities:** Agriculture remains the primary occupation, with a significant portion of households engaged in subsistence farming. Seasonal migration for labour work in nearby cities adds to household income.
- Social Structure:** Community networks play a critical role in social cohesion, yet caste-based hierarchies persist.
- Women's participation in decision-making processes is limited, though self-help groups are gaining traction.
- Infrastructure and Amenities:** The village has a single primary school and limited healthcare facilities. Road connectivity is improving, but public transport remains inadequate.
- Cultural Practices:** Traditional festivals and rituals contribute to community bonding but also incur significant expenses for households.

So, from the above interpretation we can come to end result that even though Thane District is Industrialised developed, still there are villages in the district which are far behind development and one of them is Umbermali, which is just 70 kms away from Thane. It is far behind development in many aspects like Health Care, Education, Occupation Distribution, Education as it has only one Primary School with upto 8th standard only. So, even Thane is developed but its small village umbermali is still has to achieve Socio – Economic Development.

CHALLENGES

- Limited access to quality education and healthcare services.
- Dependence on rain-fed agriculture increases vulnerability to climate change.
- Migration disrupts family structures and creates labour shortages during peak agricultural seasons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Education:** Strengthen school infrastructure and introduce vocational training programs.
- Healthcare:** Establish mobile health units to provide regular medical check-ups.
- Economic Diversification:** Promote small-scale industries and value-added agricultural products.
- Empowerment Programs:** Enhance women's participation through targeted skill development initiatives.
- Infrastructure Development:** Improve road connectivity and introduce reliable public transport services.

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This review underscores the need for localized, interdisciplinary studies to capture the nuances of socio-economic landscapes in villages such as Umbermal. Future research should leverage modern tools like GIS while incorporating participatory approaches to ensure the inclusion of marginalized voices. Addressing the identified gaps will enable a more comprehensive understanding and contribute to effective policy-making for rural development.

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SOCIAL-MEDIA FOR SOCIAL GOOD: STUDYING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL-MEDIA IN DRIVING GEN Z ACTIVISM IN SOCIAL SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z is increasingly recognized as a socially conscious demographic, actively engaging with issues such as social justice, environmental sustainability, equality, and mental health. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful spaces for promoting social causes and mobilizing public participation, particularly among young people who are digital natives.

Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and X enable rapid dissemination of cause-related messages, peer influence, and interactive engagement. However, the growing prevalence of social cause campaigns on social media has raised important concerns regarding their credibility and authenticity, which may significantly influence young people's attitudes and behaviours toward participation.

This study examines how Generation Z perceives the credibility and authenticity of social media platforms and campaigns promoting social causes, and how these perceptions shape their attitudes, behaviours, and participation in social activities. Specifically, the research seeks to understand the role of these platforms in shaping Gen Z's engagement with social initiatives. By examining these dimensions, the study seeks to contribute to the literature on digital activism, youth participation, and social media credibility. The study also explores the nature of participation adopted by Generation Z, including online actions such as liking, sharing, commenting, and digital advocacy, as well as offline involvement such as volunteering, donations, and participation in community-based social activities. It also offers insights into how social media influences Generation Z's perceptions and decision-making processes related to social causes.

Keywords: Social Media Influences, Social Services, Generation Z, Credibility, Authenticity, Attitude, Participation

INTRODUCTION

Gen Z, or Generation Z, are people born approximately between 1997 and 2012, this generation is one of the first to grow up entirely online and are shaped by characteristics of being technologically native and familiar, having a strong sense of self awareness, and valuing happiness and connection. The characteristics of being self-aware and valuing deeper connections make them one of the generations who are emotionally involved in social causes.

Social media has become a dominant force in shaping how young people engage with social causes, serving as both an information source and a platform for activism. For Generation Z (Gen Z), who have grown up in a digitally connected environment, social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter are central to how social issues are encountered, discussed, and acted upon. These platforms offer opportunities for awareness-building and participation, yet they also raise critical concerns regarding credibility, authenticity, and the depth of user engagement with social causes.

Existing research highlights the growing role of social media in promoting social activism among younger generations. Seelig (2018) found that online exposure to social causes can motivate youth to engage both virtually and offline, suggesting that digital platforms can act as gateways to real-world participation. However, generational differences are important to consider. Morris (2020) argues that despite Gen Z's high levels of connectivity, their engagement with causes such as climate change remains fragmented and inconsistent, with many young people feeling overwhelmed by the volume and variability of information available online. This information overload contributes to scepticism and polarization, influencing how Gen Z evaluates the trustworthiness of social media content.

More recent research by Biondo et al. (2024) further illustrates this complexity, showing that while social media significantly increases awareness and emotional involvement with social and environmental issues, this does not consistently translate into active participation.

Together, these studies indicate a gap between awareness, emotional engagement, and active participation among Gen Z. While social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and attitudes toward social causes, questions remain about how credibility and authenticity of social cause campaigns promoted on

such platforms influence Gen Z's willingness to move beyond passive engagement. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how young people perceive social media platforms promoting social causes, and how these perceptions influence their attitudes, behaviours, and participation in social activities. By focusing specifically on Generation Z, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which social media can foster meaningful and sustained social engagement among young people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Seelig, M. I. (2018), *Social activism: Engaging millennials in social causes*: This project builds on past research to investigate the relationship between millennials' online exposure to information about social causes and motives to take part in virtual and face-to-face engagement. The results of this study indicated that millennials are open to using social media for social causes, and perhaps increasing engagement off-line too.

Morris, M. (2020), *Climate change, social media, and Generation Z*: Findings of this paper suggests that although Gen Z is tech-savvy and connected through social media, they are not yet organized in uniting around climate change. Data gathered from this research demonstrates very little commonality in learning about and discussing climate change. All Gen Z participants had an Instagram account, but only four relied upon a social media app platform to learn and share climate change information. With the vast amount of data and sources to provide data, whether factual or subjective, there is good reason for Gen Z to feel overwhelmed and polarized.

Iro Konstantinou, Kate Jones (August 2022), *Investigating Gen Z attitudes to charitable giving and donation behaviour: social media, peers and authenticity*: This paper discussed that social media and its influences are also a major driver in what Gen Z perceive to be pivotal in their expressions of charitable giving. Peer influences are important since recommendations by friends are likely to be authentic and genuine, something which is essential for Gen Z who do not want to be perceived as jumping on the bandwagon when they support causes but want to see long-lasting impact. The findings showed that Gen Z prefer to be approached online rather than in person and feel empowered in their choices.

Biondo, A., Crescimanno, M., Adamashvili, N., & Galati, A. (2024, September), *Social media's role in fostering responsible and sustainable behaviour among young people of Generation Z*: This study investigated the complex relationship between the use of social media and the adoption of responsible and sustainable behaviour in the Italian Generation Z. The results show that social media have become extremely important in fostering greater awareness and sensitivity among young people towards environmental issues. Young Italians of Generation Z, in particular, are very emotionally involved with pro-environmental campaigns on social media, but mostly show passive forms of participation. Despite the high attitude of the participants to adopt more responsible behaviour and the high emotional involvement with the issues dealt with, these aspects do not always result in forms of active participation in protecting the environment.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand Gen Z's perception of credibility and authenticity of social media campaigns focused on social causes.
2. To assess the influence of social media platforms on Gen Z's participation in social activities.
3. To study Gen Z's attitude and behaviour of participation in social causes promoted on social media platforms.

DATA ANALYSIS

1. Total respondents 107 – 61.7% female and 37.4% male, 0.9% prefer not to say.
2. Monthly family income demographic was as follows – 25.2% upto Rs.25000, 30.8% was Rs.25000 – Rs.50,000, 15% was Rs.50,000 to Rs.1,00,000 and 29% was above Rs.1,00,000.

Credibility

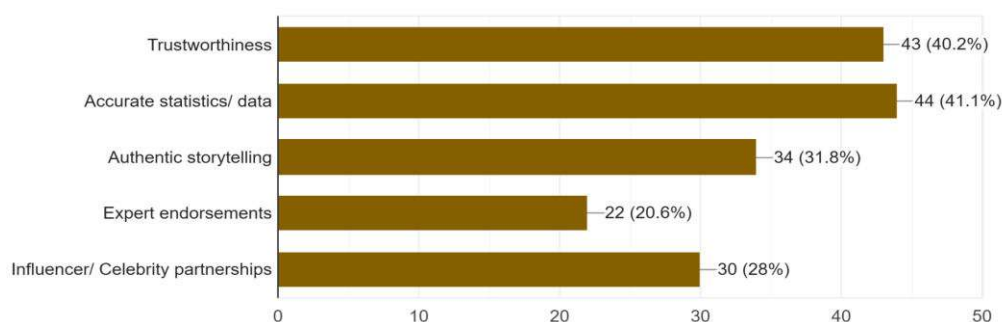
3. According to the respondents 61.7% sometimes came across social media posts about social causes, 34.6% often came across posts and 3.7% never came across social media posts about social causes.
4. According to the respondents 69.2% found Instagram promoted lot of social causes, 17.8% stated YouTube, 7.5% Twitter, 4.7% WhatsApp and 0.9% LinkedIn.
5. The respondents stated that credibility of a social cause being promoted was decided on the following – Accurate statistical data 41.1%, Trustworthiness 40.2%, Authentic storytelling 31.8%, Influencer or celebrity partnership 28% and expert endorsements 20.6%.

6. 67.3% respondents stated they sometimes verify the information shared on the social media post about social causes, 24.3% verified it often and 8.4% never verified information.

7. To verify the information posted the respondents- 53.3% considered if the organisation was well known, 49.5% if the post was from a verified account, 41.1% if expert review was given, 8.4% if it was endorsed by a influencer or an celebrity and 0.9% determined it based on real story, or personal judgment or personal investigation or checked the relevant data.

7. What makes a social media campaign promoting a social cause credible to you?

107 responses



8. According to the respondents they considered a social media post or campaign for a social cause authentic based on the following aspects –

social media post or campaign for a social cause authentic based on	% of Respondents
Real actions taken	57%
Consistent posts about the cause	35.5%
Interviews taken and shared	36.4%
Feedbacks and reviews	36.4%
Connectivity with the followers (commenting/replying)	22.4%
Sensationalised content	4.7%

9. 54.2% felt that its very important that social media campaigns were transparent about their impact and goals.41.1% felt its somewhat important and 4.7% did not find it to be important.

10. Specify how much you agree with each statement below about social-cause campaigns you come across on your feed –

I believe that the source (social account or influencer) promoting the social cause campaign on my feed is trustworthy.

The content shared in the campaign feels genuine and not overly commercialized.

I think the information presented in the campaign is accurate and factual.

The campaign clearly states when content is sponsored or promotional.

The person or organisation posting the campaign appears knowledgeable about the topic.

The campaign aligns with my personal values and beliefs, which makes it seem more authentic.

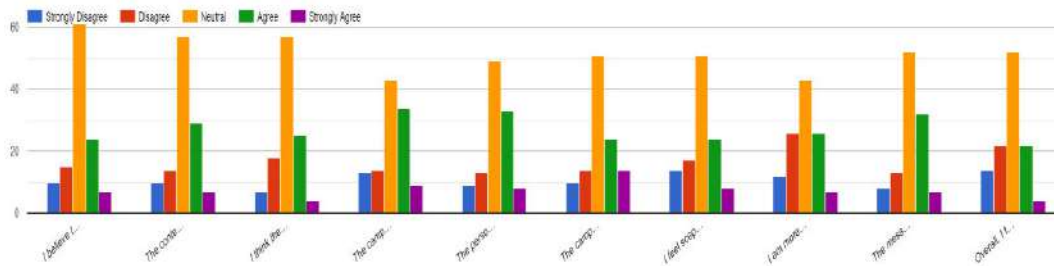
I feel sceptical when I view the social media campaign because of past misleading content online.

I am more likely to trust the campaign if it shows high likes, shares, or positive comments.

The message from the campaign is consistent across different social media platforms.

Overall, I trust the messages conveyed in the social media campaign promoted on my feed.

12. Specify how much you agree with each statement below about social-cause campaigns you come across on your feed -



Assessing the Influence of Social Media Platform

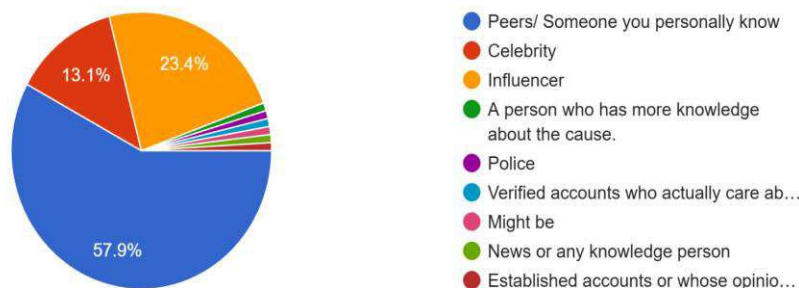
11. 59.8% found posts about social causes they cared about in their feed, while 25.2% stated maybe found such feed and 15% stated they did not find posts about social causes they are about in their feed.

12. 61.7% state that social media campaign in accordance to trends or current sensations attracts their attention, 22.2 % state maybe and 16.7% disagree that trends affect their attention.

13. 49.1% of the respondents feel visual content makes distant issues feel closer, 32.4% feel it may influence and 18.5% feel it doesn't affect them.

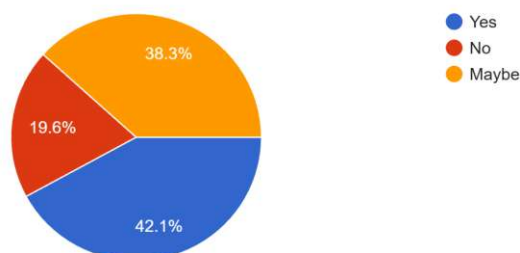
14. 57.9% respondents trusted social cause more when it was posted or promoted by someone they knew personally, 23.4% by influencer, 13.1% by celebrity.

17. You would trust a social cause more if it was posted/promoted on social media by -
107 responses



15. According to the respondents 42.1% changed their viewpoints about a particular cause based on the views shared on the social media platforms, 38.3% were neutral and 19.6% were not affected by it.

18. Have you ever felt that your perception about a particular cause changed based on viewpoints shared on social media platforms?
107 responses



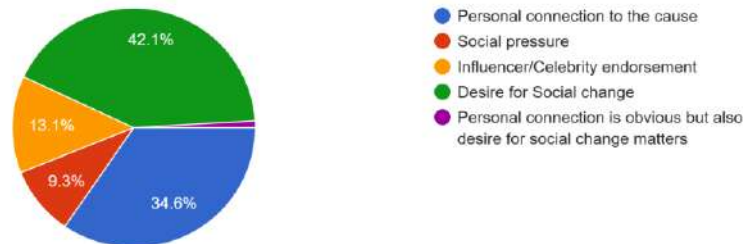
16. 50% of the respondents agreed that exposure to diverse viewpoints on social causes shared on various platforms usually lead to broader awareness of issues. 29.6% stated it lead to higher expectations for global unity and 20.4% believed it lead to confusion and polarization.

Attitude and behaviour of participation in social causes promoted on social media platforms

17. 42.6% stated desire for social change motivated them to participate in social service driven by social platforms or online campaigns, 34.3% were motivated by personal connection to the cause, 13% by influencer or celebrity endorsement, 9.3% by social pressure and 0.9% by personal connection and desire for social change.

20. What motivates/might motivate you to participate in social services driven by online campaigns/social platforms?

107 responses

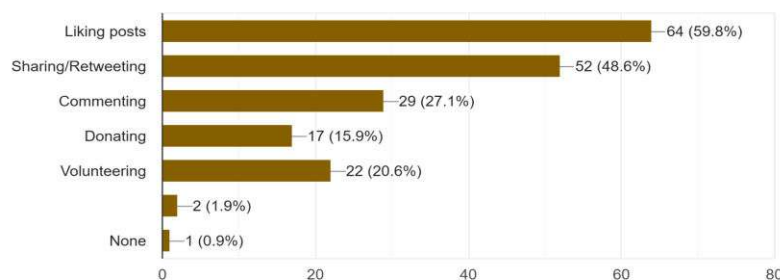


18. 36.1% question the motive behind the post promoting a social cause, 28.7% investigate the platform, 18.5% compare sources, 16.7% like and repost.

19. Respondents when asked about their habits to engage with social media content surrounded around social causes stated 60.2% liked posts, 49.1% shared or retweeted, 27.8% commented on a post, 20.4% volunteered, 15.7% donated, and 2.8% did nothing.

22. How do you usually engage with social media content surrounded around social services?

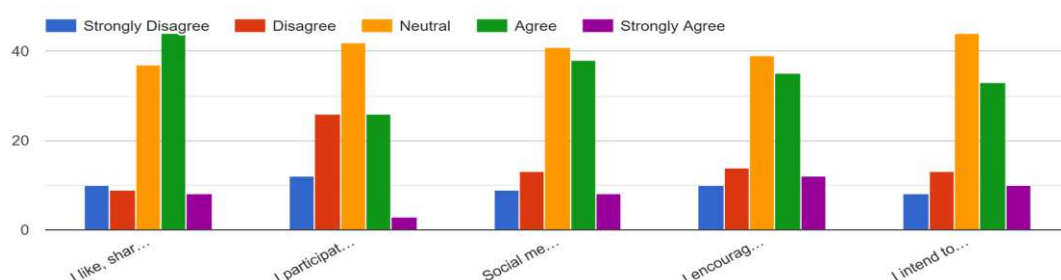
107 responses



20. 49.1% have agreed they have not contributed to a social cause without verifying the authenticity and transparency, because it gave them a sense of awareness and social identity among peers/society, but 29.6% have done contribution without checking and 21.3% might have contributed without verifying.

21. Indicate how much you agree with each statement below about social-cause engagement on social media –

24. Indicate how much you agree with each statement below about social-cause engagement on social media -



22. 54.2% of the respondents described themselves as active participants as their overall behaviour towards participating in a social media campaign on social services, and 45.8% believed themselves to be passive participants.

FINDINGS

- From the above data it's seen that social media activism in Gen Z is not confined to a certain economic group but cuts across income strata.
- Instagram dominated the platform associated with social causes surpassing YouTube, WhatsApp & Twitter. This shows visual centric appeal enhances emotional appeal and makes them feel proximity to the social cause.
- The Gen Z showed they rationally evaluate the credibility of a social cause based on legitimacy of the institution, data & expertise. Which changes the whole outlook that celebrity or influencer automatically increase credibility in social cause.
- In terms of verification behaviour there is a presence of scepticism in their behaviour pattern probably based on misinformation in past but still verification is not universal.
- Gen Z respondents linked authenticity to real actions taken rather than sensational or trending content.
- Transparency is very important for trust formation. And this was enhanced when the source was known rather than a celebrity.
- Social media functions like an awareness tool and moderately affects their opinion.
- In terms of participation behaviour, financial or time commitment for a social cause is limited and symbolic engagement is common. This shows an engagement gap i.e. a pattern for clicktivism rather than action orientation.
- In terms of motivation, intrinsic motivation is more than extrinsic clues. If they find it authentic then the probability of participation increases.
- Participation by Gen Z is not purely altruistic but identity based. They believe social cause engagement shows them to be morally responsible, and increases their social value among peers.
- There is a possible perception- behaviour gap. According to the Gen Z symbolic engagement i.e. like, share and comment is equated to activism. As more than 50% consider themselves as active participants.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that Gen Z are contemporary social media users. They engage with social cause campaigns with a high level of digital literacy, scepticism and cognitive evaluation. The Gen Z's perceive credibility of the social cause on social media through transparency, data and action rather than celebrity endorsement or sensational content.

For Gen Z, social media enhances awareness and broadens perspective, but their behavioural engagement more or less symbolic and low cost. They are intrinsically motivated and value-driven but this is not a strong predictor of engagement.

Overall, social media functions reliably as an awareness indicator rather than a driver for high action oriented commitment. Further research is required to conceptualise engagement intensity as this would help in appealing the Gen Z to move from clicktivism to offline commitment orientation. As the study suggests, continuous symbolic engagement amplifies awareness but does not translate into behavioural commitment.

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SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES USING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE WITH REFERENCE TO KHADAVALI VILLAGE IN KALYAN TALUKA

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ABSTRACT

Integrating local and traditional knowledge, which provides tried-and-true methods for resource management, environmental stewardship, and community well being and is in line with international objectives such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, greatly improves sustainable development in society. This strategy acknowledges that communities with strong relationships to their surroundings have amassed priceless, site specific knowledge that is essential for resolving regional issues and accomplishing more general sustainability goals. For thousands of years, Indigenous communities have changed their ways, methods, and understanding of their local environment in response to changes around them. This traditional knowledge is a valuable tool for creating sustainable development plans. Often, traditional knowledge is deeply connected to a community's culture and spiritual beliefs.

Traditional knowledge and indigenous (or local) knowledge is the wisdom, traditions, and ways of living that have been passed down through generations in communities. This knowledge is shared through stories, myths, legends, rituals, songs, art, and even laws. This knowledge is also part of the economy, as it is used in farming, animal raising, tree growing, fishing, water management, and making things from natural materials like crafts, furniture, and homes. A large part of the world's population depends on these activities for their daily living. So, traditional knowledge plays a big role in supporting the lives of billions of people around the world.

INTRODUCTION

Unlike the earlier concept, the term "sustainable development" (SD) was first mentioned in a report by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1983. The report said that sustainable development means meeting the needs of today without taking away the chance for future generations to meet their own needs. It also aims to solve poverty, create fair living conditions for everyone, and make sure all people have their basic needs met, while protecting the environment so that it is not damaged in a way that can't be fixed. Traditional Knowledge is important not just for people who rely on it, but also for modern industries and farming. Many goods, like medicines made from plants, health products, and beauty items, come from traditional knowledge. Other examples include things from farming and forests that aren't wood, as well as handmade crafts. Because of this, traditional knowledge plays a big role in helping the economy grow in a way that can last for the future. For thousands of years, Indigenous communities have used and taken care of the natural world in ways that don't harm it.

Also, most of the world's plant genes are found where these communities live. Some old methods have even been shown to help increase the variety of plants and animals in an area, and keep the environment healthy.

- Traditional knowledge helps people make decisions about everyday life in many ways, like:

- * Hunting, fishing, and collecting food;
- * Growing crops and raising animals;
- * Preparing, keeping safe, and sharing food;
- * Finding, collecting, and storing water;
- * Dealing with illnesses and injuries;
- * Understanding weather and climate changes;
- * Making clothes and tools;
- * Building and fixing homes;
- * Finding directions on land and sea;
- * Managing how society and nature interact;
- * Adjusting to changes in the Environment and society.

Traditional knowledge can help a lot in making development sustainable. Most indigenous and local communities live in places where most of the world's genetic resources are located. Many of these groups have grown and used biodiversity in a sustainable way for thousands of years.

LITERATURE REVIEWS:

Traditional and local knowledge plays an important role in how people interact with their environment in local areas. Indigenous communities have relied on nature for their survival for many years, which has helped them build a deep connection with their surroundings. They have learned a lot about their environment through observing and experiencing it over time. These local communities have gained a strong understanding of their area, which has helped them support their way of life across generations, including activities like growing crops, raising animals, and keeping bees.

Ryo Kohsaka & Marie Rogel (2021)

Humanity's complicated relationship with the Earth has made people wonder how to change the way we act. How can we live in a way that is better for the planet and more caring towards other living things? How can we change our economic actions to lessen and stop harming the environment? Do we have the right knowledge and understanding to make these changes happen? More and more, people are realizing that finding answers to these questions will require input from many different places.

While in the past, it was believed that modern science and technology would provide the solutions, it's now clear that traditional knowledge also has very important ideas and practices to share. Some even say that traditional knowledge may be even more valuable than modern science, if we consider the long history of responsible use that traditional communities have shown. This paper looks at the idea that traditional knowledge is very important for achieving sustainable living on Earth. It starts by looking at what "traditional knowledge" and "sustainable development" mean. Then, it shows how these two are connected and how traditional knowledge helps in different areas of human life and progress. It also briefly talks about the loss of traditional knowledge and ways to keep it alive, especially as it's important to protect those who hold it. This paper does not go into detail about protecting traditional knowledge from current intellectual property laws, since this topic has been widely discussed in academic and public conversations around the world.

Ashish Kothari (2007)

Rapid urbanization has caused significant damage to the soil, which in turn poses a serious threat to the ecological benefits that urban soils and vegetation provide. It also harms the urban microenvironment, making it harder to deal with issues like climate resilience, pollution, soil degradation, and the loss of biodiversity. In our study, we looked back at a century of history to understand the origins, classification, and characteristics of urban anthropogenic soils (UAS). We also focused on the little-known and underexplored potential of crevice soils, plants, and non-living environmental conditions found in the cracks of concrete materials along urban roadways. These often-overlooked crevice soils share several key features with UAS, including their shallow depth, varied composition, and existence in tough environmental conditions. Our research on urban crevices took place in the Nashville metropolitan area of Tennessee, USA. We collected soil samples from crevices that had plants and those that didn't, from nearby roadways, and from a switchgrass cropland located in an urban farm. We identified 34 different plant species growing in these crevices, but only 12 of those species are native to the area, showing that non-native species are dominant in these crevice soils. Regardless of whether there were plants present, the crevice soils had much higher temperatures, pH levels, and electrical conductivity, and much lower moisture content compared to the soils found on roadways and in the switchgrass cropland. This unique micro environment helps protect valuable soil resources, supports urban biodiversity, and encourages new ideas for future sustainable urban planning. Our ongoing work is also looking into heavy metals, organic and inorganic pollutants, and the composition, activity, and function of microbes in crevice soils, as well as in similar soils found in the broader urban environment.

Matthew & Jianwei Li (2025)**MATERIAL AND METHODS:**

This study is based on a Primary and secondary data research approach to explore the integration of traditional knowledge in sustainable development practices. The research study has used qualitative and quantitatively data from Interviews of local communities and academic journals, books, government publications, and international organization resources.

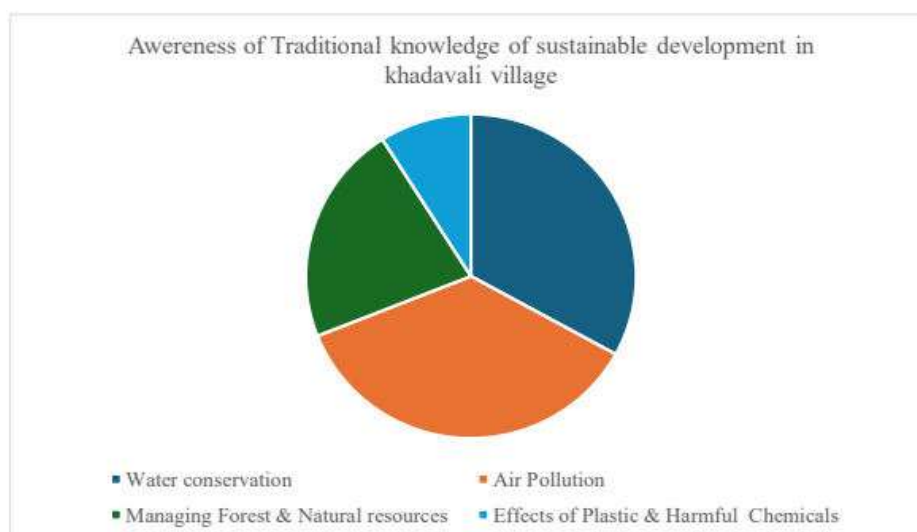
FINDINGS:

Khadavali is a small village that is found in the Kalyan tehsil, which is part of the Thane district in the state of Maharashtra, India. This village is located at a distance of 27 kilometers from the sub-district headquarter, which is Kalyan, where the tehsildar office is situated. Furthermore, it is approximately 60 kilometers away from the main district headquarter, which is Thane. According to the data from the year 2009, the gram panchayat, which is the local governing body, for Khadavali village is named Behere. According to the data from the 2011 Census, the overall literacy rate in Khadavali is 72.95%. This means that out of every 100 people in the area, approximately 73 are literate. When we look at the literacy rates separately for men and women, we find that the male literacy rate is higher, standing at 78.63%, while the female literacy rate is lower, at 65.34%. This shows there is a noticeable difference in literacy levels between men and women in Khadavali.

Khadavali provides a lifestyle that is serene and closely connected to nature, making it an ideal place for those who love a peaceful environment. Despite its tranquil setting, the area is well-connected to nearby urban areas such as Kalyan, offering easy access to city amenities and services. The surroundings are rich in greenery, giving residents a pleasant and refreshing atmosphere to live in. There is a strong sense of community among the people, which adds to the charm of the place. Additionally, the location is conveniently close to various facilities such as religious places, parks, and some popular tourist spots, making it a great choice for both locals and visitors. The area is also undergoing development with the addition of resorts and farmhouse-style accommodations, which are drawing more tourists and enhancing its appeal as a perfect getaway from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Traditional knowledge, which has been passed down through generations, plays a very important role in helping to achieve sustainable development. This kind of knowledge includes methods that have been tested over thousands of years for managing local ecosystems, conserving natural resources, and protecting biodiversity. These practices are especially useful in tackling major global issues such as climate change and desertification. Traditional knowledge contributes to sustainable development in several ways, such as through the management of forest resources and the use of agroforestry techniques. It also includes methods for conserving water and agriculture that supports a wide variety of plant and animal life. Additionally, it encompasses indigenous medicinal practices and building methods that are tailored to the specific needs and environmental conditions of local communities. It is essential to combine traditional knowledge with scientific research to create well-rounded and effective strategies and policies that support sustainable development.

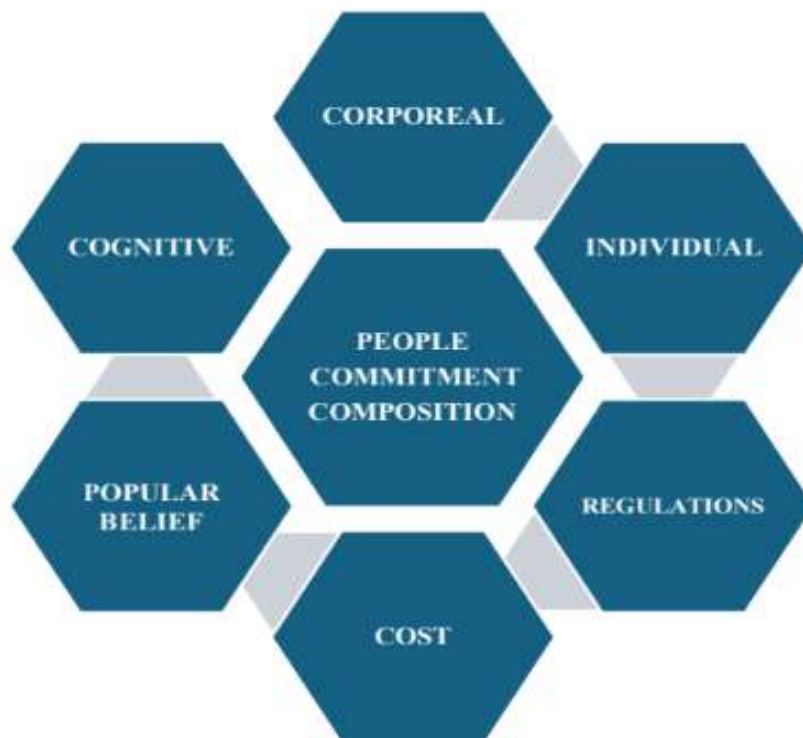
One of the best ways to move forward is by combining old knowledge with new science and technology. Using the real-life experience from traditional practices along with the tools and methods of modern research helps create better and longer-lasting solutions for problems everywhere. For example, using GIS and remote sensing tools can help us map and follow traditional farming and water systems, making it easier to develop solutions that work in other places as well. Also, modern science can help discover and study the useful parts of plants used in traditional medicine, which can lead to new and effective medicines based on this ancient knowledge.



The process of globalization, along with the rapid pace of modernization, and the increasing influence of traditional development methods are creating challenges for keeping and sharing important traditional and indigenous knowledge. These factors can lead to the loss or marginalization of the rich cultural and practical knowledge that has been passed down through generations in many communities.

In order to create a truly sustainable future, it is essential to bring together the wisdom and experience of local communities with the tools and insights of modern science. This combination can help address complex problems more effectively and fairly, ensuring that development efforts are both scientifically sound and culturally respectful. It is vital to involve indigenous communities in the decisions that affect their lands, resources, and ways of life. When their knowledge is used in projects aimed at sustainability, their intellectual property rights must be respected and protected. This includes acknowledging their contributions, ensuring they benefit from the use of their knowledge, and preventing the exploitation of their traditions without proper consent or compensation.

By valuing, restoring, and including community-based knowledge into larger development strategies, we can build a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to sustainability. This not only supports the well-being and empowerment of local people but also contributes to the overall health and balance of our global society.



The challenges of incorporating traditional knowledge into modern sustainable development practices are quite complex and often overlooked. Although traditional knowledge holds significant potential to contribute to sustainable development, merging it with contemporary policies and development strategies faces several hurdles. Here are some of the main obstacles that hinder the inclusion of traditional knowledge in mainstream development efforts:

One major challenge is the gradual disappearance of traditional knowledge itself. The rapid growth of cities, the spread of global influences, and the weakening of traditional communities have led to a decline in the transmission of these time-honored practices. Many younger people today show little interest in learning from the wisdom of their ancestors, which results in the gradual loss of valuable knowledge that has been passed down through generations.

Another difficulty is the lack of recognition and validation of traditional knowledge by mainstream scientific and policy-making circles.

These groups often prioritize data-based, Western-style approaches to sustainability, which can lead to the marginalization of traditional practices. Without acknowledgment of their value, it becomes hard to include these practices in official national or international development plans and strategies.

Additionally, there are significant concerns related to intellectual property rights. As traditional knowledge gains more attention for its practical and environmental benefits, there are growing worries about the misuse and commercialization of indigenous practices. Often, these practices are used for profit without the consent or fair compensation of the communities that have preserved and developed them over time. This raises serious ethical and legal issues, especially when it comes to protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. How do we keep Indigenous traditions alive?

To protect Indigenous or local knowledge, we need to understand how it connects to our environmental rules and organizations.

In Western countries, environmental rules are mainly based on their own ways of thinking. This makes it hard to include Indigenous environmental practices.

But things are starting to change.

As more people respect Indigenous communities, there have been big changes in international, national, and local laws. These changes are making it easier for Indigenous peoples to work together with non-Indigenous groups. Now, Indigenous people can partner with others in ways that honor their ways of caring for the land and their understanding of the world.

Conclusion: – What is 'Thrivability'?

Local communities have gained deep knowledge of their surroundings by closely watching the changes in their environment. Because of this, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have included traditional knowledge in their efforts to adapt to climate change in a sustainable way. Now, this knowledge also plays a role in protecting the variety of life on Earth.

It's important for us to recognize the value of indigenous knowledge and the ways people manage natural resources. Even though these approaches are different from modern views of society and nature, they offer valuable insights. The THRIVE Project is a non-profit organization that focuses on making a positive impact. We believe that a state of 'thrivability'—where people go beyond just surviving—is something that can be achieved and should be part of every society. These ideas guide the tools and technologies used in the Thrive Framework, helping to show the path forward.

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PRAKṚTI RAKṢAṆA (PROTECTION OF NATURE) IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE AND ITS APPLICATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL GEOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The growing environmental crisis of the contemporary world has intensified the search for sustainable and ethically grounded solutions to protect nature. While modern environmental science and geography offer technical and analytical approaches, ancient knowledge systems provide moral and philosophical foundations for environmental harmony. Sanskrit literature presents a holistic ecological worldview through the concept of Prakṛti Rakṣaṇa, which emphasizes respect, restraint, and responsibility toward nature. This study explores key ecological ideas embedded in Sanskrit texts such as the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gītā and examines their relevance to environmental geography. Using both primary and secondary data, the paper highlights how traditional environmental ethics support sustainable human–environment relationships. The study demonstrates that integrating Sanskrit ecological wisdom with geographic perspectives can strengthen collective environmental action and contribute to sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation has emerged as one of the most serious challenges facing humanity in the twenty-first century. Issues such as climate change, deforestation, water scarcity, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss are closely linked to human activities and unsustainable patterns of development. Environmental geography seeks to understand these problems by analyzing the spatial interaction between human societies and natural systems. However, scientific understanding alone is insufficient unless supported by ethical values that guide human behavior toward nature.

Ancient Indian thought, preserved primarily through Sanskrit literature, offers a deeply rooted ecological consciousness that views nature as sacred, interconnected, and life-sustaining. The concept of *Prakṛti Rakṣaṇa*—the protection of nature—emerges naturally from this worldview. In Sanskrit texts, nature is not regarded as a commodity to be exploited, but as a living entity deserving reverence. The Earth (*Bhūmi*), water (*Jala*), air (*Vāyu*), fire (*Agni*), forests (*Vana*), rivers (*Nadī*), and animals are often personified and worshipped, reinforcing a sense of moral responsibility toward the environment.

The *Atharva Veda* presents one of the earliest expressions of environmental ethics. The verse:

माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथिव्याः।

(*Atharva Veda* 12.1.12)

Meaning: The Earth is my mother, and I am her son.

This shloka establishes a familial relationship between humans and nature, implying care, respect, and responsibility rather than domination. From an environmental geography perspective, this

reflects the principle of environmental stewardship, where land and natural resources are protected for long-term sustainability.

Another significant *Atharva Vedic* verse states:

यत् ते भूमे विखनानि क्षिप्रं तदपि रोहतु।

(*Atharva Veda* 12.1.15)

Meaning: Whatever I take from the Earth, may it quickly grow again.

This verse conveys the idea of regeneration and restraint in resource use. It reflects an early understanding of sustainability, closely related to modern geographic concerns such as soil conservation, sustainable land use, and controlled resource extraction.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* further strengthens ecological understanding by explaining the interdependence between nature and human action. The verse:

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः।

(*Bhagavad Gītā* 3.14)

Meaning: Living beings depend on food, food depends on rain, and rain depends on collective action.

This shloka highlights the cyclical relationship between natural processes and human survival. In environmental geography, this idea corresponds to ecosystem interdependence and the role of climate in agricultural systems. It emphasizes that disruption in natural balance directly affects human life.

Environmental geography, which focuses on human–environment interaction, sustainability, and resource management, finds strong conceptual support in these ancient teachings. Traditional practices such as sacred groves, community-managed water systems, and seasonal agricultural cycles reflect applied ecological wisdom derived from cultural values. Revisiting Sanskrit ecological thought through the lens of environmental geography helps bridge traditional knowledge and modern scientific approaches, encouraging collective service and ethical environmental stewardship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly discussions on environmental protection increasingly acknowledge the importance of integrating traditional knowledge systems with modern scientific approaches. Sanskrit literature has attracted considerable academic attention for its holistic understanding of nature and ethical frameworks that promote environmental harmony. Researchers have emphasized that ancient Indian texts do not treat nature as a passive resource but as an active, sacred presence interconnected with human life.

Studies on Vedic literature highlight that the Vedas, particularly the *Atharva Veda*, contain some of the earliest expressions of environmental consciousness. Scholars such as Radhakrishnan (1951) and Dwivedi (1990) note that the depiction of Earth as *Bhūmi Mātā* establishes a moral obligation toward environmental protection. The repeated emphasis on restraint, balance, and regeneration in Vedic hymns reflects an early understanding of sustainability. These works argue that such ethical principles functioned as informal environmental regulations within traditional societies.

Research focusing on the *Bhagavad Gītā* interprets its teachings as a philosophical foundation for sustainable living. Authors like Gadgil and Guha (1995) explain that the concept of *Lokasaṅgraha* promotes collective welfare and social responsibility, which can be extended to environmental conservation. The *Gītā*'s explanation of natural cycles linking rainfall, food production, and human survival has been interpreted as an early ecological model emphasizing interdependence between humans and nature. This aligns closely with ecosystem-based approaches used in environmental geography.

Environmental geography literature, on the other hand, concentrates on spatial patterns of resource use, environmental degradation, and sustainable development. Scholars such as Singh (2012) and Berkes (2012) argue that environmental problems cannot be solved solely through technological interventions; cultural values and ethical frameworks play a crucial role in shaping human–environment interactions. Studies on indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge demonstrate that community-based conservation practices often succeed because they are rooted in cultural beliefs and collective responsibility.

Several interdisciplinary studies have attempted to bridge the gap between traditional ecological wisdom and modern environmental science. Shiva (2002) emphasizes that indigenous knowledge systems offer alternative models of sustainability that challenge exploitative development paradigms. These studies support the view that integrating Sanskrit ecological values with environmental geography can enrich sustainability discourse by adding moral depth and social participation.

However, despite the growing body of literature, there remains a noticeable gap in studies that systematically link Sanskrit ecological concepts with environmental geography as an academic discipline. Much of the existing research treats Sanskrit literature from a philosophical or religious perspective, while environmental geography studies often overlook cultural and ethical dimensions. This gap highlights the need for interdisciplinary research that combines textual analysis with geographic understanding to address contemporary environmental challenges through both scientific and ethical lenses.

Research Gap Identified

- Limited interdisciplinary studies connecting **Sanskrit ecological thought** with **environmental geography**
- Insufficient use of **traditional environmental ethics** in geographic sustainability models
- Need for more **community-based, value-oriented environmental studies**.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the concept of *Prakṛti Rakṣaṇa* as reflected in selected Sanskrit literature.
2. To analyze the relevance of Sanskrit ecological values to environmental geography.
3. To assess how traditional environmental ethics support sustainable and collective environmental practices.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. Both primary and secondary data sources are used to support the analysis.

Primary Data: Primary data includes observations from community-based environmental practices such as tree plantation drives, protection of sacred groves, and water conservation activities carried out by students and local communities. Informal interactions with participants involved in environmental service activities were also considered to understand collective attitudes toward nature.

Secondary Data: Secondary data was collected from Sanskrit texts (Vedas and Bhagavad Gītā), published books, research articles, journals on environmental geography, and reports related to sustainability and indigenous knowledge systems. A thematic analysis method was used to interpret the data, linking philosophical concepts from Sanskrit literature with contemporary environmental geography frameworks.

Data and Interpretation

The primary data from community environmental activities indicates that collective participation enhances environmental awareness and fosters a sense of responsibility toward natural resources. Practices such as tree plantation and water conservation are more effective when guided by ethical values rather than regulatory enforcement alone. Secondary data from Sanskrit literature reveals a consistent emphasis on harmony with nature. The Atharva Veda portrays the Earth as nurturing and life-giving, reinforcing stewardship values. The idea that resources should be used without harming nature’s vital elements aligns with modern principles of sustainable resource management. From an environmental geography perspective, this supports concepts such as land-use planning, soil conservation, and ecosystem sustainability. The Bhagavad Gītā highlights the cyclical relationship between rainfall, food production, and life, demonstrating an understanding of natural interdependence. The concept of Lokasaṅgraha further emphasizes collective welfare, supporting participatory approaches in environmental management. Together, these insights confirm that ancient ecological wisdom complements modern geographic approaches to sustainability.

Table 1: Application of Prakṛti Rakṣaṇa in Community Environmental Practices

Environmental Activity	Study Context	Nature of Participation	Environmental Outcome	Geographic Interpretation
Tree Plantation Drives	College campus and nearby residential areas	Students and faculty members	Increase in local green cover and environmental awareness	Supports urban environmental sustainability and micro-climate regulation
Protection of Sacred Trees	Temple and religious sites	Local community participation	Long-term conservation of trees	Demonstrates cultural geography influencing conservation practices
Water Conservation Awareness	Semi-urban localities	Students and residents	Reduced water wastage and increased awareness	Aligns with sustainable water resource management
Plastic Waste Collection	Public and institutional spaces	Student volunteers	Improved environmental cleanliness	Enhances environmental quality and human health

Interpretation of Table 1

The primary data reveals that environmental protection activities become more effective when rooted in collective participation and ethical motivation. Practices such as tree protection and water conservation reflect the practical application of Prakṛti Rakṣaṇa at the local level. From an environmental geography perspective, these activities contribute to sustainable land use, improved environmental quality, and responsible resource management.

Table 2: Ecological Concepts in Sanskrit Literature and Their Relevance to Environmental Geography (Secondary Data)

Sanskrit Source	Ecological Concept	Core Meaning	Application in Environmental Geography
Atharva Veda	Earth as Mother (<i>Bhūmi Mātā</i>)	Moral bond between humans and Earth	Land ethics and environmental stewardship

Sanskrit Source	Ecological Concept	Core Meaning	Application in Environmental Geography
Atharva Veda	Regeneration of Nature	Responsible use of natural resources	Soil conservation and sustainable land use
Bhagavad Gītā (3.14)	Natural Cycles	Interdependence of rain, food, and life	Ecosystem analysis and agricultural geography
Bhagavad Gītā (3.20)	<i>Lokasaṅgraha</i>	Collective welfare and responsibility	Community-based environmental management

Interpretation of Table 2

The secondary data confirms that Sanskrit literature contains structured ecological ideas closely aligned with modern environmental concepts. The ethical treatment of Earth, emphasis on regeneration, and understanding of natural cycles parallel contemporary geographic approaches to sustainability. These ideas strengthen participatory models of environmental governance.

Table 3: Integration of Sanskrit Ecological Values with Contemporary Environmental Challenges

Environmental Issue	Sanskrit Ecological Principle	Geographic Strategy
Deforestation	Reverence for forests (<i>Vana</i>)	Afforestation and protected forest zones
Soil Degradation	Earth as nurturing mother	Soil conservation and sustainable agriculture
Climate Change	Balance with nature (<i>Rta</i>)	Sustainable development and climate adaptation
Water Scarcity	Sacredness of water (<i>Jala</i>)	Rainwater harvesting and watershed management

Interpretation of Table 3

This table highlights that ancient ecological principles are not merely philosophical but offer practical solutions to modern environmental challenges. Environmental geography provides the scientific framework to implement these values spatially and systematically. The integration of Sanskrit ecological ethics with geographic planning enhances collective environmental responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that *Prakṛti Rakṣaṇa* represents a comprehensive environmental ethic deeply embedded in Sanskrit literature. These ancient texts promote values of respect, restraint, and collective responsibility toward nature—principles that are highly relevant in addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Environmental geography, when integrated with such traditional wisdom, gains a holistic perspective that combines scientific analysis with ethical guidance. Collective service inspired by these values has the potential to transform human attitudes and promote sustainable human–environment relationships.

SUGGESTIONS

- Indigenous ecological knowledge from Sanskrit literature should be integrated into environmental education curricula.
- Community-based conservation programs should incorporate ethical and cultural values to strengthen participation.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration between humanities and geography departments should be encouraged for sustainable development initiatives.

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A STUDY ON TRADITIONS OF SERVITUDE IN INDIAN SOCIETY: HISTORICAL CONTINUITY AND RELEVANCE IN MODERN VOLUNTEERISM IN THANE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Indian society has historically been grounded in rich traditions of servitude and selfless service, deeply rooted in cultural, spiritual, and philosophical values such as Seva, Dharma, and collective responsibility. These traditions have played a significant role in shaping social harmony, moral conduct, and community welfare across different historical periods. In the contemporary context, volunteerism has emerged as an organized and institutionalized form of social service through platforms such as the National Service Scheme (NSS), non-governmental organizations, and community-based initiatives. This study aims to examine the historical continuity of traditions of servitude in Indian society and analyze their relevance and influence on modern volunteerism.

The research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach, using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to students and volunteers, including NSS participants and non-participants. The study explores respondents' awareness of traditional service values, perceptions of servitude, and the extent to which these cultural traditions continue to inform present-day volunteering practices. Secondary data from books, journals, and scholarly articles has been used to support the conceptual framework of the study.

The findings indicate that traditional values of servitude remain relevant in modern volunteerism, particularly in motivating ethical behavior, social responsibility, and sustained community engagement. However, challenges such as changing lifestyles, individualism, and limited awareness affect the transmission of these values to younger generations. The study highlights the need to integrate traditional service ethics with modern institutional frameworks to enhance the effectiveness of volunteer movements. This research contributes to the understanding of volunteerism as a continuation of India's cultural heritage, emphasizing its importance for inclusive and sustainable social development.

Keywords: Traditions of Servitude, Seva, Volunteerism, Indian Society, Social Service

INTRODUCTION

Indian society has a long and rich tradition of servitude and selfless service, deeply embedded in its cultural, spiritual, and philosophical foundations. Concepts such as *Seva* (selfless service), *Dharma* (duty), and collective responsibility have historically guided social conduct and community life. These values emphasized service to others as a moral obligation and a path to social harmony rather than a means for personal gain. From ancient times, institutions such as families, temples, ashrams, and community organizations played a significant role in promoting traditions of servitude and collective welfare.

Over time, these traditional forms of service have evolved into more organized and institutionalized practices of volunteerism in modern society. In contemporary India, volunteerism is expressed through structured initiatives such as the National Service Scheme (NSS), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and various community-based movements. While the forms and methods of service have changed, the underlying ethical values rooted in tradition continue to influence motivations for social service and civic engagement.

However, rapid socio-economic changes, urbanization, individualism, and changing lifestyles have posed challenges to the continuity of traditional service values. Younger generations may engage in volunteerism for diverse reasons, including personal development and professional exposure, sometimes detached from the cultural and ethical foundations of servitude. This shift raises important questions about the relevance and continuity of traditional service values in modern volunteer practices.

In this context, the present study seeks to examine the traditions of servitude in Indian society, explore their historical continuity, and analyze their relevance in shaping modern volunteerism. By understanding the connection between traditional service values and contemporary volunteering, the study aims to highlight the importance of integrating cultural ethics with modern social service frameworks for sustainable and inclusive social development.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Indian society has historically emphasized traditions of servitude and selfless service rooted in cultural and philosophical values such as *Seva* and *Dharma*. However, in the modern context, volunteerism has become more organized and institutionalized through platforms like the National Service Scheme (NSS) and non-governmental organizations. Despite this continuity, there is limited empirical understanding of how traditional service values influence present-day volunteerism, particularly among youth. Rapid social changes, individualistic attitudes, and changing motivations for volunteering have raised concerns about the weakening connection between traditional servitude and modern social service practices. This study seeks to examine the historical continuity of servitude traditions and assess their relevance and influence on contemporary volunteerism in Indian society.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. The study focuses on understanding traditional concepts of servitude and their influence on modern volunteerism in Indian society.
2. It covers responses from students and volunteers, including NSS participants and non-participants, to analyze perceptions and practices of social service.
3. The scope is limited to academic analysis and does not attempt to evaluate the performance of any specific organization or institution.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the historical background and cultural foundations of servitude in Indian society.
2. To examine the continuity of traditional service values in modern forms of volunteerism.
3. To analyze the relevance of servitude traditions in shaping attitudes towards social service among youth.
4. To identify challenges in preserving and promoting traditional service values contemporary society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample size of 100 respondents residing in Thane Region spread across various age groups are selected through the technique of Snowball and Convenient sampling for the study and the use of simple statistical tools, like factor analysis and descriptive statistics are used for a lucid understanding of the research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ray R. and Qayum S. (2009) in their book titled *Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity and Class in India*, explained how servitude in Indian society is deeply embedded in historical, cultural, and social structures. The authors discussed how traditions of service were shaped by caste, class, and household systems and how these practices created long-term social relationships based on duty and obligation. The study highlights that servitude in India cannot be understood only as labor but as a cultural value that has continued across generations and influenced social behavior even in modern times.

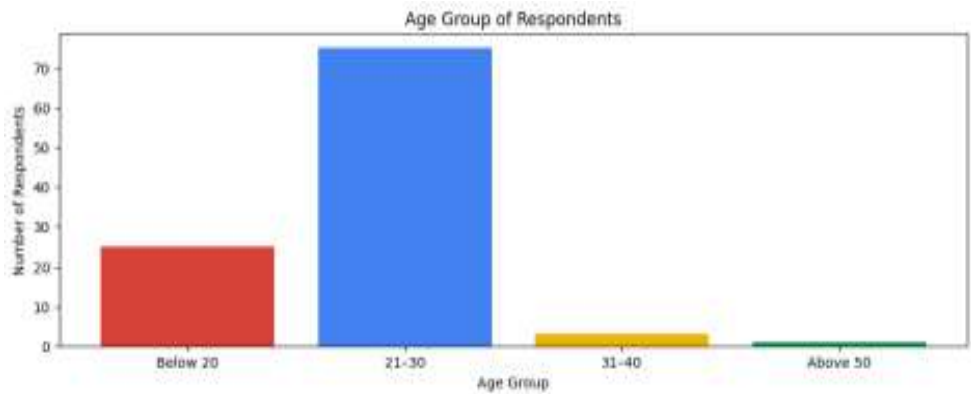
Hustinx L. and Handy F. (2022) in their research published in *Voluntary Sector Review* examined the changing nature of volunteerism in contemporary societies. The study emphasized that modern volunteerism, although organized and institutionalized, still draws motivation from moral values, social responsibility, and cultural traditions. The authors pointed out that in countries like India, volunteering is strongly connected with traditional ideas of duty and service, showing continuity between historical servitude and present-day volunteer practices.

Anheier H. K. and Salamon L. M. (2018) in their book chapter published by Springer titled *The Concept of Volunteerism: Cultural and Social Perspectives*, discussed volunteerism as a socially constructed practice influenced by cultural norms and historical contexts. The study explained that traditional service values play an important role in shaping volunteer behavior and civic engagement. The authors highlighted that volunteerism acts as a bridge between past traditions of servitude and modern social service institutions such as NGOs and government-supported programs.

The book accessed through Google Books (ISBN: 978-93-91199-52-4) discussed the role of voluntary service in Indian society and emphasized how concepts such as *Seva* and social duty have evolved into organized volunteer movements. The author explained that despite modernization and urbanization, traditional values of servitude continue to influence youth participation in programs like the National Service Scheme (NSS). However, the study also noted challenges such as declining awareness and changing motivations among younger generations.

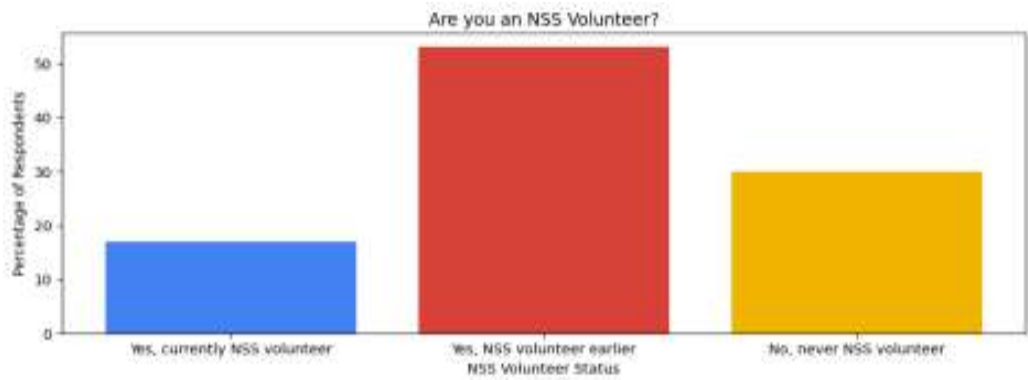
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

1. Age Group



The chart shows that most respondents (around 65–70%) belong to the 21–30 age group, followed by 20–25% below 20 years. Very few respondents are from the 31–40 age group, and almost none are above 50 years, indicating that the study mainly represents the views of young participants.

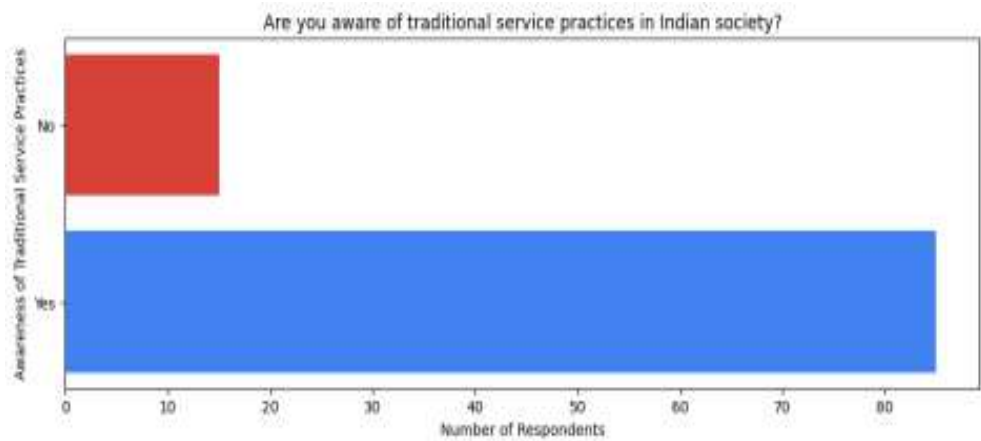
2. Are you an NSS volunteer?



The graph shows that **70% of respondents have been associated with NSS**, out of which **17% are currently NSS volunteers** and **53% were NSS volunteers in the past**.

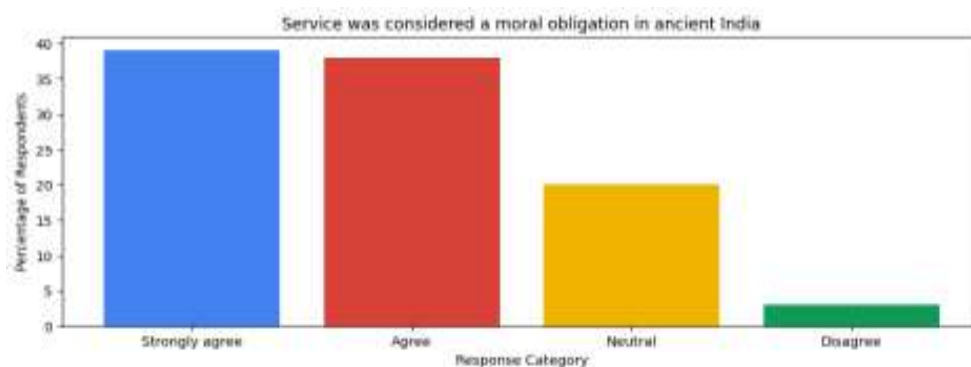
The remaining **30% of respondents have never been NSS volunteers**. This indicates that a large proportion of respondents have direct experience with organized social service activities, making the data relevant for understanding the role of NSS in promoting traditions of servitude and modern volunteerism.

3. Are you aware of traditional service practices in Indian society?



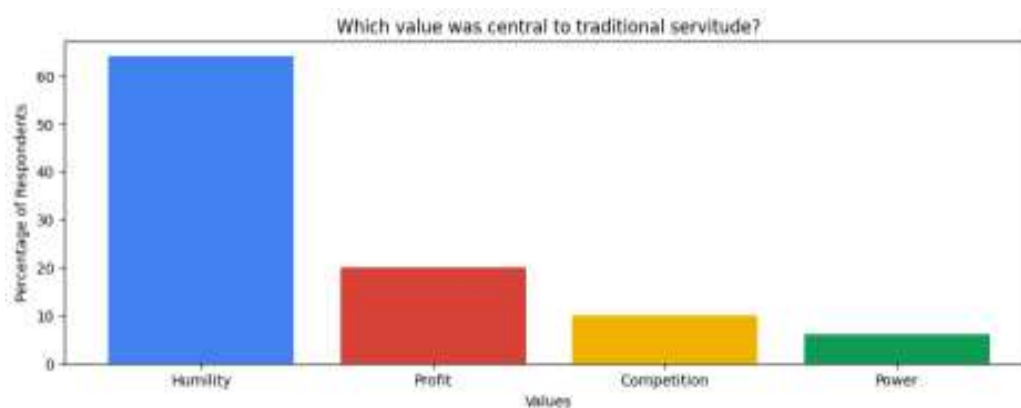
The chart indicates that around 85–90% of respondents are aware of traditional service practices in Indian society, while only about 10–15% reported a lack of awareness. This clearly shows that a strong majority of respondents recognize traditional values of service and servitude, suggesting that these practices continue to remain relevant and well understood in contemporary society.

4. Service was considered a moral obligation in ancient India.



The chart shows that a strong majority of respondents believe that service was a moral obligation in ancient India. About 39% strongly agree and 38% agree, together making 77% positive responses. Around 20% remain neutral, while only about 3% disagree, indicating broad acceptance of the idea that service was considered a moral duty in ancient Indian society.

5. Which value was central to traditional servitude?



The chart shows that a clear majority of respondents (64%) believe that humility was the central value of traditional servitude. This is followed by profit (20%) and competition (10%), while only 6% associated servitude with power. The findings indicate that traditional servitude in Indian society was largely perceived as a value-based practice rooted in humility rather than material gain or authority.

6. In your opinion, how can traditional Indian values of *seva* (service) be better connected with modern volunteer programs?

1. Indian traditional values can be connected with modern volunteer programs by organising various seminars on dharma, unity etc. Programs like helping the elders and giving respect to them. Organizing visits to an old age home, increasing awareness about ancient history of our country by visiting museums may help to increase the awareness of traditional Indian values in the volunteers.
2. The feeling within.... People do the volunteer service to show that they are doing not for Actual social value. the historic volunteering was just inbuilt into their sense of civic sense and responsibility. So yeah the feeling within that's what actually form everything they do in their life it reflects. Coz karma is For Real.
3. By providing selfless seva for the welfare of others.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is based on primary data collected through a questionnaire; therefore, the findings depend on the accuracy and honesty of the respondents' answers.
2. The sample size is limited and mainly consists of students and volunteers, which may restrict the generalization of the results to the entire population.
3. The study focuses on selected aspects of servitude and volunteerism and does not cover all forms of social service practices in Indian society.

4. Time constraints limited the depth of data collection and analysis.
5. The interpretation of traditional concepts such as *Seva* and servitude may vary among respondents due to differences in personal beliefs and cultural understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that traditions of servitude have been deeply rooted in Indian society and continue to influence modern volunteerism. The findings show that most respondents are aware of traditional service practices and strongly believe that service was considered a moral obligation in ancient India. Values such as humility, selfless service, and social responsibility remain central to volunteer activities, especially among youth and NSS volunteers. Although modernization and changing lifestyles pose challenges, traditional service values still hold relevance in shaping ethical and community-oriented volunteerism. Integrating these cultural values with modern volunteer frameworks can strengthen social responsibility and contribute to sustainable social development.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Traditional values of servitude such as *Seva*, humility, and social responsibility should be actively included in educational curricula to ensure that younger generations understand their cultural importance and social relevance.
2. Institutions like the National Service Scheme (NSS) and non-governmental organizations should strengthen their programs by linking modern volunteer activities with traditional service ethics to encourage deeper commitment among volunteers.
3. Awareness programs, workshops, and community initiatives should be conducted to revive interest in traditional service practices and highlight their relevance in addressing present-day social challenges.
4. Educational institutions should promote voluntary participation in social service beyond mandatory requirements, encouraging students to view service as a moral responsibility rather than an obligation.

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DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP: A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Dr. Sangita S. Mohanty¹ and Dr. Mrunmayee Thatte²¹Department of BAMMC²BBI/BFM, Joshi-Bedekar College Thane**ABSTRACT**

It is possible, no doubt, to observe that the digital era that was actualized in the information society of the 21st century differs genetically in many areas ranging from economy to politics and from science to philosophy. Today, governance, citizenship, and democracy carry out a new transformation towards becoming electrolyzed or digitalized in their concepts and practice. It can be stated that information and mass communication tools transformed democracy into e-democracy, citizenship into e-citizenship, and governance into e-governance when leaving issues that require multifaceted solutions such as speed, security, digital division, technology literacy, and threats from large data.

Digital participation and digital governance of the digital society forces to abandon the concept of modern democracy in which the power is entrusted to the rulers by elections and the rulers are called to account in elections. This enforcement is a similar pressure experienced during the transition from constitutional democracies that restrict the powers of the government in favor of the people to parliamentary government, from there to pluralist democracy. Digital citizenship means radical differentiation in general in the individual-state relationship and in the inner functioning of the citizenship concept in private. The old implicit sediments of the absolutist, authoritative, and one-sided dominance concepts that continue their existence in modern democracies through the individual-state relationship began to melt with the digital activism of the digital citizens.

The present paper will synthesize the concept of digital citizenship, which is a product of virtual reality culture derived from real, mechanical, and cybernetic ontologies, but originally differentiated from them.

It will explore how digital citizenship introduces a radical shift in the individual-state dynamic, dissolving the remnants of centralized, top-down authority. By leveraging virtual reality cultures and cybernetic ontologies, digital citizenship promotes active supervision and transparency, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers through platforms like social media, e-government services, and digital activism.

Keywords: e-democracy, ballot box, e-citizenship, e-participation, digital citizenship.

1. INTRODUCTION

E-participation or online engagement is a new paradigm to empower citizens to play an important, real-time, and instant role in governance. This may be in the form of voicing opinion on budgetary expenditure, policy formulation, or voicing discontent in any of the government affairs. This leads to inclusive governance, transparency, and qualitative and efficient public service. Though e-consultation tools are of high utility for large-scale e-participation, but its effective implementation still remains elusive, thanks to a low adoption rate by citizens. There is skepticism of failure due to this reason, which makes the adoption of this concept quite challenging. As the concept is novice in nature no documented reference is available for making this a strong case of adoption. In addition to providing a platform to citizens to vent their opinions, e-participation also reduces the cost of democratic processes like voting and other democratic activities. For example, the traditional ballot paper system is not only more time-consuming but also more expensive and requires the engagement of more human resources.

But across the globe, the positive outcome of e-participation is abysmally low, though massive exercise has been undertaken to sensitize this concept with a growing number of tools implemented for executing the same. According to a study conducted by the United Nations, the levels of e-participation within the top 25 countries in 2014 and 2016, the utilization level rose from 36 (United Nations, 2014) to 62 per cent (United Nations, 2016), but only 20 per cent of the United Nations member states report that "e-consultation outcomes have resulted in new policy decisions, regulation or service" (United Nations, 2016).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2008) conceptualize digital citizenship as the ability to engage with society through the internet, with a focus on civic participation, skills, and accessibility. According to their research, ICTs allow for ongoing communication between the public and the government, extending democratic engagement beyond conventional political processes like voting. This viewpoint supports the idea that

democracy in the digital era is process-oriented rather than episodic, which is consistent with the transition from representative to participatory e-democracy. The authors emphasize that genuine e-participation requires digital inclusiveness, and that without it, digital democracy runs the risk of perpetuating current disparities.

Gibson, Lusoli, and Ward (2002) examined how the internet is changing political engagement by improving direct communication between citizens and governments and reducing obstacles to participation. According to their research, e-democracy enhances representative democracy by facilitating avenues for discussion, consultation, and criticism outside of election cycles. The thesis that digital platforms undermine elite rule by enabling horizontal communication networks among citizens is supported by this literature, which also emphasizes the breakdown of centralized authority.

Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes (2010) explored how ICTs may support accountability and transparency in governance. They contend that by allowing citizens to keep an eye on state operations in real time, e-government initiatives help citizens move from being passive recipients of policy to active participants in governance processes. Their results support the idea that by improving state oversight and lowering information asymmetry between citizens and governing bodies, digital citizenship increases democratic resilience.

Castells (2012) analyzes networked social movements and makes the case that citizens can get over institutional and traditional media filters by using digital communication technology. Social media platforms enable people to question prevailing political narratives by facilitating decentralized political mobilization and discourse. The argument that digital citizenship, through amplifying citizen voices, neutralizes top-down communication structures and redefines power relations within democratic regimes is supported by this research.

Coleman and Blumler (2009) argue that by facilitating dialogic communication as opposed to unidirectional communication, digital technologies radically change the dynamic between the people and the government. They argue that deliberative democracy, in which policymaking becomes a cooperative process, is fostered by e-participation technologies. The idea that digital citizenship is a structural change rather than a technological accessory is supported by this corpus of work, which redefines citizenship as an ongoing, active practice ingrained in daily digital interactions.

RESEARCH GAPS

First Instead of treating digital citizenship as a fundamental reconfiguration of the relationship between the individual and the state, a large portion of the current research views it as an instrumental or functional extension of traditional democracy. Under-theorized is the ontological transition from passive representation to continuous e-participation.

Second, there is little examination of digital citizenship as a political identity and democratic practice influenced by virtual cultures, networked publics, and cybernetic interactions. Instead, the literature primarily takes a technology-centric or policy-oriented viewpoint, focusing on access, platforms, and institutional design.

Third, there is a conceptual and contextual gap in our understanding of how digital citizenship functions in emerging democracies, where digital participation coexists with institutional centralization, digital divides, and changing governance structures, as empirical studies mostly concentrate on Western democratic contexts.

Research that views digital citizenship as a paradigm shift that redefines democratic participation, power dynamics, and citizen-state engagement in the digital age, rather than only as a technological instrument, is therefore obviously needed. Closing this gap will advance our theoretical knowledge of e-democracy as a robust, participatory, and constantly negotiated democratic model.

Objective of Study

The primary objective of the study to understand the level of sensitization among general public on the concept of digital citizenship and the tools available, its awareness and level of utilization. This also encompasses the type of response to this concept among different section of educated mas viz. on the basis of gender and age. In this he researchers are trying to get an insight of the concept of digital citizen ship among general public and level of its being practiced in reality.

Methodology

The study was undertaken among the urban adults. Altogether eighty two responses were received with forty one males and equal number of females. Random sampling method was followed with a structured questionnaire. The data was compiled to make comparative analysis and single factor ANOVA test was conducted to find out the consistency of participation of the population based on gender and age group. The parameters of participation as e-citizen were participating in online discussion, use of Governance services,

participating online poll, participating policy making quizzes, online petitions & campaigns and over all impact of digital India in participating democratic process.

Observations

It has been observed from the data that seventy percent of respondents were aware of the concept of digital citizenship (Figure 1). However there is very minimal active participation in political or social issue I.e only one percent regularly and around 30 percent occassionally(Figure 2).

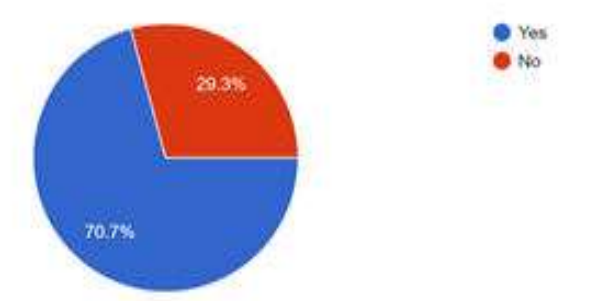


Figure 1: Awareness on Digital Citizenship

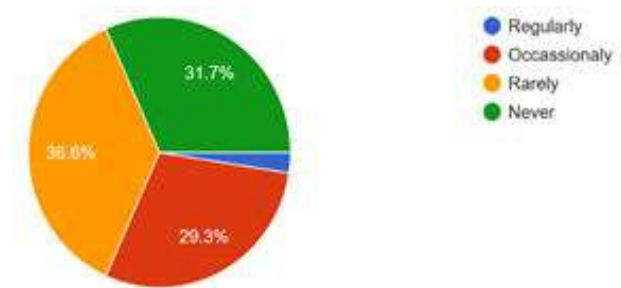


Figure 2: Active participation in political & social issues

The primary use of different e-governance services is related to tax filing and other documentation with eighty seven percent of respondents telling so (Figure 3). But as observed from figure 4 regular use of government portal for service information is not that high (twenty four percent respondents only use that facility). It seems the use of e –governance system is piecemeal in nature for selected few services.

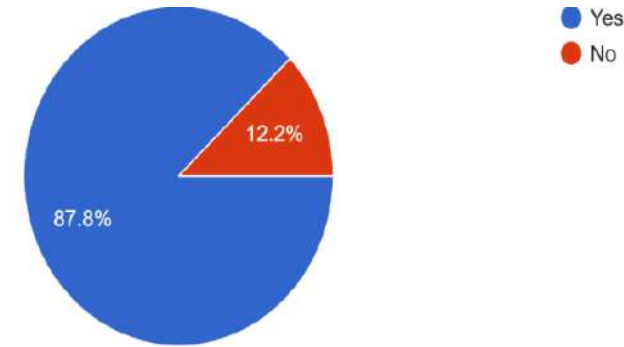


Figure 3: Use of E-governance service information

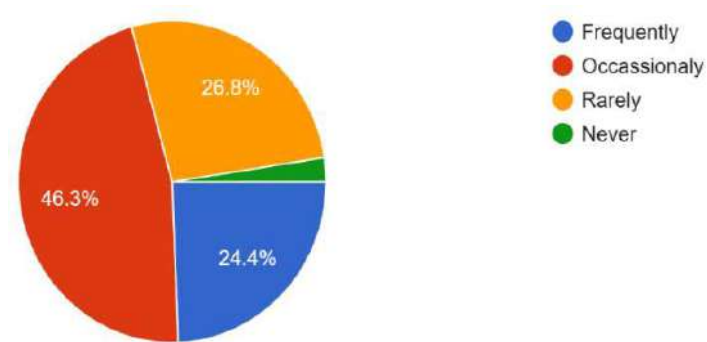


Figure 4: Use of e-portals for service

Though the respondents are aware of their digital rights and responsibilities (80% of respondents are aware of this, Figure 5) but their participation in online polls and other matters are no so encouraging (only forty one percent respondents are active, Figure 6)

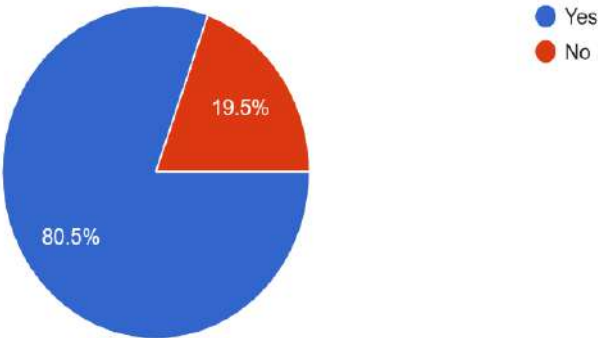


Figure 5: Aware of rights & responsibilities

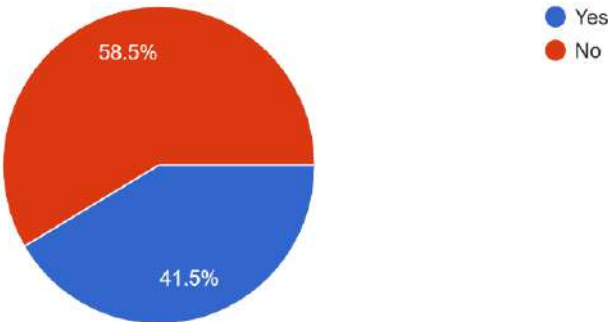


Figure 6: Participation in online polls

It is further observed that only thirty four percentage of population are having skill to verify the authenticity of political information (Figure 6), seventeen percentage respondents use my-gov platform to participate in online quizzes related to policy making(figure 7) and only twenty four percent of respondents participate in online petitions and campaigns of government policies(Figure 8).

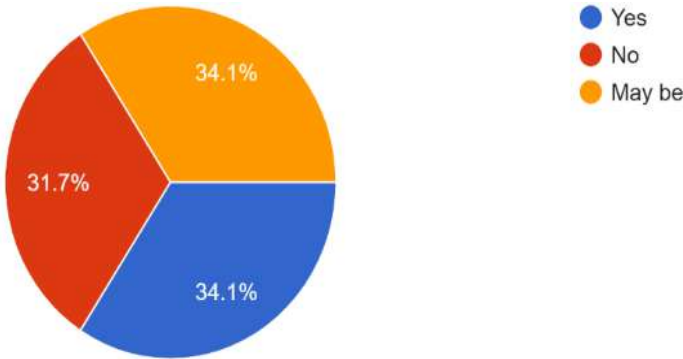


Figure6: Skill to verify the authenticity of political information

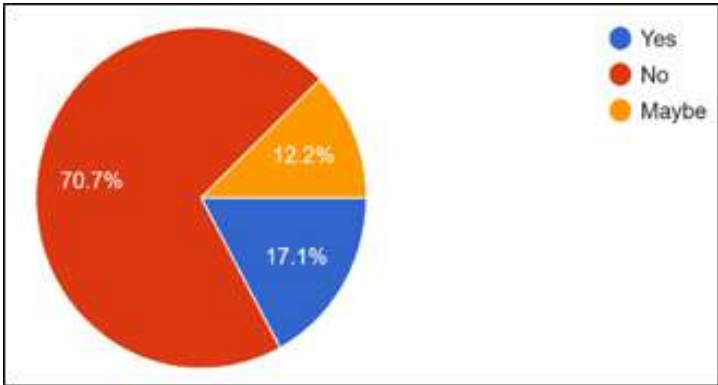


Figure 7: Participating in Online quizzes

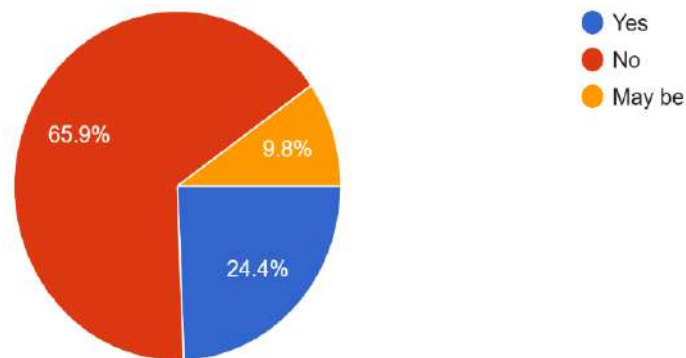


Figure 8: Participation in Online petition

Analysis

Over all analysis rendered that majority of respondents are using one digital media extensively and sparingly using other digital parameters (Figure 9). And as per further analysis it has been found that the preference of use of social media is WhatsApp followed by You Tube (Figure 10). This means most of the respondents are more into message dissemination and entertainment. Typical political oriented utility is less.

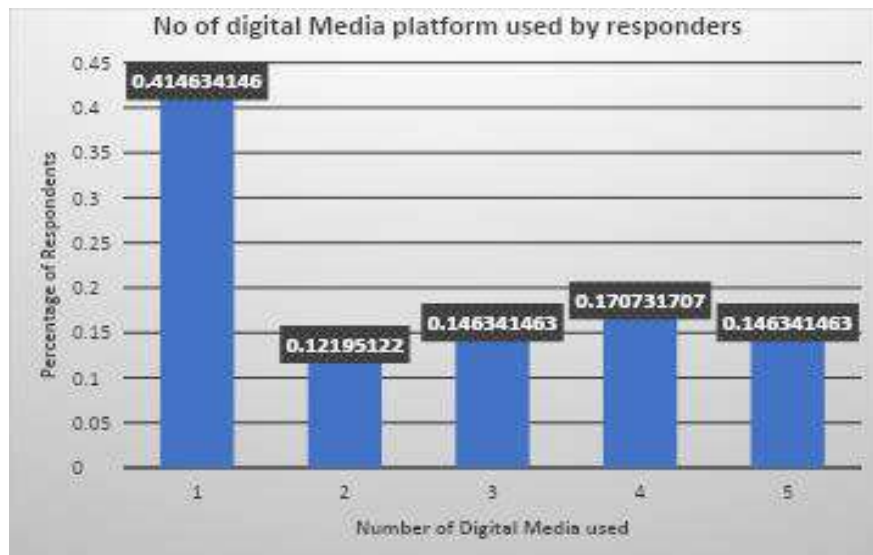


Figure 9: Number of digital medias used by respondents

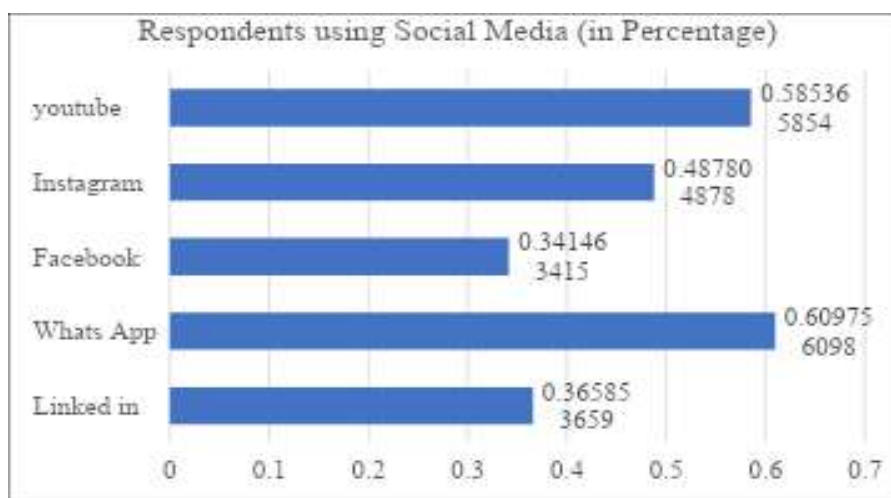


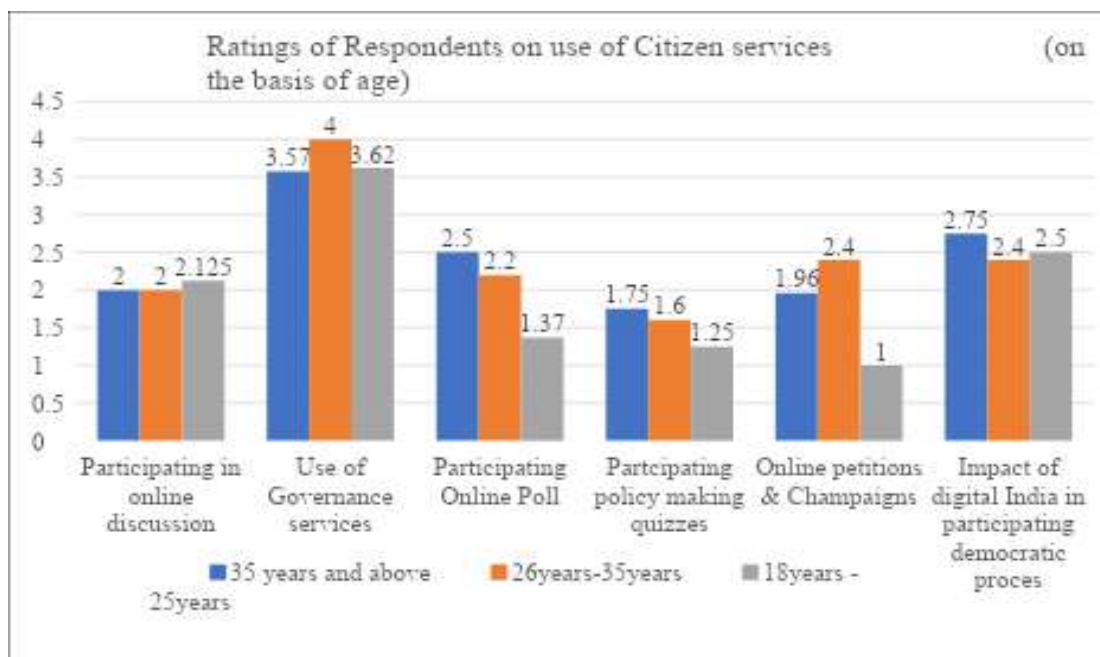
Figure 10: Preference of using social media

Further to this analysis was undertaken to understand the level of participation of different respondents (on the basis of age and gender) towards different aspect of social media leading to being a better digital citizen. This was verified by one way ANOVA test,

On the basis of age there is high inconsistency in the participation for digital citizen service usability as depicted ANOVA Table I

Table I ANOVA of respondents on use of social media (Age wise)

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	9.296795833	5	1.859359167	11.00203483	0.000376724	3.105875239
Within Groups	2.028016667	12	0.169001389			
Total	11.3248125	17				

**Figure 11:** Ratings of respondents on use of citizen services (Age wise)

The analysis indicates that there is no coherency on the issue of use of social media by different age groups of respondents towards different citizen services. Use of governance services is more preferred among all respondents. All others services are preferred in a haphazard manner among all respondents as far as age group is concerned. The rating of higher age group is more as compared to younger wage group in all aspects excluding participating in online discussion (Figure 11).

On the basis of gender too there is high inconsistency in the participation for digital citizen service usability as depicted ANOVA Table II

Table II ANOVA of respondents on use of social media (Gender wise)

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	4.148168242	5	0.829633648	4.810593403	0.040975711	4.387374187
Within Groups	1.034758391	6	0.172459732			
Total	5.182926633	11				

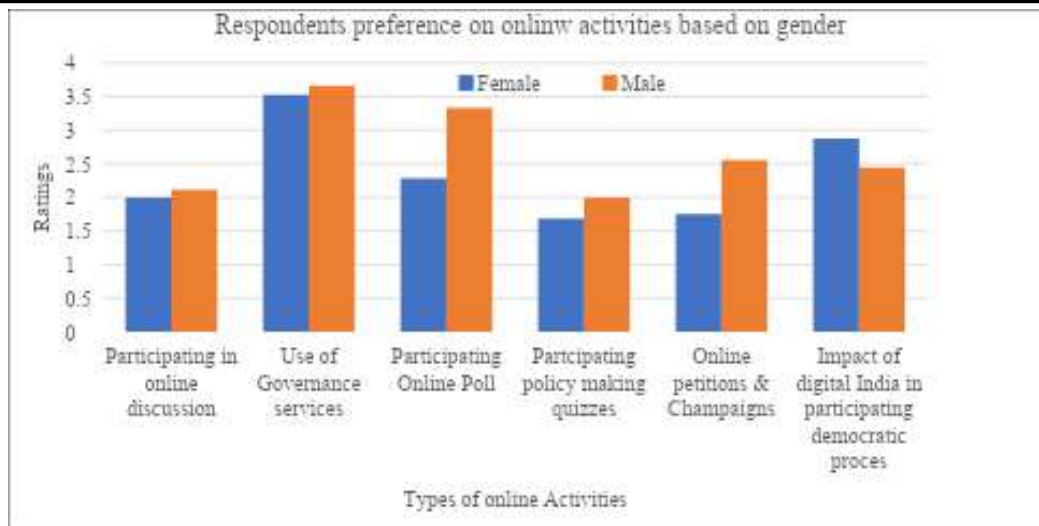


Figure 12: Ratings of respondents on use of citizen services (Gender wise)

The analysis indicates that there is no coherency on the issue of use of social media by different genders of respondents towards different citizen centric services. Ratings for different services are fluctuating as observed as we toggle between male and female respondents. The opinion (rating) of males are more in all citizen centric services except that of impact of digital media in participating democratic process. It indicates that the females are getting more exposed to understand and have a say in nation's affair through the social media (Figure 12).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that there is lack of connectivity between knowledge and action i.e proactive engagement in democratic process. It is an dichotomy to find that while 70% of respondents understand digital citizenship and 80% are aware of their digital rights, active political or social participation is abysmal, with only 1% participating regularly. Hence awareness not necessarily gets translated into active participation into civic duty or democratic engagement in the digital sphere.

Further to this the engagement with government digital services is transactional rather than informational. This is found from this study where a staggering number of respondents (87%) use e-governance for "must-do" tasks like tax filing and documentation. And only 24% use portals to actually seek information. This suggests users view these platforms as digital filing cabinets rather than tools for staying informed or engaged with the state.

There is bigger challenge of misinformation as evident from lacunae in digital literacy (only 34% of the population feels capable of verifying the authenticity of political information). Coupled with the fact that WhatsApp and YouTube are the preferred platforms (which are primary drivers of message dissemination), the population is highly susceptible to "fake news" and digital manipulation.

The ANOVA tests confirm that participation is not uniform across the population:

Older age groups generally provide higher ratings for citizen services than younger groups, except in "online discussions." This implies that while the youth are "online," they are less engaged in the formal structures of digital citizenship compared to their elders. While males generally rate their usage of citizen-centric services higher, females show a higher rating regarding the impact of digital media on the democratic process. This suggests that social media is becoming a vital tool for female empowerment and political expression.

The current state of digital citizenship is passive and entertainment-oriented. Users are digitally literate in theory but use their skills primarily for entertainment (WhatsApp/YouTube) and mandatory administrative tasks (Taxes). True "Digital Citizenship" characterized by policy participation, information verification, and democratic polling remains a niche activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. "Fact-Check First" initiative is essential. There should community-level workshops or short-form video campaigns (specifically for **YouTube and WhatsApp**) to sensitize users how to identify misinformation. This would facilitate to move beyond basic "awareness" of digital rights to the practical "skill" of information verification.

2. To lure the citizens towards digital participation an integrated reward systems or "digital badges" for participating in online polls and quizzes can be a good approach. This would transform e-governance from a "tax filing" chore into an interactive civic experience.
3. To enhance engagement of youths in citizen services rather than online discussions, a shift should be made in government service information from formal portals (which only **24%** use) to interactive social media formats (Reels, Shorts, or WhatsApp Channels). This will help to meet the younger demographic on the platforms they already prefer (WhatsApp/YouTube) rather than expecting them to visit static government websites.
4. As the data indicates that females see a higher impact of digital media on the democratic process, a concept of *Digital Town Halls* specifically can be curated for female leaders and community groups to discuss policy. In this way on this perceived impact can be capitalized to turn female users into *Digital Ambassadors* who drive social change.
5. A secure WhatsApp-integrated bot can be developed for government service information and basic document requests. Since WhatsApp is the #1 preferred platform, bringing services into the preferred media environment will naturally increase usage.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

This study was carried out among educated urban youth. There are perceptual change and other connectivity issues that lies in semi urban, rural and far flung areas. Adding there opinion and also of uneducated mass can make this study more inclusive and a better general perception can be derived.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Environmental advocacy has emerged as a critical mechanism for addressing environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development in India. Rapid industrialization, urbanization, population growth, and rising resource consumption have intensified environmental challenges such as pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion, underscoring the need for active engagement by civil society, policymakers, and local communities. This study examines the role of environmental advocacy in advancing sustainable development in India by analysing its influence on policy formulation, environmental governance, judicial interventions, and environmental justice. Using secondary data from academic literature, government reports, and international organizations, the paper evaluates how advocacy movements have shaped sustainability discourse and strengthened legal and institutional frameworks. Despite notable contributions, environmental advocacy in India faces several challenges, including limited public awareness, weak enforcement of environmental regulations, institutional constraints, and conflicts between economic growth and environmental protection. However, emerging opportunities such as increasing environmental consciousness, digital and social media activism, youth participation, supportive government initiatives, and the growing emphasis on corporate environmental responsibility offer new pathways for more effective advocacy. The study concludes that while environmental advocacy has significantly contributed to sustainable development efforts in India, its effectiveness remains constrained by political, institutional, and social barriers. Strengthening advocacy through inclusive participation, technological integration, and effective policy implementation is essential for achieving long term sustainable development in the country.

Keywords: *Environmental advocacy, Sustainable development, Environmental governance, Civil society, Environmental justice*

● INTRODUCTION

Environmental advocacy refers to the efforts and actions undertaken by individuals, groups, or organizations to promote environmental protection and sustainability. It involves raising awareness about environmental issues, influencing public attitudes and policies, and encouraging responsible behaviour to conserve natural resources and reduce environmental degradation.

Sustainable development refers to a development paradigm that balances economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection, ensuring that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations, 1987). In India, development priorities have often emphasized rapid economic growth, sometimes at the cost of environmental sustainability. Environmental advocacy includes organized efforts by civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), activists, legal professionals, and community groups to influence environmental policies, laws, and practices. In India, advocacy has played a significant role in shaping environmental legislation, judicial decisions, and public awareness, making it a key driver of sustainable development (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). Environmental advocacy in India plays a crucial role in addressing the growing environmental challenges arising from rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth. Advocacy efforts by individuals, civil society organizations, and environmental movements aim to protect natural resources, influence policy decisions, and promote sustainable development. In the Indian context, environmental advocacy has become increasingly significant in aligning economic development with environmental conservation and social well-being.

India has a long history of environmental advocacy rooted in grassroots movements such as forest conservation, water protection, and community-based resource management. Environmental advocacy in India involves raising public awareness, mobilizing communities, engaging with policymakers, and promoting environmentally responsible practices. Non-governmental organizations, activists, and local communities have played a pivotal role in highlighting environmental degradation and advocating for sustainable alternatives that support both ecological balance and livelihoods. India faces severe environmental challenges, including air and water pollution, deforestation, land degradation, climate vulnerability, and unsustainable urban expansion. These challenges threaten public health, livelihoods, and long-term economic stability. Environmental advocacy has

therefore emerged as an essential force to address governance gaps, amplify community voices, and ensure accountability in environmental decision making.

- **Role of Environmental Advocacy in India**

Environmental advocacy in India operates at multiple levels:

Policy Advocacy

Advocacy groups engage with policymakers to influence environmental laws, regulations, and development planning. Their efforts contribute to integrating sustainability principles into national and state-level policies (World Bank, 2020).

Legal and Judicial Advocacy

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has become a powerful advocacy tool in India. Judicial interventions have strengthened pollution control, forest conservation, and climate governance by enforcing environmental rights.

Grassroots and Community Advocacy

Community-based movements ensure local participation and highlight environmental justice issues, especially among marginalized and indigenous communities.

Challenges of Environmental Advocacy in India

Despite its importance, environmental advocacy in India faces several challenges. Limited public awareness, economic priorities, and political constraints often restrict effective advocacy outcomes. Conflicts between development projects and environmental protection, weak enforcement of environmental regulations, and inadequate coordination among stakeholders further hinder advocacy efforts. Additionally, marginalized communities advocating for environmental justice frequently face social, legal, and institutional barriers that limit their participation in decision-making processes.

Opportunities for Environmental Advocacy

Environmental advocacy in India also presents significant opportunities for advancing sustainable development. Increased environmental awareness, digital media platforms, and youth participation have strengthened advocacy outreach and engagement. Government initiatives promoting renewable energy, waste management, and conservation provide avenues for collaboration between advocacy groups and policymakers. Furthermore, the integration of corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices has opened new pathways for environmental advocacy to influence industry behaviour. Despite challenges, India presents significant opportunities for strengthening environmental advocacy.

Youth Engagement and Climate Leadership

India's demographic dividend provides a powerful opportunity. Youth networks and climate platforms increasingly participate in sustainability dialogues. Organizations such as: Indian Youth Climate Network, National Green Corps mobilize students and young leaders across schools and universities. According to UNICEF (2023), youth-led climate and water conservation initiatives in India have significantly improved community participation in sustainability programs.

Strengthening NGO Government Partnerships

India has a vibrant civil society ecosystem including organizations such as:

1. Vanashakti – focused on forest and wetland conservation.
2. Aaranyak – working on biodiversity and natural resource management.

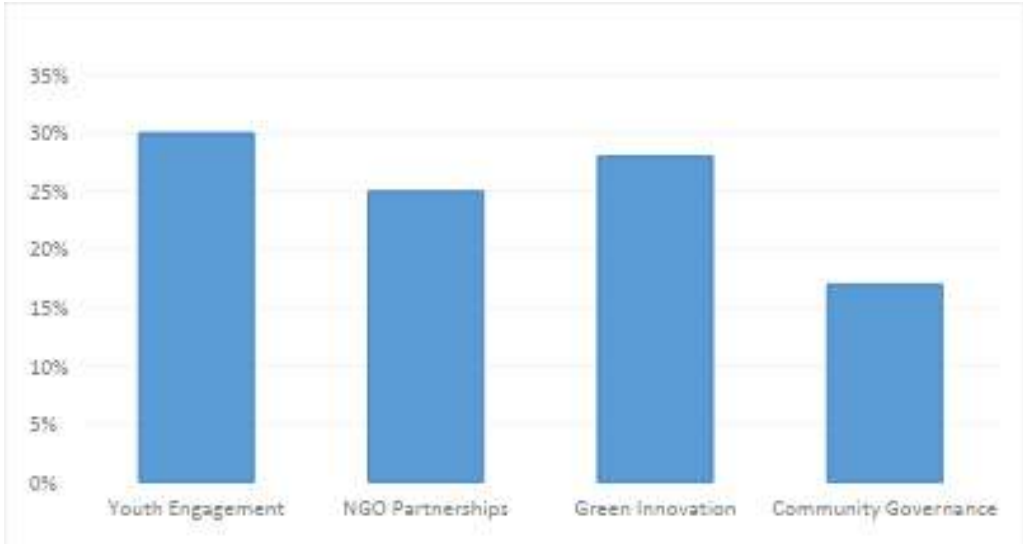
Collaborative governance between NGOs and state agencies can enhance policy implementation, monitoring, and transparency.

Green Innovation and Sustainable Technology

India is emerging as a hub for renewable energy, AI-based environmental monitoring, and sustainable startups. Initiatives supported by institutions such as NITI Aayog promote green innovation ecosystems. India's renewable energy expansion aligns with commitments made under the Paris Agreement.

Community Based Natural Resource Management

Local governance institutions (Panchayati Raj Institutions) can promote water conservation, forest management, and waste management initiatives.



● **Environmental Advocacy and Sustainable Development**

Environmental advocacy contributes directly to sustainable development by promoting resource efficiency, social equity, and long-term environmental protection. Advocacy initiatives encourage sustainable consumption, conservation of biodiversity, and responsible use of natural resources. By influencing public attitudes and policy frameworks, environmental advocacy supports India’s commitment to sustainable development goals and helps balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.

● **Environmental Advocacy**

Environmental advocacy refers to actions aimed at protecting natural resources and promoting sustainability through policy influence, legal mechanisms, awareness campaigns, and grassroots mobilization. Advocacy seeks to bridge the gap between environmental policy and implementation by ensuring transparency, accountability, and public participation.

● **Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development integrates environmental protection with economic and social development goals. In India, sustainability is embedded in national planning through environmental laws, climate action plans, and commitments to global sustainability agendas.

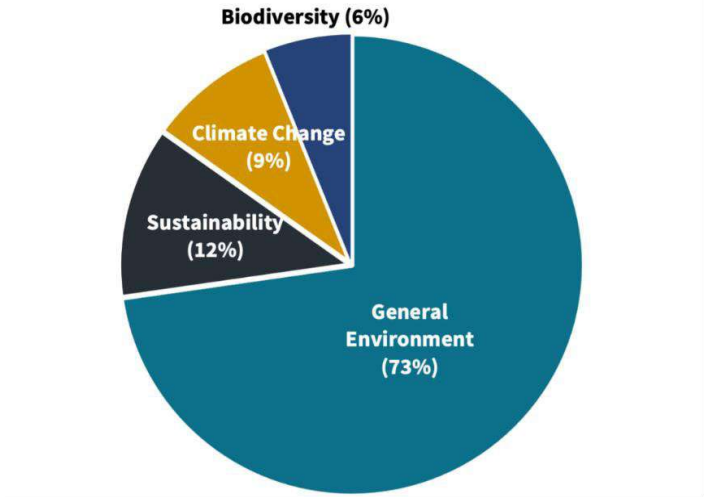


Figure 1

As shown in Figure 1, climate change specific references constitute a relatively small share of environmental themes in national education frameworks (Government of India, 2020).

National Level Policies

1. National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC)

India’s central climate strategy with 8 missions focusing on solar energy, energy efficiency, sustainable habitats, water, and Himalayan ecosystems.

2. Environment Protection Act, 1986

A key legal framework empowering the central government to set environmental standards and regulate pollutants nationwide.

3. Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 & National Board for Wildlife

Protects species, habitats, and biodiversity; the board advises the government on conservation policies.

4. Forest Conservation Act (various amendments)

Governs diversion of forest land for development; recent amendments raise debates over forest protection vs infrastructure development.

5. Environmental Movements and Advocacy in India

India has witnessed several landmark environmental movements that shaped sustainability discourse:

- Forest conservation movements that emphasized community rights
- Anti-dam movements highlighting displacement and ecological costs
- Urban environmental campaigns addressing pollution and waste

These movements illustrate how advocacy contributes to sustainable development by questioning unsustainable growth models.

● Issues and Challenges in Environmental Advocacy**Institutional and Governance Challenges**

Weak enforcement of environmental laws and overlapping institutional responsibilities undermine advocacy outcomes (Centre for Policy Research, 2020).

Political and Economic Pressures

Advocacy efforts often face resistance from powerful political and corporate interests prioritizing short-term economic gains over sustainability.

Public Awareness and Participation

Low environmental literacy and socio-economic inequalities limit widespread public engagement in advocacy initiatives (UNESCO, 2019).

Resource Constraints

Limited funding and capacity restrict the long-term effectiveness of environmental organizations (World Bank, 2020).

The analysis demonstrates that environmental advocacy has significantly contributed to sustainable development in India by influencing policies, strengthening judicial oversight, and empowering communities. However, advocacy effectiveness depends on institutional support, transparent governance, and inclusive participation. Without structural reforms, advocacy efforts may remain fragmented and reactive rather than transformative.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Scholarly literature suggests that environmental advocacy strengthens democratic governance by enabling citizen participation and improving regulatory accountability (OECD, 2019). Studies on India highlight the importance of grassroots environmental movements in shaping public discourse on sustainability, forest conservation, and displacement due to development projects.

Research also points out that although India has a comprehensive legal framework for environmental protection, enforcement remains weak due to institutional fragmentation and political pressures (Centre for Science and Environment, 2022). The judiciary has played a proactive role by expanding the interpretation of environmental rights through public interest litigation (PIL), thereby reinforcing sustainable development principles (Supreme Court of India).

Environmental advocacy in India has been widely discussed in academic literature as a response to environmental degradation caused by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and resource exploitation. Early studies emphasize that environmental advocacy emerged strongly in India during the 1970s through grassroots movements that connected environmental protection with social justice and sustainable development (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). These movements highlighted the need to integrate ecological conservation with the livelihoods of local communities, thereby redefining development from a sustainability perspective.

Several scholars have examined the role of environmental movements such as the Chipko Movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan in shaping environmental awareness and policy discourse in India. According to Guha (2000), these movements played a critical role in mobilizing public opinion and pressuring the government to reconsider environmentally destructive development projects. Such advocacy efforts demonstrated how collective action could influence environmental governance and promote sustainable development principles.

Recent literature has focused on the institutional and policy dimensions of environmental advocacy. Studies indicate that although India has developed comprehensive environmental laws and policies, their implementation remains weak due to administrative inefficiencies, political interference, and economic growth priorities (Divan & Rosencranz, 2001). Researchers argue that environmental advocacy organizations act as watchdogs, seeking accountability and transparency in environmental decision-making, thereby strengthening sustainable development frameworks.

Another stream of research highlights the growing role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in environmental advocacy. According to Agarwal (2010), NGOs contribute significantly by raising awareness, conducting environmental education programs, and engaging communities in sustainable practices. However, the literature also points out challenges such as limited funding, restricted access to decision-making platforms, and resistance from powerful industrial stakeholders, which constrain the effectiveness of advocacy efforts.

With the rise of digital communication, scholars have increasingly examined the role of social media and technology in environmental advocacy. Studies suggest that digital platforms have expanded the reach of advocacy campaigns, enabling greater public participation, especially among youth, and fostering environmental consciousness linked to sustainable development goals (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). This transformation has created new opportunities for environmental advocacy in India by facilitating faster mobilization and broader engagement.

Overall, the literature suggests that environmental advocacy in India has made significant contributions to promoting sustainable development by influencing policies, empowering communities, and reshaping public attitudes toward environmental protection. However, persistent challenges related to governance, enforcement, and socio-economic priorities continue to limit its impact. Scholars agree that strengthening institutional support, enhancing public participation, and integrating advocacy efforts with national development strategies are essential for achieving sustainable development in India (Sachs, 2015).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based on secondary data. Data were collected from academic journals, government publications, NGO reports, and documents from international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. Content analysis was used to interpret trends and patterns related to environmental advocacy and sustainable development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the role of environmental advocacy in promoting sustainable development in India
- To analyse the contribution of advocacy to environmental governance and policy
- To identify key issues and challenges faced by environmental advocacy movements

4. CONCLUSION

Environmental advocacy plays an indispensable role in advancing sustainable development in India. While advocacy has shaped environmental governance, judicial decisions, and public awareness, persistent institutional, political, and social challenges continue to limit its impact. Strengthening advocacy frameworks and ensuring participatory governance are essential for achieving environmentally sustainable and socially equitable development in India.

In conclusion, environmental advocacy in India serves as a critical mechanism for addressing environmental challenges and fostering sustainable development. While advocacy efforts face structural and socio-economic challenges, emerging opportunities through technology, policy support, and public engagement offer promising pathways for progress. Strengthening environmental advocacy through inclusive participation, effective governance, and continuous awareness-building can significantly enhance India's sustainable development trajectory.

5. SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen legal and institutional protection for environmental advocates

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- Enhance environmental education and public awareness programs
 - Improve coordination between government agencies and civil society
 - Promote digital platforms for inclusive and transparent advocacy
 - Promote environmental education at all academic levels.

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YOUTH-LED COLLECTIVE SERVICE AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: A STUDY OF THE GARAD FOUNDATION

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ABSTRACT

The conference theme “Transforming Lives: The Power of Collective Service” emphasizes the significance of community-based initiatives in addressing social disparities and promoting inclusive nation-building. This paper presents a case study of The Garad Foundation, a youth-led social work organization based in Thane, Maharashtra, which demonstrates the transformative impact of collective service at the grassroots level.

Founded and led by young leaders from the local community, The Garad Foundation works with the mission of developing a generation of responsible, skilled, and socially sensitive youth capable of contributing meaningfully to the nation. Anchored in the core values of education, innovation, empowerment, and sustainability, the organization focuses on improving the lives of deprived tribal (Adivasi) children and youth in the Thane region.

The study explores the Foundation’s diverse social interventions, including educational support for rural children, school kit distribution, cultural and educational competitions, volunteer capacity-building programs, and community awareness initiatives. Using qualitative analysis based on in-depth interviews with the founder, Mr. Abhishek Nemane, and active volunteers, along with participant observation, this paper highlights how youth leadership, collective volunteerism, and community-driven initiatives contribute to sustainable social empowerment. The case study underscores the vital role of youth-led organizations in transforming marginalized communities while simultaneously shaping socially responsible citizens, thereby strengthening the process of nation-building through service, empathy, and innovation.

Keywords: Youth-led organizations, Collective service, Social transformation, Grassroots development, Volunteerism, Nation-building (Rashtranirmitee), Community empowerment, Leadership development, Garad Foundation

1. INTRODUCTION

India stands at a crucial point in its developmental journey as it moves towards completing 100 years of independence in 2047. This milestone symbolizes not only political freedom but also the responsibility to build an inclusive, equitable, and socially responsible nation. The idea of Rashtranirmitee (Nation-building – राष्ट्रनिर्मिती) goes beyond economic growth; it demands ethical citizenship, community participation, and social empathy. Among all social groups, youth represent the most powerful agents of change. Their energy, creativity, and adaptability position them uniquely to address complex social challenges.

However, contemporary youth engagement faces multiple constraints. Rapid urbanization, competitive career pressures, digital immersion, and consumerist culture have gradually shifted youth priorities towards individual success and personal advancement. Many young people are increasingly absorbed in social media, entertainment, and professional aspirations, often distancing themselves from community life and grassroots social realities. This growing disconnect poses a challenge to collective social responsibility and community participation.

Against this backdrop, youth-led collective service initiatives emerge as crucial platforms for reconnecting young people with social issues. The Garad Foundation, based in Thane, Maharashtra, represents a grassroots effort where youth voluntarily engage in social service for community upliftment. The organization follows the guiding philosophy, “First transform yourself, then transform society,” emphasizing that sustainable social change begins with personal transformation. Volunteers are encouraged to cultivate leadership, empathy, discipline, and problem-solving abilities before seeking to influence broader social change.

The Garad Foundation has been functioning as a youth-led community organization for over eight years. During this period, the organization has consistently conducted annual youth learning programs aimed at developing social perspective and capacity building among young participants. These programs serve as entry points for youth into collective service, after which volunteers gradually become active members of the organization. The ideological orientation of the Foundation is influenced by leadership values and ethical principles associated with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, which continue to inspire youth participation and social responsibility in Maharashtra.

The Foundation's long-term vision aligns with India's 2047 aspirations of inclusive growth and social justice. It seeks to nurture socially responsible youth who actively contribute to Rashtranirmittee. The organization's objectives are grounded in four core values:

- Education (शिक्षण – Shikshan)
- Innovation (नवकल्पना – Navkalpana)
- Empowerment (सक्षमीकरण – Sakshamikaran)
- Sustainability (शाश्वतता – Shashwatata)

These values shape the Foundation's programs and interventions, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Volunteers are motivated not by financial rewards but by opportunities for personal growth and meaningful social contribution. This approach challenges dominant narratives of success defined solely by economic gain and reframes service as a pathway to holistic youth development and social transformation.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on collective service and youth engagement highlights the centrality of community participation in social development. Scholars in social work and community studies emphasize that volunteerism strengthens social capital, trust, and civic engagement. Community participation has been linked to sustainable development outcomes, as it fosters local ownership, accountability, and culturally relevant solutions. Youth participation in collective service enhances leadership skills, teamwork, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility.

In the Indian socio-cultural context, traditions of Seva (service) form a moral foundation for community engagement. Gandhian philosophy emphasized that personal moral development is the basis of societal transformation. Contemporary studies on youth volunteerism in India indicate that participation in social initiatives enhances emotional intelligence, communication skills, and social sensitivity among young people. Youth engagement in rural development projects has also been found to improve micro-to-macro management skills, accountability, and problem-solving capacities.

Cultural inspiration plays a significant role in sustaining youth participation. In Maharashtra, the ideals and leadership values of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj continue to shape youth identity and social commitment. His emphasis on leadership, justice, courage, and service to people resonates strongly with youth organizations seeking moral and cultural anchors. Research suggests that culturally rooted narratives and role models enhance the relevance and sustainability of youth-led initiatives by providing identity, purpose, and continuity.

Community-based organizations serve as bridges between formal institutions and marginalized populations. They are uniquely positioned to identify local needs, design context-sensitive interventions, and mobilize community resources. Youth-led organizations, in particular, combine innovation with grassroots insight, making them effective agents of social change. The Garad Foundation's model aligns with these theoretical perspectives by integrating youth leadership, community participation, and culturally inspired service into its operational framework.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to:

- Examine how collective service contributes to the transformation of marginalized tribal communities through the initiatives of The Garad Foundation.
- Analyze the role of youth-led leadership in addressing grassroots-level social issues.
- Assess the impact of educational, cultural, and awareness programs on children and youth in rural and tribal areas.
- Understand how the values of education (शिक्षण), innovation (नवकल्पना), empowerment (सक्षमीकरण), and sustainability (शाश्वतता) are implemented in practice.
- Explore the contribution of youth-led collective service to nation-building (Rashtranirmittee) in the context of India's Vision 2047.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with the founder of The Garad Foundation, Mr. Abhishek Nemane, and active volunteers. Informal discussions and participant observation during selected Foundation activities provided insights into volunteer motivation, organizational functioning, and community engagement.

Secondary data were collected from organizational documents, reports, and social media content related to the Foundation's activities. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns related to volunteer transformation, leadership development, program implementation, and community impact. This qualitative approach enables an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of volunteers and beneficiaries and captures the nuanced processes through which collective service leads to social transformation.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Organizational Structure and Volunteer Participation

The Garad Foundation operates through a youth-led, decentralized organizational structure that encourages ownership and leadership among volunteers. At present, approximately 100 volunteers are associated with the Foundation. Among them, 25–30 volunteers are actively involved in regular activities, 30–40 are semi-active, and others participate occasionally depending on availability. This flexible participation model accommodates the realities of youth commitments related to education and employment.

Volunteers are organized into functional teams handling operations, project implementation, accounts, and fundraising. This structure provides experiential learning opportunities in organizational management and leadership. Volunteers gain exposure to planning, coordination, documentation, and field execution, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

The organization also follows a community-expansion approach, wherein each active volunteer attempts to connect and mobilize ten or more individuals from their personal and social networks. This model strengthens community participation and expands the Foundation's outreach. Along with youth volunteers, elders from the community provide guidance and moral support, while financial supporters contribute to sustaining organizational activities, reinforcing the Foundation's identity as a community-based organization.

5.2 Financial Model and Community Ownership

The Foundation's activities are primarily supported through crowdfunding under the initiative "Mission Bharari." This financial model reinforces community ownership and shared responsibility. By involving volunteers in budgeting, fundraising, and reporting, the organization builds financial transparency and accountability. Crowdfunding also enables rapid mobilization of resources for grassroots needs while reducing dependency on large institutional funding.

5.3 Grassroots Interventions and Cultural Integration

The Garad Foundation addresses grassroots challenges through educational support for rural and tribal children, the distribution of school kits, and volunteer capacity-building programs. Cultural and educational competitions such as elocution, drawing, and Lokasangit are organized across Maharashtra. Notably, nearly 99% of competition topics are based on the life and work of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. This approach integrates cultural heritage with education, fostering leadership values, ethical conduct, confidence, and creativity among students.

By embedding cultural narratives into educational activities, the Foundation strengthens regional identity and historical awareness while promoting learning outcomes. These interventions go beyond material support by cultivating values and aspirations among children and youth.

5.4 Volunteer Transformation and Capacity Building

Participation in collective service leads to significant personal transformation among volunteers. Interviews reveal improvements in leadership abilities, confidence, communication skills, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving orientation. Volunteers develop empathy towards rural and tribal communities through direct engagement and fieldwork. Involvement in project planning and execution enhances micro-to-macro management skills, enabling volunteers to understand the full cycle of social interventions from needs assessment to implementation and evaluation.

The absence of financial incentives fosters intrinsic motivation and reinforces the Foundation's philosophy of self-transformation. Volunteers view service as an opportunity for personal growth, identity formation, and meaningful contribution to society. This internal transformation strengthens sustained commitment to collective service and social responsibility.

Volunteers also acquire practical competencies such as financial generation, leadership and team coordination, problem-solving in community contexts, social networking, proposal building, strategic planning, project execution, and basic management skills. These capacities contribute to long-term civic engagement and professional development.

5.5 Youth Challenges and Retention Strategies

In a digitalized and competitive environment, sustaining youth participation in social service is challenging. The Garad Foundation addresses this challenge through purpose-driven onboarding, peer mentorship, recognition of volunteer contributions, and opportunities for leadership progression. Cultural inspiration and value-based narratives provide identity and meaning, increasing long-term commitment. Flexible engagement pathways allow youth to contribute according to availability while maintaining continuity of programs.

An important indicator of organizational stability is the sustained involvement of a core group of volunteers. The continued active participation of 8–10 volunteers over a period of eight years reflects strong emotional commitment, value-based motivation, and effective internal leadership development. This long-term engagement strengthens institutional memory, mentorship continuity, and organizational resilience.

5.6 Outcomes, Limitations, and Scope for Scaling

The outcomes of the Foundation's initiatives include improved access to educational materials for rural children, enhanced participation in cultural-educational platforms, strengthened volunteer competencies, and increased community trust. However, limitations exist, including resource volatility inherent in crowdfunding, volunteer turnover due to career transitions, and logistical challenges in remote tribal areas.

To enhance scalability, the Foundation can develop partnerships with educational institutions and local governance bodies, standardize volunteer training modules, and establish monitoring frameworks to assess social impact. Strengthening documentation and evaluation mechanisms will further support evidence-based expansion of programs.

5.7 Research Findings

Based on qualitative interviews, participant observation, and analysis of organizational functioning, the following key research findings emerged from the case study of The Garad Foundation:

1. **Youth-Led Collective Service Enhances Social Responsibility:** Sustained participation strengthens social awareness, empathy, and ethical responsibility among youth.
2. **Behavioral Motivation is a Stronger Driver than Material Incentives:** Participation is primarily driven by inner motivation and value-based thinking rather than financial rewards.
3. **Capacity Building Through Experiential Learning:** Volunteers develop leadership, problem-solving, networking, proposal-building, strategic thinking, financial generation, and management skills through hands-on engagement.
4. **Community-Based Organizational Structure Strengthens Sustainability:** The involvement of youth, elders, and financial supporters strengthens organizational ownership and grassroots trust.
5. **Peer-Led Network Expansion Enhances Outreach:** The volunteer expansion model supports organic growth without heavy institutional dependence.
6. **Cultural Inspiration Strengthens Youth Identity and Ethical Orientation:** Cultural ideals associated with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj provide moral grounding and motivational continuity.
7. **Long-Term Volunteer Retention Indicates Organizational Stability:** The sustained involvement of 8–10 core volunteers over eight years reflects strong organizational culture and leadership continuity.
8. **Youth Organizations Function as Leadership Incubators:** Volunteers transition from participants to organizers and mentors, creating a sustainable leadership pipeline.

6. CONCLUSION

The case study of The Garad Foundation demonstrates that youth-led collective service can function as a powerful tool for social transformation at both individual and community levels. By institutionalizing the principle of “first transform yourself, then transform society,” the organization converts service into a structured learning ecosystem that nurtures leadership, empathy, accountability, and management skills among youth.

The Foundation's value framework—education (शिक्षण), innovation (नवकल्पना), empowerment (सक्षमीकरण), and sustainability (शाश्वतता)—is operationalized through culturally integrated grassroots programs and community-funded initiatives. As India advances towards 2047, youth organizations that combine service with capacity-building are strategically positioned to contribute to Rashtranirmitee.

The organization's eight-year continuity and the consistent involvement of 8–10 core volunteers highlight the importance of behavioral motivation, inner value systems, intergenerational community support, and culturally rooted inspiration in sustaining youth participation and organizational stability over time.

The Garad Foundation offers a replicable model grounded in community ownership, transparent finance, and culturally resonant engagement. With strengthened monitoring, diversified funding, and strategic partnerships, such youth-led initiatives can significantly amplify their impact. Collective service, when aligned with youth leadership and cultural inspiration, emerges as a sustainable pathway for inclusive social transformation and nation-building.

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**A STUDY ON MADHACHE GAON (HONEY VILLAGE) INITIATIVE BY MAHARASHTRA STATE
KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES BOARD**

CMA Dr Mugdha Keskar¹ and Ms Gauri Keskar²¹Faculty, Joshi Bedekar College²M Tech (VJTI, Mumbai)**ABSTRACT**

Maharashtra State Khadi and Village Industries Board (MSKVIB) has introduced an innovative initiative 'Madhache Gaon' for providing additional income to farmers. Apiary Operations flourish in Mahabaleshwar. The Researchers aim to collect actual data based on this project already operational in Manghar Village in Satara, Maharashtra. The Research paper has focussed on the apiculture, actual application of techniques to train the farmers for collection of honey, and packaging of honey for sale. Further the marketing efforts by the Khadi Board under the brand of Madhuban has also been discussed.

Keywords: MSKVIB, Madhache Gaon, Apiculture, and Madhuban Honey

1. INTRODUCTION

Maharashtra State Khadi and Village Industries Board (MSKVIB), henceforth referred to as Maharashtra Khadi Board was established on 11th April 1960. The main objectives of the Board are to encourage Khadi and development of Rural Industries; organize, develop, and assist formation and run business related to Khadi. The Board also assists in manufacturing readymade products; generates employment opportunities for villagers. The main thrust is on maintaining environmental equilibrium.

The Board runs different schemes like PM Rojgar Yojana; CM Rojgar Yojana; PM Vishwakarma Kaushalya Sanman Yojana and many more. In this paper, the researcher has focused on the Honey Centre Yojana.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

With Maharashtra's unemployment rate at 3.6% as of September 2024 (Indiastat, 2024), beekeeping offers a sustainable livelihood opportunity. This study examines beekeeping practices, environmental factors, and market dynamics to enhance productivity, profitability, and long-term sustainability, promoting it as a viable economic activity.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To visit the actual site of Honey Village.
2. To study impact of village farmers and their income.
3. To observe the actual process of honey collection by honey bees.
4. To collect data about honey packaging process.
5. To analyse the techniques adopted for marketing of honey.
6. To assess the effect on tourism due to honey village concept.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Thakkar et al. (2007) developed a balanced scorecard framework integrating Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) and Analytic Network Process (ANP). The study provided a strategic approach for performance management in various industries, including agriculture and beekeeping. It highlighted the importance of linking financial, customer, internal process, and learning perspectives for sustainable growth.

Shukla et al. (2010) investigated the economics of honey production and disposal in Uttarakhand, India. The study analyzed cost structures, market dynamics, and profitability factors. It found that beekeeping in the region has significant economic potential but requires better marketing strategies and infrastructural support to maximize benefits.

Kumar (2016) provided an overview of rural development in India through entrepreneurship. The study addressed challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs and suggested policy interventions to foster growth. It discussed financial constraints, lack of infrastructure, and skill gaps as major hurdles and proposed solutions such as microfinance support and training programs.

Kadam (2021) examined strategies for increasing exports and reducing imports in India to create a self-reliant economy (Aatmanirbhar Bharat). The study discussed policy implications and sector-wise contributions to

economic independence. It emphasized the importance of strengthening domestic industries, improving trade policies, and fostering innovation to achieve self-sufficiency.

Narang et al. (2022) conducted a PEST and SWOT analysis of beekeeping as a successful enterprise in India. The study identified key political, economic, social, and technological factors influencing the sector's growth. It emphasized the need for supportive policies, financial incentives, and technological advancements to enhance the sustainability and profitability of beekeeping.

Tesema et al. (2023) analyzed rural revitalization through technical efficiency improvements in honey production in Ethiopia. The research identified key factors affecting productivity and economic benefits to rural farmers. The study suggested that better resource allocation, advanced beekeeping techniques, and government support could significantly improve honey yields and farmer incomes.

Fraser et al. (2024) investigated the pollinator deficit in UK crop production through a farm-level survey. The study analyzed land-use management strategies to mitigate the decline in pollination services. Findings suggest that diversified farming practices, habitat restoration, and policy interventions are crucial for addressing pollination shortages.

Talukdar & Saikia (2024) studied apiculture as a male-dominated occupation in India, exploring factors influencing its acceptance as a primary livelihood option. The research identified socio-cultural constraints, economic viability, and skill development as key determinants. It suggested policy reforms and awareness programs to encourage broader participation in beekeeping.

Ferenczi et al. (2024) conducted a quantitative study on honey production characteristics in Hungary, analyzing trends in apiary operations and honey yield determinants. The study found that climatic conditions, market demand, and investment in beekeeping technologies significantly affect production. It recommended policy support and improved training programs to enhance honey yield and quality.

Putri et al. (2024) reviewed the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in tackling contemporary issues in apiculture. The study explored applications of AI in hive monitoring, bee health management, and optimizing honey production. It highlighted the potential of AI-driven tools for precision beekeeping, reducing colony losses, and improving overall efficiency in the industry.

Guerin et al. (2025) examined the current status, challenges, and perspectives of native honeybee conservation and beekeeping in Cambodia. The study highlights environmental threats, policy gaps, and the need for sustainable beekeeping practices. It emphasizes the importance of local knowledge, government support, and community involvement in conserving honeybee populations.

Hasan et al. (2025) explored the role of digital advancements in leveraging forest honey production in Sumbawa. The study emphasized the economic and environmental sustainability of honey collection and the potential of digital platforms for expanding market reach. It also discussed how digital marketing and e-commerce can help local beekeepers improve profitability and market access.

5. DATA COLLECTION

One of the researchers personally visited the honey village in Manghar on the 13th and 14th of January 2025 for primary data collection. The objective of the visit was to gain an in-depth understanding of traditional and modern beekeeping practices, as well as to collect valuable data on honey production, processing, and distribution. By visiting the actual beekeeping sites in the forest, the researcher was able to observe firsthand the environmental conditions in which the beekeeping process takes place.

The researcher was guided by Mr. Raju Chorge a local beekeeper who had placed beekeeping boxes in the nearby forest area to facilitate honey collection. His father, with over 33 years of experience in the beekeeping industry, provided detailed insights into the lifecycle of bees, colony management techniques, and the role of environmental factors in honey production. He also explained how different types of flora and fauna influence the quality of honey, showcasing how the nectar source impacts the taste, colour, and texture of the final product.

During the visit, the researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data on various aspects of honey production:

- **Beekeeping Techniques:** Information was gathered on the types of beehives used, hive management strategies, seasonal variations in honey production, and the common challenges faced by beekeepers. The researcher documented traditional practices as well as any modern innovations adopted by the local beekeepers.

- **Floral and Environmental Impact:** Detailed observations were made regarding the types of plants and flowers the bees used for nectar collection. The researcher noted the geographical distribution of these plants and their seasonal availability, which plays a crucial role in determining the taste and aroma of the honey.
- **Bee Colony Health and Management:** Data on colony strength, breeding techniques, disease prevention methods, and pest control measures were recorded. Discussions with the experienced beekeepers provided insights into the factors affecting bee mortality rates and the best practices for ensuring colony sustainability.
- **Honey Extraction and Processing:** At the honey collection centre, the researcher studied the methods used for honey extraction, filtration, and storage. Information was gathered on hygiene practices, quality control measures, and the tools used to ensure minimal contamination during the extraction process.
- **Market and Economic Aspects:** The researcher collected data on the local and regional honey trade, pricing strategies, and distribution channels. Discussions with beekeepers and local traders provided insights into the economic viability of beekeeping as a livelihood, including profit margins, production costs, and potential market challenges.
- **Sustainability and Challenges:** The researcher also recorded information on the environmental and socio-economic challenges affecting beekeeping in the region. Climate change, deforestation, pesticide use, and declining bee populations were discussed as potential threats to the industry.

Additionally, interviews with experienced beekeepers were conducted to gain deeper insights into their knowledge, experiences, and the evolution of beekeeping practices over the years. Photographs, videos, and voice recordings were taken to document the various aspects of beekeeping and honey collection. These data points will contribute to a comprehensive analysis of the efficiency, sustainability, and future prospects of beekeeping in the region.

Honey Centre Yojana: The *Madhkendra (Beekeeping) Scheme* is implemented by the Maharashtra State Khadi and Village Industries Board through its Honey Directorate at Mahabaleshwar to promote commercial beekeeping, enhance income, and improve the standard of living of beneficiaries across the state. The scheme provides training, beehives, equipment, and support for honey collection, processing, and marketing, along with organizing awareness camps at the taluka level. Eligible individuals (above 18 years and literate, preferably with their own farm) must undergo 10 days of board-recognized training, while progressive beekeepers and institutions meeting specified land, infrastructure, and qualification criteria receive advanced 20-day residential training. Financial assistance is provided in the form of 50% government grant and 50% loan contribution by the beneficiary, as per Government Decision No. KVB-2017 Q.No.-16/Industry-6 dated 18 June 2019.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

Maharashtra's "Honey Village" (Madhache Gaon) initiative in Maharashtra is led by the Maharashtra State Khadi and Village Industries Board through its Honey Directorate at Mahabaleshwar. The concept was first implemented in Manghar (Satara district, Maharashtra) and later in Patgaon (Kolhapur district, Maharashtra), where it significantly boosted rural income and tourism. Launched in 2022, the initiative aims to create a "Sweet Revolution" by promoting scientific beekeeping and honey tourism. Following its success, the Government has sanctioned ₹17 crores, with ₹5 crore allocated for the first phase, covering 10 villages across 10 districts in Maharashtra.

The scheme provides 90% subsidy on bee boxes and colonies (with only 10% beneficiary contribution), structured training support, and marketing assistance. Training includes 5-day programs for farmers and students and 20-day residential training for professional beekeepers. Infrastructure development includes honey processing units, "Madhuban" honey parks, sales centers, and proposed honey cafés in tourist destinations like Lonavala, Mahabaleshwar, and Panchgani. Honey is marketed under the "Madhuban" brand, and the Board procures honey at ₹500 per kg and beeswax at ₹300 per kg, ensuring assured income to farmers.

In 2024–25, Maharashtra produced 3 lakh kg of honey, with increasing adoption of beehive boxes for pollination in crops such as watermelon, pomegranate, and drumstick, thereby improving agricultural yields. The initiative is supported by related schemes such as the Madh Kendra Yojana and the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission. Together, these efforts aim not only to expand honey markets but also to raise awareness about the critical role of honey bees in pollination, biodiversity, and sustainable rural development.

7. CONCLUSION AND BENEFITS TO SOCIETY

The "Madhache Gaon" (Honey Village) Initiative by the Maharashtra State Khadi and Village Industries Board represents a transformative step toward sustainable rural development in Maharashtra. By promoting scientific beekeeping practices, the initiative not only strengthens farmers' incomes but also diversifies livelihood

opportunities through honey production, value-added products, and agro-based entrepreneurship. It also creates sustainable rural employment and boosts the local economy.

In India, bee pollination increases crop yields by about 20–60%, depending on the crop. Pollinators contribute nearly 8–10% to India's total agricultural production value. Biodiversity Support: Bees help pollinate over 90 major crops in India, supporting plant diversity and ecosystem balance.

The program highlights the immense potential of honey tourism, where villages become experiential hubs showcasing beekeeping processes, live demonstrations, and direct sales of natural honey and allied products such as beeswax, royal jelly, pollen, and propolis. This integration of apiculture with rural tourism enhances local employment, preserves ecological balance through improved pollination, and creates a unique identity for participating villages.

Furthermore, the initiative emphasizes awareness about different species of honey bees such as Pisa, Jamun, Hirda, Terda, along with the importance of diverse nectar-rich plants that influence honey quality and flavor. By combining training, subsidies, scientific processes, and market linkages, the Madhache Gaon scheme fosters self-reliance, environmental sustainability, and inclusive growth. Overall, it stands as a model rural development framework that effectively blends agriculture, entrepreneurship, and eco-tourism for long-term socio-economic impact.

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“साहित्य से समाज तक: हिंदी रचनाओं में सामूहिक सेवा की परिवर्तनकारी भूमिका”**डॉ. कप्तान कुशवाह**

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शोध सार

यह शोध-पत्र हिंदी साहित्य में निहित “सामूहिक सेवा” की अवधारणा और उसके सामाजिक-परिवर्तनकारी प्रभाव का अध्ययन प्रस्तुत करता है। भारतीय साहित्य-परंपरा में सेवा, करुणा, लोकमंगल और सह-अस्तित्व जैसे मूल्य केवल नैतिक उपदेश नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक व्यवहार के प्रेरक तत्व रहे हैं। प्रेमचंद, निराला, महादेवी वर्मा, फणीश्वरनाथ ‘रेणु’, दिनकर तथा समकालीन रचनाकारों के चयनित पाठों के माध्यम से यह लेख प्रतिपादित करता है कि हिंदी साहित्य ने व्यक्ति-केंद्रित नैतिकता से आगे बढ़कर सामूहिक चेतना को आकार दिया है। अध्ययन से निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि साहित्य सामाजिक संवेदनशीलता को संगठित कर सामूहिक सेवा की संस्कृति विकसित करता है, जो वंचितों के सशक्तीकरण, लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों और लोककल्याणकारी दृष्टि को मजबूत करती है।

कुंजी-शब्द: सामूहिक सेवा, लोकमंगल, सामाजिक परिवर्तन, हिंदी साहित्य, सामूहिक चेतना

प्रस्तावना

“सामूहिक सेवा” का भाव भारतीय बौद्धिक-सांस्कृतिक परंपरा में “लोकमंगल”, “वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्” और “सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः” जैसे आदर्शों के रूप में दीर्घकाल से उपस्थित रहा है। हिंदी साहित्य ने इन आदर्शों को केवल नैतिक उपदेश तक सीमित नहीं रखा, बल्कि उन्हें सामाजिक यथार्थ, वर्ग-विभाजन, जातिगत असमानता, लैंगिक अन्याय और ग्रामीण-शहरी विषमता जैसे प्रश्नों से जोड़ते हुए सामूहिक सेवा की परिवर्तनकारी शक्ति को रचनात्मक रूप दिया। आधुनिक काल से हिंदी साहित्य का केन्द्रीय सरोकार “मनुष्य” रहा है, पर यह मनुष्य अकेला नहीं, बल्कि समाज में अवस्थित एक ऐतिहासिक-सामाजिक प्राणी है। इसलिए यहाँ “सेवा” का अर्थ दया या परोपकार भर नहीं, बल्कि संगठित मानवीय प्रयास है जो संरचनात्मक अन्याय को चुनौती देता है। यह शोध-पत्र इसी बिंदु को केंद्र में रखकर यह विवेचना करता है कि हिंदी साहित्य किस प्रकार व्यक्तिगत करुणा को सामूहिक चेतना में रूपांतरित कर समाज-परिवर्तन की आधारशिला रखता है।

प्रेमचंद, निराला, महादेवी वर्मा, फणीश्वरनाथ ‘रेणु’, रामधारी सिंह ‘दिनकर’ जैसे रचनाकारों की कृतियाँ तथा नामवर सिंह और रामविलास शर्मा जैसे आलोचकों के वैचारिक प्रतिपादन यह स्पष्ट करते हैं कि साहित्य सामाजिक व्यवहार की दिशा निर्धारित करने वाली सांस्कृतिक शक्ति है। श्यामाचरण दुबे के समाजशास्त्रीय दृष्टिकोण के आलोक में यह लेख साहित्य और समाज के अंतर्संबंध को “सेवा- सामूहिकता- परिवर्तन” की त्रयी में समझने का प्रयास करता है। भारतीय सामाजिक दर्शन में “सेवा” का अर्थ केवल दान नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व है। आधुनिक समाज-विज्ञान की भाषा में इसे सामूहिक प्रयास कहा जा सकता है, अर्थात् साझा उद्देश्य के लिए संगठित प्रयास। श्यामाचरण दुबे भारतीय समाज को “परिवर्तन और परंपरा” की द्वंद्ववात्मकता में समझते हुए बताते हैं कि सामाजिक परिवर्तन केवल नीतियों से नहीं, बल्कि सांस्कृतिक चेतना से संभव होता है। यही वह क्षेत्र है जहाँ साहित्य निर्णायक भूमिका निभाता है। रामविलास शर्मा के अनुसार प्रगतिशील साहित्य की भूमिका सामाजिक यथार्थ का अनावरण और शोषण-विरोधी चेतना का प्रसार है। नामवर सिंह ‘नई कहानी’ के संदर्भ में साहित्य की सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व-भावना को रेखांकित करते हैं - “कि कथा केवल मनोरंजन नहीं, बल्कि समय की नैतिक साक्षी है।” इस प्रकार, हिंदी साहित्य में “सेवा” एक वैचारिक-सांस्कृतिक परियोजना के रूप में उभरती है जो व्यक्ति को समाज के साथ जोड़ती है और “मैं” को “हम” में बदलती है।

प्रेमचंद के कथा-संसार का केन्द्रीय ध्येय समाज की उन संरचनाओं को उजागर करना है जो मनुष्य को अमानवीय बनाती हैं। *गोदान* में होरी की त्रासदी केवल एक किसान की व्यक्तिगत विफलता नहीं, बल्कि सामंती-पूंजीवादी व्यवस्था की सामूहिक विफलता है। यहाँ करुणा पाठक को भावुक भर नहीं करती; वह सामाजिक संरचना पर प्रश्न उठाती है “कि क्या किसान की

मुक्ति व्यक्तिगत दान से संभव है या इसके लिए सामूहिक परिवर्तन आवश्यक है?" सेवासदन में नारी-सुधार का प्रश्न "उद्धार" की संकीर्णता से निकलकर सामाजिक पुनर्निर्माण की ओर बढ़ता है। वेश्यावृत्ति, नैतिकता और स्त्री-अधिकार के प्रश्नों को प्रेमचंद सामाजिक दायित्व के रूप में रखते हैं, जहाँ सेवा संस्थागत और सामूहिक रूप लेती है। प्रेमचंद के यहाँ सेवा का आशय "दया" नहीं, बल्कि न्यायोन्मुख सामाजिकता है। उनकी यथार्थवादी परंपरा यह सिखाती है कि समाज-परिवर्तन व्यक्तिगत सदृच्छा से नहीं, बल्कि संगठित चेतना से संभव है।

निराला की काव्य-चेतना में करुणा निष्क्रिय भाव नहीं, बल्कि अन्याय के विरुद्ध विद्रोह है। *निराला रचनावली* में शोषित-पीड़ित के प्रति सहानुभूति, सामंती-सामाजिक रूढ़ियों पर प्रहार और मानवीय गरिमा की उद्घोषणा मिलती है। निराला के लिए कविता सामाजिक हस्तक्षेप का माध्यम है, जहाँ संवेदना संगठित होकर सामाजिक चेतना बनती है। यहाँ "सेवा" का अर्थ करुणा को सामाजिक संघर्ष में रूपांतरित करना है। निराला की कविताएँ पाठक को केवल द्रवित नहीं करतीं, बल्कि प्रश्नाकुल बनाती हैं और यही प्रश्नाकुलता सामूहिक परिवर्तन की भूमि तैयार करती है।

महादेवी वर्मा के निबंध-संग्रह "*शृंखला की कड़ियाँ*" में करुणा मानवीय संबंधों की पुनर्रचना का आधार बनती है। वे स्त्री, पीड़ित और वंचित के अनुभव को आत्मकथात्मक संवेदना से आगे बढ़ाकर सामाजिक प्रश्न में बदल देती हैं। महादेवी की करुणा "आत्मिक" होते हुए भी "सामाजिक" है, वह व्यक्ति को समाज से जोड़ती है। उनके लेखन में सेवा किसी परोपकारी दया का नाम नहीं, बल्कि **नैतिक उत्तरदायित्व** है। यही कारण है कि उनकी संवेदना पाठक को सामाजिक सहभागिता के लिए प्रेरित करती है, जहाँ परिवर्तन का रास्ता सामूहिकता से होकर जाता है।

रेणु का कथा संसार लोकजीवन की सामूहिक ऊर्जा का दस्तावेज़ है। *मैंला आँचल* में ग्रामीण समाज के भीतर स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, जाति और गरीबी जैसे प्रश्न समुदाय के स्तर पर उभरते हैं। यहाँ परिवर्तन किसी नायक की निजी पहल से नहीं, बल्कि सामुदायिक प्रयासों से संभव होता है। रेणु की भाषा, पात्र और कथा-संरचना लोक-अनुभव को केंद्र में रखती है, जहाँ "सेवा" संस्थागत औपचारिकता नहीं, बल्कि **समुदाय की आत्मा** है। यह लोक-आधारित सामूहिकता ही जीवन-परिवर्तन की वास्तविक शक्ति बनती है।

दिनकर के काव्य में सामाजिक न्याय, श्रम की गरिमा और समानता की प्रखर उद्घोषणा मिलती है। *कुरुक्षेत्र* में युद्ध की पृष्ठभूमि में नैतिकता का प्रश्न व्यक्तिगत नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक है, कि क्या शांति अन्याय पर टिक सकती है? दिनकर के लिए नैतिकता तब तक अधूरी है, जब तक वह संगठन और संघर्ष में रूपांतरित न हो। यहाँ "सेवा" का आशय सामाजिक न्याय के लिए सक्रिय सहभागिता है। दिनकर की काव्य-भाषा सामूहिक चेतना को स्वर देती है, जहाँ परिवर्तन एक साझा लक्ष्य बनता है।

नामवर सिंह 'नई कहानी' के संदर्भ में साहित्य की सामाजिक ज़िम्मेदारी को रेखांकित करते हैं कि "कथा अपने समय की नैतिकता की परीक्षा लेती है।" रामविलास शर्मा प्रगतिशील साहित्य को सामाजिक संघर्ष की वैचारिक शक्ति मानते हैं। दोनों के यहाँ साहित्य "निरपेक्ष सौंदर्य" नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक हस्तक्षेप है, जो सामूहिक सेवा की वैचारिकी को पुष्ट करता है। हिंदी साहित्य सबसे पहले अनुभूति का निर्माण करता है। पीड़ा को दृश्य बनाता है, हाशिए की आवाज़ को केंद्र में लाता है। प्रेमचंद की यथार्थवादी कथा, निराला की विद्रोही करुणा, महादेवी की संवेदनात्मक नैतिकता और रेणु की लोक-समुदायिक दृष्टि, ये सब पाठक में सह-अनुभूति जगाते हैं। यह सह-अनुभूति परिवर्तन की पहली शर्त है। साहित्य केवल भावुकता नहीं, बल्कि मूल्य-निर्माण करता है। न्याय, समानता, गरिमा और सहभागिता जैसे मूल्य पाठक की नैतिक कल्पना में प्रतिष्ठित होते हैं। यहाँ "सेवा" परोपकार से आगे बढ़कर "लोकमंगल" बनती है। दिनकर का काव्य और प्रगतिशील आलोचना इस नैतिकता को संघर्ष और संगठन से जोड़ते हैं।

जब निजी पीड़ा साझा अनुभव बनती है, तब "मैं" का विस्तार "हम" में होता है। रेणु के यहाँ समुदाय, प्रेमचंद के यहाँ समाज और महादेवी के यहाँ मानवीय संबंध, ये सब सामूहिक पहचान के निर्माण के उदाहरण हैं। यह पहचान ही सामूहिक सेवा की आधारभूमि है। साहित्य नीति-निर्माण नहीं करता, पर सामाजिक व्यवहार को दिशा देता है। पाठकीय चेतना स्वयंसेवी

प्रयासों, नागरिक पहलों, सामाजिक आंदोलनों और संस्थागत सुधारों में रूपांतरित होती है। इस अर्थ में साहित्य परिवर्तन की सांस्कृतिक तैयारी करता है, जो दीर्घकालीन और स्थायी होती है।

आज के संदर्भ में जहाँ आर्थिक असमानता, पर्यावरण-संकट, लैंगिक भेदभाव और सामाजिक बहिष्करण जैसी चुनौतियाँ हैं। सामूहिक सेवा की अवधारणा और अधिक प्रासंगिक हो जाती है। समकालीन हिंदी साहित्य इन प्रश्नों को सामुदायिक सहभागिता, नागरिक पहल और हाशिए की आवाज़ों के माध्यम से प्रस्तुत करता है। प्रेमचंद-रेणु की परंपरा आज एनजीओ, सामाजिक उद्यम, ग्राम-स्वराज, पर्यावरण-संरक्षण और शिक्षा-स्वास्थ्य के सामुदायिक मॉडल में प्रतिध्वनित होती दिखाई देती है। यह स्पष्ट है कि हिंदी साहित्य ने सेवा को “दया” की संकीर्णता से मुक्त कर **लोकमंगल की व्यापक नैतिकता** में रूपांतरित किया है, जो परिवर्तन की सबसे सशक्त शक्ति है।

निष्कर्ष

यह शोध-पत्र प्रतिपादित करता है कि हिंदी साहित्य में “सामूहिक सेवा” कोई गौण विषय नहीं, बल्कि एक नैतिक-सांस्कृतिक परियोजना है। प्रेमचंद की यथार्थवादी सामाजिकता, निराला की विद्रोही करुणा, महादेवी की नैतिक संवेदना, रेणु की सामुदायिक लोकदृष्टि और दिनकर की न्यायोन्मुख कविता—इन सबमें सेवा व्यक्तिगत सद्गुण से आगे बढ़कर संगठित मानवीय प्रयास बनती है। नामवर सिंह और रामविलास शर्मा की आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि तथा श्यामाचरण दुबे का समाजशास्त्रीय परिप्रेक्ष्य यह स्पष्ट करता है कि साहित्य समाज-परिवर्तन की सांस्कृतिक तैयारी करता है। “साहित्य से समाज तक” की यह यात्रा जीवन-परिवर्तन को वैचारिक, भावनात्मक और व्यवहारिक—तीनों स्तरों पर संभव बनाती है। हिंदी साहित्य में सामूहिक सेवा की परिकल्पना केवल मानवीय संवेदना नहीं, बल्कि लोकतांत्रिक, न्यायपूर्ण और सहभागी समाज की रचना का सांस्कृतिक आधार है—और यही इसकी परिवर्तनकारी भूमिका का सार है।

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“एकता से मिलती है शक्ति: सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता, सामाजिक एकजुटता और संगठनात्मक परिणामों पर एक शोध अध्ययन”

प्रा. अनिल ढवळे

हिंदी विभागाध्यक्ष एवं शोध निर्देशक, के. जी. जोशी कॉलेज ऑफ आर्ट्स एवं एन. जी. बेडेकर (स्वायत्त) कॉलेज ठाणे
संलग्न मुंबई विश्वविद्यालय मुंबई

सारांश

लोकोक्ति "एकता से शक्ति मिलती है, जो फलदायी परिणाम देती है" एक शाश्वत सिद्धांत को प्रतिबिंबित करती है, जिसकी पुष्टि समकालीन संगठनात्मक मनोविज्ञान, सामाजिक गतिशीलता और समुदाय विकास के शोध द्वारा होती है। यह पत्र विविध संदर्भों—संगठनात्मक टीमों से लेकर समुदाय एकजुटता पहलों तक—में सामूहिक एकता कैसे मापनीय प्रदर्शन परिणाम उत्पन्न करती है, इसकी वर्तमान अनुभवजन्य शोध का संश्लेषण प्रस्तुत करता है। सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता सिद्धांत, समूह गतिशीलता शोध और सहयोगी उत्पादकता अध्ययनों के विश्लेषण के माध्यम से, हम प्रदर्शित करते हैं कि एकता व्यक्तिगत क्षमताओं को वर्धित करती है, समस्या-समाधान क्षमता बढ़ाती है और स्थायी परिणाम उत्पन्न करती है। निष्कर्षों से पता चलता है कि एकता और परिणामों के बीच संबंध योगात्मक न होकर गुणात्मक है, जिसमें सामाजिक एकजुटता और विश्वास महत्वपूर्ण मध्यस्थ कारक हैं। यह शोध संगठनात्मक प्रबंधन, समुदाय विकास और सामाजिक नीति के लिए महत्वपूर्ण निहितार्थ रखता है।

संकेत शब्द : सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता, सामाजिक एकजुटता, टीम प्रदर्शन, सहयोगी उत्पादकता, समूह गतिशीलता, संगठनात्मक परिणाम

1. परिचय

मानवीय उपलब्धियाँ शायद ही कभी एकाकी होती हैं। इतिहास भर में, सभ्यताओं ने पहचाना है कि सामूहिक कार्रवाई व्यक्तियों द्वारा अकेले हासिल की जा सकने वाली उपलब्धियों से कहीं आगे के परिणाम उत्पन्न करती है। यह सिद्धांत, जो मराठी लोकोक्ति "एकीचे बळ मिळते फळ" (एकता से शक्ति मिलती है, जो फलदायी परिणाम देती है) में अभिव्यक्त है, मानव सामाजिक संगठन के बारे में एक मौलिक सत्य को प्रतिबिंबित करता है। समकालीन शोध इस सहज समझ की कठोर अनुभवजन्य जांच के माध्यम से बढ़ती हुई पुष्टि कर रहा है। संगठनात्मक मनोविज्ञान, समुदाय समाजशास्त्र और समूह गतिशीलता में अध्ययन दर्शाते हैं कि एकजुट समूह व्यवस्थित रूप से अपने व्यक्तिगत सदस्यों को स्वतंत्र रूप से कार्य करते हुए प्रदर्शित परिणामों से श्रेष्ठ प्रदर्शन करते हैं। हालांकि, एकता द्वारा परिणाम उत्पन्न करने वाली प्रक्रियाएँ जटिल और बहुआयामी हैं, जिसमें मनोवैज्ञानिक, सामाजिक और संरचनात्मक कारक गैर-रैखिक तरीके से परस्पर क्रिया करते हैं।

इस प्रपत्र का उद्देश्य सामूहिक एकता द्वारा मापनीय परिणाम उत्पन्न करने के सैद्धांतिक और अनुभवजन्य आधारों की जांच करना है। हम चार केंद्रीय प्रश्नों को संबोधित करते हैं:

- (1) सामाजिक और संगठनात्मक संदर्भों में सामूहिक एकता क्या बनाती है?
- (2) एकता कैसे उन्नत प्रदर्शन और परिणामों में अनुवादित होती है?
- (3) इस परिवर्तन को सक्षम करने वाले महत्वपूर्ण मध्यस्थ कारक क्या हैं?
- (4) संगठनात्मक और समुदाय संदर्भों के लिए कौन से व्यावहारिक निहितार्थ उभरते हैं?

2. सैद्धांतिक ढांचा: सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता और सामाजिक एकजुटता

2.1 सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता सिद्धांत

सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता, सामाजिक संज्ञानात्मक सिद्धांत में विकसित एक अवधारणा, एक समूह की साझा धारणा को संदर्भित करती है जो उसके द्वारा आवश्यक कार्रवाइयों को संगठित और निष्पादित करने की क्षमता में विश्वास रखता है ताकि दिए गए स्तर की प्राप्ति हो सके। यह अवधारणा अल्बर्ट बंडुरा के व्यक्तिगत प्रभावकारिता सिद्धांत को सामूहिक स्तर पर विस्तारित करती है, यह मानते हुए कि समूह अपने लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने की क्षमता में अपनी साझा आत्मविश्वास विकसित करते हैं।

सैंपसन और रॉडेनबुश (1999) ने पड़ोसों में सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता की अवधारणा को पेश करके इसकी महत्वपूर्ण समझ को आगे बढ़ाया। उन्होंने पहचाना कि सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता सामूहिक समस्याओं को संबोधित करने के लिए समुदायों द्वारा सामाजिक संसाधनों को जुटाने का एक तंत्र के रूप में कार्य करती है। महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, उन्होंने पाया कि एकजुटता और विश्वास वह आवश्यक संदर्भ हैं जिसमें सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता कार्य करती है।

जैसा कि सैंपसन और रॉडेनबुश ने देखा, "पड़ोस संदर्भ में कार्रवाई करना असंभाव्य है जहाँ नियम अस्पष्ट हैं और लोग एक-दूसरे पर विश्वास नहीं करते" (1999: 612)। यह अंतर्दृष्टि प्रकट करती है कि सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता अलग-थलग अस्तित्व में नहीं रहती—इसके लिए सामाजिक एकजुटता और पारस्परिक विश्वास का आधार आवश्यक है।

2.2 सामाजिक एकजुटता आधार के रूप में सामाजिक एकजुटता उस डिग्री को दर्शाती है जिसमें समूह के सदस्य जुड़े महसूस करते हैं, एक-दूसरे पर विश्वास करते हैं और सामान्य मानदंडों तथा मूल्यों को साझा करते हैं। शोध दर्शाता है कि सामाजिक एकजुटता और सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता स्वतंत्र रूप से न होकर सहक्रियात्मक रूप से परस्पर क्रिया करती हैं। उनका संबंध योगात्मक न होकर गुणात्मक है—मतलब कि दोनों कारकों के उच्च स्तर एक साथ उनके व्यक्तिगत योगों के योग से असमानुपातिक रूप से अधिक परिणाम उत्पन्न करते हैं। हिप्प और स्टीनबेक के शोध (2015) ने पाया कि एक साथ उच्च स्तर की एकजुटता और सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता प्रदर्शित करने वाले पड़ोसों में अव्यवस्था और अपराध में काफी अधिक कमी आई, तुलना में उन पड़ोसों की जहाँ केवल एक कारक मौजूद था। यह गुणात्मक संबंध सुझाव देता है कि एकता की शक्ति केवल सामूहिक विश्वास की उपस्थिति से ही नहीं, बल्कि उस विश्वास के वास्तविक सामाजिक संबंध और पारस्परिक विश्वास के साथ एकीकरण से उभरती है।

2.3 समूह गतिशीलता और प्रदर्शन

ब्रूस टकमैन का टीम विकास मॉडल—फॉर्मिंग, स्टॉर्मिंग, नॉर्मिंग, परफॉर्मिंग और अडजॉर्निंग—समझने का एक ढांचा प्रदान करता है कि समूह कैसे प्रभावी प्रदर्शन के लिए आवश्यक एकता विकसित करते हैं। मॉडल दर्शाता है कि सभी समूह पूर्वानुमानित चरणों से गुजरते हैं, जिसमें प्रभावी नेतृत्व टीम इन चरणों को सफलतापूर्वक नेविगेट करने में मदद करता है। महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, शोध की पुष्टि करता है कि "सबसे बुद्धिमान लोग नहीं, बल्कि सबसे एकजुट टीम ही निरंतर प्रदर्शन प्रदान करती हैं"। यह निष्कर्ष पारंपरिक धारणा को चुनौती देता है कि प्रतिभाशाली व्यक्तियों का संग्रह उत्कृष्ट परिणामों की गारंटी देता है। इसके बजाय, पारस्परिक गतिशीलता की गुणवत्ता, विश्वास संबंध और सामूहिक लक्ष्यों के प्रति साझा प्रतिबद्धता प्रमुख कारक के रूप में उभरती है।

3. अनुभवजन्य साक्ष्य: एकता से परिणाम

3.1 संगठनात्मक उत्पादकता और सहयोग

हाल के बड़े पैमाने के शोध लोकोक्ति के दावे के लिए आकर्षक मात्रात्मक साक्ष्य प्रदान करते हैं। 1,400 से अधिक संगठनों का वैश्विक सर्वेक्षण प्रकट करता है कि टीमों यदि सहयोग सुधारें तो औसतन 39% उत्पादकता बढ़ा सकती हैं। यह पर्याप्त वृद्धि दर्शाती है कि बेहतर सहयोग के माध्यम से एकता बढ़ाने से ठोस, मापनीय व्यावसायिक परिणाम प्राप्त होते हैं।

शोध ने और भी नाटकीय उदाहरण पहचाने: एक संगठन ने अपने निचले चतुर्थांश टीमों की प्रभावकारिता को औसत स्तर तक उठाने से 54% लाभप्रदता प्रभाव का अनुमान लगाया। एक अन्य संगठन ने 89 देशों में भौगोलिक और क्रॉस-फंक्शनल

सहयोग सुधारने से दो वर्षों में 500 मिलियन डॉलर का प्रत्यक्ष वित्तीय प्रभाव प्राप्त किया। ये आंकड़े दर्शाते हैं कि एकता का "फल" महत्वपूर्ण संगठनात्मक मूल्य सृजन तक विस्तारित होता है।

3.2 भारतीय आईटी क्षेत्र अध्ययन

भारतीय आईटी क्षेत्र की विशेष रूप से जांच करने वाले शोध ने पाया कि संगठनात्मक सहयोग विधियाँ कर्मचारी उत्पादकता पर महत्वपूर्ण और स्थायी प्रभाव डालती हैं। अध्ययन ने सहयोगी प्रथाओं और कई सकारात्मक परिणामों के बीच मजबूत सकारात्मक सहसंबंध प्रकट किया:

एकजुट, सहयोगी वातावरणों में बढ़ी हुई उत्पादकता

कार्यस्थल को सहयोगी मानने वाले कर्मचारियों में उन्नत नौकरी संतुष्टि

मजबूत टीम भावना और सौहार्द को बढ़ावा देने वाली अधिक संगठनात्मक प्रतिबद्धता

सहकर्मियों के बीच उन्नत मनोवैज्ञानिक सुरक्षा और सद्भाव

यह शोध भारतीय संदर्भ में एकता सिद्धांतों के कार्य करने के तरीके को समझने के लिए विशेष रूप से प्रासंगिक है, जहाँ सहयोगी संगठनात्मक संस्कृतियाँ प्रतिस्पर्धी लाभ के रूप में बढ़ती हुई मान्यता प्राप्त कर रही हैं।

3.3 एकता द्वारा परिणाम उत्पन्न करने वाली प्रक्रियाएँ

शोध एकजुट समूहों द्वारा श्रेष्ठ परिणाम प्राप्त करने वाली कई विशिष्ट प्रक्रियाओं की पहचान करता है:

उन्नत संचार और विश्वास: एकजुट समूह स्वतंत्र संचार प्रदर्शित करते हैं, जो टीम सदस्यों को एक-दूसरे के दृष्टिकोण, भावनाओं और व्यवहारों को बेहतर समझने की अनुमति देता है। यह उन्नत संचार अधिक व्यापक समस्या-समाधान और तेज निर्णय कार्यान्वयन की स्थितियाँ बनाता है।

उन्नत समस्या-समाधान: सकारात्मक समूह गतिशीलता विविध दृष्टिकोणों को सतह पर लाने और मजबूत, अधिक व्यापक समाधानों में विलय करने की अनुमति देती है। एकता समूहों को संज्ञानात्मक विविधता का लाभ उठाने की अनुमति देती है बिना कम एकजुट टीमों में विविध दृष्टिकोणों के साथ घर्षण के।

कम समन्वय लागत: जब समूह सामान्य मानदंडों और लक्ष्यों की साझा समझ के साथ कार्य करते हैं, तो समन्वय की ओवरहेड न्यूनतम हो जाती है। सदस्य एक-दूसरे की आवश्यकताओं का पूर्वानुमान लगा सकते हैं और न्यूनतम स्पष्ट वार्ता के साथ प्रयासों को संरेखित कर सकते हैं।

बढ़ी हुई जवाबदेही और पारस्परिक समर्थन: एकजुट समूहों में, सदस्य सामूहिक रूप से निर्णय-प्रक्रिया में भाग लेते हैं और परिणामों के लिए पारस्परिक जवाबदेही महसूस करते हैं। यह सामूहिक जिम्मेदारी साझा लक्ष्यों की ओर निरंतर प्रयास और पारस्परिक समर्थन को प्रेरित करती है।

बेहतर प्रतिधारण और स्थिरता: भावनात्मक प्रतिबद्धता, अनुकूल टीम जलवायु और नौकरी संतुष्टि से चिह्नित समूहों में टर्नओवर कम होता है। यह स्थिरता संचित ज्ञान और मजबूत संबंधों को समय के साथ गहरा करने की अनुमति देती है, जो सामूहिक क्षमता को आगे बढ़ाती है।

4. महत्वपूर्ण मध्यस्थ कारक

4.1 विश्वास आवश्यक पूर्वशर्त के रूप में

विश्वास शोध भर में लगातार एकजुटता को परिणाम उत्पन्न करने में सक्षम बनाने वाली महत्वपूर्ण आधार के रूप में उभरता है। समूह विश्वास टीम प्रदर्शन से मजबूती से सहसंबद्ध होता है। जब विश्वास उच्च होता है, संचार बढ़ता है, मनोवैज्ञानिक सुरक्षा जोखिम लेने और प्रयोग की अनुमति देती है, और सदस्य सामूहिक लक्ष्यों के प्रति अधिक पूर्ण प्रतिबद्धता करते हैं। विपरीत रूप से, समुदायों में सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता पर शोध दर्शाता है कि विश्वास अनुपस्थित

संदर्भों में उच्च मानी गई प्रभावकारिता भी कार्रवाई में अनुवादित नहीं होती। यह निष्कर्ष रेखांकित करता है कि विश्वास के बिना एकता निष्क्रिय बनी रहती है।

4.2 स्पष्ट मानदंड और साझा उद्देश्य

एकजुट समूह सामूहिक नियमों, मानदंडों और साझा उद्देश्य के बारे में स्पष्टता के साथ कार्य करते हैं। जब अपेक्षाएँ अस्पष्ट और मानदंड अनिश्चित होते हैं, तब भी अच्छे इरादों वाले समूह सामूहिक विश्वास को समन्वित कार्रवाई में परिवर्तित करने में संघर्ष करते हैं। स्पष्ट मानदंडों और साझा उद्देश्य की स्थापना वह ढांचा प्रदान करती है जिसके माध्यम से सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता ठोस परिणामों में निर्देशित होती है।

4.3 नेतृत्व और सुविधाकरण की गुणवत्ता

समूह गतिशीलता और चरण विकास के प्रति समायोजित नेता महत्वपूर्ण रूप से प्रभावित करते हैं कि क्या समूह सफलतापूर्वक एकता विकसित करते हैं जो परिणामों में अनुवादित होती है। मनोवैज्ञानिक सुरक्षा को बढ़ावा देने वाला, विश्वास का मॉडल करने वाला और कठिन चरणों को नेविगेट करने में मदद करने वाला नेतृत्व संभावित एकता को वास्तविक प्रदर्शन में परिवर्तित करने के लिए आवश्यक सिद्ध होता है।

5. सांस्कृतिक आयाम: उबुन्तु संबंध

रुचिकर बात यह है कि लोकोक्ति की बुद्धिमत्ता विविध सांस्कृतिक और दार्शनिक परंपराओं में गूंजती है। सामाजिक एकजुटता और सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता को उबुन्तु—अफ्रीकी दर्शन जो परस्पर जुड़ाव और सामूहिक मानवता पर जोर देता है—से जोड़ने वाली हाल की विद्वता सुझाव देती है कि यह सिद्धांत विशेष सांस्कृतिक संदर्भों को पार करता है। उबुन्तु व्यक्तिगत समृद्धि के सामूहिक समृद्धि पर निर्भर होने की आवश्यक अंतर्दृष्टि को ग्रहण करता है, जो मराठी दर्शन, अफ्रीकी नीतिशास्त्र और समकालीन संगठनात्मक विज्ञान में प्रकट होता है।

6. व्यावहारिक निहितार्थ

6.1 संगठनात्मक निहितार्थ

प्रदर्शन सुधारने के इच्छुक संगठनों को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए:

पारदर्शी संचार और प्रतिबद्धताओं पर विश्वसनीय अनुसरण के माध्यम से विश्वास और मनोवैज्ञानिक सुरक्षा की खेती टीम मूल्यों के ईर्द-गिर्द स्पष्ट चर्चा और आम सहमति-निर्माण के माध्यम से साझा मानदंडों और सामूहिक उद्देश्य का विकास संचार बाधाओं को कम करने और बार-बार, अर्थपूर्ण अंतर्क्रिया सक्षम करने वाली सहयोगी बुनियादी ढांचे में निवेश भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता और समूह सुविधाकरण कौशल पर जोर देने वाला नेतृत्व विकास टीम विकास प्रक्रियाएँ जो समूहों को टकमैन के चरणों को प्रभावी ढंग से नेविगेट करने में मदद करें

6.2 समुदाय विकास निहितार्थ

सामूहिक चुनौतियों को संबोधित करने के इच्छुक समुदायों को मान्यता देनी चाहिए कि:

समुदाय कार्रवाई के लिए सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता और सामाजिक एकजुटता दोनों आवश्यक हैं—दूसरे को उपेक्षित करते हुए केवल एक का निर्माण सीमित परिणाम देता है सामूहिक कार्रवाई पहलों से पहले विश्वास-निर्माण प्रक्रियाएँ स्पष्ट मानदंड और अपेक्षाएँ सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता सक्रियण को सुविधाजनक बनाती हैं समूह विकास चरणों को नेविगेट करने में मदद करने वाला स्थानीय नेतृत्व विकास आवश्यक है

6.3 शैक्षिक निहितार्थ

शैक्षिक संस्थान छात्रों को एकता के लाभों का अनुभव करने की स्थितियों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए:

वास्तविक परस्पर निर्भरता की आवश्यकता वाले सहकारी शिक्षण संरचनाएँ

सहयोगी कौशल और समूह गतिशीलता में स्पष्ट निर्देश

सामूहिक जिम्मेदारी और पारस्परिक समर्थन पर जोर देने वाले कक्षा मानदंडों की स्थापना

सहयोग की शक्ति प्रदर्शित करने वाले मूर्त परिणाम उत्पन्न करने वाला परियोजना-आधारित शिक्षण

7. चर्चा और निष्कर्ष

इस पत्र में संश्लेषित शोध लोकोक्ति "एकता से शक्ति मिलती है, जो फलदायी परिणाम देती है" के लिए आकर्षक अनुभवजन्य पुष्टि प्रदान करता है। संगठनात्मक, समुदायिक और शैक्षिक संदर्भों में, एकजुट समूह लगातार कम एकजुट समूहों की तुलना में वांछित परिणाम प्राप्त करने में श्रेष्ठ प्रदर्शन करते हैं।

हालांकि, यह शोध लोकोक्ति की बुद्धिमत्ता में महत्वपूर्ण बारीकियाँ भी प्रकट करता है:

एकता बहुआयामी है, जिसमें केवल सामूहिक प्रभावकारिता ही नहीं बल्कि सामाजिक एकजुटता, विश्वास और साझा मानदंड भी शामिल हैं एकता और परिणामों के बीच संबंध गुणात्मक है, न कि योगात्मक—तत्वों का संयोजन असमानुपातिक परिणाम उत्पन्न करता है विश्वास आधारभूत है—इसके बिना, एकता के अन्य तत्व निष्क्रिय बने रहते हैं नेतृत्व महत्वपूर्ण रूप से मायने रखता है समूहों को परिणाम उत्पन्न करने वाली एकता विकसित और बनाए रखने में मदद करने के लिए संदर्भ अभिव्यक्ति को आकार देता है, हालांकि मौलिक सिद्धांत सार्वभौमिक प्रतीत होता है

सबसे महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, शोध दर्शाता है कि लोकोक्ति का वादा केवल प्रेरणादायक नहीं बल्कि व्यावहारिक रूप से प्राप्त करने योग्य है। संगठन और समुदाय जो सचेत रूप से प्रामाणिक एकता को सक्षम करने वाली स्थितियों का विकास करते हैं—विश्वास-निर्माण, मानदंड-निर्धारण, सहयोगी बुनियादी ढांचे और कुशल सुविधाकरण के माध्यम से—उचित रूप से लोकोक्ति द्वारा वादा किए गए "फलदायी परिणामों" की अपेक्षा कर सकते हैं। समकालीन संगठनों और समुदायों के समक्ष चुनौती यह नहीं है कि क्या एकता परिणाम देती है—शोध स्पष्ट रूप से पुष्टि करता है कि यह देती है—बल्कि यह है कि प्रामाणिक एकता को फलने-फूलने वाली स्थितियों को व्यवस्थित रूप से कैसे बनाया जाए। यह भविष्य के शोध और अभ्यास के लिए केंद्रीय फोकस बना रहता है।

8. भविष्य के शोध दिशाएँ

कई महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्नों की आगे जांच की आवश्यकता है:

संदर्भीय विविधताएँ: सांस्कृतिक, संगठनात्मक और समुदाय संदर्भ एकता को परिणाम उत्पन्न करने वाली स्थितियों को कैसे आकार देते हैं?

डिजिटल सहयोग गतिशीलता: रिमोट कार्य और डिजिटल सहयोग प्लेटफॉर्म सामूहिक एकजुटता के विकास और रखरखाव को कैसे प्रभावित करते हैं?

पैमाने और जटिलता: बहुत बड़े संगठनों या विविध समुदायों में एकता सिद्धांत कैसे स्केल होते हैं?

समय के साथ स्थिरता: एकजुट समूहों को अपनी एकजुटता और प्रभावकारिता को लंबे समय तक बनाए रखने वाले कारक क्या हैं?

उद्देश्यपूर्ण एकता विकास: प्रामाणिक विश्वास और साझा मानदंडों के विकास को सबसे प्रभावी ढंग से तेज करने वाली हस्तक्षेप क्या हैं?

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“समर्थ रामदासांच्या समर्थ संप्रदायाद्वारे संघटना कौशल्यातून घडलेले समाज परिवर्तन”**प्रा.डॉ. विमुक्ता राजे**

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सारांश (Abstract)

समर्थ रामदास हे केवळ संत किंवा तत्त्वज्ञ नव्हते, तर ते एक दूरदर्शी संघटक, राष्ट्रनिर्माते आणि समाजसुधारक होते. त्यांच्या संप्रदायाद्वारे त्यांनी केवळ अध्यात्मिक जागृतीच घडवली नाही, तर संघटनात्मक कौशल्याचा उपयोग करून समाज परिवर्तन घडवून आणले. ‘दासबोध’ आणि ‘मनाचे श्लोक’ या त्यांच्या ग्रंथांमधून त्यांनी व्यक्तीच्या अंतःकरणातील शक्ती जागृत करण्याचे कार्य केले, तसेच त्यांच्या अनुयायांच्या संघटनेद्वारे समाजात एकात्मता, शिस्त आणि स्वाभिमानाचे बीज पेरले.

रामदासांनी आपल्या संप्रदायाला केवळ धार्मिक चौकटीत मर्यादित ठेवले नाही. त्यांच्या मठ आणि मंदिरांनी सामाजिक आणि सांस्कृतिक बांधणीचे कार्य केले, जे आजच्या काळातील सामाजिक अभियंता (Social Engineer) सारखे दिसते. संत-शिष्य परंपरेतून त्यांनी जनतेला कर्मयोग, संयम आणि राष्ट्रसेवेचे धडे दिले. छत्रपती शिवाजी महाराजांसारख्या नेतृत्वाला त्यांनी अध्यात्मिक प्रेरणा आणि संघटनात्मक पाठबळ दिले, ज्यातून ‘रामराज्य’ या आदर्श संकल्पनेचा प्रत्यय समाजाला आला.

समर्थांच्या कार्यातील संघटनशक्ती ही केवळ भक्तिमार्गापुरती नव्हती, तर ती समाजजीवनाच्या प्रत्येक स्तरावर परिणामकारक ठरली. स्त्री-पुरुष, गरीब-श्रीमंत, गावकुसाबाहेरचे लोक – सर्वांना समानतेच्या सूत्रात बांधून रामदासांनी सामाजिक समरसतेचा पाया रचला. त्यांच्या संप्रदायाने अध्यात्म, राष्ट्रभावना आणि नैतिक मूल्ये यांचा संगम साधत जनमानसात आत्मविश्वास निर्माण केला.

अशा प्रकारे सामाजिक अभियांत्रिकी (Social Engineering) करत समर्थ रामदासांच्या संप्रदायाद्वारे उभ्या राहिलेल्या संघटनात्मक चळवळीमुळे समाजात नवचैतन्य, नैतिकता आणि राष्ट्रभावनेचा जागर झाला. त्यांच्या कार्यातून ‘संघटीत शक्ती हीच खऱ्या परिवर्तनाची जननी आहे’ हा संदेश आजही तेवढाच जिवंत आणि प्रेरणादायी वाटतो.

कीवर्ड्स समर्थ रामदास, संप्रदाय, संघटनकौशल्य, समाजपरिवर्तन, अध्यात्मिक जागृती, सामाजिक अभियांत्रिकी राष्ट्रभावना.

1. प्रास्ताविक :

मराठी समाजजीवनात संत परंपरेचे कार्य केवळ अध्यात्मिक मर्यादेत राहिले नाही, तर ते सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक आणि राजकीय परिवर्तनाचे प्रेरक तत्त्व ठरले आहे. या संत परंपरेतील समर्थ रामदास हे एक विलक्षण व्यक्तिमत्त्व होते. त्यांनी केवळ भक्तीचा प्रचार केला नाही, तर समाज संघटन, नैतिक जागृती, शौर्यप्रेरणा आणि राष्ट्रभक्ती या मूल्यांद्वारे जनतेत नवी ऊर्जा, चेतनास्रोत या गोष्टी निर्माण केल्या.

सतराव्या शतकात सामाजिक, राजकीय आणि धार्मिक परिस्थिती अत्यंत ढवळून निघालेली होती. इस्लामी राज्यकर्त्यांच्या काळात हिंदू समाजात उदासीनता, विभक्तता आणि भयाचे वातावरण होते. अशा काळात समर्थ रामदासांनी आपल्या **समर्थ संप्रदायाद्वारे** लोकांना धर्म, कर्तव्य आणि संघटनाचे महत्त्व पटवून दिले. त्यांनी स्थापन केलेल्या मठ-महंत व्यवस्था, दासबोधातील तत्त्वज्ञान, आणि शिष्य-परंपरेद्वारे घडवलेले संघटन कौशल्य हे समाज परिवर्तनाचे अधिष्ठान बनले.

समर्थ रामदास यांचा संप्रदाय हा केवळ धार्मिक चळवळ नव्हता, तर तो एक व्यापक सामाजिक परिवर्तनाचा मार्ग होता. ‘‘लोकी लोक वाढविले | तेणे समुदाय केले |’’ या त्यांच्या उपदेशातून सामूहिक सेवाभाव, आत्मबल व राष्ट्रभावना जागवली

गेली. प्रस्तुत संशोधन निबंधात समर्थ संप्रदायाने केलेल्या सामूहिक सेवाकार्याचा अभ्यास करून त्यातून समाजजीवनात घडवलेल्या परिवर्तनाचा विचार केला आहे.

समर्थ रामदासांनी समाजाला केवळ 'भक्ती' नव्हे तर 'शक्ती'चीही जाणीव करून दिली. त्यांनी "भक्तीमध्ये शक्ती आणि शक्तीमध्ये भक्ती" असा अद्वितीय संगम साधला. समर्थ संप्रदायाने युवकांना संघटीत केले, समाजातील दुर्बल घटकांना आत्मविश्वास दिला, आणि स्वराज्याच्या कार्यासाठी समर्थ आधार तयार केला.

या संशोधन पेपरमध्ये समर्थ रामदासांच्या संप्रदायाची सामाजिक भूमिका, त्यांचे संघटन कौशल्य आणि त्या माध्यमातून झालेल्या समाजपरिवर्तनाचा अभ्यास केला आहे. समर्थ संप्रदायाच्या माध्यमातून घडलेली ही सामाजिक क्रांती केवळ धार्मिक आंदोलन नव्हे तर भारतीय समाजाच्या चेतनेला नवे वळण देणारे युगप्रवर्तक असे कार्य होते.

2. संशोधन उद्दिष्ट आणि संशोधन पद्धत :

या संशोधनाचा मुख्य हेतू म्हणजे समर्थ रामदासांच्या संप्रदायाद्वारे घडलेल्या समाजपरिवर्तनाचा संघटन कौशल्याच्या दृष्टिकोनातून अभ्यास करणे. समर्थांचे तत्त्वज्ञान तसेच कृती आणि संघटन रचनेने जनमानसावर केलेल्या परिणामांचा शोध घेणे हा या अभ्यासाचा केंद्रबिंदू आहे.

समर्थ संप्रदायाने समाजात निर्माण केलेली राष्ट्रीयता, नैतिकता आणि आत्मशक्ती यांचा प्रभाव अभ्यासणे. समर्थांच्या विचारसरणीचा आजच्या समाजात आणि संघटन व्यवस्थेत असलेला संदर्भ व उपयोग तपासणे.

या संशोधनात समर्थ रामदासांच्या संप्रदायाद्वारे घडलेल्या समाजपरिवर्तनाचा अभ्यास गुणात्मक संशोधन पद्धतीने (Qualitative Research Method) करण्यात आला आहे.

3. संप्रदायाची पार्श्वभूमी :

भारतातील संतपरंपरेत समर्थ रामदास (१६०८-१६८२) यांचे स्थान अत्यंत महत्वाचे आहे. त्यांनी दासबोध आणि मनाचे श्लोक यांसारख्या ग्रंथांमध्ये जीवनातील चारित्र्य, प्रयत्नवाद, संघटनशक्ती आणि समाजसेवेचे तत्त्वज्ञान मांडले. समर्थ संप्रदायाने समाजाला आत्मशक्ती, संघटनबळ आणि राष्ट्रभक्ती या मूल्यांची शिकवण दिली. "Transforming Lives – The Power of Collective Service" प्रस्तुत सेमिनारच्या दृष्टिकोनातून पाहता, समर्थ संप्रदाय हे एक असे आदर्श उदाहरण आहे जिथे अध्यात्मिकता आणि समाज परिवर्तन एकत्र आले.

संत परंपरेच्या सुवर्णयुगात समर्थ रामदास यांचा उदय झाला. सतरावे शतक हे भारतातील धार्मिक, सामाजिक आणि राजकीय उलथापालथीचे युग होते. मुस्लिम सत्तेमुळे हिंदू समाजात अधःपतन, अंधश्रद्धा, सामाजिक भेदभाव आणि दुर्बल मानसिकता हे सर्व वाढीस लागले होते. अशा स्थितीत समर्थ रामदासांनी "बलोपासना, मनाची शुद्धी आणि समाजाची एकता" या तिन्ही अंगांनी समाज उभा करण्याचा संकल्प केला.

संघटीत स्वरूपात एक विशिष्ट विचार रुजविण्याचे तंत्र त्या काळाला अभिनव होते. समाजबांधणीचा हा प्रयत्न वेगळा होता. समाजपरिवर्तनासाठी रामदासांनी अलिकडे संघटनशास्त्र म्हणतात तसे पद्धतशीर प्रयत्न केले. प्रयत्न, बुद्धिवाद, ज्ञान आणि विवेक या चतुःसूत्रीवर त्यांचे संघटन आधारित होते.

समर्थ रामदास यांनी 'रामभक्ती'च्या माध्यमातून आत्मशक्ती जागवली आणि संघटनेला दिशा दिली. त्यांचा संप्रदाय हा फक्त धार्मिक नव्हे तर समाजरचनेचे पुनरुज्जीवन करणारे आंदोलन ठरले. त्यांनी भारतभर ११०० मठ तसेच ११ मारुती मंदिरे, ठिकठिकाणी राममंदिरे स्थापन करून अनेक महंत व शिष्य घडवले. त्यातूनच संघटनात्मक कार्याची शृंखला निर्माण केली.

सामर्थ्य आहे चळवळीचे। जो जो करील त्याचे । (२०-४-२६)

ही ओवी समर्थांच्या कर्तव्यप्रधान व संघटनशील जीवनदृष्टीची साक्ष देते.

४. संघटन कौशल्याची वैशिष्ट्ये :

समर्थ रामदास यांचे संघटन कौशल्य हे आधुनिक नेतृत्व व्यवस्थेप्रमाणे तसेच संघटनाशास्त्राप्रमाणे नियोजनबद्ध, प्रोत्साहनप्रधान आणि उद्देश्यपूर्ण होते. त्यांच्या संघटन कौशल्याची वैशिष्ट्ये पुढीलप्रमाणे:

(अ) संघटना स्वरूप :

रामदासांनी संघटनेसाठी काही नीतीनियम व कार्यप्रणाली आखून दिली. त्याचा विचार दासबोधातील काही निवडक ओव्यांच्या आधारे केला आहे.

'मुख्य सूत्र हाती घ्यावे । करणे ते लोकांकरवी करवावे ।

कितेक खलक उगवावे । राजकारणामध्ये ॥' (१९-९-१८)

संघटनेत राजकारण करताना चार्तुयाने मुख्य नियंत्रण संघटकाने म्हणजेच नेत्याने अधिकार आपल्या हाती ठेवावे. मात्र अनेक धूर्त, चतुर (खलक) लोकांना सामील करून घेत लोकांकडून ते कार्य करवून घ्यावे.

(ब) सामाजिक संघटन :

समाजातील सर्व स्तरातील लोकांना एकत्र आणून त्यांनी 'समानता आणि प्रयत्नवादाचा'चा संदेश दिला.

'सुगड संगीत गुणग्राही । अनापेक्षी लोकसंग्रही ।

आर्जव सख्य सर्वही । प्राणीमात्रासी ॥

सात्विक शुद्धमार्गी । निःकपट निर्वसनी ॥' (२-८-१९)

ज्यास लोकसंग्रह करायचा आहे, अशा संघटकास आपला लोकसंग्रह वाढवायचा आहे त्याने साहित्य आणि संगीत जाणले पाहिजे. गुणी माणसांचा आदर केला पाहिजे. त्याचे वागणे, सौम्य, सात्विक आणि नीतिमान असले पाहिजे. तो स्वतः निर्व्यसनी असला पाहिजे व मनामध्ये कपट कारस्थान ठेवता कामा नये.

'द्रव्यसुची दारासुची । न्यायसुची अंतरसुची ।

प्रवृत्ति सुची निवृत्तीसुची । सर्वसुची निःसंगपणे ॥' (२-८-२०)

परद्रव्य आणि परनारी यांचा लोभ जो धरीत नाही त्याचे अंतःकरण निर्मळ आणि वागणे नीती न्यायाच्या मर्यादेत असते. प्रवृत्तीमार्ग व निवृत्तीमार्ग म्हणजेच प्रपंच व परमार्थ हे दोन्हीही तो उत्तम रीतीने करतो. कोणत्याही आंतरिक अपेक्षेने वागत नसल्याने त्याचे विचार, उच्चार आणि आचार अत्यंत प्रभावी असतात. या सगळ्या गुणविशेषांनी युक्त असणारा माणूस आपोआपच विपुल लोकसंग्रह करू शकतो.

(क) चातुर्य :

'येक ठायी बैसोन राहिला । तरी मग व्यापची बुडाला ।

सावधपणे ज्याला त्याला । भेटि द्यावी ॥' (१५-१-३४)

संघटक एकाच ठिकाणी बसून राहिला तर त्याचा जनसंपर्क तुटतो. यासाठी तो सर्वत्र हिंडत राहिला पाहिजे. वेगवेगळ्या थरातील भिन्न पेशातील, उच्चनीच अशा सामाजिक स्तरांतील वेगवेगळ्या क्षेत्रातील लोकांशी संपर्कात राहिला पाहिजे. भेटताना मोकळेपणाने भेटले तरी अंतरीचा सावधपणा मात्र सोडू नये.

'अखंड तजवीजा चाळणा जेथे । पाहता काय उणे तेथे ।

येकांतेविण प्राणियांते । बुद्धी कैची ॥' (१९-६-२९)

कोणतेही अवघड व महत्वाचे कार्य करावयाचे असल्यास त्याची चाळणा (अभ्यास) करावी म्हणजे सांगोपांग विचार करावा आणि असा सांगोपांग विचार करण्याकरिता, बुद्धी तीक्ष्ण होण्याकरिता एकांतात बसावे.

(ड) राजकीय-संघटन :

छत्रपती शिवाजी महाराजांच्या स्वराज्य स्थापनेस समर्थानी मानसिक व नैतिक बळ दिले. “देशभक्ती म्हणजे धर्मभक्ती” अशी त्यांनी नवी व्याख्या समाजमनात रुजवली.

कोणतीही गोष्ट झटपट साध्य होत नसून त्यासाठी सातत्य व चिकाटी लागते.

'जाणत्याचे धूर्तपण । जाणत्याचे राजकारण ।

जाणत्याचे निरूपण । ऐकत जावे ।।' (१२-२-१४)

जाणत्या माणसाकडून त्याचे मुत्सद्दीपण व चतुरपण (राजकारण) पाहत पाहत ते आत्मसात करावे. जे बोलेल, सांगेल ते ऐकून, मनन करून त्यातील सत्व शोधून घ्यावे. मुत्सद्दी (धूर्त) लोकांचे डावपेच ओळखण्यात व त्यानुसार प्रत्युत्तर देण्यास वाकबगार असावे.

'जाणत्याचे पेंच जाणावे । जाणत्याचे पीळ उकलावे ।

जाणता राखेल तैसे राखावे। लोक राजी ।।' (१८-२-११)

हा जाणता माणूस विरोधकांना पेचात कसा पकडतो, त्यांच्या पेचातून कसा सुटतो हे ज्ञान करून घ्यावे. त्यांच्या मनातील अनेक योजना जाणून घ्याव्यात तसेच तो वेगवेगळ्या लोकांशी कसा वागतो मजून घ्यावे. अनेक लोकांना राजी राखून लोकसंग्रह कसा करतो हे जाणून घ्यावे, ते आत्मसात करावे आणि त्याप्रमाणे वागून लोकसंग्रह वाढवावा.

५. समर्थ संप्रदायाद्वारे घडलेली समाजपरिवर्तनाची प्रक्रिया :

समाजपरिवर्तन ही एक क्रमिक आणि संघटित प्रक्रिया असते. समर्थांच्या संघटना कार्यातून ती स्पष्टपणे अधोरेखित होताना दिसते.

प्रक्रिया :

१. आत्मजागृतीतून व्यक्तीमध्ये कर्तव्यभाव आणि आत्मविश्वास निर्माण केला.
२. संघटन निर्मिती मठ, शाखा व शिष्यसंस्था स्थापून त्यातून सामाजिक बळ वाढविले.
३. नैतिक व धार्मिक शिक्षण देत दासबोधाद्वारे आणि मनाच्या श्लोकातून समाजात सदाचार, संयम आणि राष्ट्रभक्ती वाढविली.
४. सामाजिक एकात्मता जातीभेद व अंधश्रद्धा कमी करून सामूहिकतेची भावना निर्माण केली.
५. स्वराज्य स्थापनेसाठी समाजात राष्ट्रभक्तीची ज्योत प्रज्वलित केली.

यासंदर्भात दासबोधातील निवडक ओव्या :

दासबोध हा समर्थ संप्रदायाचा बौद्धिक पाया आहे, तर मनाचे श्लोक हा मानसिक आधार आहे. त्यात व्यक्ती, समाज आणि राज्यव्यवस्थेसाठी आचारसंहिता दिली आहे. काही निवडक ओव्या :

'शांती करून करवावी । तर्हे सांडून सांडवावी ।

क्रिया करून करवावी । बहुतांकरवी ।।' (११-५-१६)

कठिण प्रसंगी संघटकाने शांत राहावे आणि इतरांस शांत राहण्यास शिकवावे. आपले कर्म करीत रहावे ते मध्येच सोडू नये आणि इतरांकडूनही ते करवून घ्यावे.

'उदंड उपासनेची कामे । लावीत जावी नित्यनेमे ।

अवकाश कैचा कृत्रिमे ।। करावयासी ।।' (१९-९-८)

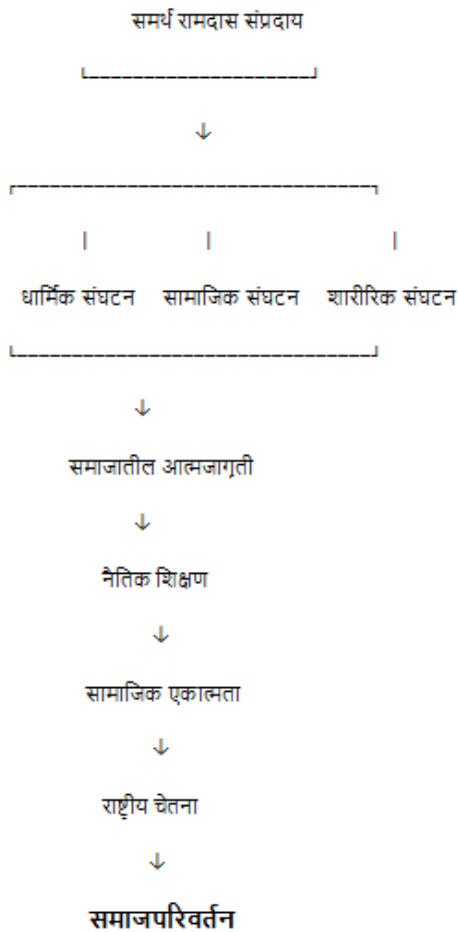
नित्यनेमाने करायची अशी उपासनेची पुष्कळ कामे समुदायाच्या संघटनेच्या मागे लावून द्यावीत लोक त्यात गुंतून राहिले की मग कुरापती काढण्यास, लबाडी करण्यास कुणास सवडच उरणार नाही.

राखावी बहुतांची अंतरे । भाग्य येते तदनंतरे ।' (११-३-१८)

रामदासांच्या लोकसंग्रह विषयक विचारांचे सारच जणू यात सांगितले आहे. ज्याला आपले आयुष्य सफल करायचे आहे त्याला लोकसंग्रहाशिवाय पर्याय नाही. असे सफल जीवन असणाऱ्यालाच आपण भाग्यवान म्हणालो रामदासांनी विपुल लोकसंग्रह केला तसेच, लोकसंघटनेचे महत्त्वपूर्ण कार्य करून विशिष्ट विचारधारा असलेल्या समर्थ संप्रदायाची स्थापना केली.

वरील निवडक ओव्यांमधून समर्थाचा संघटनवाद, प्रयत्नवाद आणि राष्ट्रभक्तीचा आत्मा स्पष्टपणे प्रकट होतो.

६. समर्थ संप्रदाय प्रारूप (Diagram) :



७. समर्थाचे संघटन वैशिष्ट्य :

समर्थ रामदास हे पारतंत्र्याच्या काळात एक सुनिश्चित जीवनकार्य घेऊन प्रेरित झाले होते. हे कार्य राष्ट्र उभारणीचे होते. त्यासाठी समाज जागृतीची गरज होती. त्याकरता समुदायाची शक्ती लागते, म्हणजे संघटना लागते ती त्यांनी उभी केली.

माणसांना संघटीत करून त्यांच्याकडून सत्कार्य घडवून आणले, त्याकरता रामदासांनी ठिकठिकाणी मठांची स्थापना करून मठाधिपती नेमून तरुणांना संघटित करून त्यांच्यात राष्ट्रभक्ती निर्माण केली. एक प्रबळ संघटना निर्माण केली.

रामदास स्वतः उत्तम संघटक होते. त्यांनी अतिशय शिस्तबद्धपणे महंतांना मार्गदर्शन केलेले दिसते. त्यांचे हे मार्गदर्शन सांप्रत काळातील संघटकासही उपयुक्त ठरणारे असे आहे.

रामदासांच्या संघटनाविचार आजही ग्राह्य ठरावा असाच आहे. सामान्य माणसाच्या सहभागातून लोकसंग्रह हे संघटनेचे सूत्र त्यांनी मांडले.

८. समारोप :

समर्थ रामदासांच्या संप्रदायाने भक्ती आणि शक्ती यांचा विलक्षण समन्वय साधून समाजात नवा आत्मविश्वास, संघटनबुद्धी आणि राष्ट्रभक्ती निर्माण केली. समर्थ केवळ अध्यात्माचे उपदेशक न राहता, सामाजिक अभियंते म्हणून समाज संघटना (Social Engineering) घडवली. त्यांच्या कार्यातून निर्माण झालेला हा परिवर्तनाचा प्रवाह आजही भारतीय संस्कृतीत तेजस्वीपणे प्रवाही आहे.

समर्थ संप्रदायाचे कार्य हे आधुनिक “collective service” संकल्पनेचे आदर्श भारतीय उदाहरण आहे. एकत्रित प्रयत्न आणि संघटनातून समाज सुधारता येतो. व्यक्तिगत विकास आणि सामाजिक विकास यांचा संगम आवश्यक आहे. संतांचा विचार आजच्या स्वयंसेवी व सामाजिक संस्थांमध्ये देखील लागू आहे.

९. निष्कर्ष :

१. समर्थ रामदास यांचा समर्थ संप्रदाय हा भारतीय सामूहिक प्रयत्नवादाचा सर्वोत्तम नमुना आहे.
२. समर्थांच्या विचारांनी आणि संघटन कार्याने समाजात आत्मनिर्भरता, नैतिकता आणि राष्ट्रभावना निर्माण केली.
३. आजच्या काळातही त्यांची शिकवण समाज परिवर्तनाचे शक्तिशाली साधन ठरू शकते.
४. समर्थ रामदास हे केवळ भक्तीचे उपदेशक नव्हते, तर समाजसंघटनाचे द्रष्टे नेते होते.
५. समर्थांच्या संप्रदायाने धार्मिक जागृतीसह सामाजिक, शारीरिक आणि नैतिक शिस्त यांचा संगम साधला.
६. दासबोधाच्या आणि मनाच्या श्लोकांच्या माध्यमातून त्यांनी जनमानसात आत्मशक्ती, कर्मनिष्ठा आणि संघटनबुद्धी रुजवली.
७. स्वतः समर्थांनी आणि त्यांच्या शिष्यसंस्थांनी लोकांना एकत्र आणून स्वराज्याच्या स्थापनेला बळ दिले.
८. भक्ती आणि शक्ती या दोन्हीच्या संतुलनातून त्यांनी समाजाला नवजीवन दिले.
९. समर्थ संप्रदाय आजही संघटन, नैतिकता आणि राष्ट्रभक्तीचे प्रतीक आहे.
१०. समर्थांच्या कार्यातून घडलेले समाजपरिवर्तन हे भारतीय संस्कृतीच्या नवचैतन्याचे अनन्य उदाहरण आहे.

१०. संदर्भ सूची :

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३. रामदास दर्शन – अर्थात रामदासांच्या वाडमयातील वेचे, मॉडर्न बुक डेपो, पुणे, १९७२.
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५. समुदाय संघटन : समाजकार्य पद्धत – डॉ. घोंगडे दिलीप, अथर्व पब्लिकेशन, जळगाव, २०२४.

“राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या संदर्भात राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे (NSS) योगदान : एक अभ्यास”**सह प्रा. रुपेश यशवंत महाडीक**

सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, मराठी भाषा आणि साहित्य विभाग, विद्या प्रसारक मंडळाचे, के.ग.जोशी कला आणि ना.गो.बेडेकर वाणिज्य महाविद्यालय(स्वायत्त), ठाणे

प्रस्तावना

भारतासारख्या विकसनशील आणि लोकशाहीप्रधान राष्ट्रांमध्ये राष्ट्रनिर्मिती ही केवळ शासनाची जबाबदारी नसून समाजातील प्रत्येक घटकाची सामूहिक जबाबदारी आहे. राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या प्रक्रियेत सामाजिक सलोखा, राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता, लोकसहभाग, मूल्यशिक्षण आणि सामाजिक बांधिलकी या घटकांना अनन्यसाधारण महत्त्व आहे. या सर्व घटकांच्या विकासासाठी युवाशक्तीचा सक्रिय सहभाग आवश्यक आहे. याच दृष्टीने भारत सरकारने युवकांना समाजाभिमुख करण्यासाठी राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना (NSS) ही महत्वाची योजना सुरू केली.

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना ही ‘शिक्षण आणि सेवा’ यांचा समन्वय साधणारी योजना असून, तिचा मुख्य उद्देश "शिक्षणातून सेवा आणि सेवेतून शिक्षण" हा आहे. या योजनेद्वारे विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये सामाजिक जाणीव, राष्ट्रप्रेम, कर्तव्यभावना आणि नेतृत्वगुण विकसित होऊन राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या प्रक्रियेस चालना मिळते.

संशोधनाचा उद्देश

१. राष्ट्रनिर्मितीची संकल्पना स्पष्ट करणे.
२. राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या प्रक्रियेत NSS चे योगदान विश्लेषित करणे.
३. विद्यार्थ्यांच्या व्यक्तिमत्त्व विकासात NSS ची भूमिका अभ्यासणे.
४. समाजविकास व राष्ट्रीय एकात्मतेत NSS चे योगदान स्पष्ट करणे.

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना : निर्मितीची पार्श्वभूमी

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना १९६९ साली महात्मा गांधी यांच्या जन्मशताब्दीनिमित्त भारत सरकारने सुरू केली. युवकांना सामाजिक सेवेसाठी प्रवृत्त करणे हा या योजनेचा मुख्य हेतू आहे. त्याची प्रमुख उद्दिष्टे पुढीलप्रमाणे -

- विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये सामाजिक जाणीव व जबाबदारी निर्माण करणे.
- राष्ट्रप्रेम व राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता बळकट करणे.
- समाजातील समस्या ओळखून त्यावर उपाययोजना करण्याची क्षमता विकसित करणे.
- स्वयंसेवकांमध्ये नेतृत्वगुण व सेवाभाव निर्माण करणे.
- ग्रामीण व शहरी समाजामध्ये समन्वय साधणे.

राष्ट्रनिर्मिती : संकल्पना

राष्ट्रनिर्मिती ही एक व्यापक, सर्वांगीण आणि दीर्घकालीन सामाजिक प्रक्रिया असून तिचा उद्देश केवळ भौगोलिक किंवा राजकीय राष्ट्र उभारणे एवढाच मर्यादित नसतो. राष्ट्रनिर्मिती म्हणजे समाजातील विविध घटकांमध्ये राष्ट्रीय जाणीव, सामाजिक ऐक्य, सांस्कृतिक समन्वय, लोकशाही मूल्ये आणि नैतिक बांधिलकी विकसित करून सशक्त व एकात्म राष्ट्र घडविण्याची प्रक्रिया होय. नागरिकांच्या सहभागातून राष्ट्राच्या सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक आणि राजकीय रचनेचा विकास साधणे, हे राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या केंद्रस्थानी असते.

राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या प्रक्रियेत राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता हा महत्वाचा घटक आहे. विविध जाती, धर्म, भाषा, प्रदेश आणि संस्कृती असूनही परस्पर सहअस्तित्व, सहिष्णुता आणि बंधुभावाची भावना निर्माण होणे आवश्यक ठरते. यासोबतच लोकशाही मूल्ये—स्वातंत्र्य, समता, न्याय, बंधुता आणि मानवी हक्क या मूल्यांचा स्वीकार व आचरण राष्ट्रनिर्मितीस पूरक ठरतो.

शिक्षण हे राष्ट्रनिर्मितीचे प्रभावी साधन मानले जाते. शिक्षणाद्वारे नागरिकांमध्ये सामाजिक जाणीव, कर्तव्यभावना, राष्ट्रप्रेम आणि नैतिक मूल्यांची जडणघडण होते. तसेच सामाजिक न्याय, आर्थिक समानता आणि सर्वसमावेशक विकास हे घटक राष्ट्रनिर्मितीची प्रक्रिया अधिक सक्षम करतात. नागरिकांचा सक्रिय सहभाग, स्वयंसेवी संस्था, युवक संघटना आणि सामाजिक चळवळी राष्ट्रनिर्मितीत महत्वाची भूमिका बजावतात.

अशा प्रकारे राष्ट्रनिर्मिती ही शासन आणि नागरिक यांच्या संयुक्त प्रयत्नातून घडणारी प्रक्रिया असून, ती समाजाच्या सर्वांगीण विकासावर आधारित असते. सशक्त, समृद्ध व स्थिर राष्ट्र उभारण्यासाठी राष्ट्रनिर्मिती ही अनिवार्य व सातत्यपूर्ण प्रक्रिया मानली गेली आहे.

राष्ट्रनिर्मितीत राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे योगदान

राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या प्रक्रियेत युवाशक्तीची भूमिका अत्यंत महत्वाची असून, त्या युवाशक्तीला समाजाभिमुख व राष्ट्राभिमुख करण्याचे कार्य राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना प्रभावीपणे पूर्ण करते. राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना ही शिक्षण आणि समाजसेवा यांचा समन्वय साधणारी योजना असून, तिचे ब्रीदवाक्य “Not Me But You” हा राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या तत्वाशी सुसंगत आहे. राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या विविध उपक्रमांद्वारे राष्ट्रनिर्मितीच्या अनेक अंगांना बळ मिळते.

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेमुळे राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता आणि बंधुभाव

सदर संशोधनाचे एक प्रमुख उद्दिष्ट म्हणजे राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या माध्यमातून राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता व बंधुभाव कसा विकसित होतो याचा अभ्यास करणे होय. या उद्दिष्टाच्या पूर्ततेसाठी राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या निवडक उपक्रमांचे विश्लेषण पुढीलप्रमाणे करता येईल.

१) राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना विशेष शिबिर

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेची विशेष शिबिरे ग्रामीण भागात आयोजित केली जातात. या शिबिरांमध्ये विविध जाती, धर्म व शैक्षणिक पार्श्वभूमीतील स्वयंसेवक एकत्र राहून स्वच्छता, साक्षरता व आरोग्य जनजागृतीची कामे करतात. सामूहिक निवास व श्रमदानामुळे परस्पर सहकार्य, समज आणि बंधुभाव निर्माण होतो. यावरून सदर उपक्रम राष्ट्रीय एकात्मतेस पोषक ठरतात हे दिसून येते.

२) राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता शिबिर

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या अंतर्गत आयोजित राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता शिबिरांमध्ये विविध राज्यांतील स्वयंसेवक सहभागी होतात. सांस्कृतिक सादरीकरण, अनुभव कथन आणि सामूहिक सेवा उपक्रमांमुळे भाषिक व प्रादेशिक भेद कमी होतात. या उपक्रमांमुळे युवकांमध्ये ‘एक राष्ट्र’ ही भावना दृढ होते.

३) आपत्ती व्यवस्थापनातील राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचा सहभाग

पूर, भूकंप, महामारी यांसारख्या आपत्तीच्या काळात राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे स्वयंसेवक मदतकार्य करतात. धर्म, जात किंवा भाषा न पाहता सर्व नागरिकांना मदत करण्याची भावना स्वयंसेवकांमध्ये विकसित होते. उदाहरणार्थ, कोविड-१९ महामारीच्या काळात राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या स्वयंसेवकांनी अन्नवाटप, लसीकरण जनजागृती आणि आरोग्य सहाय्य कार्यात सक्रिय सहभाग घेतला. मानवतावादी दृष्टिकोन, सहिष्णुता आणि सामाजिक सलोखा या मूल्यांचा विकास होऊन राष्ट्रीय बंधुभाव दृढ होतो. यावरून राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना हे राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता निर्माण करणारे प्रभावी माध्यम आहे, हे संशोधन उद्दिष्टांच्या आधारे अधोरेखित होते. राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांमुळे सर्व विद्यार्थी एकत्र येऊन काम करतात. यामुळे राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता, बंधुभाव आणि सहिष्णुतेची भावना निर्माण होते.

सामाजिक जबाबदारीची जाणीव

विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये सामाजिक जबाबदारीची जाणीव निर्माण करणे हे राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे प्रमुख उद्दिष्ट आहे. विविध सामाजिक उपक्रमांच्या माध्यमातून विद्यार्थी समाजाशी प्रत्यक्ष जोडले जातात आणि समाजातील समस्या, गरजा व वास्तव यांची जाणीव त्यांना येते.

१) स्वच्छता अभियान

स्वच्छ भारत अभियानांतर्गत राबविण्यात येणाऱ्या ग्रामस्वच्छता, परिसर स्वच्छता, शौचालय स्वच्छता, प्लास्टिकमुक्त मोहिमा यांमुळे विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये स्वच्छतेचे महत्त्व सखोलपणे रुजते. सार्वजनिक ठिकाणांची स्वच्छता ही केवळ प्रशासनाची नव्हे तर प्रत्येक नागरिकाची जबाबदारी आहे, ही जाणीव त्यांच्यात निर्माण होते. स्वच्छतेअभावी रोगराई पसरते आणि आरोग्यावर विपरीत परिणाम होतो, हे विद्यार्थी प्रत्यक्ष अनुभवातून समजून घेतात. त्यामुळे वैयक्तिक स्वच्छतेबरोबरच सामाजिक स्वच्छतेविषयी सामूहिक उत्तरदायित्वाची भावना विकसित होते.

२) रक्तदान शिबिरे

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेअंतर्गत आयोजित रक्तदान शिबिरांमुळे 'दान हीच सेवा' ही मूल्यभावना विद्यार्थ्यांच्या मनात दृढ होते. स्वतः रक्तदान करून अपघातग्रस्त, आजारी किंवा गरजू रुग्णांचे प्राण वाचू शकतात, ही जाणीव विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये माणुसकी, परोपकार व सामाजिक संवेदनशीलता निर्माण करते. रक्तदानासंबंधी असलेले गैरसमज दूर होऊन समाजाच्या आरोग्य व्यवस्थेत सक्रिय सहभाग घेण्याची जबाबदारी विद्यार्थ्यांना समजते. त्यामुळे ते केवळ प्रेक्षक न राहता जबाबदार घटक बनतात.

३) वृक्षारोपण व पर्यावरण संवर्धन

वृक्षारोपण, जलसंधारण, पाणी बचत, पर्यावरण जनजागृती यांसारख्या उपक्रमांमुळे विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये पर्यावरण संरक्षणाची सामाजिक व नैतिक जबाबदारी विकसित होते. वाढते प्रदूषण, हवामान बदल, पाणीटंचाई यांसारख्या समस्या मानवनिर्मित असल्याची जाणीव त्यांना होते. आज केलेले वृक्षारोपण व पर्यावरण संवर्धन भविष्यातील पिढ्यांच्या जीवनासाठी आवश्यक आहे, ही दीर्घकालीन सामाजिक जाणीव विद्यार्थ्यांच्या मनात रुजते. त्यामुळे शाश्वत विकासाचा दृष्टिकोन विकसित होतो.

४) आरोग्य जनजागृती उपक्रम

एड्स जनजागृती, व्यसनमुक्ती, मानसिक आरोग्य, पोषण आहार, महिला व बाल आरोग्य यांसारख्या विषयांवरील जनजागृती कार्यक्रमांमुळे समाजातील आरोग्यविषयक अज्ञान दूर करण्याचे महत्त्व विद्यार्थ्यांना कळते. आरोग्य ही वैयक्तिक बाब नसून सामाजिक प्रश्न आहे, हे त्यांना उमगते. समाजात योग्य माहिती पोहोचवून लोकांच्या जीवनशैलीत सकारात्मक बदल घडविता येतो, ही जबाबदारी विद्यार्थी स्वीकारतात. अशा उपक्रमांमुळे आरोग्यदायी व जागरूक समाजनिर्मितीस हातभार लागतो.

मूल्यशिक्षण आणि चारित्र्यनिर्मिती

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना ही विद्यार्थ्यांना केवळ सेवा उपक्रमांमध्ये सहभागी करून घेणारी योजना नसून त्यांच्यात मूल्यशिक्षण आणि चारित्र्यनिर्मिती घडविण्याचे महत्त्वाचे कार्य करते. विविध सामाजिक, शैक्षणिक व सेवाभावी उपक्रमांत प्रत्यक्ष सहभाग घेताना स्वयंसेवकांना जीवनमूल्यांचा अनुभवातून बोध होतो.

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांतून विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये प्रामाणिकपणा विकसित होतो. समाजासाठी काम करताना जबाबदारीने, निष्ठेने व पारदर्शकपणे कार्य करणे आवश्यक असते. कोणताही स्वार्थ न ठेवता सेवा करण्याची सवय लागल्याने प्रामाणिक वृत्ती दृढ होते. शिस्त ही राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेची मूलभूत मूल्यंपैकी एक आहे. वेळेचे पालन, नियमांचे अनुसरण, संघटित पद्धतीने काम करणे आणि वरिष्ठांचे मार्गदर्शन स्वीकारणे यामुळे विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये शिस्तबद्ध जीवनशैली निर्माण होते. ही शिस्त त्यांच्या वैयक्तिक व व्यावसायिक आयुष्यातही उपयोगी ठरते.

सेवाभाव हा राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचा आत्मा आहे. “Not Me But You” या ब्रीदवाक्यामुळे स्वतःपेक्षा समाजाचे हित महत्वाचे मानण्याची वृत्ती स्वयंसेवकांमध्ये विकसित होते. समाजातील दुर्बल, वंचित घटकांसाठी काम करताना करुणा, सहानुभूती व माणुसकीची भावना अधिक बळकट होते.

समूहात कार्य करताना सहकार्य आणि संघभावना यांचे महत्त्व विद्यार्थ्यांना समजते. विविध पार्श्वभूमीतील लोकांबरोबर काम करताना समन्वय, व परस्पर आदरभाव निर्माण होतो. हे गुण लोकशाही समाजासाठी अत्यावश्यक आहेत.

त्यासोबतच राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांमुळे त्याग आणि कर्तव्यभावना विद्यार्थ्यांच्या मनात रुजते. वेळ, श्रम आणि कधी-कधी वैयक्तिक बाबींचा त्याग करून समाजासाठी कार्य करण्याची सवय लागते. हीच त्यागशील वृत्ती राष्ट्रनिर्मितीसाठी आवश्यक असलेल्या आदर्श नागरिकाची ओळख ठरते. राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या स्वयंसेवकांना प्रामाणिकपणा, शिस्त, सेवाभाव, सहकार्य आणि त्याग यांसारखी मूल्ये आत्मसात करण्याची संधी मिळते. ही मूल्ये राष्ट्रनिर्मितीसाठी अत्यंत आवश्यक आहेत.

युवा नेतृत्वाचा विकास

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना ही युवकांमधील नेतृत्वगुण विकसित करणारे प्रभावी व्यासपीठ आहे. स्वयंसेवकांना विविध जबाबदाऱ्या दिल्या जातात. उपक्रमांचे नियोजन, वेळेचे व्यवस्थापन व समन्वय साधणे या प्रक्रियांमधून त्यांच्यात नेतृत्वगुणांचा विकास होतो. जबाबदारी स्वीकारण्याची सवय लागल्याने आत्मविश्वास वाढतो आणि निर्णयक्षम नेतृत्व घडते. समाजाभिमुख दृष्टिकोन विकसित होतो. समाजातील प्रत्यक्ष समस्या समजून घेऊन त्यावर उपाययोजना करण्याची संधी स्वयंसेवकांना मिळते. नेतृत्व म्हणजे केवळ आदेश देणे नसून सेवा, सहकार्य आणि संवेदनशीलता हे त्याचे मूलतत्त्व आहे. ही जाणीव राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या कार्यातून दृढ होते.

मर्यादा आणि आव्हाने

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना ही समाजोपयोगी व मूल्याधिष्ठित उपक्रमांची चळवळ असली तरी तिच्या अंमलबजावणीत काही मर्यादा आणि आव्हाने प्रकर्षाने जाणवतात. या मर्यादा लक्षात घेणे इथे आवश्यक ठरते.

१) उपक्रमांची औपचारिकता

काही ठिकाणी राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे उपक्रम केवळ अहवाल, उपस्थिती किंवा गुणांकनापुरते मर्यादित राहतात. नियोजनात नाविन्याचा अभाव असल्यामुळे उपक्रमांचा अपेक्षित सामाजिक परिणाम साधला जात नाही. औपचारिकतेमुळे स्वयंसेवकांमध्ये सेवाभावाऐवजी केवळ कर्तव्यपूर्तीची भावना निर्माण होते, ज्यामुळे राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या मूळ उद्दिष्टांवर मर्यादा येतात.

२) स्वयंसेवकांचा मर्यादित सहभाग

अनेक वेळा शैक्षणिक ताण, परीक्षांचे वेळापत्रक किंवा वैयक्तिक कारणांमुळे सर्व स्वयंसेवकांचा सक्रिय सहभाग मिळत नाही. काही विद्यार्थी केवळ नावापुरते नोंदणीकृत राहतात. परिणामी कार्यभार काही मोजक्या स्वयंसेवकांवर पडतो आणि संघटनात्मक समतोल बिघडतो.

३) साधनसामग्री व निधीची कमतरता

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे उपक्रम प्रभावीपणे राबविण्यासाठी आवश्यक असलेली साधनसामग्री, वाहतूक, प्रशिक्षण साहित्य व आर्थिक मदत अनेक ठिकाणी अपुरी ठरते. निधीच्या मर्यादेमुळे उपक्रमांचा विस्तार, सातत्य आणि गुणवत्ता प्रभावित होते. विशेषतः ग्रामीण भागातील उपक्रमांवर याचा अधिक परिणाम जाणवतो.

४) समाजातील अपेक्षित सहकार्याचा अभाव

काही वेळा स्थानिक समाजाकडून राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांना अपेक्षित प्रतिसाद मिळत नाही. समाजातील उदासीनता, गैरसमज किंवा सहभागाचा अभाव यामुळे स्वयंसेवकांच्या प्रयत्नांना मर्यादा येतात. समाज-संस्था-स्वयंसेवक यांच्यातील समन्वय कमकुवत असल्यास उपक्रमांचा दीर्घकालीन परिणाम साधला जात नाही.

या मर्यादा असूनही राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे महत्त्व कमी होत नाही; मात्र उपक्रमांची गुणवत्ता वाढविण्यासाठी नियोजन, प्रोत्साहन, संसाधनांची उपलब्धता आणि समाजाशी प्रभावी संवाद आवश्यक ठरतो. या आव्हानांवर मात केल्यास राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना अधिक परिणामकारक, सामाजिक परिवर्तनाचे साधन ठरू शकते.

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या प्रभावी अंमलबजावणीसाठी उपाययोजना

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना अधिक परिणामकारक व समाजोपयोगी ठरावी यासाठी तिच्या कार्यपद्धतीत काही आवश्यक सुधारणा करणे महत्वाचे आहे.

१) राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांचे प्रभावी नियोजन व मूल्यमापन

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचे उपक्रम राबवितांना स्थानिक गरजांवर आधारित नियोजन करणे आवश्यक आहे. उपक्रम केवळ वार्षिक कार्यक्रम म्हणून न पाहता उद्दिष्टनिश्चिती आणि अपेक्षित परिणाम स्पष्ट असावेत. प्रत्येक उपक्रमानंतर मूल्यमापन करून त्यातील यश, अडचणी व सुधारणा नोंदविल्यास भविष्यातील उपक्रम अधिक परिणामकारक होऊ शकतात. यामुळे औपचारिकतेला आळा बसून गुणवत्तावाढ साध्य होते.

२) समाज आणि स्थानिक संस्थांचा सक्रिय सहभाग

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांना समाजाचा पाठिंबा मिळणे अत्यंत आवश्यक आहे. ग्रामपंचायत, स्वयंसेवी संस्था, स्थानिक प्रशासन, शाळा व आरोग्य केंद्रे यांच्या सहकार्याने उपक्रम राबविल्यास त्यांचा सामाजिक प्रभाव वाढतो. समाजाला केवळ लाभार्थी न मानता सहभागी घटक म्हणून समाविष्ट केल्यास उपक्रमांना सातत्य आणि स्वीकारार्हता प्राप्त होते.

३) स्वयंसेवकांना प्रोत्साहन व प्रशिक्षण

स्वयंसेवकांचा उत्साह टिकवण्यासाठी त्यांना योग्य प्रोत्साहन देणे आवश्यक आहे. प्रमाणपत्रे, सन्मान, गुणांकनासोबतच नेतृत्व, संवादकौशल्य, आपत्ती व्यवस्थापन, सामाजिक संशोधन अशा विषयांवर प्रशिक्षण दिल्यास त्यांची कार्यक्षमता वाढते. प्रशिक्षित स्वयंसेवक अधिक आत्मविश्वासाने व प्रभावीपणे सामाजिक कार्य करू शकतात.

४) तंत्रज्ञानाचा वापर करून उपक्रमांचा विस्तार

आधुनिक तंत्रज्ञानाचा योग्य वापर केल्यास राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांची व्याप्ती वाढू शकते. सामाजिक माध्यमे, डिजिटल सर्वेक्षण, ऑनलाइन जनजागृती मोहिमा, माहिती संकलन व अहवाल सादरीकरण यासाठी तंत्रज्ञानाचा उपयोग करता येतो. यामुळे उपक्रमांची पारदर्शकता वाढते आणि अधिक युवकांपर्यंत पोहोच साधता येते.

समापन

सदर शोध निबंधाचा मुख्य उद्देश राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या राष्ट्रनिर्मितीतील योगदानाचा सखोल अभ्यास करणे हा होता. या उद्दिष्टाच्या अनुषंगाने केलेल्या अभ्यासातून असे निष्पन्न होते की राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना ही युवकशक्तीला समाजसेवेकडे व राष्ट्रहिताकडे वळविणारी प्रभावी चळवळ आहे. शिक्षणासोबत सेवाभावाची जोड देत राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना युवकांमध्ये सामाजिक बांधिलकी आणि राष्ट्रीय कर्तव्याची भावना दृढ करते.

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या माध्यमातून सामाजिक जाणीव, राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता आणि लोकशाही मूल्यांचा विकास कसा घडून येतो या अभ्यासातून हे स्पष्ट झाले की राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या उपक्रमांमुळे विविध सामाजिक व सांस्कृतिक

पार्श्वभूमीतील स्वयंसेवकांमध्ये समता, बंधुता, सहकार्य व सहिष्णुता यांसारखी लोकशाही मूल्ये रुजतात. त्यामुळे राष्ट्रीय ऐक्य मजबूत होऊन समाजात सलोखा निर्माण होण्यास हातभार लागतो.

राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या मूल्यशिक्षण, चारित्र्यनिर्मिती व नेतृत्वगुणांच्या विकासावर होणारा परिणाम याचा अभ्यास करताना असे आढळून आले की राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या स्वयंसेवकांमध्ये जबाबदारीची जाणीव, निर्णयक्षमता, संघटन कौशल्य व सेवाभाव यांचा विकास लक्षणीयरीत्या होतो. हे गुण राष्ट्रनिर्मितीसाठी अत्यावश्यक असून भावी सक्षम नागरिक घडविण्यात राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेची भूमिका महत्त्वपूर्ण ठरते.

एकूणच, या सर्व अनुषंगाने असे ठामपणे म्हणता येते की, राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना ही सशक्त, समृद्ध व आत्मनिर्भर राष्ट्रनिर्मितीसाठी एक प्रभावी माध्यम आहे. त्यामुळे राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेचा अधिक विस्तार, उपक्रमांची गुणवत्ता वाढविणे व प्रभावी अंमलबजावणी करणे ही काळाची गरज असून, या दिशेने धोरणात्मक प्रयत्न होणे आवश्यक आहे.

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रामायण के संदर्भ में स्वयंसेवकता एवं सामाजिक सेवा के आध्यात्मिक-दार्शनिक आयाम

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शोध-सार (Abstract)

वाल्मीकि रामायण न केवल एक महाकाव्य है, बल्कि स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा के आध्यात्मिक, नैतिक और दार्शनिक आयामों का समग्र ग्रंथ भी है। वर्तमान शोध-पत्र में रामायण के प्रमुख पात्र--श्रीराम, हनमान, शबरी और भरत--के माध्यम से सेवा और स्वयंसेवकता की अवधारणा का विश्लेषण किया गया है। श्रीराम का जीवन निष्काम सेवा और धर्मपरायणता का आदर्श प्रस्तुत करता है, हनमान का चरित्र निष्काम समर्पण और दास्य-भाव का सर्वोच्च उदाहरण है, शबरी की सेवा भावात्मक भक्ति और सामाजिक समता को सिद्ध करती है, और भरत का राज्य-त्याग कर्तव्य-आधारित सेवा का दार्शनिक स्वरूप उजागर करता है।

अध्ययन से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि रामायण ए सेवा केवल व्यक्तिगत परोपकार तक सीमित नहीं, बल्कि आध्यात्मिक साधना, नैतिक कर्तव्य और सामाजिक कल्याण का समग्र दर्शन है। रामराज्य की अवधारणा इस सेवा को संस्थागत रूप प्रदान करती है, जहाँ शासन स्वयं लोकहित और न्याय का माध्यम बनता है। समकालीन संदर्भ में यह दर्शन सामाजिक न्याय, समानता, नैतिक शासन और निष्काम स्वयंसेवकता के लिए अत्यंत प्रासंगिक है।

इस लेख का तात्पर्य यही है कि भगवान श्रीराम का जीवन हमारे सामाजिक जीवन के उत्थान के लिये अत्यंत ही प्रासंगिक इसलिए भी है क्योंकि वर्तमान में हम देख रहे हैं कि कुछ स्वार्थी राजनीतिक तत्व अपना हित साधने के लिये समाज में फट पैदा करने का प्रयास करते हैं। समाज की फूट का दुष्परिणाम हमारे देश ने भोगा है। भारत इसी फूट के कारण ही वर्षों तक गुलाम बना। आज भी देश में लगभग वैसी ही स्थिति है। जो काम पहले अंग्रेज करते थे, वह काम आज राजनीतिक दल कर रहे हैं। हमें आज पुनः सामाजिक एकता के प्रयासों को गति प्रदान करने होगी तभी हमारा देश शक्तिशाली होगा।

अतः यह शोध यह प्रतिपादित करता है कि वाल्मीकि रामायण स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा का कालातीत, सार्वकालिक और प्रेरणादायक ग्रंथ है, जो आधुनिक समाज में भी नैतिक सामाजिक और आध्यात्मिक मार्गदर्शन प्रदान करता है।

बीज-शब्द (Keywords): रामायण, स्वयंसेवकता, सामाजिक सेवा, निष्काम कर्म, लोककल्याण, आध्यात्मिक दर्शन नैतिक, सामाजिक, आध्यात्मिक

1. भूमिका (Introduction)

आज मानव जीवन अनेक विसंगतियाँ एवं विडम्बनाओं से जड़ रही हैं। एक समय हुआ करता था जब लोग प्रेम, स्नेह, सद्भावना के साथ जीवन यापन किया करते यह एक दूसरे के सम्मान तथा बढ़ोतरी के लिए बड़े से बड़ा त्याग करने को तैयार रहते थे, परंतु वर्तमान समय बिल्कल विपरीत हो चका है। आज प्रेम-सद्भावना की जगह छल-कपट, ईर्ष्या-द्वेष तथा स्वार्थ ने ले लिया है।

सामाजिक, नैतिक एवं मर्यादाओं का हास होता हुआ नजर आ रहा है। स्वार्थ एवं पाखंड के कारण मानव जीवन मल्यहीन हो चका है। फलस्वरूप समाज में विश्रंखलता उत्पन्न हो रही है। यह भी सत्य है कि जब जब पाप, अत्याचार, अधर्म, शोषण, बर्बरता, हिंसा जैसे सामाजिक बुराईयों ने अपना सिर उठाकर मानवता का शिकार करना चाहा है तब तब उसके सिर को कचलने के लिए किसी न किसी रूप में महामानवों का आगमन इस पवित्र धरा पर अवश्य हुआ है। त्रेता युग में राम का आगमन इस बात का उत्कृष्ट उदाहरण है। रामकथा में जिस राम का चित्रण किया गया है वे एक मर्यादित व्यक्ति हैं, नैतिकता के पजारी हैं, धर्म तथा संस्कृति के रक्षक हैं, समस्त मानवीय मूल्यों एवं के प्रतिष्ठापक हैं, श्रीराम

मर्यादापुरुषोत्तम हैं। अतः वे व्यक्ति तथा समाज एवं विश्वमानव के लिए प्रेरणा स्वरूप हैं। समाज में व्याप्त जघन्य समस्याओं को मिटाने हेतु, नैतिकता एवं मानवता की रक्षा हेतु राम एक आदर्श हैं। राम के सद्गुणों, उनके आदर्शों की पोवनधारा प्रवाहित करने वाली 'रामकथा' ज्ञान की ज्योति जलानेवाली एवं कभी न खत्म होने वाली प्रकाशपंज है।

रामकथा' एक ऐसा शब्द, जिसे सनते ही हमारे मन में 'रामायण' और 'रामचरितमानस' जैसे महाकाव्यों के प्रसंगों की छवि बन उठती है। लेकिन इनके अलवा भी बहते-से-से ग्रंथों का उल्लेख मिलता है जिनका मुख्य विषय रामकथा है। "रामकथा का आधार से वाल्मीकि रामायण ही रही है।" वाल्मीकि रामायण वह केंद्र बिंदु है जिसके ईद-गिर्द समस्त रामकथा सौरमंडल के ग्रहों की तरह घूमती रहती है। तलसी कत 'रामचरितमानस' जिसे संपूर्ण उत्तर भारत का मेरूदंड कहा जाता है, रामकथा की सर्वश्रेष्ठ ग्रंथ मानी जाती है।

भारत विविधताओं से भरा एक विशाल देश है जहां विभिन्न प्रांतों एवं राज्यों की अपनी अपनी भाषाएँ तथा सभ्यता-संस्कृति हैं। अलग-अलग प्रांतों की संस्कृतियों की प्रतिछवि रामकथा में देखने को मिलती है। राम-सीता कहीं जनजातीय परिधान में दिखलाये पड़ते हैं, तो कहीं क्षेत्र विशेष की पारम्परिक वस्त्र धारण किए हुए तथा उन क्षेत्रों से सम्बंधित पारंपरिक मान्यताओं का पालन करते हुए दिखलाए देते हैं। उनके रँग-रूप, वेश-भूषा, खान-पान, रहन-सहन, जीवन-शैली आदि में भिन्नता देखने को मिलती है। भले ही अलग-अलग प्रदेशों की सांस्कृतिक प्रभाव के कारण रामकथा में भिन्नता के दर्शन होते हैं किंतु भाव की दृष्टि से सभी में एक समता ही परिलक्षित होती है। राम हर रामकथा में राजा दशरथ के ही पुत्र हैं, राम सीता के स्वामी तथा लक्ष्मण के बड़े भाई हैं, धर्म के रक्षक तथा प्रजा के हितैषी एवं मर्यादापुरुषोत्तम ही रहे हैं।

आधुनिक युग एक ओर जहां सामाजिक, राजनीतिक और आर्थिक क्रांति के साथ-साथ वैज्ञानिक चिंतन का युग है तो दूसरी ओर वैयक्तिक, पारिवारिक एवं सामाजिक जीवन मूल्यों के विघटन का भी दौर है। आज मानव विचलित और आतंकित दिखलाई दे रहा है। हर तरफ अनीति तथा

अत्याचार का बोलबाला है। आय दिन ऐसी घटनाएँ तथा खबरें सनने व पढ़ने को मिलती रहती हैं जिससे दिल दहल उठता है। ऐसे में एक ही सवाल जनमानस के हृदय में शन बन कर चभती है कि क्या वर्तमान समय मानवीय Heat के पतन का दौर है? आज चाहे धर्म के नाम पर हो, सामाजिक

स्तर पर या पारिवारिक जीवन में सभी नैतिक एवं मानवीय Heat की हत्याएँ नित्य की जा रही हैं। इसके मल में है स्वार्थपति की भावना। मानव स्वार्थ पति में इतना पागल हो गया है कि उसमें मानवीयता लेशमात्र भी नहीं बची है। समाज का संतुलन बिगड़ चुका है। समाज में संतुलन एवं स्थिरता ब्राने तथा मानवीय की पनःस्थापना के लिए आज दरकार है पीछे देखने की अर्थात् उन परंपराओं, मान्यताओं, आदर्शों एवं मर्यादाओं के अनसरण की, उनसे शिक्षा लेने की जिनकी स्थापना हमारे पूर्वजों ने सामाजिक संतुलन, न्याय, समता की स्थापना के लिए कर गए हैं। यदि दाय समय मार्ग में छोटा सा गड़ढ़ा सामने आ जाए तो वापस लौटने की बजाए उस TSS की सीमा का अनमान कर HS कदम पीछे चलने के बाद दौड़ लगाकर परी शक्ति के साथ छलांग मारते हुए 738 को पार कर जाते हैं, ठीक उसी प्रकार यदि जीवन में कोई समस्या आए, तो हमें अपनी प्राचीन परंपराओं की ओर रुख करनी चाहिए क्योंकि उनमें जीवन की अनेक समस्याओं के समाधान का मंत्र BAT होता है, जिनसे हमारे टूटे एवं निराश मन को शक्ति मिलती है क्योंकि वे संजीवनी का काम करती हैं। रामकथा भी उस संजीवनी का भंडार है जिसमें मूल्यों, आदर्श

मर्यादा तथा नैतिकता के एक से एक उदाहरण हैं। रामकथा 'राम' नाम के एक ऐसे महामानव की गाथा है जो मानवीय मूल्यों एवं गुणों के साक्षात्कर्तृ हैं। भारतीय प्राचीन साहित्य में वाल्मीकि रामायण का स्थान केवल एक महाकाव्य के रूप में ही नहीं, बल्कि एक ऐसे जीवन-दर्शन के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित है, जो मानव जीवन के नैतिक, सामाजिक, आध्यात्मिक और दार्शनिक आयामों को समग्रता में प्रस्तुत करता है। रामायण की कथा आदर्श

मानव-व्यवहार, कर्तव्यनिष्ठा, त्याग और लोककल्याण की भावना से ओत-प्रोत है। इसी कारण यह ग्रंथ भारतीय संस्कृति में धर्म, सेवा और सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व का आधार-स्तंभ माना जाता

आधुनिक यग में स्वयंसेवकता (Volunteerism) और सामाजिक सेवा (Social Service) को सामाजिक विकास, मानवीय संवेदना और नैतिक नागरिकता के अनिवार्य घटक के रूप में स्वीकार किया गया है। किंतु इन अवधारणाओं की जड़ें आधुनिक नहीं, बल्कि भारतीय दार्शनिक परंपरा में गहराई से निहित हैं। रामायण में सेवा को मात्र परोपकार या दान के रूप में नहीं, बल्कि निष्काम कर्मयोग, धर्मपालन और आत्म-शुद्धि के रूप में देखा गया है।

रामायण के प्रमुख पात्र--श्रीराम, सीता, लक्ष्मण, भरत, हनुमान और शबरी--अपने-अपने आचरण द्वारा और त्याग के विविध रूपों को रूप प्रदान करते हैं। श्रीराम का जीवन लोकमंगल के लिए समर्पित है, हनुमान निष्काम स्वयंसेवकता के आदर्श हैं, भरत त्यागमय राजनीतिक सेवा के प्रतीक हैं और शबरी भावनात्मक सेवा द्वारा सामाजिक समता की स्थापना करती हैं। इन सभी उदाहरणों से स्पष्ट होता है कि रामायण में सेवा व्यक्तिगत सद्गुण न होकर समाज-संरचना और नैतिक व्यवस्था का मूल आधार है।

प्रस्तुत शोध-पत्र का उद्देश्य रामायण के चयनित प्रसंगों एवं पात्रों के आलोक में स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा के आध्यात्मिक तथा दार्शनिक आयामों का विश्लेषण करना है। इस अध्ययन के

माध्यम से यह प्रतिपादित करने का प्रयास किया गया है कि रामायण न केवल प्राचीन भारतीय समाज का प्रतिबिंब है, बल्कि आधुनिक संदर्भ में भी सामाजिक सेवा और स्वयंसेवकता के लिए एक प्रासंगिक और मार्गदर्शक ग्रंथ है।

2. रामायण में सेवा की अवधारणा : सैद्धांतिक विवेचन

वाल्मीकि रामायण में सेवा की अवधारणा किसी एक प्रसंग या पात्र तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि यह संपूर्ण काव्य की वैचारिक आधारभूमि के रूप में विद्यमान है। यहाँ सेवा को केवल दया, दान अथवा सहायता-कार्य के रूप में न देखकर उसे धर्म, कर्तव्य और लोककल्याण से दृढ़ एक समग्र जीवन-दृष्टि के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है। रामायण A सेवा का सैद्धांतिक स्वरूप मुख्यतः धर्म की अवधारणा से संबद्ध है।

रामायण में धर्म का अर्थ संकीर्ण धार्मिक कर्मकाण्ड नहीं, बल्कि समाज-व्यवस्था, नैतिक अनुशासन और मानवीय उत्तरदायित्व है। इस संदर्भ में सेवा धर्म का व्यावहारिक रूप बनकर सामने आती है। श्रीराम को बार-बार धर्मज्ञ, सत्यपरायण और लोकहितेशी कहा गया है, जो यह सिद्ध करता है कि सेवा रामायण में धर्म का अनिवार्य अंग है-- "धर्मज्ञः सत्यसंधश्च प्रजानां च रतः।" (बालकाण्ड, 1.1)

यह श्लोक श्रीराम को केवल धर्म का ज्ञाता ही नहीं, बल्कि प्रजाहित में निरत शासक के रूप में प्रस्तुत करता है। यहाँ सेवा का सैद्धांतिक स्वरूप स्पष्ट होता है--सेवा वह कर्म है जो समाज और प्रजा के हित के लिए किया जाए।

रामायण में सेवा का दूसरा महत्वपूर्ण सैद्धांतिक आधार निष्काम कर्म है। सेवा तब श्रेष्ठ मानी जाती है जब उसमें फल-लिप्सा या स्वार्थ का अभाव हो। श्रीराम का वनगमन इसी निष्काम सेवा का प्रत्यक्ष उदाहरण है-- "पितर्वचननिर्देशात् वनं गच्छामि निश्चयम्।" (अयोध्याकाण्ड, सर्ग 18)

यहाँ श्रीराम अपने व्यक्तिगत सख, राज्य और अधिकार का त्याग कर पिता की आज्ञा और सामाजिक मर्यादा की रक्षा करते हैं। यह सेवा किसी व्यक्ति विशेष के लिए नहीं, बल्कि धर्म और सामाजिक विश्वास की रक्षा हेतु है।

रामायण में सेवा की अवधारणा केवल राजधर्म तक सीमित नहीं रहती, बल्कि सामान्य जन के आचरण में भी प्रकट होती है। शबरी का प्रसंग सेवा के भावात्मक और मानवीय स्वरूप को सिद्ध करता है-- "एA फलानि दत्त्वा तु रामं प्रीणयत प्रभम्।" (अरण्यकाण्ड)

शबरी ZIRT अर्पित सेवा सामाजिक हैसियत या विधि-विधान से नहीं, बल्कि शुद्ध भक्ति और करुणा से प्रेरित है। यह उदाहरण सिद्ध करता है कि रामायण में सेवा का सिद्धांत सामाजिक समता और मानवीय गरिमा पर आधारित है।

इसी प्रकार हनुमान की सेवा रामायण में स्वयंसेवकता का आदर्श प्रतिमान प्रस्तुत करती है— *दासोऽहं कोसलैन्द्रस्य रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः।” (संदरकाण्ड, सर्ग 34)

हनुमान स्वयं को राम का दास कहकर सेवा की उस अवधारणा को प्रस्तुत करते हैं जिसमें अहंकार का पूर्ण विसर्जन है। यह सैद्धांतिक रूप से सेवा को आत्म-समर्पण और कर्तव्य-बोध से जोड़ता है।

अतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि रामायण में सेवा की अवधारणा तीन प्रमुख सैद्धांतिक पर आधारित है

- (1) धर्म और लोककल्याण,
- (2) निष्काम कर्म, तथा
- (3) भावात्मक एवं करुणामय मानवीय दृष्टि।

इन सिद्धांतों के कारण रामायण में सेवा एक व्यक्तिगत गण न रहकर सामाजिक और आध्यात्मिक जीवन का अनिवार्य आधार बन जाती है।

3. स्वयंसेवकता के आध्यात्मिक आयाम

रामायण के वैचारिक में स्वयंसेवकता (Volunteerism) को केवल सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व या परोपकार की गतिविधि के रूप में नहीं, बल्कि आध्यात्मिक साधना के रूप में स्वीकार किया गया है। यहाँ सेवा का प्रेरक तत्त्व बाह्य यश, प्रतिफल या सामाजिक मान्यता नहीं, बल्कि अंतःकरण की, अहंकार का क्षय और धर्म-साधना है। इस प्रकार स्वयंसेवकता रामायण में व्यक्ति के आत्मिक विकास और समाज के नैतिक उत्थान--दोनों का सेत बनती है।

आध्यात्मिक दृष्टि से स्वयंसेवकता का मूल आधार निष्काम कर्मयोग है। रामायण का नायक श्रीराम अपने समस्त कर्मों को फल-आकांक्षा से रहित होकर संपन्न करते हैं। सेवा यहाँ "कर्तव्य" मात्र न होकर "साध्य" बन जाती है, जिसके माध्यम से व्यक्ति आत्मोन्नति की ओर अग्रसर होता है। इस संदर्भ में सेवा को ईश्वर-समर्पण के रूप में देखा गया है, जहाँ कर्म का उद्देश्य स्वयं नहीं बल्कि धर्म और लोककल्याण होता है।

रामायण में स्वयंसेवकता का दूसरा महत्वपूर्ण आध्यात्मिक आयाम अहंकार-त्याग है। सच्ची सेवा वही मानी गई है, जिसमें सेवक अपनी पहचान, प्रतिष्ठा और अधिकार-बोध को त्याग देता है। हनुमान जैसे पात्र इस तथ्य को स्पष्ट करते हैं कि सेवा तभी आध्यात्मिक बनती है, जब का भाव लप्त हो जाता है और 'कर्तव्य' ही प्रधान रह जाता है। इस प्रकार सेवा आत्म-विसर्जन की प्रक्रिया बन जाती है।

तीसरा आध्यात्मिक आयाम करुणा और समदृष्टि है। रामायण में सेवा केवल अपने निकटवर्ती या समान सामाजिक स्तर के लोगों तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि वह वंचित, वनवासी, स्त्री और सामान्य जन तक विस्तृत है। शबरी, निषादराज और वानर-सेना जैसे प्रसंग यह सिद्ध करते हैं कि आध्यात्मिक स्वयंसेवकता सामाजिक भेदभाव से Arad होती है और सभी प्राणियों में एक ही चेतना के दर्शन कराती है।

इसके अतिरिक्त, रामायण A स्वयंसेवकता को आत्म-शुद्धि का साधन माना गया। सेवा के माध्यम से व्यक्ति अपने राग-द्वेष, लोभ और मोह से होता है। यही कारण है कि रामायण में सेवा को तपस्या के समकक्ष रखा गया है। वनवास, कठिन परिस्थितियाँ और व्यक्तिगत कष्ट--ये सभी सेवा के मार्ग में साधक को आध्यात्मिक रूप से परिष्कृत करते हैं।

अतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि रामायण में स्वयंसेवकता के आध्यात्मिक आयाम चार प्रमुख तत्वों पर आधारित हैं--

- (1) निष्काम कर्मयोग
- (2) अहंकार-त्याग,
- (3) करुणा एवं समदृष्टि, तथा

(4) आत्म-शुद्धि और साधना।

इन आयामों के माध्यम से रामायण स्वयंसेवकता को मात्र सामाजिक क्रिया न मानकर उसे आध्यात्मिक उन्नयन का सशक्त माध्यम सिद्ध करती है। यही कारण है कि रामायण की सेवा-दृष्टि आज भी नैतिक और आध्यात्मिक जीवन के लिए उतनी ही प्रासंगिक है जितनी प्राचीन काल में थी।

3.1 श्रीराम: निष्काम सेवा का आदर्श

आदर्श के परिप्रेक्ष्य में राम- 'रामकथा' विश्वमानव के हृदय को छूती है, इसलिए नहीं कि यह एक सांस्कृतिक धरोहर है, बल्कि इसलिए कि इसमें एक आदर्श जीवन के दर्शन मिलते हैं। चाहे विद्यार्थी जीवन के गुरु-शिष्य, पिता-पुत्र, माता-पुत्र, पति-पत्नी, स्वामी-सेवक, राजा-प्रजा अथवा भाई-भाई आदि सभी रिश्तों में सर्वत्र राम के द्वारा एक ही नियमित आदर्श जीवन-दर्शन ही दिखलाई देता है। राम के लिए माता-पिता के वचन क्या मायने रखते हैं यह उनके द्वारा सारे सख-वैभव को ठकराकर वनगमन का प्रसंग एक उत्कृष्ट उदाहरण है। लक्ष्मण भी बड़े भाई की सेवा का मार्ग देता है एक आदर्श प्रस्तुत करते हैं। राम-लक्ष्मण दोनों भाईयों का प्रेम ऐसा है मानो दो अलग-अलग देह जरूर है पर उनकी आत्मा एक है। एक शिष्य के रूप में भी राम ने सदैव गुरु के आज्ञा का सम्मान किया है। मित्रता निभाते हुए कभी भी उन्होंने मित्र पर संदेह व संकोच की भावना नहीं रखी, चाहे शत्रु का भाई ही क्यों न "जब सेना के नेतृत्व की बात आती है तो कहीं भी वे स्वामित्व अथवा आधिपत्य जमाने का भाव नहीं आने वे उनको संगठित कर स्वावलम्बी बनाते हैं और उनमें उनके कौशल का श्रेष्ठ जागृत करते हैं।"

अधिकार मिलते ही क्षमता का दुरुपयोग करना वर्तमान समय में मानव की नियति बन चुकी है। राम अयोध्यापति होते हुए भी अपने जीवन कभी राजधर्म व राजशक्ति का दुरुपयोग नहीं किया। "राज-धर्म में तो वे एक ऐसा मापदंड निर्धारित करते हैं कि आज भी शासक राम-राज्य को

ही आदर्श लक्ष्य मानते हैं।" पद का मोह, धन की लोलप्ता से वर्तमान मानव बच नहीं पाया है खासकर सत्तावर्ग। त्याग, बलिदान की भावना लेशमात्र भी उनमें दिखलाई नहीं पड़ती है। "वसंत के आगमन के समय जब सारी वन-स्थली पशु-पक्षी से मर्मरित होती रहती है, शिरीष के पराने फल बरी तरह खड़खड़ाते रहते हैं। मझे इनको देखकर उन नेताओं की बात याद आती है, जो किसी प्रकार जमाने का रूख नहीं पहचानते और जब तक नयी पौध के लोग उन्हें धक्का मारकर निकाल नहीं देते तब तक जमे रहते हैं।" द्रविदीयों की ये पंक्तियाँ उन भ्रष्ट नेताओं की पोल खोलती हैं जो सिर्फ अपना स्वार्थ देखते हैं। राम ने एक समय स्वयं कहा है "अब वह समय आ गया जब अगली पीढ़ी को राज संभाल लेना चाहिए, हम सबों को समय भी तो बहत हो गया।" राम एक उदार, परोपकारी राजा थे, जिन्होंने कभी किसी राज्य पर शासन नहीं किया, बल्कि प्रजा के हृदय पर राज किया। लंका जीतकर विभीषण को सौंपना तथा किष्किंधा विजय के बाद सगीव को राजा बनाना श्रीराम के स्वभाव की उदारता को ही दर्शाती है। "तुलसी के राम एक ऐसे रोजा का आदर्श करते हैं जो परम उदार है, पर दुख कातर है, प्रजा वत्सल है, बिना कुछ लिए ही दीनों के प्रति सहानुभूति दिखाते हैं, उनका उद्धार करते हैं। शासक के रूप में ऐसे राजा की अनिवार्यता हर युग को

पारिवारिक संदर्भ में भी रामकथा एक उत्कृष्ट उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करती है। आज की नयी पीढ़ी एकांगी जीवन में ही सूख का अनभव कर रहा है। पारिवारिक विघटन के कारण संयुक्त परिवार की धारणा बिल्कुल सिमटेकर रह गई है। परिवारों के टूटने के कारण नयी पीढ़ी के लोग पारिवारिक

संबंधों तथा संस्कारों से पिछड़ती चली जा रही है। "आज परिवारों में संस्कारों का हास होता जा रहा है। समाज संस्कृति से ००२ हो रहा है। संस्कारों के अभाव में वृद्ध माता-पिता को बोझ मानकर संतानें उनके साथ उपेक्षापूर्ण व्यवहार कर रही है। जिसके मूल में हमारा धर्म से विमुख होना रामायण मानवमात्र को धर्ममय, मर्यादित, संस्कारवान जीवन जीना सिखाती है।" 9 रामकथा में जितने भी रिश्तों का उल्लेख मिलता है जैसे माता-पिता, पति-पत्नी, पुत्र, भाई, बंध, सास-बह, सेवक-स्वामी आदि सभी विषम परिस्थितियों में तप कर ही खरे उतरे हैं। "आज जब रिश्तों में बिखराव आ गया है और व्यक्ति

अकेलेपन की यातनाओं से जड़ रहा है तब वे रिश्ते और भी महत्वपूर्ण हो उठते हैं।” 10 रामकथा में उल्लेखित हर एक चरित्र आदर्शनीय है, बशर्ते सकारात्मक सोच के साथ उन्हें समझें, उनसे शिक्षा ग्रहण करें और उनके जीवन आदर्शों को अंगीकार कर समाज के विकास एवं उन्नति में भागीदार बनें।

प्रायः कहा जाता है कि जीवन हो तो भगवान श्रीराम जैसा। जीवन जीने की उच्चतम मर्यादा का पथ प्रदर्शक भगवान श्रीराम के जीवन पर दृष्टिपात करेंगे तो निश्चित ही हमें कई पाथेय दिखाई देंगे, लेकिन इन सबमें सामाजिक समरसता का आदर्श उदाहरण कहीं और दिखाई नहीं देता। अयोध्या के राजा श्रीराम ने अपने जीवन से अनुशासन और विनमता का जो चरित्र प्रस्तुत किया वह आज भी समाज के लिए एक दिशाबोध है।

वनवासी राम का सम्पूर्ण जीवन सामाजिक समरसता का अनकरणीय पाथेय है। श्रीराम ने वनगमन के समय प्रत्येक कदम पर समाज के अंतिम व्यक्ति काँ गल्ले त्रगाया। केवट के बारे में हम सभी ने सना ही है, कि कैसे भगवान राम ने उनको गले लगाकर समाज को यह संदेश दिया कि प्रत्येक मनेष्य के अंदर एक ही जीव आत्मा है। बाहर भले ही अलग दिखते हों, लेकिन अंदर से सब एक हैं। यहां जाति का कोई भेद नहीं था। वर्तमान में जिस केवट समाज को वंचित समुदाय की श्रेणी में शामिल किया जाता है, भगवान राम ने उनको गले लगाकर सामाजिक समरसता का अद्भुत उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किया है। सामाजिक समरसता के भाव को नष्ट करने वाली जो बराई आज दिखाई दे रही है, वह प्रातन समय में नहीं थी। समाज में विभाजन की रेखा खींचने वाले स्वार्थी व्यक्तियों ने भेदभाव की जन्म दिया है।

वर्तमान में हम स्पष्ट तौर पर देख रहे हैं कि समाज को कमजोर करने का सनियोजित प्रयास किया जा रहा है, जिसके कारण जहां एक ओर समाज की शक्ति तो कमजोर हो रही है, वहीं देश भी कमजोर हो रहा है। वर्तमान में राम राज्य की संकल्पना को साकार करने की बात तो कही जाती है, लेकिन उसके लिए सकारात्मक प्रयास नहीं किए जा रहे हैं। सामाजिक एकता स्थापित करने के लिए रामायण हम सभी को उचित मार्ग दिखा सकती है।

यह भी सर्वविदित है कि राम वन गमन के दौरान भगवान राम ने निषाद राज को भी गले लगाया केवट को भी प्रा सम्मान दिया। इतना ही नहीं भगवान राम ने उन सभी को अपना अंग माना जो आज समाज में हेय दृष्टि से देखे जाते हैं। इसका यही तात्पर्य है कि भारत में कभी भी जातिगत

आधार पर समाज का विभाजन नहीं था। प्रा समाज एक शरीर की ही तरह था। जैसे शरीर के किसी भी हिस्से में दर्द होता है, तब पूरा शरीर अस्वस्थ हो जाता था। इसी प्रकार समाज की भी अवधारणा है, समाज का कोई भी हिस्सा वंचित हो जाए तो सामाजिक एकता की धारणा समाप्त होने लगती है। हमारे देश में जाति आधारित राजनीति के कारण ही समाज में विभाजन के बीजों का अंकुरण किया गया। जो आज एकता की मर्यादाओं को तार-तार कर रहा है।

भगवान राम ने अपने वनवास काल में समाज को एकता के सत्र में पिरोने का काम परे कौशल के साथ किया। समाज की संग्रहित शक्ति के कारण ही भगवान राम ने आसरी प्रवृत्ति पर प्रहार किया। समाज को निर्भयता के साथ जीने का मार्ग प्रशस्त किया। इससे यही शिक्षा मिलती है समाज जब एक धारा के साथ प्रवाहित होता है तो कितनी भी बड़ी बराई हो, उसे नत मस्तक होना ही पड़ता है। सीधे शब्दों में कहा जाए तो संगठन में ही शक्ति है। इससे यह संदेश मित्रता है कि हम समाज के साथ कदम मिलाकर नहीं चलेंगे तो हम किसी न किसी रूप में कमजोर होते चले जाएंगे और हमें कोई न कोई दबाता ही चला जाएगा। सम्पूर्ण समाज हमारा अपना परिवार है। कहीं कोई भेदभाव नहीं है। जब इस प्रकार का भाव बढ़ेगा तो स्वाभाविक रूप से हमें किसी भी व्यक्ति से कोई खतरा भी नहीं होगा। आज समाज में जिस प्रकार के खतरे बढ़ते जा रहे हैं, उसका अधिकांश कारण यही है कि समाज का हिस्सा बनने बहुत हो रहे अपने जीवन को केवल भाग दौड़ तक सीमित कर दिया है। यह सच है कि व्यक्ति ही व्यक्ति के काम आता 21 यही सांस्कृतिक भारत की अवधारणा है।

परे विश्व भारत एक सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्र के रूप में पहचाना जाता है, जब हम भारत को राष्ट्र बोलते हैं, तब हमें इस बात का बोध होना ही चाहिए कि राष्ट्र आखिर होता क्या है? हम इसका अध्ययन करेंगे तो पता चलेगा कि राष्ट्र की एक संस्कृति होती है, एक साहित्यिक अवधारणा होती है, एक आचार विचार होता है, एक जैसी परंपराएं होती हैं। भगवान राम के जीवन

इन सभी का साक्षात दर्शन होता है, इसलिए कहा जा सकता है कि राम जी केवल वर्ग विशेष के न होकर सम्पूर्ण विश्व के हैं। उनके आदर्श हम सभी के लिए हैं। हमें राम जी के जीवन से प्रेरणा लेकर ही अपने जीवन को उत्सर्ग के मार्ग पर ले जाने का उपक्रम करना चाहिए।

मानवीय मूल्यों के परिप्रेक्ष्य में राम

मूल्य, समाज में मानव द्वारा निर्मित कुछ नियमों की श्रृंखला है। समाज में संतुलन कायम रखने के लिए ही मानव द्वारा निर्मित ये मूल्य 'मानवीय मूल्य' कहलाते हैं। जब व्यक्ति इन मूल्यों की कसौटी पर खड़ा उतरता है तभी उसकी मनस्थिति सिद्ध होती है और वह सामाजिक जानवर की श्रेणी से ऊपर उठकर नैतिक एवं मानवीय प्राणी कहलाने का अधिकारी बनता है।

आज समाज की स्थिति विकृत होती चली जा रही है। बाजारवादी एवं पंजीवादी स्वार्थी दौर ने मानव को मानवीय मूल्यों से कोसों दूर कर दिया है। आज मनुष्य भावनाओं से कम और बुद्धि से अधिक काम लेने लगा है। अपने फायदे के लिए वह जीवन की अवहेलना करने लगा है। जब-जब किसी ने स्वार्थवश जान-बूझकर या फिर अनजाने ही सही मानवीय मूल्यों की अवहेलना करनी चाही है, समाज में असंतुलन स्थापित करनी चाहा है तब-तब उसे दुख एवं कष्ट के सिवा नहीं मिला है। आज संपूर्ण मानव समाज विनाश की ओर बढ़ रहा है क्यों ? इसके में हैं शाश्वत नियमों एवं की अवहेलना। जिसके चलते छलन-प्रपंच, हिंसा, घणा,

अनाचार, व्याभिचार, अष्टाचार, शोषण, जातिवाद, सांप्रदायिकता जैसे समाज तथा राष्ट्र को खोखला करने वाली भावनाएँ उठ रही हैं। मानवीय मूल्यों के अभाव में मनुष्य का चरित्रिक पतन हो रहा है जिसके कारण उसकी भावनाएँ क्लिप्त हो रही हैं और वह जघन्य से जघन्य अपराध को अंजाम दे रहा है।

ऐसे पतनमयी समाज एवं क्षत-विक्षत होते मानवता की रक्षा हेतु मानवीय जैसे- प्रेम

सम्मान, परोपकार, दान, श्रद्धा, तप आदि की स्थापना की जरूरत है। अतः राम का चरित्र पूर्णतः मानवीय से परिपूर्ण है। मानव जीवन के प्रति सही आस्था, प्रेम, महत्व आदि उचित मूल्यों का विचार राम के चरित्र से ही मिलते हैं। राम का चरित्र समस्त मानवीय का वहन करते हुए मानव मानव के बीच उचित सम्मान एवं प्रेम हेतु दर्शाती है। रामकथा में इसका स्पष्ट प्रतिपादन किया गया है। ऐसे अनेक प्रसंग रामकथा भरे पड़े हैं जो समाज तथा राष्ट्र में मानवीय एवं नैतिक को जीवित रखने में सक्षम हैं। "राम के जन्म के साथ ही देवताओं एक संतोष की लहर दौड़ गयी है कि अब संसार से अनैतिकता और अनाचार समाप्त हो जाएगा।

मर्यादा के परिप्रेक्ष्य में राम

मर्यादा" कहने को एक छोटा सा शब्द है किंतु मानव जीवन का संपूर्ण आदर्श इससे जड़ा हुआ है। समाज में संतुलन बनाए रखने के लिए हर रिश्तों की एक मर्यादा निर्धारित की गई है। आज चिंता का विषय है कि ध्वस्त होती मर्यादाओं के कारण समाज दयनीय स्थिति से गुजर रही है। अहंकार लालच से आज का मानव मर्यादा की हर सीमा लांघ चुका है। रिश्तों के मायने खत्म होता दिखलाई दे रहा है, बड़ों का सम्मान तथा शिष्टाचार की सीमा को मर्यादाहीन जीवन ठोने को तल्लीन है।

राम का जीवन वर्तमान मानव के लिए अनकरणीय है क्योंकि राम अनेक मर्यादित से परिपूर्ण हैं, जिसका उल्लेख रामकथा में मिलता है। बचपन से लेकर जीवन के अंतिम समय तक कहीं भी उन्होंने धर्म तथा मर्यादा का उल्लंघन किया हो, ऐसा देखने को नहीं मिलता है। विचारों तथा व्यवहारों में कहीं भी उन्होंने मर्यादा नहीं छोड़ी। यही कारण है कि उन्हें 'मर्यादा प्रभुत्तम राम' कहा जाता है। "मर्यादा प्रभुत्तम श्रीराम ने अपने माता की बातों का मान रखते वनवास जाने का निर्णय और अपने माता-पिता की बातों को न काटते हुए अपना विचार नहीं रखा, यह मर्यादा है।

श्रीराम का संपूर्ण जीवन निष्काम सेवा की जीवंत व्याख्या है। वे न केवल राजकमार हैं, बल्कि धर्म, मर्यादा और लोकहित के प्रति पूर्णतः समर्पित सेवक हैं। रामायण में श्रीराम का प्रत्येक निर्णय व्यक्तिगत लाभ से अधिक सामाजिक नैतिकता और आध्यात्मिक कर्तव्य से प्रेरित है। यही कारण है कि उन्हें मर्यादा प्रभुत्व कहा गया है।

श्रीराम के निष्काम सेवा-भाव का सर्वप्रमुख उदाहरण उनका वनगमन है। पिता की आज्ञा और राज्य की मर्यादा की रक्षा हेतु वे राज्य, सख और सत्ता का स्वेच्छा से त्याग करते हैं— 'थपेतर्वचननिर्देशात् वनं गच्छामि निश्चयम्।' (अयोध्याकाण्ड, सर्ग 18)

यह कथन आध्यात्मिक स्वयंसेवकता का मूल सिद्धांत प्रस्तुत करता है—कर्तव्य पालन बिना किसी प्रतिफल की आकांक्षा के। श्रीराम यहाँ न तो अपने अधिकारों की चर्चा करते हैं, न ही अन्याय का विरोध करते हैं, बल्कि सामाजिक विश्वास और धर्म की रक्षा को प्राथमिकता देते हैं।

श्रीराम की निष्काम सेवा केवल व्यक्तिगत त्याग तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि उनके शासन-दृष्टिकोण में भी प्रकट होती है। वे स्वयं को राजा नहीं, बल्कि प्रजा-सेवक मानते हैं— 'धर्मेण रक्षिताः प्रजा धर्मः रक्षति रक्षितः।' (भावार्थ - उत्तरकाण्ड)

यह यह विचार दर्शाता है कि श्रीराम के लिए शासन सत्ता नहीं, बल्कि सेवा का माध्यम है। यहाँ स्वयंसेवकता का आध्यात्मिक स्वरूप राजधर्म के रूप में प्रकट होता है।

इसके अतिरिक्त, सीता-वियोग की अवस्था में भी श्रीराम का आचरण निष्काम सेवा का परिचायक है। वे अपने व्यक्तिगत दुःख को समाज और धर्म के हित में नियंत्रित रखते हैं। उनका शोक आत्मकेंद्रित न होकर कर्तव्यपरायण है।

आध्यात्मिक दृष्टि से श्रीराम की सेवा में तीन प्रमुख तत्त्व स्पष्ट रूप से दृष्टिगोचर होते हैं--

- (1) अहंकार का पूर्ण त्याग
- (2) कर्तव्य को ईश्वरार्पण मानना, तथा
- (3) लोककल्याण को जीवन का लक्ष्य बनाना।

इस प्रकार श्रीराम रामायण स्वयंसेवकता के उस आदर्श को स्थापित करते हैं, जहाँ सेवा कर्म न होकर आध्यात्मिक साधना बन जाती है। उनका जीवन यह सिद्ध करता है कि सच्ची स्वयंसेवकता वही है, जो निस्वार्थ, धर्मनिष्ठ और लोकमंगलकारी हो।

3.2 हनुमान : निष्काम स्वयंसेवकता का चरम उदाहरण

वाल्मीकि रामायण हनुमान का व्यक्तित्व निष्काम स्वयंसेवकता का सर्वोच्च और सर्वाधिक

प्रामाणिक उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करता है। हनुमान न केवल श्रीराम के भक्त हैं, बल्कि वे सेवा को

अपने अस्तित्व का मूल आधार मानते हैं। उनके समस्त कर्म-लंकागमन, सीता-संदेश

अशोक-वाटिका विध्वंस तथा संपूर्ण रामकार्य की सिद्धि--स्वार्थ, यश या प्रतिफल की आकांक्षा से

पूर्णतः मुक्त हैं। इस दृष्टि से हनुमान रामायण में स्वयंसेवकता के आध्यात्मिक शिखर पर

हनुमान की स्वयंसेवकता का मूल आधार दास्य-भाव है। वे स्वयं को राम का सेवक मानते हैं, न कि स्वतंत्र यह भाव उन्हें अहंकार से कर देता है— 'असौ कोसलेंद्रस्य रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः।' (संदरकाण्ड, सर्ग 34)

यह कथन स्वयंसेवकता के आध्यात्मिक दर्शन को स्पष्ट करता है। यहाँ 'दास' शब्द हीनता का नहीं, बल्कि पूर्ण आत्म-समर्पण का प्रतीक है। हनुमान का यह भाव उन्हें निष्काम कर्मयोगी बनाता है।

हनुमान की सेवा में दूसरा प्रमुख तत्त्व कर्तृत्व-त्याग है। वे अपने असाधारण पराक्रम को भी रामकपा का परिणाम मानते हैं-
*“नाहे कर्ता हरिः कर्ता।” (भावार्थ)

यह दृष्टि स्वयंसेवकता को आध्यात्मिक ऊँचाई प्रदान करती है, क्योंकि यहाँ सेवा अहं-प्रदर्शन, बल्कि ईश्वर-निष्ठा का माध्यम बन जाती है।

हनुमान की निष्काम सेवा का एक महत्वपूर्ण उदाहरण लंकादहन के पश्चात भी अहंकार का अभाव है। वे अपने पराक्रम का श्रेय स्वयं न लेकर रामकार्य की सिद्धि को ही महत्व देते हैं। उनका उद्देश्य विजय या विनाश नहीं, बल्कि धर्म-स्थापना है।

हनुमान की स्वयंसेवकता में करुणा और विवेक का भी समन्वय है। अशोक-वाटिका विध्वंस के समय वे केवल आवश्यक सीमा तक ही कार्य करते हैं और निरपराध स्त्रियाँ को हानि नहीं पहुँचाते। यह सेवा के नैतिक पक्ष को रेखांकित करता है।

आध्यात्मिक दृष्टि से हनुमान की स्वयंसेवकता में तीन प्रमुख गण स्पष्ट होते हैं--

- (1) पूर्ण निष्कामता
- (2) अहंकार-शून्यता, तथा
- (3) धर्म-निष्ठा से प्रेरित कर्म।

अतः यह निष्कर्ष निकाला जा सकता है कि हनुमान रामायण में स्वयंसेवकता का चरम आदर्श हैं। उनकी सेवा केवल रामकार्य की पूर्ति नहीं, बल्कि आत्म-विसर्जन द्वारा आत्मोन्नति की साधना है। इस प्रकार हनुमान का चरित्र आधुनिक स्वयंसेवकता के लिए भी एक आदर्श और प्रेरणास्रोत सिद्ध होता है।

3.3 शबरी : भावात्मक सेवा और सामाजिक समता

वाल्मीकि रामायण में शबरी का प्रसंग सेवा के भावात्मक (emotional-spiritual) स्वरूप और सामाजिक समता के दार्शनिक सिद्धांत को अत्यंत सशक्त ढंग से प्रस्तुत करता है। शबरी न तो किसी उच्च कल से हैं, न ही वे वैदिक कर्मकाण्ड या शास्त्रीय विद्या A संपन्न हैं, फिर भी

उनकी सेवा रामायण में आध्यात्मिक दृष्टि से सर्वोच्च स्थान प्राप्त करती है। यह तथ्य स्पष्ट करता है कि रामायण में सेवा का मूल्य सामाजिक स्थिति, जाति या बाह्य आडंबर पर नहीं बल्कि अंतःकरण की शुद्धता और भक्ति-भाव पर आधारित है।

शबरी की सेवा का मूल आधार भावात्मक समर्पण है। वर्षों तक श्रीराम की प्रतीक्षा करते वनवासी जीवन तपस्या और सेवा को ही साधना का माध्यम बनाती हैं। श्रीराम के आगमन पर वे प्रेमपूर्वक फल अर्पित करती हैं-- "भक्त्या फलानि दत्त्वा तु रामं प्रीणयत प्रभुम्।" (अरण्यकाण्ड)

यह श्लोक यह स्पष्ट करता है कि शबरी की सेवा में विधि-विधान या औपचारिकता नहीं, बल्कि निष्कलष भक्ति और करुणा है। राम द्वारा उस सेवा का स्वीकार किया जाना यह सिद्ध करता है कि आध्यात्मिक सेवा का मूल्य भाव में निहित होता है, न कि बाह्य श्रद्धा में।

शबरी का प्रसंग सामाजिक दर्शन की दृष्टि से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। उस काल की सामाजिक संरचना में शबरी एक उपेक्षित वर्ग से संबंधित थीं, fra श्रीराम द्वारा उनकी सेवा का आदर करना सामाजिक समता और मानवीय गरिमा का उद्घोष करता है। रामायण इस माध्यम से यह संदेश

देती है कि सेवा और भक्ति के क्षेत्र में कोई ऊँच-नीच नहीं है। "जाति-पाँति पछे नहिं कोई, हरि को भजै सो हरि का होई।" (भावार्थ)

यद्यपि यह पंक्ति तलसीदास की परंपरा में मिलती है, तथापि इसका भाव वाल्मीकि रामायण में शबरी प्रसंग द्वारा पूर्णतः प्रतिपादित होता है।

शबरी की सेवा भावात्मक होने के साथ-साथ आत्म-विसर्जन की प्रतीक भी है। वे सेवा को अपने अस्तित्व का उद्देश्य मानती हैं, न कि सामाजिक प्रतिष्ठा प्राप्त करने का साधन। उनकी सेवा में किसी प्रकार की अपेक्षा या प्रतिफल की आकांक्षा नहीं है। यह भावात्मक सेवा को निष्काम स्वयंसेवकता के निकट ले आती है।

आध्यात्मिक दृष्टि से शबरी की सेवा तीन प्रमुख तत्वों पर आधारित है--

- (1) शद्ध भक्ति और प्रेम।
- (2) निष्काम भाव, तथा
- (3) सामाजिक भेदभाव का निषेध।

इस प्रकार शबरी का चरित्र रामायण में यह स्थापित करता है कि स्वयंसेवकता का सर्वोच्च रूप वही है, जो करुणा, प्रेम और समता से प्रेरित हो। शबरी की भावात्मक सेवा न केवल आध्यात्मिक साधना है, बल्कि सामाजिक न्याय और मानवीय समानता की सशक्त अभिव्यक्ति भी है।

4. सामाजिक सेवा के दार्शनिक आयाम

वाल्मीकि रामायण A सामाजिक सेवा केवल व्यक्तिगत या भावनात्मक करुणा तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि वह एक सविचारित दार्शनिक अवधारणा के रूप में प्रस्तुत होती है। यहाँ सेवा का संबंध समाज, राज्य और नैतिक व्यवस्था से है। रामायण का दर्शन व्यक्ति को समाज से पथक सत्ता के रूप में नहीं देखता, बल्कि उसे सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व से युक्त नैतिक प्राणी के रूप में स्थापित करता है। इस दृष्टि से सामाजिक सेवा रामायण में धर्म, कर्तव्य और न्याय की दार्शनिक त्रिवेणी से संयुक्त है।

रामायण में सामाजिक सेवा का प्रथम दार्शनिक आधार कर्तव्य-बोध (Duty-consciousness) है। प्रत्येक पात्र अपने-अपने सामाजिक दायित्व का निर्वाह सेवा-भाव से करता है--चाहे वह पत्र-धर्म हो, भ्रात-धर्म, मित्र-धर्म या राज-धर्म। श्रीराम का जीवन इस दृष्टि से आदर्श है, जहाँ कर्तव्य व्यक्तिगत सख से ऊपर है। यहाँ सेवा स्वेच्छा से किया गया त्याग है, न कि विवशता।

सामाजिक सेवा का दूसरा प्रमुख दार्शनिक आयाम लोककल्याण (Welfare of all) की भावना है। रामायण में किसी एक वर्ग या समूह का हित नहीं, बल्कि समस्त समाज का कल्याण लक्ष्य है। रामराज्य की संकल्पना इसी लोककल्याणकारी दर्शन की परिणति है, जहाँ राज्य स्वयं सेवा-संस्था का रूप ग्रहण कर लेता है। -"नाधिव्याधिजं दुःखं न दारिद्र्यं न चानूतम्।" (उत्तरकाण्ड)

यह पंक्ति सामाजिक सेवा के उस आदर्श को प्रतिपादित करती है, जिसमें शासन का उद्देश्य जनकल्याण और सामाजिक न्याय है।

तीसरा दार्शनिक आयाम न्याय और समता है। रामायण में सेवा का उद्देश्य केवल सहायता करना नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक असंतुलन को दूर करना भी है। शबरी, निषादराज और वनवासी समाज के प्रति श्रीराम का व्यवहार यह दर्शाता है कि सामाजिक सेवा का आधार मानवीय समानता है, न कि वर्ग या सत्ता।

चौथा महत्वपूर्ण आयाम नैतिक अनुशासन है। रामायण में सेवा नैतिक मर्यादाओं से मुक्त नहीं है। प्रत्येक सेवा धर्म और विवेक के नियंत्रण में है। हनमान का पराक्रम, लक्ष्मण का त्याग और भरतका शासन-त्याग--ये सभी उदाहरण सेवा को नैतिक दर्शन से जोड़ते हैं।

दार्शनिक दृष्टि से रामायण A सामाजिक सेवा का अंतिम लक्ष्य सामाजिक समरसता और स्थायी शांति है। यह सेवा तात्कालिक सहायता नहीं, बल्कि समाज की नैतिक पुनर्रचना का साधन है। व्यक्ति जब सेवा करता है, तो वह समाज को अधिक न्यायपूर्ण और संतुलित बनाने में योगदान देता है।

अतः यह निष्कर्ष निकाला जा सकता है कि रामायण में सामाजिक सेवा के दार्शनिक आयाम निम्नलिखित तत्वों पर आधारित हैं--

- (1) कर्तव्य-बोध,
- (2) लोककल्याण,
- (3) न्याय एवं समता
- (4) नैतिक अनुशासन, तथा
- (5) सामाजिक समरसता।

इन आयामों के कारण रामायण सामाजिक सेवा को भावनात्मक परोपकार से ऊपर उठाकर एक ससंगठित नैतिक-दर्शन के रूप में स्थापित करती है, जो आज के सामाजिक चिंतन के लिए पूर्णतः प्रासंगिक है।

4.1 भरत : कर्तव्य-आधारित सेवा का दार्शनिक उदाहरण

वाल्मीकि रामायण में भरत का चरित्र कर्तव्य-आधारित सामाजिक सेवा का अत्यंत उच्चकोटि का दार्शनिक उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करता है। भरत का आचरण यह स्पष्ट करता है कि सेवा केवल सक्रिय कर्म (action) तक सीमित नहीं होती, अपितु कभी-कभी सत्ता का त्याग और अधिकार का निषेध भी सेवा का सर्वोच्च रूप बन जाता है। दार्शनिक दृष्टि से भरत का त्याग नैतिक कर्तव्य और धर्मनिष्ठा का प्रतीक है।

अयोध्याकाण्ड में भरत को जब यह ज्ञात होता है कि राम के वनवास के कारण राज्य उन्हें प्राप्त हो सकता है, तब वे इस अवसर को व्यक्तिगत लाभ के रूप में स्वीकार नहीं करते। वे राज्य को सत्ता नहीं, बल्कि उत्तरदायित्व और सेवा का माध्यम मानते हैं। इसी कारण वे राजसिंहासन को अस्वीकार करते हैं-- "नाहं राज्यं करोम्येष पादुके ते करोम्यहम्।" (अयोध्याकाण्ड)

यह कथन दार्शनिक रूप से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। यहाँ भरत स्पष्ट करते हैं कि राज्य करना उनका लक्ष्य नहीं, बल्कि राम के प्रति कर्तव्य और प्रजा के प्रति उत्तरदायित्व ही उनका धर्म है। यह सेवा अधिकार-विसर्जन के माध्यम से संपन्न होती है।

भरत की सेवा का एक अन्य महत्वपूर्ण पक्ष उनका प्रजा-कल्याणकारी दृष्टिकोण है। वे स्वयं को राजा नहीं, बल्कि श्रीराम का प्रतिनिधि मानते हुए राज्य संचालन करते हैं। राम की खड़ाऊँ कोसिंहासन पर स्थापित करना इस भाव का प्रतीकात्मक रूप है। दार्शनिक दृष्टि से यह सत्ता के

व्यक्तिकरण के निषेध और नैतिक शासन की स्थापना है।

भरत का त्याग राजनीतिक दर्शन में उस अवधारणा को सुदृढ़ करता है, जहाँ शासन का उद्देश्य सत्ता-सुख नहीं, बल्कि समाज की सेवा है। उनका आचरण यह भी सिद्ध करता है कि सच्चा सेवक वह है, जो पद और प्रतिष्ठा को नहीं, बल्कि धर्म और न्याय को प्राथमिकता देता है।

भरत की कर्तव्य-आधारित सेवा में तीन प्रमुख दार्शनिक तत्व स्पष्ट रूप से इष्टिगोचर होते हैं--

- (1) कर्तव्य की सर्वोच्चता,
- (2) अधिकार और सत्ता का त्याग, तथा
- (3) नैतिक एवं उत्तरदायी शासन।

इस प्रकार भरत रामायण में सामाजिक सेवा के उस दार्शनिक आदर्श को स्थापित करते हैं, जिसमें सेवा आत्म-प्रदर्शन नहीं, बल्कि नैतिक संयम और कर्तव्यनिष्ठा की अभिव्यक्ति बन जाती है। उनका चरित्र यह सिद्ध करता है कि कभी-कभी न करना (त्याग) भी सामाजिक सेवा का सर्वोच्च रूप हो सकता है।

4.2 रामराज्य : सामाजिक सेवा का संस्थागत स्वरूप

वाल्मीकि रामायण में रामराज्य की संकल्पना सामाजिक सेवा के संस्थागत (Institutional) और दार्शनिक स्वरूप को स्पष्ट रूप से अभिव्यक्त करती है। रामराज्य केवल एक आदर्श शासन-प्रणाली नहीं, बल्कि ऐसी सामाजिक व्यवस्था है, जहाँ राज्य स्वयं सेवा-संस्था के रूप में कार्य करता है। यहाँ शासन का उद्देश्य सत्ता-प्रयोग नहीं, बल्कि लोककल्याण, न्याय और सामाजिक समरसता की स्थापना है।

रामराज्य का मूल आधार राजधर्म है। श्रीराम स्वयं को राजा नहीं, बल्कि प्रजा का सेवक मानते हैं। शासन उनके लिए व्यक्तिगत अधिकार नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक दायित्व है। यही कारण है कि रामराज्य A प्रशासन का केन्द्र प्रजा का सुख-दुःख है, न कि शासक की सुविधा। -"नाधिव्याधिजं दुःखं न दारिद्र्यं न चानूतम्।" (उत्तरकाण्ड) यह श्लोक रामराज्य की सामाजिक सेवा-प्रधान संरचना को उजागर करता है। यहाँ राज्य की सफलता का मापदंड आर्थिक समृद्धि या सैन्य शक्ति नहीं, बल्कि जनता का स्वास्थ्य, सत्यनिष्ठा और अभावमुक्त जीवन हैं।

रामराज्य A सामाजिक सेवा व्यक्तिगत प्रयासों तक सीमित न रहकर नीतियाँ और संस्थाओं के माध्यम से संपन्न होती है। न्याय-प्रणाली, प्रशासन, आर्थिक व्यवस्था और सामाजिक आचरण-सभी लोककल्याण के सिद्धांत से संचालित होते हैं। यह दर्शाता है कि रामायण ae सेवा को केवल नैतिक उपदेश नहीं, बल्कि व्यवहारिक शासन-दर्शन के रूप A प्रस्तुत करती है।

दार्शनिक दृष्टि से रामराज्य में समता और न्याय केंद्रीय मूल्य है। किसी वर्ग, जाति या समुदाय के साथ भेदभाव का उल्लेख नहीं मिलता। शासक और शासित के बीच विश्वास का संबंध है, जो सेवा-आधारित शासन की पहचान है। राज्य नागरिकों के जीवन A अनावश्यक हस्तक्षेप नहीं करता, किंतु उनके मूलभूत सख और Gran की पूर्ण जिम्मेदारी लेता है।

रामराज्य की संकल्पना सामाजिक सेवा के एक और महत्वपूर्ण पक्ष को रेखांकित करती है--नैतिकता का संस्थानीकरण। यहाँ सेवा केवल व्यक्तिगत सदाचार नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक नियम बन जाती है। राज्य का प्रत्येक अंग धर्म, सत्य और करुणा से अनप्राणित होता है।

इस प्रकार रामराज्य सामाजिक सेवा का वह आदर्श संस्थागत स्वरूप प्रस्तुत करता है, जहाँ शासन और सेवा के बीच कोई विभाजन नहीं Wall दार्शनिक रूप से यह सिद्ध करता है कि जब सत्ता धर्म और कर्तव्य से नियंत्रित होती है, तब राज्य स्वयं समाज-सेवा का सर्वोच्च माध्यम बन जाता है।

5. आध्यात्मिकता और दर्शन का समन्वय

वाल्मीकि रामायण की सबसे महत्वपूर्ण विशेषता यह है कि इसमें आध्यात्मिकता (Spirituality) और दर्शन (Philosophy) परस्पर विरोधी न होकर एक-कु के प्रक रूप में प्रस्तुत होते हैं। रामायण A सेवा न तो केवल भावनात्मक भक्ति तक सीमित है और न ही मात्र बौद्धिक नैतिकता तक; बल्कि यह दोनों के समन्वय से एक समग्र जीवन-दृष्टि का निर्माण करती | यही समन्वय स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा को स्थायी, सार्थक और मल्यनिष्ठ बनाता है।

आध्यात्मिकता रामायण में सेवा को अंतःप्रेरणा, करुणा और निष्कामता प्रदान करती है। श्रीराम हनमान और शबरी जैसे पात्र यह सिद्ध करते हैं कि सेवा तब आध्यात्मिक बनती है जब वह अहंकार से मुक्त होकर ईश्वरार्पण की भावना से की जाए। यहाँ सेवा आत्म-शुद्धि की साधना है

जिसके माध्यम से व्यक्ति अपने राग-द्वेष और स्वार्थ का क्षय करता है।

वहीं दर्शन रामायण में सेवा को तार्किक, नैतिक और सामाजिक संरचना प्रदान करता है। भरत का त्याग, रामराज्य की संकल्पना और राजधर्म का सिद्धांत यह दर्शाते हैं कि सेवा केवल व्यक्तिगत सदगुण नहीं, बल्कि समाज और राज्य के संचालन का दार्शनिक आधार भी है। दर्शन सेवा को कर्तव्य, न्याय और लोककल्याण से जोड़ता है, जिससे वह स्थायी सामाजिक व्यवस्था का रूप ग्रहण करती है।

रामायण में आध्यात्मिकता और दर्शन का समन्वय विशेष रूप से निष्काम कर्मयोग के सिद्धांत में दृष्टिगोचर होता है। यहाँ सेवा भावनात्मक प्रेरणा से उत्पन्न होती है, किंतु उसका क्रियान्वयन नैतिक विवेक और सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व के अंतर्गत होता है। श्रीराम का जीवन इस समन्वय का सर्वोत्तम उदाहरण है, जहाँ आध्यात्मिक संयम और दार्शनिक कर्तव्य एक साथ क्रियाशील हैं।

यह समन्वय सेवा को दो अतिवादी प्रवृत्तियों से बचाता है-

- (1) केवल भावक करुणा, जो व्यावहारिक प्रभाव से रहित हो सकती है, और
- (2) शुष्क नैतिकता, जो संवेदना के अभाव में कठोर बन जाती है।

रामायण में सेवा न तो अंधी भावना है और न ही निरा नियम, बल्कि संवेदनशील विवेक का साकार रूप है।

अतः यह निष्कर्ष निकाला जा सकता है कि रामायण में आध्यात्मिकता और दर्शन का समन्वय स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा को एक उच्चकोटि की मानवीय साधना में रूपांतरित कर देता है। यह समन्वय ही रामायण को कालातीत और सार्वकालिक बनाता है तथा आधुनिक समाज के लिए भी सेवा और नैतिक जीवन का विश्वसनीय मार्गदर्शक सिद्ध करता है।

6. समकालीन संदर्भ

वर्तमान वैश्वीकरण, भौतिकतावाद और तीव्र सामाजिक परिवर्तन के यग A स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा की आवश्यकता पहले से कहीं अधिक बढ़ गई V1 आर्थिक असमानता, सामाजिक विघटन, नैतिक संकट और मानवीय संवेदना के क्षय जैसी समस्याएँ आधुनिक समाज की प्रमुख चनौतियाँ हैं। ऐसे परिदृश्य में वाल्मीकि रामायण में निहित सेवा-दर्शन समकालीन समाज के लिए ने केवल प्रासंगिक, बल्कि अत्यंत मार्गदर्शक सिद्ध होता है।

आधुनिक स्वयंसेवी संगठनों और सामाजिक आंदोलनों A सेवा प्रायः प्रबंधन, लक्ष्य और परिणाम के आधार पर संचालित होती है। यद्यपि यह व्यावहारिक दृष्टि आवश्यक है, fa इसके साथ यदि आध्यात्मिक चेतना का अभाव हो, तो सेवा यांत्रिक और आत्मकेंद्रित बन सकती है। रामायण की सेवा-दृष्टि आधुनिक स्वयंसेवकता को यह सिखाती है कि सेवा का मंत्र उद्देश्य लोककल्याण और आत्म-शुद्धि होना चाहिए, न कि केवल उपलब्धि या प्रतिष्ठा।

समकालीन प्रशासन और शासन-व्यवस्था के संदर्भ में रामराज्य की अवधारणा विशेष रूप से महत्वपूर्ण है। आज सशासन (Good Governance), जनकल्याणकारी राज्य और कल्याणकारी नीतियाँ जिन सिद्धांतों पर आधारित हैं, वे रामायण में प्रतिपादित राजधर्म के निकट प्रतीत होते हैं। इससे यह स्पष्ट होता है कि रामायण का सामाजिक दर्शन आधुनिक लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों से विरोध नहीं करता, बल्कि उन्हें नैतिक आधार प्रदान करता है।

सामाजिक समता और समावेशन (Social Inclusion) क्षेत्र में शबरी और निषादराज जैसे प्रसंग समकालीन समाज के लिए अत्यंत प्रासंगिक हैं। जाति, वर्ग, लिंग और क्षेत्रीय भेदभाव से ग्रस्त आज के समाज में रामायण यह संदेश देती है कि सेवा और सम्मान का अधिकार प्रत्येक मनष्य को समान रूप से प्राप्त है। यह दृष्टि आधुनिक मानवाधिकार और सामाजिक न्याय की अवधारणाओं से गहन साम्यता रखती है।

इसके अतिरिक्त, हनुमान का निष्काम सेवाभाव आधुनिक स्वयंसेवकों के लिए आदर्श प्रेरणा-स्रोत बन सकता है। आज जब सेवा कई बार स्व-प्रचार या संस्थागत प्रतिस्पर्धा का साधन बन जाती है तब हनुमान का कर्तव्य-त्याग और समर्पण स्वयंसेवकता की Weer आत्मा को पनः स्थापित करता है।

अतः समकालीन संदर्भ में रामायण की सेवा-दृष्टि यह सिद्ध करती है कि आध्यात्मिक मूल्यों से सामाजिक सेवा ही स्थायी, नैतिक और मानवीय समाज का निर्माण कर सकती है। रामायण ने केवल अतीत का ग्रंथ है, बल्कि वर्तमान और भविष्य के लिए भी स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा का एक प्रामाणिक वैचारिक आधार प्रस्तुत करती है।

7. निष्कर्ष (Conclusion)

वाल्मीकि रामायण में स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा केवल व्यक्तिगत सदगुण या भावनात्मक करुणा तक सीमित नहीं हैं, बल्कि इन्हें आध्यात्मिक साधना, नैतिक कर्तव्य और सामाजिक दर्शन के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित किया गया है। अध्ययन से स्पष्ट होता है कि रामायण में सेवा के तीन मुख्य आयाम समन्वित रूप में Wedd हैं--

1. **आध्यात्मिक आयाम:** सेवा को निष्काम, अहंकार-रहित और भक्ति-प्रधान माना गया है। श्रीराम, हनुमान और शबरी जैसे पात्र सेवा को आत्म-शुद्धि और आत्मोन्नति का साधन मानते हैं।
2. **सामाजिक-दार्शनिक आयाम:** भरत का त्याग, रामराज्य की संकल्पना और राजधर्म यह सिद्ध करते हैं कि सेवा Hae व्यक्तिगत लाभ या भावनात्मक करुणा नहीं, बल्कि समाज और राज्य के हित का नैतिक कर्तव्य है।
3. **समकालीन प्रासंगिकता:** आज के सामाजिक, आर्थिक और नैतिक संकट के यग में रामायण का सेवा-दर्शन स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक न्याय के लिए प्रासंगिक मार्गदर्शक सिद्ध होता है।

रामायण के पात्र और प्रसंग यह स्पष्ट करते हैं कि सच्ची सेवा--जो निष्काम, करुणामय और नैतिक हो--न केवल समाज का कल्याण करती है, बल्कि व्यक्तिगत आध्यात्मिक उन्नति का मार्ग भी प्रशस्त करती है। श्रीराम का वनगमन, हनुमान का समर्पण, शबरी की भावात्मक सेवा और भरत का राज्य-त्याग--ये सभी उदाहरण सेवा के उच्चतम आदर्श हैं।

अतः निष्कर्षस्वरूप कहा जा सकता है कि वाल्मीकि रामायण स्वयंसेवकता और सामाजिक सेवा का कालातीत, सार्वकालिक और प्रेरणादायक ग्रंथ है। यह ग्रंथ न केवल प्राचीन भारतीय समाज के नैतिक और सामाजिक ढाँचे को स्पष्ट करता है, बल्कि आधुनिक समाज में सेवा, कर्तव्य और लोककल्याण के लिए मार्गदर्शन भी प्रदान करता है।

रामायण में सेवा और सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व का समग्र दर्शन यह संदेश देता है कि लोकहित और धर्मपरायणता के साथ किया गया प्रत्येक कर्म आध्यात्मिक और सामाजिक रूप से मूल्यवान होता है।

निष्कर्ष

APM जनमानस को सदैव प्रभावित करनेवाली एक पावनधारा है। भारतीय समाज A इसका विशिष्ट स्थान है। यह ज्ञान का अक्षय भंडार है। यह सत्य है पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी लोगों ने लीला के रूप में रामायण (रामकथा) को बार-बार जिया है और उससे मिलने वाले Heal और संस्कारों को नवीकृत करते हुए अपनाया भी है। राम के महान चरित्र का अनुसरण करते हुए मानव समाज मानव सेवा का मार्ग अपना सकता है, देश तथा विश्वभर समन्वय की भावना स्थापित कर सकता है। Wed चिंता की बात यह है कि 'WA' नाम का जयकारा लगाना एक फैशन बनता जा रहा है। "तुलसी जी बोले- हिंदु धर्म संकट में नहीं है, तुम लोगों का स्वार्थ ही संकट में है। प्रभु राम की ओट में स्वार्थ है। कर्सी का स्वार्थ है। इसलिए are श्रीराम का 'ओट' लेना पड़ा है। सच कहने से घबड़ाते हो। पर इतना जान लो श्रीराम की मर्यादा तक इस तरह तम लोग नहीं UST सकते। प्रभु श्रीराम 'dle' के नहीं 'प्रेम' के भखे हैं।" 11 राम को किसी भी एक धर्म से जोड़कर देखना एक संकेचित सोच होगी, बल्कि राम को मानव धर्म के साथ जोड़ा जाना चाहिए। अंततः यह कह सकते हैं कि रामकथा की वजह से ही राम हमारे रोम-रोम में बसते हैं। आज अगर समाज में मानवीय मर्यादाओं तथा आदर्शों को जीवित रखना है तो रामकथा A बढ़कर कोई सुरक्षा कवच नहीं है।

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श्यामची आई: राष्ट्रीय विचारधारा**सुजाता मिलिंद काळे**

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शोध-सार (Abstract)

समाजाला योग्य दिशा दाखवून प्रत्येक व्यक्तीने आपला समाज ओळखून सेवा करावी ही धारणा साने गुरुजींची होती. 'श्यामची आई' हे विशाल हृदयी श्याम घडावा यासाठी मातृप्रेमाचे स्तोत्र आहे असे म्हणावे लागेल. मराठी भाषेचे एक अमर भूषण .गुरुजींनी त्यांचे आयुष्य राष्ट्राला अर्पण केले. समस्त मानव कल्याणासाठी आजचा श्याम हा योग्य आचार विचारांनी कटिबद्ध असावा यासाठी संजीवनी देणारे असे 'श्यामची आई' ही मांगल्याने ओथंबलेली विचारधारा आहे असे म्हणावे लागेल. साने गुरुजींचा श्याम हा वडीलधाऱ्यांचे ऐकणारा नम्र , ऋजू व्यक्तिमत्त्वाचा आणि चांगले विचार आत्मसात करणारा होता. त्याबरोबरच एकमेकांना तत्परतेने मदत करणे हा सेवाभाव त्याच्याकडे होता. त्यामुळे स्वाभाविक त्यातूनच समाजसेवा हा गुण त्यामध्ये विकसित झालेला होता.

आजच्या श्याम पुढे अनेक आव्हाने आहेत. आजचा श्याम समाज जीवनामध्ये कसे आचरण करतो ,समतोलपणे आचरण कसा करतो हे महत्वाचे आहे. आजचा श्याम आणि आजची आई आताचा काळ पकडण्याचा प्रयत्न करीत आहेत. प्राप्त परिस्थितीचा स्वीकार करत अनेक अडचणींना तोंड देता देता प्रॅक्टिकल होत चालली आहेत. श्यामच्या आई मधील प्रत्येक मौल्यवान विचार हे आजच्या समाज जीवनासाठी अत्यंत उपयुक्त आहेत. आजच्या श्याममध्ये हे सर्व कंगोरे तपासणे, सर्वसमावेशक विचार करणे हे मुख्य प्रयोजन आहे.

बीज शब्द ... 'श्यामची आई' समाजजीवनातील समतोल साधणारा जिवंत झरा'

प्रास्तविक :

समाजाला योग्य दिशा दाखवून प्रत्येक व्यक्तीने आपला समाज ओळखून सेवा करावी ही धारणा साने गुरुजींची होती. श्यामची आई विशाल हृदयी श्याम घडावा यासाठी मातृप्रेमाचे स्तोत्र आहे असे म्हणावे लागेल. मराठी भाषेचे अमर भूषण गुरुजींनी त्यांचे समग्र आयुष्य राष्ट्राला अर्पण केले. समस्त मानव कल्याणसाठी आजचा श्याम हा योग्य आचार विचारांनी कटिबद्ध असावा यासाठी संजीवनी देणारे असे ' श्यामची आई' ही

मांगल्याने ओथंबलेली विचारधारा आहे. साने गुरुजींचा श्याम हा वडीलधाऱ्यांचे ऐकणारा नम्र ,रुजू व्यक्तिमत्त्वाचा आणि चांगले विचार आत्मसात करणारा होता. त्याबरोबरच एकमेकांना तत्परतेने मदत करणे हा सेवाभाव त्याच्याकडे होता. त्यामुळे स्वाभाविकपणे त्यातूनच सेवाभाव, समाजसेवा हा गुण त्यामध्ये विकसित झालेला होता. त्यांच्या आईने त्यांच्यावर केलेल्या संस्कारांनी तो भाव सतत त्यांच्या मनात जागृत राहिला. चांगल्या आचारातून -विचारांतून समाजसेवेसाठी आवश्यक असणारे ज्ञान, विज्ञानाचे प्रवाह सशक्त करण्याचे काम गुरुजींनी आपल्या लेखनातून केले. त्यामुळेच राष्ट्राच्या प्रगतीचे मार्ग दुर्गोचर करण्याची ताकद त्यांच्या लेखनातून आलेली दिसते.

बालस्वयंसेवक हे भावी काळातील राष्ट्राचे आधारस्तंभ आहेत. प्रत्येक व्यक्तीने स्वेच्छेने व स्वयंस्फूर्तीने समाजसेवा करावी हा भाव गुरुजींच्या श्यामची आई मधून सहज साध्य होतो. बालवयात झालेल्या संस्कारांचे मूल्य हे खूप मोठे असते. बालवयात केलेले हृदयनिश्चय पुढील जीवनात महत्वाचे ठरतात. ज्या समाजात अशा कर्तुत्वान सामर्थ्यशाली आचार विचारांनी परिपूर्ण असा श्याम घडेल तोच समाज खऱ्या अर्थाने समृद्धशाली होईल हे तत्त्वज्ञान गुरुजींनी 'श्यामची आई' मध्ये मांडले.

काळाला सुसंगत असे आचरण आजच्या श्याम मध्ये असायला हवे. आजच्या श्याम पुढे अनेक आव्हाने आहेत. आजचा श्याम समाजजीवनात कसे आचरण करतो? समतोल पणे आचरण करतो का? हे महत्वाचे आहे आजचा श्याम आणि आजची माता आताचा काळ पकडण्याचा प्रयत्न करीत आहे. प्राप्त परिस्थितीचा स्वीकार करत अनेक अडचणींना तोंड

देताना प्रॅक्टिकल होत चालली आहेत साने गुरुजींच्या 'श्यामची आई' मधील प्रत्येक मौल्यवान विचार हे आजच्या समाज जीवनासाठी अत्यंत उपयुक्त आहेत. आजच्या श्याममध्ये हे सर्व कंगोरे तपासणे, सर्व समावेशक विचार करणे हे मुख्य प्रयोजन आहे. गुरुजींची 'श्यामची आई' म्हणजे समाज जीवनातील समतोल साधना जिवंत झरा आहे असेच म्हणता येईल.

संशोधन विषयाचे महत्त्व व स्वरूप :

बदलत्या कालमानाप्रमाणे नवनव्या शोधाची परिक्रमा अव्याहतपणे चालू असलेली दिसते. जुने व नवीन यांचे मिश्रण करून वेगळे काही दाखवण्याचा असतो. नवीन बदल आत्मसात करून समाजात अंतर्बाह्य बदल वेगाने पुढे जात असताना विशेषतः काळाचा ठसा समाज जीवनावर उमटत असल्याचे चित्र स्पष्टपणे दिसून येते. एकूणच समाज जीवनाच्या परिघात केंद्रबिंदू असणारा घटक म्हणजे आजचे बालक एकविसाव्या शतकातील आव्हानांना सामोरे जाताना मुलांच्या मनातील प्रचंड ऊर्जा. त्या ऊर्जेला सकारात्मक वाट करून देणे मुलांच्या व्यक्तिमत्त्वाचा अंतर्बाह्य सर्वांगीण विकास साधणे, त्यांच्यामध्ये असलेला सुप्त गुणांना वाव देणे, त्यांच्या मनातील आंदोलने बोलती करणे यासाठी 'श्यामची आई' म्हणजे मातृ प्रेमाचे 'महन्मंगल स्तोत्र' आहे असे आचार्य अत्रे यांनी म्हटले आहे. श्यामची आई पुस्तक रूपाने व चित्रपटाद्वारे घराघरात पोहोचली ह्या संस्कारित पुस्तकात संवाद हा मुख्य स्त्रोत आहे. रोजच्या जडणघडणीत आई आणि मूल यांच्यातील श्यामच्या आई मधील संवाद हा समाज जीवनाचे तत्वज्ञानास उपयुक्त आहे. आज एकविसाव्या शतकातील आव्हानास सामोरे जाताना तंत्रज्ञानाची गरज आहेच

पण त्याहूनही अधिकतम गरज मुलांच्या उमलत्या वयातील मुलांच्या भावनिक आव्हानांना सामोरे जाण्यासाठी आहे आणि त्यातूनच समाज उभारणीसाठी सुजाण आणि सजग बालकाची आवश्यकता आहे. आज देशाला स्वातंत्र्य मिळवून ७८ वर्षे होऊन गेली. लोकशाहीच्या मार्गाने प्रगतीपथावर असलेला देश 'मेक इन इंडियाची' वाटचाल करत आहे. श्यामच्या आई मधील प्रेरणादायी मूल्ये ही मुलांच्या भावनेला साध्या, सोप्या भाषेत व्यक्त करण्यासाठी उपयुक्त आहेतच त्याचबरोबर जीवन विषयक उच्च ध्येयाचे आणि चारित्र्यसंवर्धन, शौर्यता, औदार्यता, देशाप्रती सहानुभूती इत्यादी गुणांचे संस्करण यामधून होते. श्यामच्या आई मधील संवादरूपी कथा या भाषेची ओळख तर करून देतातच पण त्या अनुषंगाने निर्माण झालेली ज्ञानाधिष्ठित कौशल्य कुशल मनुष्यबळ निर्मिती होत असेल पण संवेदनशील समाज हा सुसंस्कृत आणि प्रगत समाज असतो हे दाखवून देते. असा समाज घडविण्यासाठी राष्ट्रीय विचारधारा या श्यामच्या आईच्या अनुषंगाने विचार होणे गरजेचे आहे.

संशोधनाची गरज व अपेक्षा :

आज एकविसाव्या शतकात संस्कृती वेगळे रूप आकार घेते आहे. मिश्रता तिच्यात आली आहे मुले जशी घडतात तशी घडू देत असे म्हणण्यात जबाबदारी संपणारी नाही. श्यामची आईचा काळ निराळा होता. आजचा काळ जरी बदलला असला तरी मुलांमध्ये चैतन्य, जिवंतपणा आणण्याची गरज आहे. मुलांमध्ये सुप्त गुण असतात. कित्येकदा अशा सुप्त गुणांना वाव मिळत नाही. मग ही गुणपुष्प कोमेजून जातात आणि मग दिसतात ती वेडीवाकडी वागणारी मुलं त्यांच्या हातून घडणारी गुन्हेगारी आणि अनेक नकारात्मक बाबी. मुलांच्या संदर्भात घर, शाळा त्यांच्या आजूबाजूचा समाज अशा तीन संस्था फार महत्त्वाचा सहभाग देतात. ज्या समाजात मूल जन्माला येतो तिथं त्याला प्रेम आणि सुरक्षितता मिळणं आवश्यक आहे. शाळेत ज्ञान आणि विद्यार्थ्यांची स्वतंत्र अशी ओळख निर्माण होणं अनिवार्य असते अशा प्रकारे सिद्ध झालेलं मूल समाजात आपलं स्थान निर्माण करते. किंबहुना समाजाने तशी व्यवस्था करणं अभिप्रेत असते. या तीनही संस्थांचा स्वतंत्रपणे विचार करण्याची आजच्या काळातील श्याम घडवितांना नितांत आवश्यकता आहे. जेव्हा स्वतंत्रपणे तीनही घटकांचा विचार केला जाईल तेव्हा समाजाच्या हितासाठी मुल नावाच्या सुंदर चैतन्याला घडविण्यात येईल त्याची अपरिहार्यता आपल्या लक्षात येईल.

मुलांमधील याच क्षमता शोधून काढणं, त्यांना खतपाणी घालणं, त्यांना उतेजन देणे या गोष्टी हे तीनही घटक करीत असतात. समाधानकारक समाज जीवनातील घडण तयार करायची असेल तर दादा धर्माधिकारींनी आजच्या तरुण पिढीसाठी दिलेले तीन 'त' कार तेजस्विता, तपस्वीता, तत्परता अंगीकारणे आवश्यक आहे. ही प्रेरणा मुलांमध्ये विविध

संकल्पनांतून जागृत करण्याची गरज आहे. त्यासाठी प्रयत्न केले जाणे गरजेचे वाटते. तेव्हाच राष्ट्र घडवण्यात येईल. योगदान मोलाचे ठरेल. आधीच्या पिढीने अनुभवलेल्या पालकत्वाचाच विचार केला तर जाणवतो की अत्यंत समृद्ध पालकत्व होतं. कथामाला, राष्ट्रीय सेवा दलाच्या शिबिरांना जाणारी पिढी होती. त्या संस्कारांचा वारसा आजच्या एकविसाव्या शतकातील पिढीतील मुलांमध्ये रुजवता यायला हवा ही आजची मुख्य गरज आहे. हाच संशोधनाचा मुख्य हेतू आहे.

संशोधनाची उद्दिष्टे:

१. श्यामची आई मधील चिरंतन मूल्यांचे पुनर्दर्शन आजच्या पिढीला घडवायला उपयुक्त ठरते हे जाणून घेणे.
२. मुलांच्या सर्वांगीण जीवनात पोषक वातावरण निर्माण करणे.

समारोप:

समाज ज्या वेगाने बदलतो आहे त्या वेगाचे प्रतिबिंब आजच्या पिढीतील मुलांमध्ये दिसते आहे. आजची माता देखील हा वेग पकडण्याचा प्रयत्न करते आहे. अशावेळी साने गुरुजींच्या श्यामसारखा आजचा श्याम म्हणजे मानसिक, बौद्धिक, कौटुंबिक, सामाजिक पातळीवर घडण्यासाठी सुसंस्कृत, संवेदनशील, जबाबदार बनविण्यासाठी घरातूनच सुरुवात व्हायला हवी म्हणजे राष्ट्राला असा परिपूर्ण श्याम मिळेल.

“ तरुण पिढी आणि रस्त्यावरची नाटके: सामाजिक जाणीव निर्माण करण्याचे साधन म्हणून अभ्यास ”

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विभाग प्रमुख, बी. ए एम एम सी, एन. के. ई. एस कला, वाणिज्य आणि विज्ञान महाविद्यालय, वडाळा.

गोष्टवारा (Abstract)

आजच्या गतिमान आणि बदलत्या सामाजिक परिस्थितीत विविध सामाजिक प्रश्नांवर चर्चा घडवून आणण्यासाठी अनेक कलामाध्यमे वापरली जातात. त्यात **रस्त्यावरची नाटके (Street Plays)** ही एक प्रभावी आणि जनसामान्यांशी थेट संवाद साधणारी कला आहे. तरुण पिढी समाजातील सर्वात **ऊर्जावान** घटक आहे आणि तिच्या सर्जनशीलतेमुळे सामाजिक बदल साध्य होऊ शकतो. या पार्श्वभूमीवर या संशोधनाचा उद्देश म्हणजे रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांच्या माध्यमातून तरुण पिढी सामाजिक जाणीव कशी निर्माण करते? हे अभ्यासणे.

प्रस्तावना (Introduction)

सामाजिक जाणीव, सहभाग आणि बदल या तिन्ही घटकांचा संगम म्हणजे रस्त्यावरची नाटके. आजच्या काळात समाजातील विविध समस्यांवर संवाद साधण्याची अनेक साधने निर्माण झाली आहेत, पण त्यांपैकी काही थेट जनतेच्या भावनांशी संवाद साधतात, त्यात **रस्त्यावरची नाटके** हे प्रमुख माध्यम ठरले आहे. या नाटकांची वैशिष्ट्ये म्हणजे - ती **खुल्या जागेत** सादर होतात, प्रेक्षकांचा **थेट सहभाग** असतो, आणि संदेश **स्पष्ट, सशक्त व भावनिक** पद्धतीने पोहोचवला जातो. भारतात या **नाटकांचा उदय १९७० च्या दशकात** झाला, जेव्हा **“जननाट्य मंच”, “अस्मिता थिएटर”** आणि **“समता नाट्यगट”** यांनी सामाजिक प्रश्नांवर **जनजागृती** केली. तरुण पिढी या चळवळीची आत्मा आहे; तिच्या कल्पकतेमुळे आणि सामाजिक जबाबदारीमुळे ही नाटके **समाजपरिवर्तनाचे** साधन ठरतात.

कळ शब्द (Key Words) - रस्त्यावरची नाटके, सामाजिक परिवर्तन, तरुण पिढी

संशोधन प्रश्न (Research Questions):

1. तरुण पिढी रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांमध्ये का आणि कशी सहभागी होते?
2. रस्त्यावरची नाटके सामाजिक जाणीव निर्माण करण्यात कितपत प्रभावी ठरतात?
3. या नाटकांचा प्रेक्षकांच्या विचारांवर आणि वर्तनावर काय परिणाम होतो?

संशोधनाचा उद्देश (Objectives of the Study):

1. रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांबद्दल तरुण पिढीची दृष्टी समजून घेणे.
2. सामाजिक विषयांवर आधारित रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांचा प्रभाव विश्लेषित करणे.
3. नाट्यकलेतून सामाजिक संदेश कसा पोहोचतो, हे तपासणे.

गृहितके (Hypotheses):

1. रस्त्यावरची नाटके तरुण पिढीच्या सामाजिक विचारांना दिशा देतात.
2. या नाटकांचा सामाजिक जाणीव निर्माण करण्यात प्रभावी सहभाग असतो.
3. प्रेक्षकांचा थेट सहभाग आणि भावनिक प्रतिसाद ही नाटकांच्या यशाची प्रमुख कारणे आहेत.

मर्यादा (Limitations):

- अभ्यास मर्यादित क्षेत्रात - **मुंबई शहरातील प्रेक्षक व महाविद्यालयातील विद्यार्थी** पातळीवर केला जाईल.
- प्रतिसादांमध्ये **वैयक्तिक मतभेद** संभाव्यता.

संशोधन पद्धती (Research Methodology): तरुण पिढी आणि रस्त्यावरची नाटके: सामाजिक जाणीव निर्माण करण्याचे साधन म्हणून अभ्यास करत असताना संशोधन प्रकारात - गुणात्मक (Qualitative) आणि वर्णनात्मक (Descriptive) प्रकारचा वापर केला गेला आहे. त्याचबरोबर माहितीचे संकलन करण्यासाठी गूगल फॉर्म प्रश्नावली (Questionnaire) - तरुण प्रेक्षक व कलाकारांकडून भरून घेतली. याच बरोबर निरीक्षण (Observation) - प्रत्यक्ष रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांचे निरीक्षण केले. याचसोबत महाविद्यालयातील विद्यार्थ्यांसोबत फोकस ग्रुप डिस्कशन (FDP) केले. याखेरीज दुय्यम माहिती गोळा करण्यासाठी (Secondary Data) - लेख, प्रबंध, वृत्तपत्रे, आणि संशोधन अहवाल याचा वापर साहित्य समीक्षा मध्ये केला. नमुना (Sample) विचारात घेता,

○ ५०-१०० तरुण सहभागी (१८-४५ वयोगटातील)

○ ०९ प्रेक्षक प्रतिसाद

याचा अभ्यास केला जाईल. आणि त्यासर्वांचे डेटा विश्लेषण: विषयवस्तू विश्लेषण (Content Analysis) आणि गुणात्मक विवेचन (Interpretative Analysis) पद्धतीने केले आहे.

साहित्य समीक्षा (Review of Literature):

रस्त्यावरची नाटके (Street Plays) ही समाजातील वास्तवाचे प्रतिबिंब दर्शवणारी, आणि त्यावर थेट प्रतिसाद देणारी कलापद्धती आहे. या माध्यमाचा इतिहास भारतात आणि जगभरात लोकसंवादाच्या स्वरूपात विकसित झाला आहे. समाजजागृती, जनमत निर्माण, तसेच सांस्कृतिक प्रतिकार या तिन्ही बाबींसाठी नाट्यकलेचा वापर होत आला आहे. या विभागात विविध संशोधन, लेख, आणि सामाजिक चळवळींनी केलेल्या कार्याचा आढावा घेतला आहे.

भारतातील रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांचा उगम १९७०-८० च्या दशकात झाला. त्या काळात देशात सामाजिक विषमता, राजकीय भ्रष्टाचार, आणि स्त्रीविषयक अन्यायाविरुद्ध आवाज उठवण्यासाठी “जननाट्य मंच” (Habib Tanvir, Badal Sircar, Safdar Hashmi) या चळवळींनी नवे पाऊल टाकले. या नाटकांनी शहरी आणि ग्रामीण दोन्ही पातळ्यांवर लोकांशी थेट संवाद साधला. विशेषतः, सफदर हाशमी यांच्या “हल्ला बोल” या नाटकाने जनतेच्या जाणीवा जागृत करण्याचे कार्य केले. यानंतर “अस्मिता थिएटर” (दिल्ली), “समता नाट्यगट” (मुंबई) आणि “नंदिकार” (कोलकाता) यांनी सामाजिक प्रश्नांवर आधारित नाटके सादर करून चळवळींना प्रेरणा दिली.

रस्त्यावरची नाटके सामाजिक विषयांवर जनजागृती घडविण्यासाठी प्रभावी साधन ठरली आहेत. जोशी (२०२०) यांच्या “रस्त्यावरचं नाटक: सामाजिक संवादाचे माध्यम” या ग्रंथात असे नमूद केले आहे की या नाटकांमुळे प्रेक्षक फक्त मनोरंजन घेत नाहीत, तर सामाजिक समस्यांविषयी विचार करतात आणि कृतीस प्रवृत्त होतात. देशमुख (२०१८) यांनी “भारतीय नाट्यपरंपरा आणि समाजजागृती” मध्ये नमूद केले आहे की लोकनाट्य, तमाशा, भारुड, आणि नंतरची रस्त्यावरची नाटके ही समाजातील लोकशिक्षणाची साधने ठरली आहेत.

तरुण पिढी या नाट्यप्रकाराची आत्मा आहे. एनएसएस (National Service Scheme) आणि महाविद्यालयीन नाट्यगटामार्फत अनेक विद्यार्थी सामाजिक विषयांवर नाटके सादर करतात.

भारत सरकारच्या “Youth and Cultural Development Report” (2022) नुसार, १८ ते ३० वयोगटातील तरुण नाट्यकलावंत समाजातील बदलासाठी सर्वाधिक सक्रिय असतात.

तरुणांमध्ये सर्जनशीलता आणि सामाजिक जबाबदारीची भावना यांचा संगम झाल्यास, नाटक हे केवळ कलात्मक नव्हे तर परिवर्तनवादी साधन बनते.

पाउलो फ्रेरे (Paulo Freire) यांच्या *"Pedagogy of the Oppressed"* मध्ये शिक्षणाला मुक्तीचे साधन म्हणून वर्णन केले आहे. त्यांच्या मतानुसार, शिक्षण हा संवादाचा आणि आत्मजाणीवेचा प्रवास आहे – हीच संकल्पना रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांत प्रत्यक्ष दिसते.

प्रेक्षक आणि कलाकार यांच्यातील संवादामुळे सामाजिक विषयांची सखोल समज वाढते. त्यामुळे रस्त्यावरची नाटके "जनशिक्षणाचे जिवंत माध्यम" म्हणून पाहिली जाऊ शकतात.

मराठी रंगभूमीवर सामाजिक विषयांवर आधारित अनेक प्रभावी नाटके सादर झाली आहेत.

"महानगरी", "माझं गाव", "आवाज उठवा", "पाणी अडवा पाणी जिरवा" या नाटकांनी पर्यावरण, शहरी जीवन, स्त्रीसक्षमीकरण आणि सामाजिक न्याय या विषयांवर ठोस भूमिका घेतली. या नाटकांतून युवकांनी समाजातील विसंगतींना आवाज दिला आणि लोकांना सहभागी बनवले.

संशोधनातून दिसून आले आहे की रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांचा प्रभाव प्रेक्षकांच्या भावनांवर, विचारांवर आणि वर्तनावर थेट पडतो. फिल्ड स्टडीजमध्ये असे दिसते की एखादे नाटक पाहिल्यानंतर लोक संबंधित विषयावर चर्चा करतात, ऑनलाईन मोहिमा चालवतात किंवा स्थानिक कृतीत सहभागी होतात. हे दाखवते की या माध्यमातून केवळ संदेशच नव्हे, तर कृतीची प्रेरणाही मिळते.

पूर्वीच्या संशोधनांचा आढावा

- **Ramaswamy (2015)** यांनी "Theatre for Development in India" मध्ये म्हटले आहे की, रस्त्यावरची नाटके ही लोकशिक्षणासाठी 'Participatory Communication' चे उदाहरण आहेत.
- **Nandikar Theatre Group Reports (Kolkata)** मध्ये दाखवले आहे की नाट्यप्रयोगानंतर लोकांच्या सामाजिक दृष्टिकोनात दीर्घकालीन बदल दिसतात.
- **Deshmukh & Joshi (2021)** यांच्या संयुक्त संशोधनात नमूद आहे की महाविद्यालयीन विद्यार्थ्यांच्या नाट्यक्रियांमुळे सामाजिक जबाबदारीची भावना वाढते आणि नागरी सजगता विकसित होते.

साहित्यिक आणि संशोधनाधारित माहितीवरून हे स्पष्ट होते की रस्त्यावरची नाटके सामाजिक संवादाचे अनोखे माध्यम आहे. तथापि, आर्थिक अडचणी, सरकारी प्रोत्साहनाचा अभाव आणि डिजिटल मनोरंजनानामुळे या कलाप्रकाराचे अस्तित्व काहीसे मर्यादित झाले आहे. तरीसुद्धा, तरुणांच्या सहभागामुळे ही कला पुन्हा नव्याने जागृत होत आहे. अनेक संस्था आणि स्वयंसेवी संघटनांनी या माध्यमाचा वापर स्वच्छता, महिला सुरक्षा, ड्रग्सविरोध, आणि लोकशाही जागृतीसाठी केला आहे.

०९ प्रेक्षक प्रतिसाद

Street play gives knowledge about cultural, traditional and storytelling concept. It is actually as a powerful tool for awareness and educating people for social program and public or private company awareness campaign like Women's Violence, Child education Beti Bachao Beti padao, involves in NGO, etc. Here we directly come into the contact of audience so we get genuine feedback and can change attitude of people.

Some concepts are not only as an entertainment but also eye opening for people we can learn many things.

Name. Shruti C. Bole

Name Of Organisation -NKES College of Arts, Commerce and Science.

Designation: - Assistant Professor

Street plays do not affect day to day life but create awareness about several social, cultural issues among citizens.

Dr. Mahesh Patil, Vice Principal and Coordinator Department of BAMMC, Joshi Bedekar College, Thane

Street plays affect in my life primarily by acting as powerful, accessible tools for social communication, awareness, and community building. They engage individuals emotionally and intellectually with pressing issues, encouraging critical thinking and prompting action for social change.

Name – Chhaya Laxman Kavire

Street plays have a strong impact on life by spreading social awareness in a simple, direct, and emotional way. They address real-life issues such as gender equality, health, education, corruption, and social justice, making people think about their own attitudes and behaviour. Because street plays are performed in public spaces using local language and expressions, they easily connect with common people and leave a lasting impression.

They also help individuals involved in street plays by building confidence, communication skills, teamwork, and social responsibility. For both performers and audiences, street plays encourage critical thinking and inspire positive social change, making them a powerful tool for education and transformation in everyday life.

Street plays are important art for connecting with people. It's lively and speaks in the language of the people. Important social issues can be discussed in conversational way.

Name –Rashmi Warang

Designation - Radio Jockey/ Lecturer

Its understanding by actions. Act effect a lot than voice. Brain accept act fast as comparing voice or speech. So that act or street play effect each and every people educated uneducated. Larter. Unlit rate evenly. people understand fast compare to less educated and illiterate ppl in society. So that street play impact much more on society.

Name – Prof. Dr. Sunanda salve.

Name of the Organization – Sushma Patil Jr. And Degree College Kamothe Panvel.

Designation- professor

Street plays affect in my life primarily by acting as powerful, accessible tools for social communication, awareness, and community building. They engage individuals emotionally and intellectually with pressing issues, encouraging critical thinking and prompting action for social change.

Name – Chhaya Laxman Kavire

Name of the Organization – India Today

Designation- Associate Producer

In my opinion, street plays are an effective medium to connect with youth because they present social issues in a realistic and engaging way. Young people find street plays impactful as they combine entertainment with strong messages. They also encourage awareness, discussion, and social responsibility among the youth.

Name: - Mr. Rahul Patwa

Name of the organization: - Universal College of Engineering

Designation: - Asst. Prof.

पहिल्यांदा, ही नाटके सामाजिक जाणीव निर्माण करतात. स्वच्छता, स्त्री-पुरुष समानता, व्यसनमुक्ती, पर्यावरण संरक्षण, मतदानाचे महत्त्व अशा विषयांवर लोकांचे लक्ष वेधले जाते. सामान्य माणसाला थेट आणि सोप्या भाषेत संदेश मिळतो. दुसरे म्हणजे, रस्त्यावरची नाटके विचार करण्याची दृष्टी बदलतात. दैनंदिन जीवनातील समस्या आपण दुर्लक्ष करतो, पण नाटकाच्या माध्यमातून त्या समोर येतात आणि आत्मपरीक्षण करण्यास भाग पाडतात. तिसरे, ही नाटके समाजातील बदलाला चालना देतात. लोकांच्या मनात बदलाची बीजे रोवली जातात आणि काही जण प्रत्यक्ष कृतीकडे वळतात.

शेवटी, रस्त्यावरची नाटके केवळ मनोरंजन नसून ती समाजप्रबोधनाचे प्रभावी साधन आहेत, जी आपल्या जीवनाला अधिक जागरूक, संवेदनशील आणि जबाबदार बनवतात.

नाव - सुजित पाटील

कार्यालयाचे नाव - व्हाईट मार्क सोल्युशन

पदनाम - असोसिएट कन्सल्टंट रिजनल आउटरीच

Street plays affect my life by making me aware of social issues like cleanliness, women's safety, and drugs awareness.

They present strong messages in a simple, entertaining way, just like the traditional natak (drama) seen in Indian communities.

Street plays inspire me to think responsibly and motivate me to bring positive change in society.

Name – Sanchita Humane

Name of the Organization – NKES Arts, Commerce and Science

Designation - Asst. Prof.

महाविद्यालयातील विद्यार्थ्यांसोबत फोकस ग्रुप डिस्कशन (FDP) केले.



तरुण पिढी आणि रस्त्यावरची नाटके: सामाजिक जाणीव निर्माण करण्याचे साधन म्हणून अभ्यास या विषयावर महाविद्यालयातील विद्यार्थ्यांसोबत फोकस ग्रुप डिस्कशन (FDP) केले.

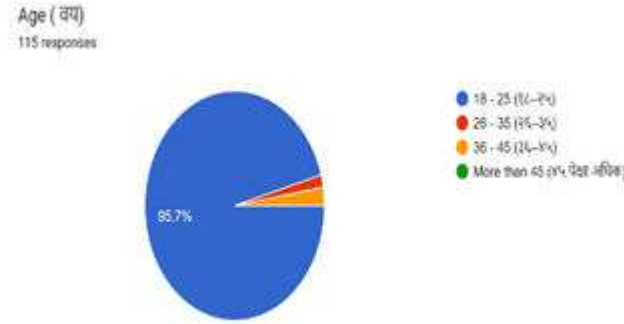
पुढील तीन निष्कर्ष समोर आले.

1. सामाजिक मुद्द्यांविषयी संवेदनशीलता वाढते - रस्त्यावरची नाटके पाहिल्याने किंवा त्यामध्ये सहभागी झाल्याने विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये सामाजिक समस्यांविषयी अधिक जाणीव निर्माण होते आणि त्यावर विचार करण्याची वृत्ती वाढते असे विद्यार्थ्यांनी म्हंटले.

2. सक्रिय सहभाग आणि आत्मविश्वास वाढतो - त्याचबरोबर विद्यार्थ्यांच्या मते विद्यार्थ्यांनी नाटकमधील भूमिका पार पाडताना किंवा चर्चा करताना आत्मविश्वास, संवाद कौशल्य आणि नेतृत्व क्षमता सुधारण्यास मदत झाली.

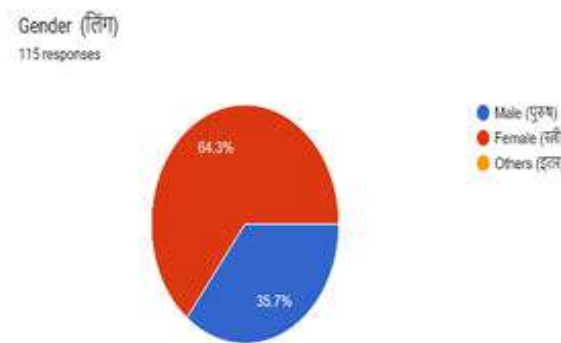
3. सामाजिक बदलासाठी प्रेरणा मिळते - रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांमुळे आम्हा युवकांना केवळ निरीक्षक राहण्याऐवजी सामाजिक बदलासाठी स्वतः योगदान देण्याची प्रेरणा मिळाली

११५ लोकांनी गूगल फॉर्म भरले आहेत त्याचे दाखले व विश्लेषण पुढीलप्रमाणे



सदर संशोधनासाठी एकूण 115 प्रतिसादकांकडून माहिती संकलित करण्यात आली. या माहितीच्या विश्लेषणातून रस्त्यावरील नाटके, सामाजिक संदेश आणि तरुणांचा सामाजिक परिवर्तनातील सहभाग याबाबत महत्त्वपूर्ण निष्कर्ष समोर आले आहेत.

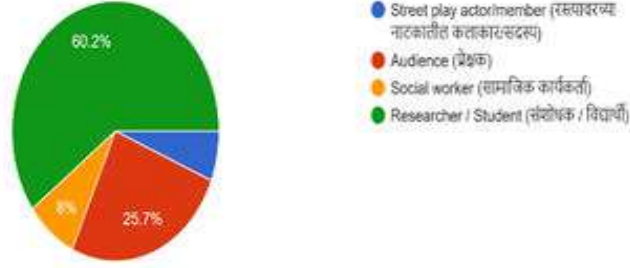
वयोगटाच्या दृष्टीने पाहता, सर्वेक्षणातील बहुसंख्य प्रतिसादक 18 ते 25 वयोगटातील (95.7%) आहेत. 26-35, 36-45 आणि 45 पेक्षा जास्त वयोगटातील प्रतिसादकांचे प्रमाण अत्यल्प आहे. यावरून असे स्पष्ट होते की रस्त्यावरील नाटकांशी संबंधित प्रेक्षक, सहभागी किंवा निरीक्षक मुख्यतः तरुण वर्गातील आहेत. त्यामुळे रस्त्यावरील नाटके ही तरुणांना केंद्रस्थानी ठेवणारी कला व सामाजिक माध्यम असल्याचे दिसून येते.



लिंगाच्या आधारे केलेल्या विश्लेषणातून असे आढळते की 64.3% महिला आणि 35.7% पुरुष प्रतिसादक आहेत. इतर लिंगाचे प्रतिनिधित्व नगण्य आहे. यावरून रस्त्यावरील नाटकांमध्ये महिलांचा सहभाग व रस अधिक असल्याचे सूचित होते. विशेषतः महिला सुरक्षा व लिंग समानता यांसारख्या विषयांवर आधारित नाटके महिलांना अधिक जोडत असल्याचा अंदाज यावरून व्यक्त करता येतो.

Which group do you belong to? (आपण कोणत्या गटात मोडता?)

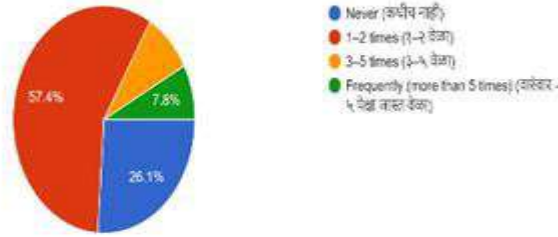
113 responses



प्रतिसादकांच्या गटवर्गीकरणानुसार, 60.2% प्रतिसादक संशोधक किंवा विद्यार्थी आहेत. त्यानंतर 25.7% प्रेक्षक, 8% सामाजिक कार्यकर्ते आणि केवळ 6% रस्त्यावरील नाटकांतील कलाकार किंवा सदस्य आहेत. यावरून या विषयाकडे शैक्षणिक व संशोधनात्मक दृष्टिकोनातून पाहणाऱ्यांचे प्रमाण जास्त असल्याचे स्पष्ट होते, तसेच प्रत्यक्ष कलाकारांचे प्रतिनिधित्व तुलनेने कमी आहे.

How often have you watched street theatre? (तुम्ही रस्त्यावरचे नाटक किती वेळा पाहिले आहे?)

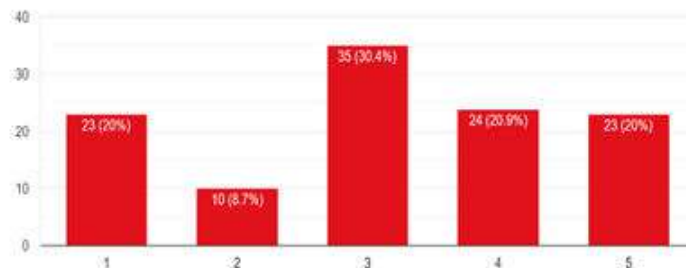
115 responses



रस्त्यावरील नाटक पाहण्याच्या वारंवारतेचा विचार करता, 57.4% प्रतिसादकांनी 1 ते 2 वेळा नाटक पाहिल्याचे नमूद केले आहे. 26.1% प्रतिसादकांनी कधीच नाटक पाहिले नाही, तर केवळ 7.8% प्रतिसादक नियमित (5 पेक्षा अधिक वेळा) नाटक पाहतात. यावरून असे दिसून येते की रस्त्यावरील नाटके अजूनही व्यापक सार्वजनिक स्तरावर नियमितपणे पोहोचलेली नाहीत.

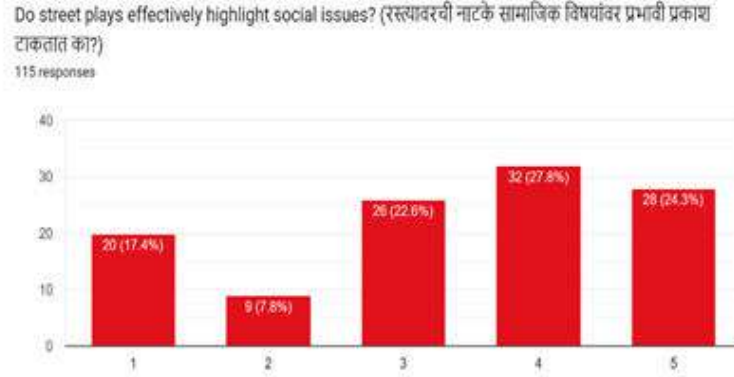
What is your overall perception of street theatre? (रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकाविषयी तुमची एकूण धारणा काय आहे?)

115 responses

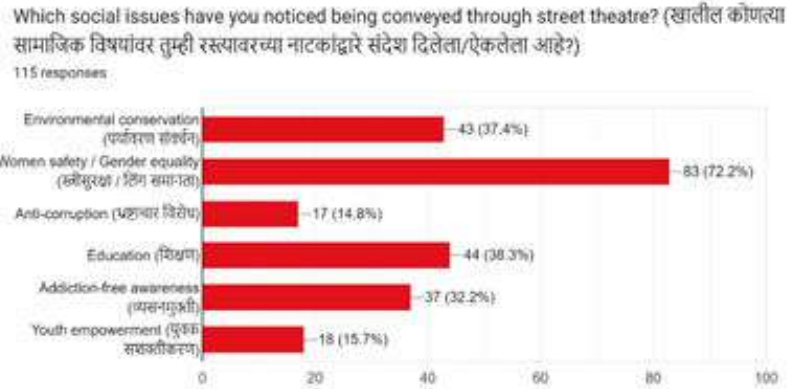


रस्त्यावरील नाटकांविषयीच्या सर्वसाधारण धारणांचा विचार करता, बहुसंख्य प्रतिसादकांनी मध्यम ते चांगले मूल्यांकन दिले आहे. 30.4% प्रतिसादकांनी मध्यम, तर सुमारे 40% प्रतिसादकांनी चांगले किंवा अत्यंत चांगले

असे मत व्यक्त केले आहे. मात्र काही प्रमाणात नकारात्मक मतेही दिसून येतात, ज्यावरून लोकांची धारणा मिश्र स्वरूपाची असल्याचे स्पष्ट होते.



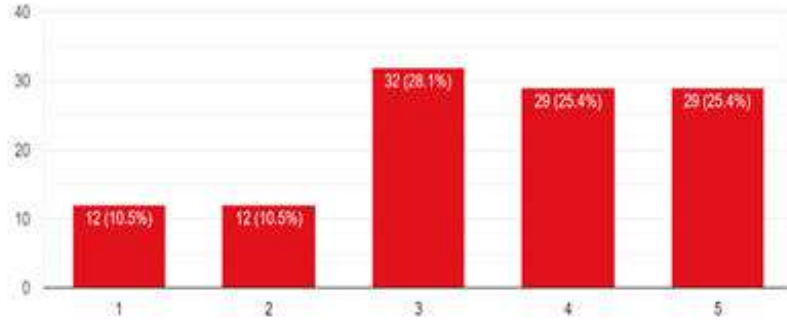
सामाजिक विषय अधोरेखित करण्याच्या प्रभावाबाबत, सुमारे 52% प्रतिसादकांनी रस्त्यावरील नाटके प्रभावी किंवा अत्यंत प्रभावी असल्याचे मानले आहे, तर उर्वरित प्रतिसादकांनी मध्यम ते कमी प्रभाव असल्याचे नमूद केले आहे. यावरून सामाजिक प्रश्न मांडण्यासाठी हे माध्यम उपयुक्त असले तरी त्याची प्रभावीता वाढवण्याची गरज असल्याचे सूचित होते.



रस्त्यावरील नाटकांमधून लक्षात आलेल्या सामाजिक मुद्द्यांमध्ये महिला सुरक्षा व लिंग समानता (72.2%) हा प्रमुख विषय ठरतो. त्यानंतर शिक्षण, पर्यावरण संवर्धन, व्यसनमुक्ती आणि युवक सशक्तीकरण या मुद्द्यांचा उल्लेख करण्यात आला आहे. यावरून समकालीन सामाजिक प्रश्नांवर रस्त्यावरील नाटके अधिक लक्ष केंद्रित करतात हे स्पष्ट होते.

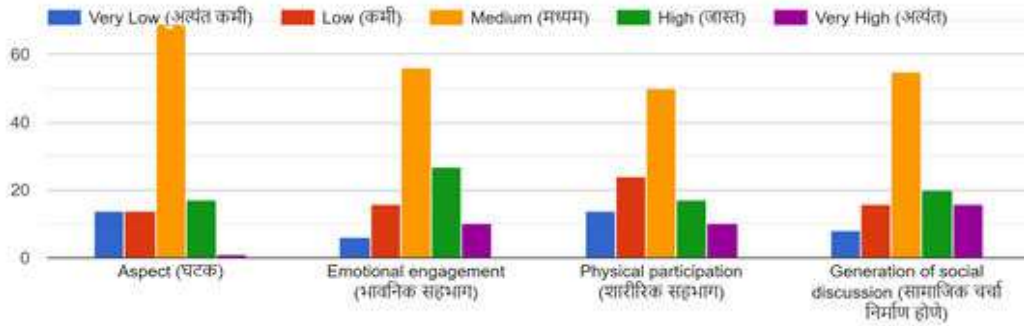
How convincing do you find the social messages in street theatre? (रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांमधील सामाजिक संदेश तुम्हाला कितीपट पटतात?)

114 responses



रस्त्यावरील नाटकांमधील सामाजिक संदेश किती पटतो, या प्रश्नाच्या विश्लेषणातून असे दिसते की सुमारे 79% प्रतिसादकांना हा संदेश मध्यम ते अत्यंत प्रभावी वाटतो. यावरून रस्त्यावरील नाटके सामाजिक संदेश पोहोचवण्यात लक्षणीय यशस्वी ठरत असल्याचे निष्कर्ष काढता येतात.

How do you perceive audience engagement during street plays? (नाटकादरम्यान प्रेक्षकांचा सहभाग कसा वाटतो?)



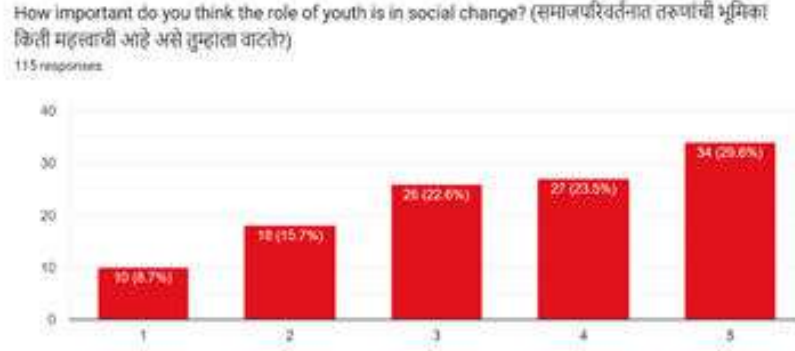
प्रेक्षकांच्या सहभागाच्या बाबतीत, दृश्यात्मक आकर्षण, भावनात्मक सहभाग आणि सामाजिक चर्चा निर्माण होणे या घटकांमध्ये प्रामुख्याने मध्यम ते जास्त स्तराचा सहभाग दिसून येतो. शारीरिक सहभाग तुलनेने कमी असला तरी मानसिक आणि भावनात्मक गुंतवणूक अधिक असल्याचे स्पष्ट होते.

After watching a play, did you participate in discussion? (नाटक पाहिल्यानंतर तुम्ही चर्चेत सहभागी होता का?)

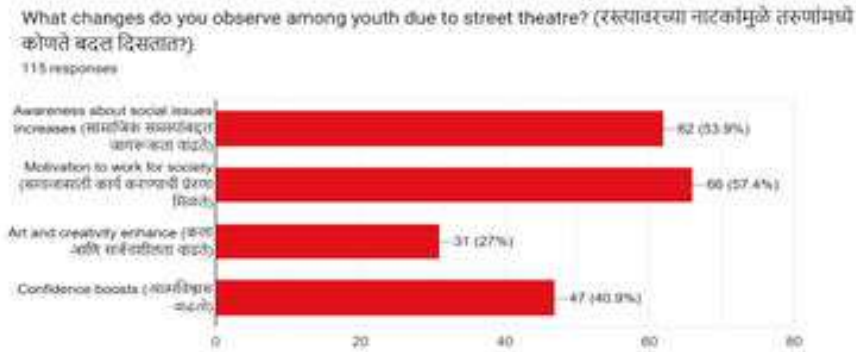
115 responses



नाटक पाहिल्यानंतर चर्चेत सहभागाबाबत, सुमारे 64% प्रतिसादक (नेहमी व कधी कधी) चर्चेत सहभागी होत असल्याचे दिसते. यावरून रस्त्यावरील नाटके केवळ प्रेक्षणीय न राहता विचारप्रवर्तक माध्यम म्हणून कार्य करतात हे अधोरेखित होते.



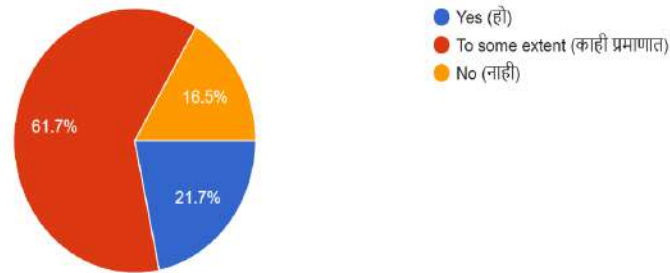
सामाजिक परिवर्तनात तरुणांच्या भूमिकाबाबत, सुमारे 53% प्रतिसादकांनी ती महत्वाची किंवा अत्यंत महत्वाची असल्याचे मानले आहे. तसेच रस्त्यावरील नाटकांमुळे तरुणांमध्ये सामाजिक जाणीव, समाजासाठी काम करण्याची प्रेरणा आणि आत्मविश्वास वाढतो, असे स्पष्टपणे दिसून येते.



दीर्घकालीन परिणामांच्या बाबतीत, बहुसंख्य प्रतिसादकांचे मत आहे की रस्त्यावरील नाटकांचा परिणाम काही प्रमाणात दीर्घकाळ टिकतो. यावरून असे दिसते की ही नाटके विचारांची सुरुवात करतात, मात्र त्यांचा प्रभाव टिकवण्यासाठी सातत्य आणि पूरक उपक्रमांची आवश्यकता आहे.

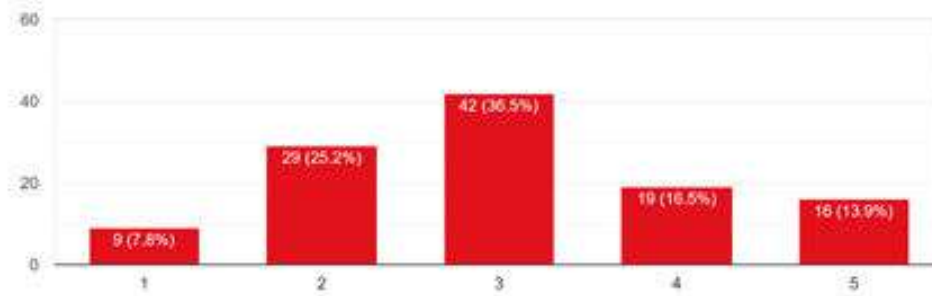
Do you think street theatre has a long-term impact? (तुम्हाला वाटते का की रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांचा परिणाम दीर्घकालीन असतो?)

115 responses



How significant is the impact of street theatre in measuring social change? (समाजातील बदल मोजताना रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांचा प्रभाव किती ठळक वाटतो?)

115 responses



गुणात्मक प्रतिसादांच्या विश्लेषणातून असे आढळते की रस्त्यावरील नाटके अधिक प्रभावी करण्यासाठी स्पष्ट संदेश, प्रेक्षक सहभाग, भावनिक मांडणी, प्रभावी अभिनय, सध्याचे सामाजिक विषय, माध्यमांचा वापर आणि योग्य नियोजन या बाबी अत्यंत महत्वाच्या आहेत.

In your opinion, what should be done to make street theatre more effective? (रस्त्यावरील नाटके अधिक प्रभावी करण्यासाठी तुमच्या मते काय केले पाहिजे?)

97 responses

Talk about current matters

make street theatre more effective, performances should prioritize audience interaction and relevance to the local community's issues, employ strong acting and vocal skills,

Using multiple props to engaging the audience, acknowledge of current socialism

Sound effects

1 MORE FLEXIBILITY SHOULD BE THERE 2 ALSO THERE SHOULD BE MORE CREATIVITY

Talk with emotion and realise that the however is wrong and they should get guilty feel for what they have done wrong

Do more participating work by audience interaction

Motivational thoughts

In your opinion, what should be done to make street theatre more effective? (रस्त्यावरील नाटके अधिक प्रभावी करण्यासाठी तुमच्या मते काय केले पाहिजे?)

97 responses

Provide a holl

To make street theatre more effective, focus on audience engagement through clear, reliable language and direct interaction.

The street theatre should be more emotional and heart touching

Street theatre can be made more effective through strategies that enhance audience engagement, simplify the message, and improve logistical execution [1]. Key approaches involve maximizing visibility and interactivity, using clear narratives, and ensuring performances are adaptable to diverse public spaces

Make it reliable, interactive, and authentic. Use social media to amplify reach. Collaborate with locals to spark meaningful convos

Actor

It's very important work

Online media

In your opinion, what should be done to make street theatre more effective? (रस्त्यावरील नाटके अधिक प्रभावी करण्यासाठी तुमच्या मते काय केले पाहिजे?)

97 responses

To make more understanding

Street theatre can be made more effective by keeping the message clear and easy to understand. Performers should use loud voices, expressive actions, and simple props to attract the crowd. Choosing busy locations and the right time helps reach more people. Adding songs, slogans, and audience participation makes the play more engaging. The performance should be short and focused. After the play a quick interaction or sharing information can help the audience remember the message better.

Clear message and purpose and script

Strong social message simple but impact full language music and rhythm, Strong ending, team coordination.

Dressing, acting, attraction

Clear message and purpose , engaging script

Dialogues to grab attention from audience

In your opinion, what should be done to make street theatre more effective? (रस्त्यावरील नाटके अधिक प्रभावी करण्यासाठी तुमच्या मते काय केले पाहिजे?)

97 responses

...

Dressing, Acting, attraction

Public relation

Performance better and make attractive

Awareness about the environment that should be not polluted

Awareness

Education is important

...

use more convincing type to express with additional proof that may effect the audience

Communication

एकूण निष्कर्ष (Conclusion)

सदर माहिती विश्लेषणावरून असे निष्कर्ष निघतात की रस्त्यावरील नाटके सामाजिक परिवर्तनासाठी एक प्रभावी माध्यम असून ती विशेषतः तरुण वर्गाला सामाजिक जाणीव आणि कृतीकडे प्रवृत्त करतात. मात्र या माध्यमाचा प्रभाव अधिक व्यापक आणि दीर्घकालीन करण्यासाठी नियोजनबद्ध, सहभागात्मक आणि संवादप्रधान दृष्टिकोन स्वीकारणे आवश्यक आहे.

निष्कर्ष (Conclusion):

1. रस्त्यावरील नाटकांचा मुख्य प्रेक्षक आणि सहभागक वर्ग तरुण पिढी आहे.

सर्वेक्षणातील बहुसंख्य प्रतिसादक 18-25 वयोगटातील असून यावरून रस्त्यावरील नाटके ही तरुणांना केंद्रस्थानी ठेवणारे प्रभावी सामाजिक माध्यम असल्याचे स्पष्ट होते.

2. रस्त्यावरील नाटके सामाजिक जाणीव निर्माण करण्यात मध्यम ते उच्च पातळीवर प्रभावी ठरतात.

बहुसंख्य प्रतिसादकांना सामाजिक संदेश समजतो व पटतो, विशेषतः महिला सुरक्षा, लिंग समानता, शिक्षण आणि पर्यावरण यांसारख्या समकालीन सामाजिक मुद्द्यांवर ही नाटके प्रभावी ठरतात.

3. या नाटकांमुळे प्रेक्षकांचा भावनिक व बौद्धिक सहभाग वाढतो.

नाटकांनंतर चर्चा, विचारमंथन आणि संवाद घडून येत असल्याचे दिसून येते, ज्यामुळे रस्त्यावरील नाटके केवळ मनोरंजनाचे नव्हे तर विचारप्रवर्तक माध्यम ठरतात.

4. रस्त्यावरील नाटकांचा प्रभाव तात्काळ जाणवतो, मात्र दीर्घकालीन परिणाम मर्यादित आहेत.

नाटके सामाजिक विचारांची सुरुवात करतात, पण त्यांचा परिणाम टिकवण्यासाठी सातत्यपूर्ण सादरीकरण, पूरक उपक्रम आणि व्यापक प्रसार आवश्यक आहे.

5. रस्त्यावरील नाटके अधिक प्रभावी करण्यासाठी संवादात्मक व नियोजनबद्ध दृष्टिकोन गरजेचा आहे.

स्पष्ट संदेश, प्रेक्षकांचा थेट सहभाग, भावनिक मांडणी, प्रभावी अभिनय, योग्य स्थळ-वेळ आणि आधुनिक माध्यमांचा वापर केल्यास सामाजिक परिवर्तनात या माध्यमाची भूमिका अधिक भक्कम होऊ शकते.

हे निष्कर्ष रस्त्यावरील नाटकांचे सामाजिक परिवर्तनातील महत्त्वपूर्ण साधन म्हणून स्थान अधोरेखित करतात.

शिफारसी (Recommendations):

1. महाविद्यालये आणि विद्यापीठांमध्ये सामाजिक विषयांवरील नाटकांचे आयोजन करावे.
2. तरुण नाट्यकलावंतांना प्रशिक्षण व आर्थिक सहाय्य उपलब्ध करून द्यावे.
3. सामाजिक संस्थांनी या नाटकांच्या माध्यमातून प्रचार-प्रसार वाढवावा.
4. ग्रामीण भागातही रस्त्यावरच्या नाटकांचा प्रसार व्हावा.
5. सरकारने सामाजिक नाट्यकलेसाठी प्रोत्साहनपर योजना आखाव्यात.

संदर्भसूची (References / Bibliography):

1. देशमुख, आर. (२०१८). *भारतीय नाट्यपरंपरा आणि समाजजागृती*. पुणे: लोकवाङ्मय गृह.
2. जोशी, म. (२०२०). *रस्त्यावरचं नाटक: सामाजिक संवादाचे माध्यम*. मुंबई: मराठी अकादमी.
3. Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (English Edition)
4. Nandikar Theatre Group Reports (Kolkata)
5. Government of India. (2022). *Youth and Cultural Development Report*.

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Manuscripts should be submitted preferably through email and the research article / paper should preferably not exceed 8 – 10 pages in all.
2. Book review must contain the name of the author and the book reviewed, the place of publication and publisher, date of publication, number of pages and price.
3. Manuscripts should be typed in 12 font-size, Times New Roman, single spaced with 1" margin on a standard A4 size paper. Manuscripts should be organized in the following order: title, name(s) of author(s) and his/her (their) complete affiliation(s) including zip code(s), Abstract (not exceeding 350 words), Introduction, Main body of paper, Conclusion and References.
4. The title of the paper should be in capital letters, bold, size 16" and centered at the top of the first page. The author(s) and affiliations(s) should be centered, bold, size 14" and single-spaced, beginning from the second line below the title.

First Author Name1, Second Author Name2, Third Author Name3

1 Author Designation, Department, Organization, City, email id

2 Author Designation, Department, Organization, City, email id

3 Author Designation, Department, Organization, City, email id

5. The abstract should summarize the context, content and conclusions of the paper in less than 350 words in 12 points italic Times New Roman. The abstract should have about five key words in alphabetical order separated by comma of 12 points italic Times New Roman.
6. Figures and tables should be centered, separately numbered, self explained. Please note that table titles must be above the table and sources of data should be mentioned below the table. The authors should ensure that tables and figures are referred to from the main text.

EXAMPLES OF REFERENCES

All references must be arranged first alphabetically and then it may be further sorted chronologically also.

• Single author journal article:

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S. Neelamegham," Marketing in India, Cases and Reading, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, III Edition, 2000.

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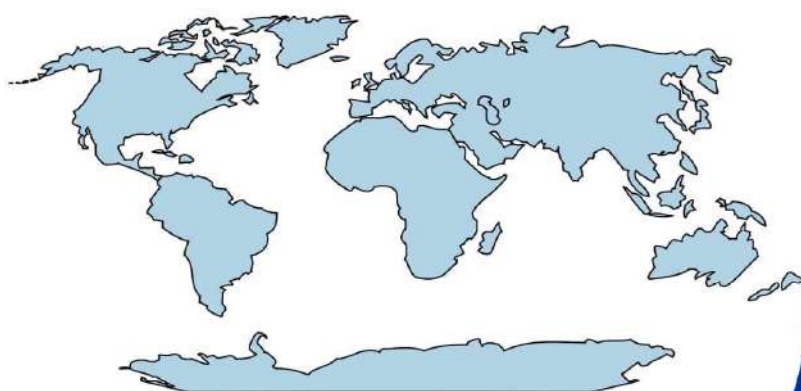
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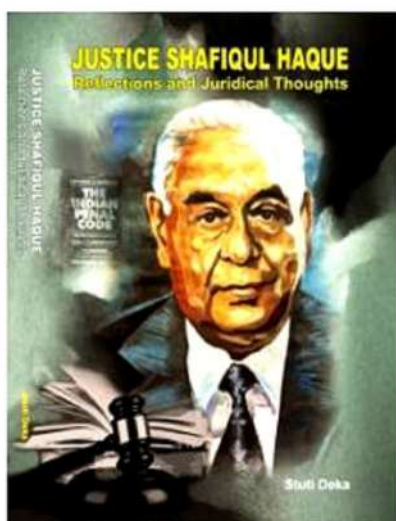


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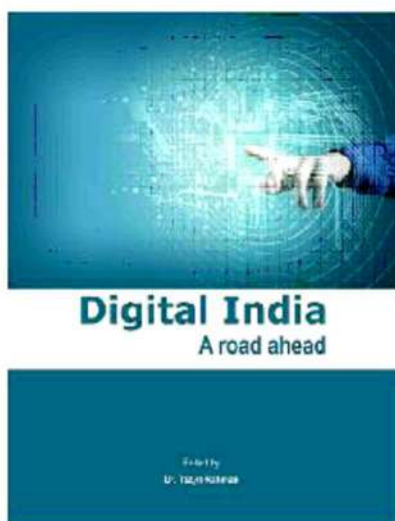
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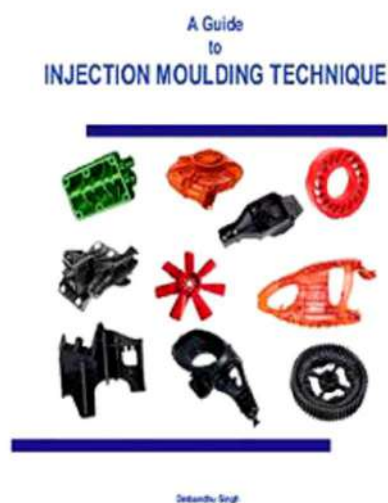
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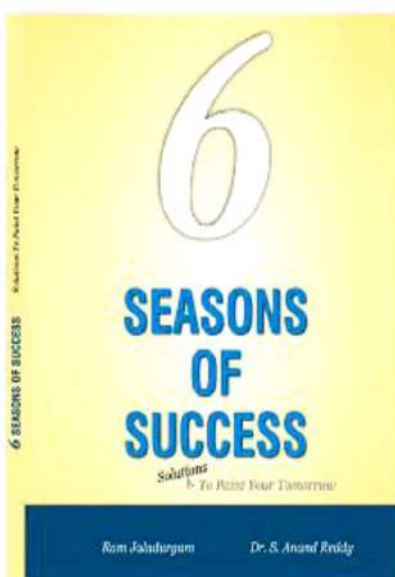


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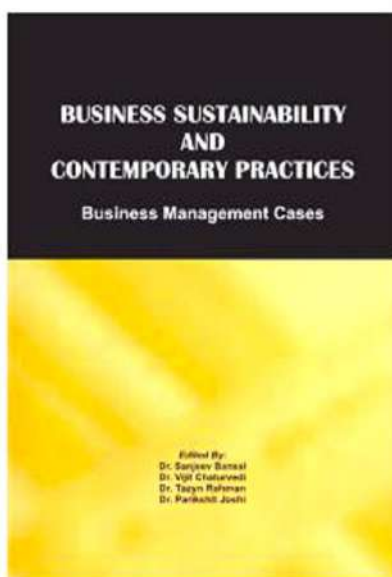


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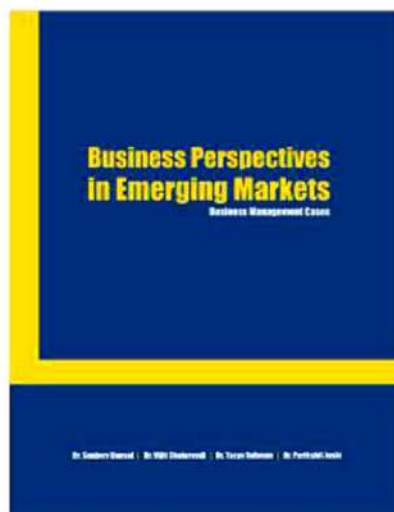
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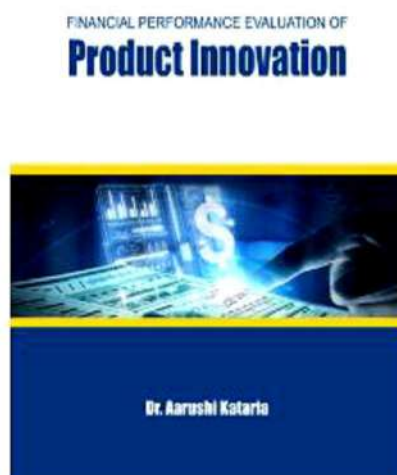
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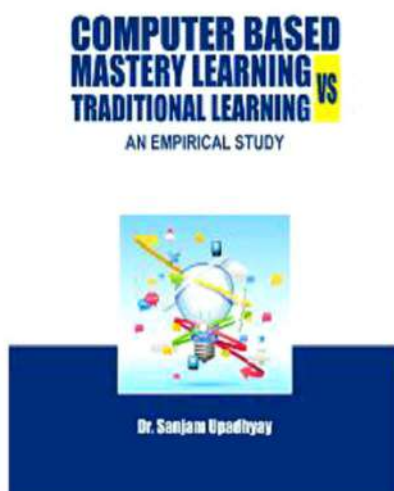
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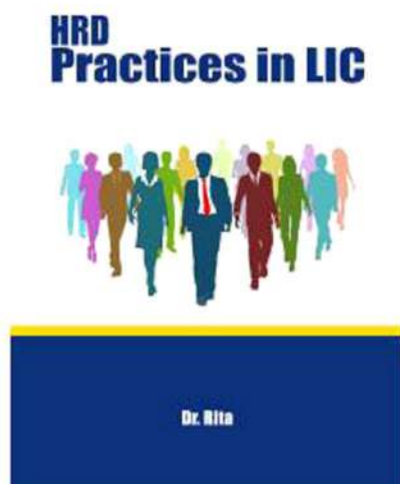
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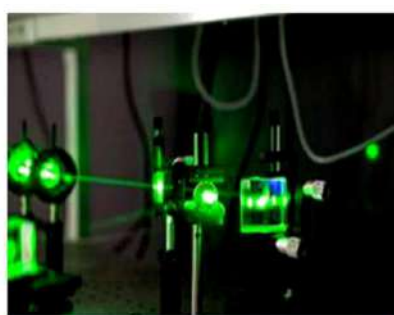


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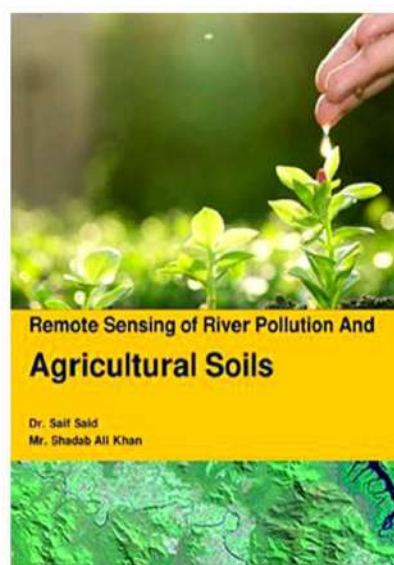
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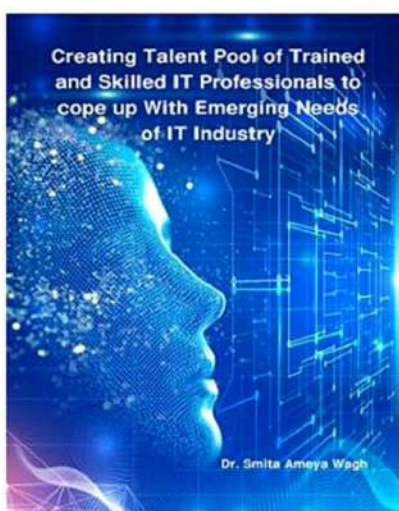
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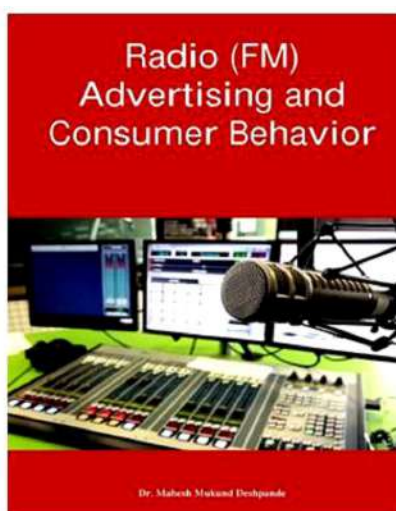
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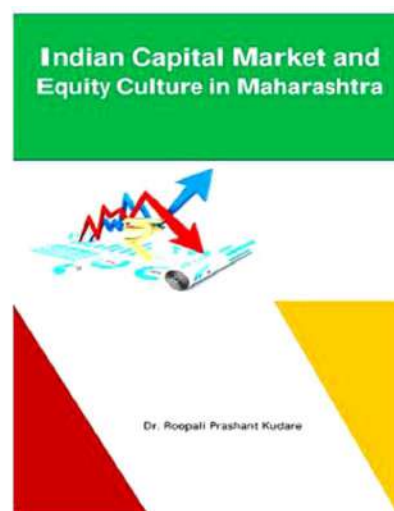
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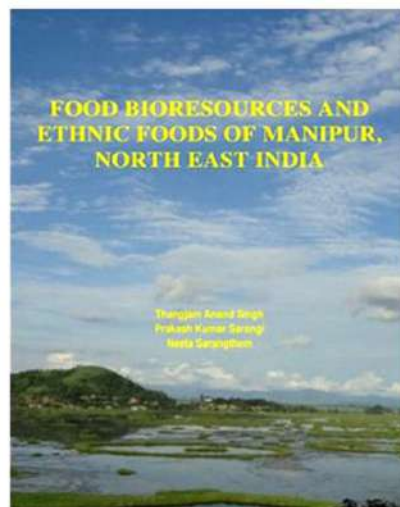
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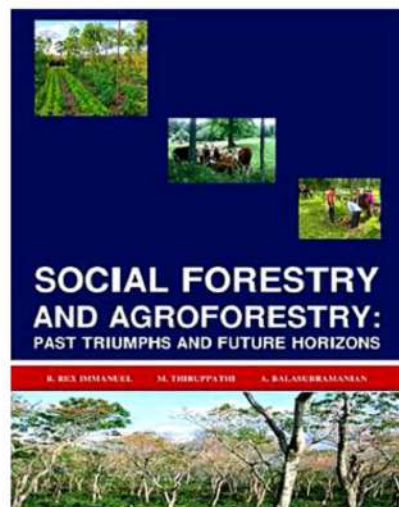
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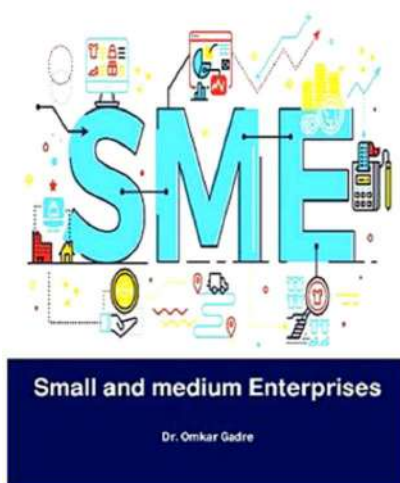
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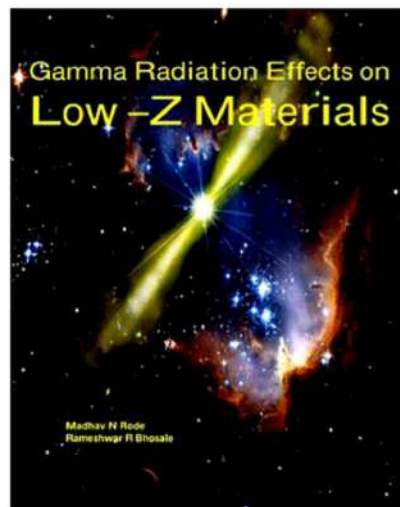
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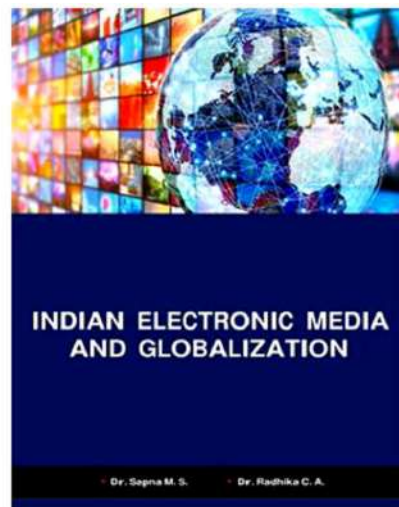
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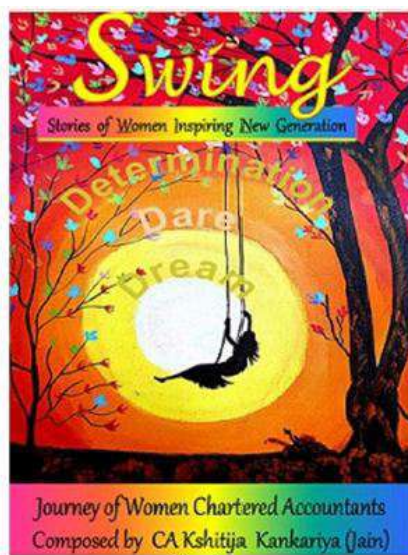
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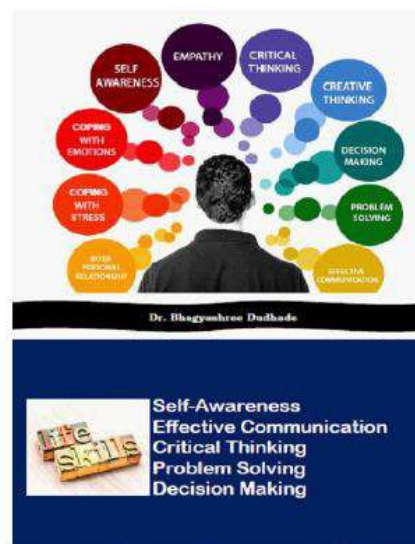
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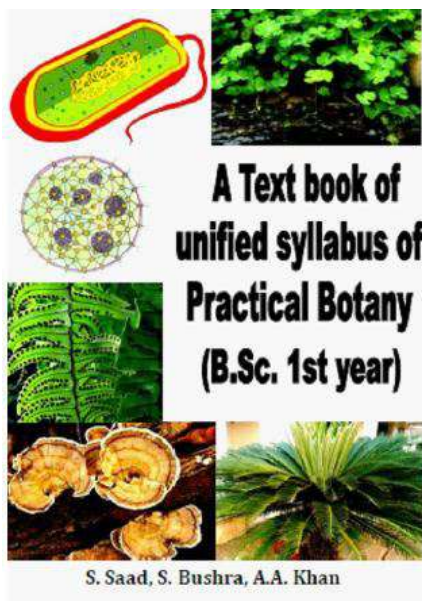
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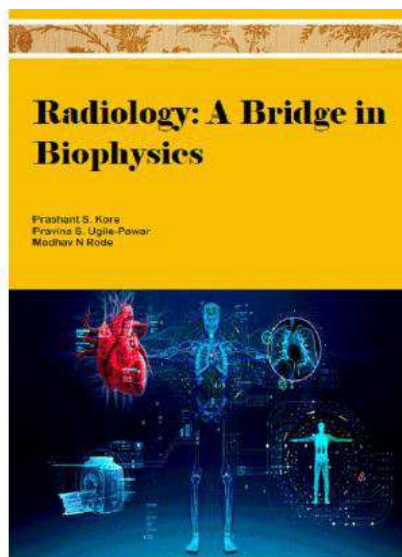
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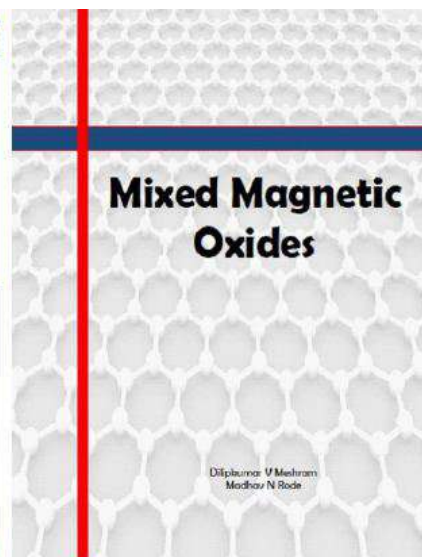


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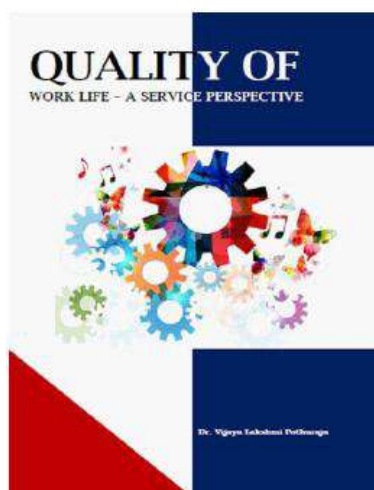


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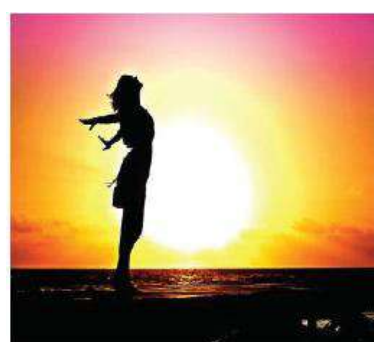
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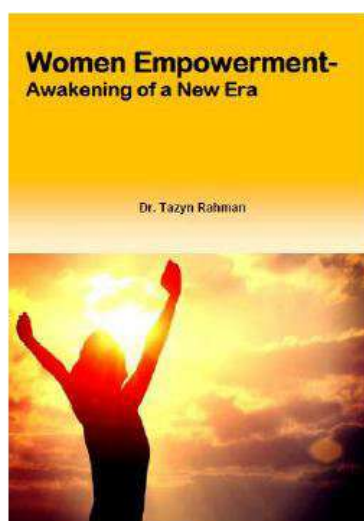
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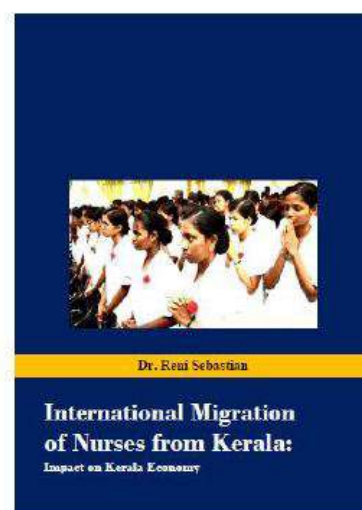
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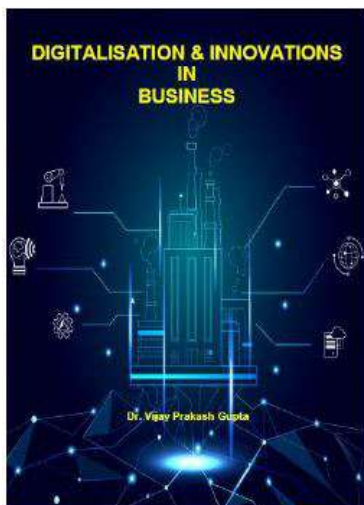
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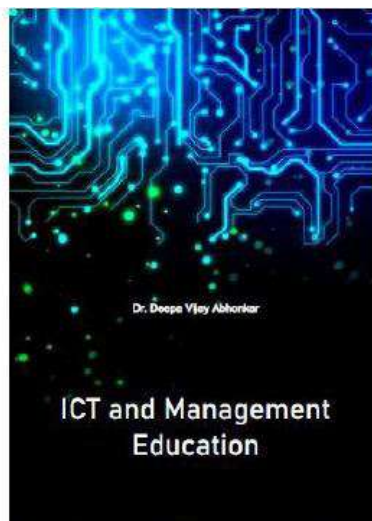
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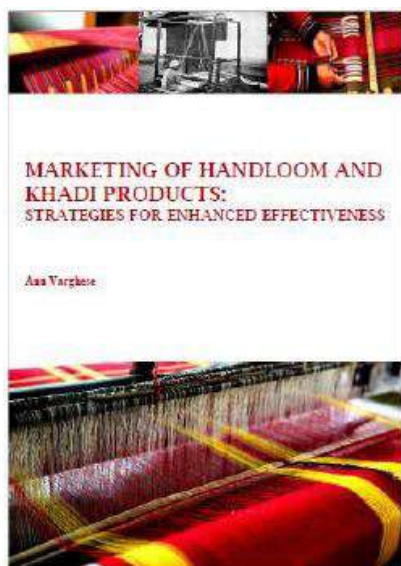
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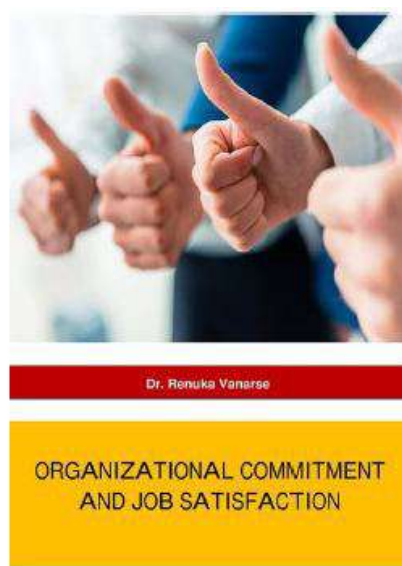
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