

RESEARCHER

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader

It is with great enthusiasm that we present the latest issue of Researcher, a multidisciplinary journal of the University of Jammu (UoJ). This volume continues our proud tradition of publishing impactful, innovative, and rigorous scholarly work across four core academic domains: Science & Technology, Social Sciences, Business Studies, and Arts & Humanities.

Section I, dedicated to Science & Technology, features an insightful paper focused on Freshwater Ostracod diversity and its distribution patterns across various water bodies in the Jammu Region. Following this, Section II explores the Social Sciences through five distinct papers covering history, politics, and social welfare. The first paper traces the evolution of minting techniques and currency circulation in Mewar from the 9th to the 16th century. The second article critically analyzes Norway's role as a facilitator in the peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The third paper examines the workplace challenges faced by women domestic workers in urban Punjab, while the fourth highlights the democratization process in Uzbekistan and its shifting political landscape across changing regimes. While the final article explores how libraries can serve as transformative spaces for social inclusion and community growth.

Section III shifts the focus to Business Studies, presenting an observational field study on public safety and examines the behavioral trends and compliance patterns regarding helmet usage among two-wheeler riders across the city of Lucknow. Lastly, the Arts & Humanities section comprises five papers focusing on culture, education, and modern frameworks. The first paper evaluates the infrastructural facilities at art-integrated institutes specializing in Music and Fine Arts. The second paper discusses metacognitive awareness as a vital predictor of future-ready competencies among pre-service teachers, followed by a critical review titled 'From Myth to Modernity: Exploring Theatricality in Girish Karnad's Hayavadana'. The fourth paper critically evaluates Dalit women's assertion of identity and the politics of exclusion within the Dalit Movement, while the concluding article highlights how integrating "repair rights" into Geographical Indication (GI) protection frameworks can drive sustainable development.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our authors for their outstanding contributions. Their dedication to scholarly rigor and creative inquiry drives the success of this journal. We also offer our sincere thanks to our team of associate editors and peer reviewers. Their tireless efforts and expert feedback are instrumental in maintaining our commitment to a fair and robust peer-review process. We trust that the insights shared in this volume will spark new academic discussions, encourage collaborations, and advance knowledge across fields. Thank you for your continued engagement with our research community.



Editor:
Prof. Shashi Prabha
Department of Geography,
University of Jammu

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Freshwater Ostracod Diversity and Distribution in Selected Water Bodies of Jammu Region

Supriya Sharma* and Sarbjeet Kour **

ABSTRACT

The present study explored the diversity of freshwater ostracods in two important lentic habitats of the Jammu region, Dilli Pond and Gharana Wetland. Monthly surveys conducted over two years (December 2022–November 2024) recorded 11 species belonging to six families. Among these, the family Cyprididae was the most dominant, represented by six species, while Candonidae, Darwinulidae, Ilyocyprididae, Notodromadidae, and Entocytheridae were less abundant. Genera such as Cypris, Cypretta, Stenocypris, Potamocypris, Cypridopsis, and Hemicypris were commonly observed. Seasonal variation was evident, with the highest diversity and abundance during the post-monsoon and winter months. These tiny bivalved crustaceans, commonly known as seed shrimps, are important bioindicators because of their sensitivity to physico-chemical fluctuations.

Key Words: Freshwater Ostracoda, Cyprididae, species richness, seasonal dynamics, bio-indication, Jammu, North India

Introduction

Ostracods (Class Ostracoda, Latreille, 1806) represent one of the most evolutionarily successful groups of crustaceans, possessing an extensive fossil record that dates back to the Ordovician period and a contemporary diversity exceeding 33,000 described extant and fossil species (Horne et al., 2011; Oakley et al., 2013). Commonly referred to as “seed shrimps” due to their minute size (generally 0.3–5 mm) and seed-like morphology, ostracods are characterised by a calcified bivalved carapace enclosing the soft body and appendages (Martens & Horne, 2009; Smith et al., 2015).

The class Ostracoda is presently divided into two subclasses: the exclusively marine Myodocopa and the predominantly benthic Podocopa (Martin & Davis, 2001; Horne et al., 2002; Karanovic, 2012). Among these, the order Podocopida Sars, 1866 comprises the majority of non-marine representatives. Contemporary non-marine ostracods include approximately 2,340 species distributed among 235 genera and 15 families (Meisch et al., 2019; Martens et al., 2023). Freshwater ecosystems are primarily dominated by the super families Cypridoidea Baird, 1845 and Darwinuloidea Brady & Norman, 1889, whereas Cytheroidea Baird, 1850 is largely confined to marginal marine and brackish-water habitats (Martens & Savatentalinton, 2011; Karanovic, 2012).

Freshwater ostracism are widely recognised as reliable bio indicators because of their rapid life cycles, parthenogenetic or mixed reproductive strategies, and high sensitivity to environmental variables such as temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, and nutrient availability (Holmes & Chives, 2002; Frenzel & Boomer, 2005; Ruiz et al., 2013; Horne et al., 2022). Consequently, they play an important role in contemporary ecological assessments as well as palaeolimnological

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reconstructions.

In India, ostracod research was first initiated by William Baird (1859). Subsequently, Victor and Fernando (1979) compiled the first comprehensive inventory of Indian freshwater ostracods, documenting 56 taxa. Later contributions by Battish (1981, 1998), Harshey and collaborators (1983–2011), George & Martens (2002, 2004), Patil & Talmale (2005a, b, 2012), and several other researchers considerably expanded the known non-marine ostracod fauna of India to more than 200 species (Meisch et al., 2019). Despite these advances, substantial geographical gaps remain, particularly in north-western India. The Jammu region, located at the ecotonal interface between the Indo-Gangetic plains and the Himalayan foothills, encompasses diverse freshwater habitats including ponds, wetlands, and riverine systems; however, systematic investigations of ostracod diversity in this region remain scarce, with only a preliminary unpublished account by Sharma (2018) reporting 16 taxa from a single sampling effort.

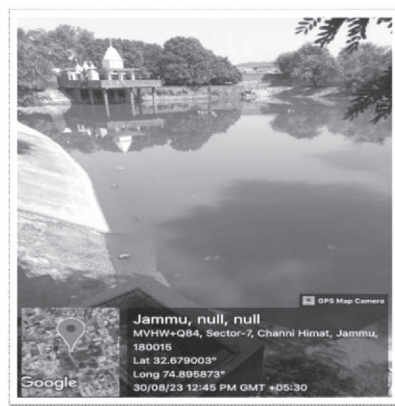
The present study was therefore undertaken to: (i) document the species composition and taxonomic diversity of ostracods in two representative lentic habitats of Jammu; (ii) analyze seasonal variations in community structure; and (iii) generate baseline data for future ecological assessment and biomonitoring programs in this rapidly urbanizing region.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

Jammu region (32°27'–33°15' N, 74°15'–75°30' E) experiences a subtropical climate with hot summers (April–June), a pronounced monsoon (July–September) and cool winters (December–February). Two perennial lentic sites were selected:

- Dilli Pond (32°44' N, 74°51' E; alt. ~320 m a.s.l.): a small (≈0.8 ha) eutrophic village pond surrounded by agricultural fields and receiving domestic runoff.
- Gharana Wetland (32°34' N, 74°39' E; alt. 280 m a.s.l.): a larger (1.2 km²) Ramsar-designated wetland along the India–Pakistan border, characterised by extensive emergent vegetation (Phragmites, Typha) and wintering migratory birds.



Dilli Pond



Gharana Wetland

Sampling and Laboratory Procedures

- Monthly sampling was carried out from December 2022 to January 2024 (14 months). At each site, triplicate sediment samples (top 5 cm) were collected using plankton-net sweeps (60 µm mesh) were performed among macrophytes. Samples were preserved in 70% ethanol.

Physico-chemical parameters (temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, and total dissolved solids) were measured and analysed following standard APHA (2017) protocols.

Result and discussion

Taxonomic Composition

Eleven species belonging to six families were identified (Table 1). The super family Cypridoidea dominated (10 species). Cyprididae contributed six species, making it the most diverse family. *Darwinula stevensoni* (Darwinulidae) and *Oncocypris pustulosa* (Notodromadidae) represent noteworthy records for the region. Table 1. Systematic list of ostracod species recorded from Jammu water bodies (December 2022 – January 2024).

Table 1- Showing diversity of ostracod species from Dilli Pond and Gharana Wetland.

Taxon	Dilli Pond	Gharana Wetland	Seasonal occurrence
Super family Cypridoidea Baird, 1845			
Family Cyprididae Baird, 1845			
<i>Cypris sp.</i> by, 1840	+	+	Year-round
<i>Cypretta sp.</i>	+	+	Post-monsoon, winter
<i>Stenocypris sp.</i>	+	+	
<i>Potamocypris sp.</i>	+	—	Summer—monsoon
<i>Cypridopsis madurensis</i>	+	+	Year-round
<i>Hemicypris ovata</i>	—	+	Post-monsoon
Family Candonidae Kaufmann, 1900			
<i>Candona sp.</i>	+	+	Winter
Family Darwinulidae Brady & Robertson, 1885			
<i>Darwinula stevensoni</i> (Brady & Robertson, 1870)	+	+	Year-round
Family Ilyocyprididae Kaufmann, 1900			
<i>Ilyocypris sp.</i>	+	—	Spring—summer
Family Notodromadidae Kaufmann, 1900			
<i>Oncocypris pustulosa</i> (Gurney, 1916)	—	+	Monsoon—post-monsoon
Family Entocytheridae Hoff, 1942			
<i>Entocythere sp.</i> (commensal on crayfish)	+	—	Sporadic

The ostracod assemblages recorded from Dilli Pond and Gharana Wetland exhibit characteristic features of subtropical freshwater ecosystems influenced by monsoonal hydrology. The family Cyprididae dominated the fauna, contributing six of the eleven recorded species, consistent with its global predominance in non-marine ostracod communities (Karanovic, 2012; Meisch et al., 2019). Genera such as *Cypris*, *Cypretta*, *Stenocypris*, *Potamocypris*, *Cypridopsis*, and *Hemicypris* were particularly abundant, reflecting their broad ecological tolerance and adaptation to shallow, macrophyte-rich lentic habitats.



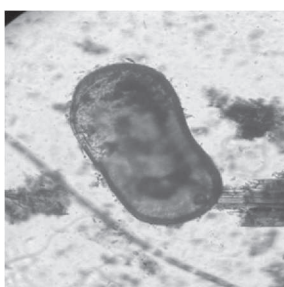
Cypris sp



Candona sp



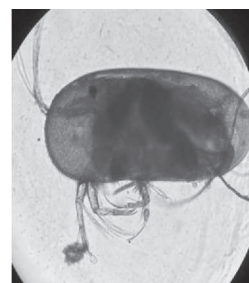
Oncocypris sp.



Ilyocypris sp.



Potamocypris sp.



Stenocypris sp.

Fig: Showing Diversity of Ostracode species from fresh water bodies of Jammu region

Species richness in the present study was comparatively low relative to other Indian freshwater systems, such as the Western Ghats, where 20–35 species have been reported from similar habitats (George & Martens, 2004). The lower diversity observed in Jammu may be attributed to its transitional biogeographic setting between the Indo-Gangetic plains and Himalayan foothills, characterized by pronounced seasonal fluctuations in temperature and hydrology. The absence of Limnocytheridae and Cytheridae further indicates stable freshwater conditions with minimal saline or brackish influence.

Seasonality emerged as the principal factor regulating community structure. Species richness and abundance reached maxima during post-monsoon and winter months, coinciding with lower water temperatures and higher dissolved oxygen concentrations. In contrast, summer and monsoon periods favored ecologically tolerant taxa such as *Potamocypris* and *Ilyocypris*. Similar seasonal patterns have been documented in subtropical and temperate ostracod communities worldwide (Mezquita et al., 2005; Viehberg, 2006). Habitat heterogeneity also influenced assemblage composition: Gharana Wetland, characterized by extensive emergent vegetation and greater spatial complexity, supported higher diversity than the comparatively eutrophic and runoff-affected Dilli Pond.

The continuous occurrence of *Darwinula stevensoni* at both sites highlights the ecological resilience of this cosmopolitan species, known for its broad tolerance to environmental variability. Another notable record was *Oncocypris pustulosa* from Gharana Wetland, representing a potentially significant range extension for north-western India and suggesting either historical under-sampling or recent dispersal through wetland connectivity.

Overall, the ostracod communities indicate relatively stable freshwater environments with

moderate trophic status and limited anthropogenic disturbance. However, increasing urbanization, agricultural runoff, and wetland modification in the Jammu region may threaten these habitats and promote shifts toward low-diversity, pollution-tolerant assemblages. As the first systematic investigation of ostracods in the Jammu plains, this study establishes essential baseline data for future ecological monitoring, biomonitoring, and palaeolimnological research in the region.

Conclusion

The present study documents 11 species of freshwater ostracods from the Jammu region and provides the first comprehensive seasonally resolved dataset for north-western India. The ostracod assemblages were predominantly composed of cosmopolitan representatives of the super family Cypridoidea, indicating relatively stable freshwater environments characterized by moderate trophic conditions and limited saline influence. Variations in species composition and abundance across seasons demonstrate the strong influence of environmental factors such as temperature, dissolved oxygen, and hydrological fluctuations on community structure. The observed post-monsoon and winter maxima in diversity further emphasize the ecological significance of seasonal dynamics in subtropical lentic ecosystems.

The findings also highlight the vulnerability of these aquatic habitats to increasing anthropogenic disturbances, including rapid urbanisation, agricultural runoff, nutrient enrichment, and habitat modification. Such pressures may alter water quality and lead to shifts in ostracod assemblages toward pollution-tolerant and low-diversity communities. Consequently, continued long-term monitoring of ostracod populations is essential for assessing ecosystem health and detecting early ecological changes in the wetlands and ponds of the Jammu plains.

As one of the few detailed studies on freshwater ostracods from this region, the present investigation establishes an important baseline for future taxonomic, ecological, biomonitoring, and palaeolimnological research. The recorded taxa and their associated environmental preferences provide a valuable modern reference framework for interpreting sedimentary ostracod records and reconstructing past environmental and climatic conditions in north-western India.

Acknowledgements

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- Ostracods, a group of small crustaceans, have shown great potential in this role due to their sensitivity to various pollutants and environmental conditions. (Olga Schmitz et.al, 2025)

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Minting Techniques and Currency Circulation in Medieval India: Evidence from Mewar (9th–16th Century)

Himanshu Meena*

ABSTRACT

This research work deals with the evolution of the art of minting and the circulation of money in Mewar during 9th to 16th century. Mewar is a fascinating case study from the region to address the functioning of coinage in politically and economically integrated medieval India. The paper's reconstruction, based on numismatic, epigraphic and historical sources, of the evolution of the punch-marked to die-struck coinage, and the analysis of the manner in which the technological change paved the way for monetary integration. This study takes a political economy approach to understanding the relationship between the state and markets in the formation of monetary practices. The results show that the rulers of Mewar have employed coinage as a tool of sovereignty as well as a realistic solution for growing trade needs.

Key Words: Minting, Mewar, Currency Circulation, Medieval India, Numismatics, Trade Networks

Introduction

Coinage is one of the most informative kinds of material evidence available to the historians of medieval India. The coin is a representation of economic value, political power and technology; it is an invaluable source that can be used for the study of the economy, the politics and the technology of state formation and economic development. As Altekar has shown, in pre-modern India the right to mint was closely linked to the concept of sovereignty; the ability of a ruler to mint his own coins was seen as a sign of independence and coinage was a means of wielding political power (Altekar 39). In addition to being political, coins served as the means by which commerce was conducted in a growing market economy, uniting producers, traders and consumers on distant lands.

Between 9th to 16th centuries, there were many changes in the money system of Medieval India. As trade routes expanded, regional sultanates and Rajput states developed, and land revenue was monetised, there was a greater need for reliable, standardised currency. In early medieval North India, the scarcity of silver during the 9th to 12th centuries had a major impact on the patterns of coinage, leading to the development of alternative coinage using copper and base metal for local transactions, with silver reserved for high-value exchanges (Deyell 105). These general trends set the macroeconomic framework for region's monetary practices.

Mewar is one of the most important Rajput states of medieval India, and the dynamics there are an instructive case study in itself. Mewar was geographically located between the commercially active areas of Gujarat and Malva, thus it was a hub of trade network in western India. The coins, coin hoards, and coins found during excavations are relatively common in the area and date from the ninth century through the sixteenth century. These are mainly in silver and copper and have unique symbols, the most prominent of which is the sun, representing the presumed solar descent of the ruling family of Mewar, and subsequently legends in Nagari script (Hooja 328). A systematic

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examination of the ways in which minting technology and currency circulation reacted to political pressures or commercial pressures can be undertaken based on the material evidence.

In spite of this numismatic evidence, little analytical attention has been devoted to Mewar's monetary history. In the past, the study of Indian coinage has tended to be either on the subject of imperial coinage of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughals or on the technological history of coinage, with little attention paid to regional practices. This paper tries to sustain this approach by focusing specifically on Mewar's coinage as a way to explore the economic and political underpinnings of the important regional state of Mewar.

The study's three focused objectives are: First, it summarizes the technological changes in minting in Mewar from the ninth to the sixteenth century, from punch-marked coinage, in which symbols are stamped on single pieces of metal, to die-struck issues, in which metal blanks are pressed between engraved dies to make the coin uniform in design and weight. Second, it examines the circulation of currency within and outside Mewar, looking at trends in the movement of coins in trade and revenue systems. Third, it focuses on the relationship between the political and the market, and how monetary policy was influenced by both factors, with particular attention to whether coinage was used as a tool of political power or a reflection of commercial demand.

Similarly, the following three research questions guide the enquiry, (1) How did minting techniques change in Mewar from 9th to 16th centuries and why? How did the circulation of money in Mewar indicate Mewar's integration with the wider trade network? How much was politics involved in monetary practices and how did market forces moderate this? (3) The paper is based largely on the evidence of the coins with a few epigraphic records and historical chronicles. The existing body of literature on Indian coins and monetary history is also drawn upon.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The analytical framework of this study is based on two related areas of learned research – the political economy of coinage and the theory of monetary integration. Cribb has held that the Indian coinage tradition is one of the earliest and most intricate monetary systems in recorded history, with a unique relationship between the political and the commercial (Cribb 3). Within this perspective, coins are seen as a technology of governance, not just a currency, by which states exercised control, broadcasted political messages, and controlled economic transactions. The symbols, legends and the metallurgical characteristics of coins can be interpreted as intended political messages and the markets would have accepted the coin to the extent that the economic actors trusted in the issue authority.

In ancient India the prerogative of minting was one of the most prized by the states and it was established by Altekar's work that it was a prerogative. He noted that minting privileges were as sacred as territorial ones, and that, "changes in coin design were often paralleled by changes in political power (Altekar 39). The political stability of regimes has been directly linked to the production and circulation of coins in Deyell's monetary history of early medieval North India. A strong central authority led to higher mint production and the standardization of coinage, but political disunity led to reductions in the metal content of the coinage and irregular mint production (Deyell 108).

The framework is complemented by the theory of monetary integration. During the Medieval era the expansion of trade networks brought parts of the world, that were experiencing barter or other local economies, into larger monetary systems. Deyell's idea of the "monetary zones" is especially useful for the analysis of the role of Mewar in the Indian economy as a whole (Deyell 112). This scheme defines the extent of monetary regions not on the basis of political borders, but rather of trade routes, merchant networks, and the source of coins. If a coin was consistently heavy and pure, it could

be used freely outside the range of the coin's original mint, thus bringing together markets that are actually quite different into a viable economic system.

Habib's study of agrarian system of Mughal India, though concentrating on a later period, is of great value to the understanding of the connection between revenue collection and currency circulation in the Mughal India. He further showed that the switch from kind to cash land revenue in the medieval period put into place a vicious circle – taxes were collected in coins, spent on salaries and grants, and so sustained a continuous flow of currency (Habib 68). This income cycle was essential to the operation of the medieval market economy and is one key analytical tool in the consideration of the movement of Mewar's coinage within the economy.

Few studies on the monetary history of Mewar have been made available in the literature. A thorough history of Rajasthan by Sharma offered a lot of numismatic data and trade, while in Hooja's more recent study of the subject, numismatic evidence was integrated into a larger political framework (Sharma 117; Hooja 328). Agrawal's studies on Indian coins provide typological categories that assist in the typology of the Mewar's coins in the larger context of Indian coinage (Agrawal 52). No study has yet used a systematic political economy approach to the coin issue of Mewar with a view to examining the links between coin production, political power and economic participation from the ninth century to the sixteenth. The present paper fills this void in the literature.

Minting Practices in Mewar (9th–16th Century)

The evidence of numismatics from Mewar indicates a definite progression of the minting technology from the ninth to the sixteenth century, from the simple punch-marked to organised and state-controlled die-striking. This technological development was not a standalone phenomenon, but rather influenced by politics, commerce, and the growing supply of metals.

In the initial period (approx. 9th to 12th centuries) coins of Mewar were minted in punch-mark style. This technique involved cutting a metal object, usually a thin sheet of copper or impure silver, to a size that is roughly correct and then stamping it with individual small symbols using punches. The punching was done individually, so that the coins were not all identical in weight, shape or design. This was the common technique for the making of coins in early medieval India, and yielded functional coins for use in localised economies where most buyers and sellers were familiar with each other and the value of coins was negotiated face-to-face (Altekar 41). Coins from this period from Mewar tend to be copper, and have abstract symbols but no inscriptions.

The selection of the metal in this early period is an indication of the overall monetary situation of the era. Deyell has now recorded a severe lack of silver in North India from the ninth to twelfth centuries, such that a high proportion of copper and base metal was used for all forms of transactions in the region (Deyell 105). Silver, if available, was used to make large payments, remittances of taxes and long-distance trade. In Mewar, this bimetallic system is evident: the copper issues have been the more common type of coins in hoards in the early period, while the silver coins, although less abundant, see higher standards of weight and execution.

The transitional period (thirteenth and fourteenth century) is characterized by the start of die-striking in Mewar. The technique involved in this was to prepare a standard weight of metal blanks (called a planchet) and to press them in between two engraved dies, transferring the entire design in one press. One of the technological advances of the turn to die-striking was the ability to make coins that were more uniform in weight, more consistent in design and more legible than punch-marked issues. During the same time period, as Agrawal has mentioned, this shift was happening all over India, as increasing trade networks became dependent on reliable, standardised currency (Agrawal 67). For Mewar, this was the time of political consolidation under the Guhil dynasty, allowing for the

introduction of organised production of mints.

The classical period of Mewar's coinage (fifteenth to sixteenth century) is the most advanced stage of direct state control of minting by die-struck coinage. It was during the reign of Rana Kumbha (1433-1468) that this was especially notable. During his reign, the process of minting was formalized and mint workshops were opened in the fortresses of Chittor and Kumbhalgarh. These fortified sites had two functions: they helped the protection of the metal reserves and the regulation of the issuing of the coins, so that the quality of the coins could be carefully monitored by state authorities (Hooja 328). The distinguishing feature of the coins of this period are legends set in Nagari script, which, like the solar symbol, also included the name or title of the ruler. This development was a planned step in the process of political communication – the ruler's name was put on the coin, and thereby his authority appeared in every marketplace where the coin was used.

Mewar's coins during the entire period from this time emphasize a conscious creation of political identity. The sun symbol is the most enduring symbol that can be seen on Mewar's coins, and it explicitly links the ruling dynasty with divine authority, the Guhil dynasty claiming that they were descended from the sun's dynasty (Suryavamsa) (Hooja 330). Other symbols, such as the bow and the trident, are on some of the issues and possibly had martial or religious significance. With the introduction of Nagari legends in the fifteenth century, this political message was accompanied by a linguistic one which proclaimed Mewar's cultural difference in an era when the currency of the Delhi Sultanate was written in Persian. Not only was it a design decision, but also a strategic statement about local identity and political sovereignty.

Tables 1 and 2 show the chronology and type of coins known from Mewar for the three periods outlined above, and the main distinguishing characteristics of the various coin types respectively.

Currency Circulation and Trade Networks

The economic bondings which coinage facilitated and reflected in the study of currency circulation are apparent. The circulation of coins in markets, tax schemes, and trade networks in Mewar offers direct clues as to how the regional economy operated and how it was linked to other commercial networks.

The geographic location of Mewar was the only most significant factor affecting the circulation of its currency. Mewar was located on the elevated plateau of Gujarat to the west of the fertile plains, and to the east of the central plateau of Malwa, which dominated the trade caravans (see Figure 1) travelling through the passes and valleys. The trade between ports on the Arabian Sea and the northern part of the Indian heartland had to pass through Mewar, which meant constant trade. The markets of Mewar were traversed by caravans of salt from the Sambhar Lake region, grain from the Gangetic plains, textiles from Gujarat and metal goods from the Aravalli mines. The medium of exchange for each transaction was a need; and Mewar's coins were used within the local economy as well as local currency that was imported from travelling merchants.

The currency circulation in Mewar was found to be similar to the revenue-cycle in the model described by Habib. Land taxes were levied in cash not kind: especially near main towns and trade routes (Habib 68). The state then spent this money through paying salaries to soldiers and officials, giving grants to temple establishments, payments to build and fortify. This means that the coins were in constant circulation, flowing from the state treasury to the markets in the cities and vice versa, passing through the rural economies. The state's spending caused the velocity of money to rise, adding more money to the marketplace when the state expanded spending, as it did during military campaigns, for instance.

Mewar's currency was bimetallic, so that a layered economy was created. There were silver coins of higher intrinsic value, which were used for large transactions, such as land revenue payments, wholesale trade and long distance commercial transactions. By contrast, copper coins were generally used in local markets and were used to make small everyday purchases. Sharma has observed that this dual economy was typical of the economies of the Rajputs, where most residents had limited contact with coinage via copper issues (Sharma 118). The presence of both metals established a monetary system where various levels of the economy were catered for by suitable monetary instruments.

Stranger coins in local hoards are one of the most revealing features of the circulation of Mewar. The coins of the Delhi Sultanate, Gujarat Sultanate and later the Mughals have also been discovered in the region in hoards, which also include Mewar's own issues (Hooja 331). The representative foreign coins found in the Mewar hoards are recorded in Table 3. Their existence confirms the introduction of foreign coinage into the region and that traders valued coins according to their content of metal and their weight, not their political origin. Agrawal has called this the "market confidence", which is the confidence that economic actors have in a coin due to its intrinsic properties (Agrawal 74).

There was an intermediary role for guilds and merchant associations in the circulation of currency. Occasionally large traders would "park" coins, and sell them off at regular periods, almost as if they were working as "informal bankers". Much lending was done for caravan travel, the interest rates being fixed according to the risk levels of the route (Mitchiner 452). If roads were unsafe due to conflict or banditry, the interest rate increased which made long-distance trade more expensive. These coins did not only enable direct exchange but also credit relations, vital for commercial networks. The use of money in Mewar was thus inextricably tied to intricate financial transactions between these various spheres of production and trade, levies and taxation, and credit and lending.

Mewar in the Wider Monetary System of Medieval India

It is not possible to appreciate Mewar's monetary history without an appreciation of the broader monetary systems of medieval India. During this era several concurrent monetary regions existed on the subcontinent, not political regions, but monetary regions based on trade and the flow of coinage. Mewar was unique in this multi-faceted situation.

The Delhi Sultanate, which introduced its currency as the most important currency standard in much of North India since the 13th century, challenged and provided a model for Mewar's own coinage. Because of the consistent weights and reliable metal content, the Sultanate's silver tanka and copper jital were widely accepted. Srivastava has chronicled the system of imperial mints set up by the Sultanate in major cities to guarantee uniformity of output (Srivastava 142). Mewar's rulers did not emulate these designs; they rejected them, and instead used their own symbols, such as the sun, the bow, the Nagari legend, as a political statement of difference. This is especially true in the context of the designs of the coins, as Cribb states: "One of the main ways states communicated their political identity was through the designs of their coins" (7).

The link between Mewar's monetary system and Gujarat's sea trade is of great importance. Large quantities of silver were imported into the ports of the Gujarat coast, mostly via trade with the Persian Gulf and Red Sea (Chandra 102). This silver was brought in through well-trodden trade lanes, and passed through the land of Mewar on its route to the north. The availability of this supply of silver was important for the minting of Mewar as silver was the main metal used in high denomination currency. Geography was therefore a direct factor in monetary capacity – the location of a trade route meant access to the raw materials of coinage.

In medieval India, coins from different authorities circulated together in the same market which is known as multiple currency circulation. Mewar's markets had both local and the currencies of Gujarat, Malwa and the Delhi Sultanate. Richards has described how in Mughal times, this co-existence was dealt with predetermined exchange rates, with merchants agreeing to exchange the various currencies according to the amount of metal in each (Richards 61). This was the case in previous centuries: if the coin's weight and purity were guaranteed, it was acceptable, no matter who had minted it. The plan was based on the market, and Mewar's own coin continued in circulation because, not because the state ordered them to be used, but because they were of a good quality and merchants trusted them.

Chandra's study of the transition from the Sultanate to the Mughal monetary system attests to a more general trend, of which Mewar's history is a part, between the uniformity of the imperial monetary system and the autonomy of the region (Chandra 98). The larger states wanted to bring uniformity in the coinage within their respective territories, whereas other smaller states were in opposition by keeping their own coin designs and weight. This opposition had economic implications since it maintained the monetary identity in the region and enabled local economies to operate through their own economic logic. Monetary sovereignty was integral to political sovereignty for medieval Indian states, as can be seen from the fact that Mewar continued to mint its own coins despite political pressure from the larger powers over the centuries.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore three interrelated questions relating to the monetary history of Mewar in the ninth to the sixteenth century. The results provide a systematic account of the development of minting technology, the role of currency in the regional economy, and the relationship between political authority and market forces in the region's important Rajput kingdom.

The evidence gathered in response to the first research question shows that the minting process used by Mewar developed in three distinct stages; a punch-marked period (9th–12th centuries), a period of transition (13th–14th centuries) and a classical period of well organised die-struck minting under state control (15th–16th centuries). This change was influenced by three factors: first, the political stability under the Guhil dynasty, second, the need to standardise the currency as a result of the growing spread of trade networks, and third, the growing availability of metal resources via trade links with Gujarat. This technological advance was not an isolated one, but one that was also recorded in other parts of India by Altekar and Agrawal, indicating that Mewar was involved in a monetary modernisation process that took place on a much larger scale throughout the subcontinent.

For the second question, the circulation patterns analysis shows that the economy of Mewar was highly connected to the economy of western and central India. There were two ways that currency circulated: the revenue-expenditure cycle with the state, and merchant networks, credit relationships, and guild activities. The foreign coins found in Mewar's hoards, from the Delhi Sultanate, the Gujarat Sultanate and eventually the Mughals, attest to the fact that trade was a regular occurrence across political boundaries, and that merchants judged coins by their intrinsic value, not their political affiliation. This discovery reinforces Deyell's theory about the monetary zones, that is, the limits of monetary exchange were not set by political boundaries but by trade routes.

The third question, which relates to the relationship between politics and markets, is the one that has perhaps most important result. The rulers of Mewar obviously used coins as a means of political communication, with both the use of the solar symbol and the legends of Nagari to establish their sovereignty and cultural identity. But ultimately, their coinage's circulation and survival hinged on market acceptance. The state could mint coins, but it was not going to force anyone to use them if the

coin was not of a sufficient standard of metal or if the weight was not reliable. This dynamic established a principle of accountability between the mint and the market, that is, to limit political ambition by the rationalities of the market. The evidence indicates that the rulers of Mewar were aware of this limitation and adjusted minting accordingly, ensuring that a standard adequate to keep consumers confident in the mintage process was maintained from one generation to the next.

The theoretical contribution of the present study is to use the political economy approach to the study of a region's monetary system which is not studied in that depth before. The study offers insights on the political and economic role of Mewar's coins and the non-conformity of the two functions, thus enriching the understanding of the monetary history of medieval India. The results also indicate that the study could be continued with other regional Indian kingdoms for the sake of having a broader understanding of the role played by the coins in various political contexts of medieval India.

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Chronological Development of Minting in Mewar (9th–16th Century)

Phase	Period	Technique	Metal	Key Features
Early	9 th –12 th c.	Punch-marked	Copper, debased silver	Abstract symbols; irregular weight; local circulation
Transitional	13 th –14 th c.	Punch-marked to die-struck	Copper, silver	Improved uniformity; partial weight standardisation
Classical	15 th –16 th c.	Die-struck	Silver, copper	Nagari legends; solar symbol; state mints at Chittor and Kumbhalgarh

Table 2: Representative Coin Types of Mewar by Period

Period	Metal	Weight (approx.)	Obverse	Reverse
9 th –12 th c.	Copper	2.5–4.0 g	Punch marks (sun, animal)	Blank or punch marks
9 th –12 th c.	Silver (debased)	3.0–4.5 g	Punch marks (geometric)	Blank or punch marks
13 th –14 th c.	Copper	3.0–5.0 g	Die-struck: sun symbol	Die-struck: bow/trident
15 th –16 th c.	Silver	4.0–5.5 g	Sun symbol + Nagari legend	Bow or trident
15 th –16 th c.	Copper	3.0–4.5 g	Sun symbol + ruler's name	Decorative pattern

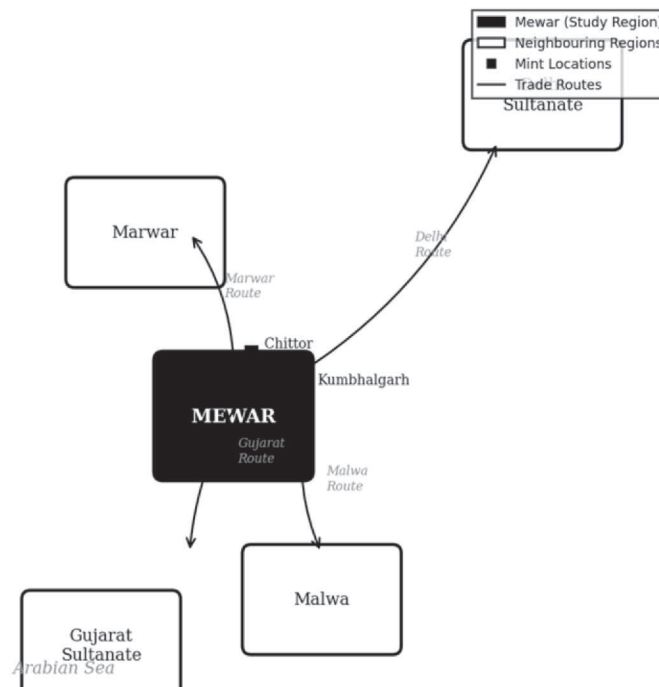
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Table 3: Foreign Coins Identified in Mewar Hoards

Foreign Coin Type	Issuing Authority	Period	Metal	Context of Find
Tanka	Delhi Sultanate	13 th –14 th c.	Silver	Hoards from Udaipur district
Jital	Delhi Sultanate	13 th –14 th c.	Copper	Market site deposits near Chittor
Silver Tanka	Gujarat Sultanate	15 th –16 th c.	Silver	Trade route hoards, southern Mewar
Mughal Rupee	Mughal Empire	16 th c.	Silver	Later period deposits

Figure 1: Schematic Map of Mewar and Its Major Trade Routes (9th–16th Century). Source: Prepared by the author based on trade route data from Hooja and Chandra.

Figure 1: Mewar and Its Major Trade Routes (9th-16th Century)



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Norway's Mediation in Sri Lanka's Peace Process: Structural Limitations

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ABSTRACT

This article critically examines Norway's facilitation of the peace process between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1999 to 2009, interrogating the proposition of "neutrality without leverage" in international mediation. Frequently cited as a paradigmatic case of small-state peace diplomacy, Norway's involvement in Sri Lanka's Peace Process was marked by consensual entry, sustained engagement, and a strong commitment to impartial facilitation. While the mediation produced notable short-term achievements, including the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) and a temporary reduction in hostilities, the process ultimately collapsed, culminating in a military victory rather than a negotiated settlement. Drawing on mediation theory, small-state diplomacy, and critiques of liberal peacebuilding, this article argues that Norway's reliance on a "pure facilitation" model, emphasizing neutrality, confidentiality, and party ownership, proved structurally inadequate in an asymmetric intrastate conflict where parties retained viable military alternatives and exhibited low commitment credibility. Efforts to compensate by "borrowing leverage" from international co-chairs further undermined Norwegian autonomy and intensified domestic perceptions of bias. The article advances a distinction between relational authority and structural authority, showing how trust-based mediation erodes in the absence of enforcement capacity. It argues that neutrality, while facilitating entry, is insufficient as a standalone strategy in deeply polarized civil wars. That small-state mediators require hybrid approaches to influence conflict trajectories meaningfully.

Key Words: Mediation, Neutrality, leverage, Small States, Civil War, Peace Process

Introduction

Third-party mediation has become a central instrument of international conflict management in the post-Cold War era. Alongside coercive diplomacy by major powers, a distinct model of neutral facilitation has gained prominence, particularly through the engagement of small and middle powers such as Norway, Switzerland, and Finland. This approach emphasizes impartiality, confidentiality, and respect for local ownership, positioning the mediator as an "honest broker" rather than an enforcer of outcomes (Mitchell, 2002). Norway has emerged as the most visible proponent of this model. Its mediation efforts in the Middle East, Sudan, and Sri Lanka have shaped both scholarly debates and policy practice, contributing to what is often described as the "Norwegian model" of peace diplomacy (Stokke, 2009). Central to this model is the assumption that neutrality constitutes a core asset in mediation, particularly in conflicts where great-power involvement is viewed with suspicion due to colonial legacies or regional rivalries (Pruitt, 2002). However, the process unravelled by 2006, large-

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scale violence had resumed, and in 2009, the conflict ended with a decisive military victory rather than political compromise. Norway was marginalized and eventually excluded from any meaningful role. This outcome poses a central puzzle: why did a mediation effort characterized by neutrality, the parties' consent, and sustained engagement fail to achieve the desired end. Existing explanations emphasize LTTE intransigence, Sinhala nationalist backlash, or adverse geopolitical shifts following the global "war on terror" (DeVotta, 2010; Hoglund, 2011). While important, these explanations underplay the structural limitations of the mediation model itself. This article argues that Norway's failure was rooted not only in contextual obstacles but in the inherent weaknesses of neutrality-centered facilitation absent credible leverage. The article advances three arguments. First, neutrality facilitated entry but constrained Norway's capacity to influence core strategic decisions once parties recalculated their military options. Second, attempts to "borrow leverage" from international co-chairs reduced Norwegian autonomy and blurred perceptions of impartiality (Goodhand et al., 2011). Third, the erosion of mediator authority illustrates the limits of facilitative mediation in asymmetric conflicts lacking a mutually hurting stalemate. Methodologically, the study employs qualitative process tracing across four critical junctures in the peace process, drawing on official documents, evaluation reports, and existing scholarship. By doing so, it contributes to mediation theory, small-state diplomacy, and debates on the limits of liberal peace building.

Literature Review

Mediation literature distinguishes third-party roles based on leverage and strategies. Zartman and Touval (1985) classify mediators as communicators (facilitators), formulators, or manipulators, with success hinging on ripeness—the parties' perception of a mutually hurting stalemate. In asymmetric conflicts like Sri Lanka's, where one party (GOSL) holds state legitimacy, and the other (LTTE) relies on guerrilla tactics, mediators face challenges in maintaining neutrality while addressing imbalances. Beardsley (2009) notes that low-leverage mediators, lacking coercive tools, excel at facilitation but struggle with enforcement, often resulting in fragile agreements. Small-state mediation theory emphasizes norm entrepreneurship. Ingebrigtsen (2002) describes Nordic states like Norway as "norm entrepreneurs," promoting peace through impartiality and humanitarianism. However, in practice, this blurs with interests, as mediators seek prestige or economic ties. Bary (2022) introduces norm-driven vs. interest-driven approaches for low-leverage states, arguing that Norway's norm-based facilitation in Sri Lanka deviated toward manipulation to counter asymmetries, risking impartiality. Specific to Sri Lanka, Höglund and Svensson (2009) analyze Norway's diplomacy as "mediating between tigers and lions," highlighting how even-handed treatment ignored the LTTE's terrorist designation, fuelling biased perceptions. Fowsar (2020) evaluates third-party impacts, noting Norway's role enhanced dialogue but failed due to domestic spoilers and geopolitical isolation. Nissen (2018) examines US influence, showing how American anti-terrorism views post-9/11 constrained Norway's engagement with the LTTE, eroding leverage. Palihapitiya (2007) critiques the "Viking intervention," arguing that cultural misunderstandings and over-reliance on Western liberal models alienated local actors. Stokke (2012) explores "images of neutrality," positing that Nordic even-handedness perpetuated unjust structures, leading to accusations of bias and reduced influence. The "Pawns of Peace" evaluation (Goodhand et al., 2011) provides the most comprehensive critique, concluding Norway's ownership model was vulnerable to instrumentalization without leverage. Gaps in the literature include a limited focus on how post-9/11 dynamics affected small-state mediators and comparative analyses with other low-leverage cases (e.g., Norway in Sudan). This paper fills these by integrating theoretical and empirical insights, emphasizing the interplay of neutrality and leverage in facilitation limits.

Conceptual Framework

This article conceptualizes neutrality and leverage as interacting dimensions shaping mediator authority. Neutrality is understood relationally, as a claim to non-alignment whose effectiveness depends on perceptions rather than intentions (Hoglund, 2011). Leverage refers to the capacity to alter incentives, whether through owned resources or borrowed influence from external partners (Beardsley, 2011). The framework distinguishes between: Relational authority, derived from trust, access, and perceived impartiality; and Structural authority, derived from leverage and enforcement capacity.

Facilitative mediation relies heavily on relational authority. However, repeated violations without consequences erode trust in both the process and the mediator (Touval & Zartman, 1985).

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative case study methodology with embedded process-tracing, designed to establish causal mechanisms linking Norway's facilitative approach (independent variable) to the collapse of the peace process (dependent variable) through specific intervening mechanisms (George & Bennett, 2005). The study covers the period from Norway's formal involvement (1999) to the end of the war (2009), with particular attention to four critical junctures: the signing and implementation of the CFA (2002-2003), the Karuna defection (2004), the election of President Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005), and the final abrogation of the ceasefire and military campaign (2006-2009). Data collection incorporates:

1. Primary Documents: Norwegian Foreign Ministry reports, diplomatic cables (including those from the "Sri Lanka Archives" of diplomatic correspondence), CFA documents, Sri Lankan parliamentary debates, LTTE communications, and reports from the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). Semi-structured interviews conducted between 2018 and 2022 with former Norwegian mediators (including Erik Solheim and Jon Hanssen-Bauer), Sri Lankan officials from the peace process period, members of the international donor community in Colombo, and Tamil diaspora representatives involved in backchannel communications. These interviews provided insight into decision-making processes, perceptions of mediator effectiveness, and internal assessments of leverage.
2. Secondary Literature: Scholarly analysis of the peace process, historical accounts of the conflict, and comparative studies of third-party mediations. Examination of documents from the Norwegian Center for Conflict Resolution (NOREF) and selected materials from the International Crisis Group archives.

This includes examining Norwegian responses to ceasefire violations, attempts to renegotiate during crises, and interactions with regional powers. The analysis pays particular attention to counterfactual reasoning: what Norway could have done differently if it had leverage, and how parties might have responded.

Norway's Mediation in Sri Lanka

This section provides a detailed empirical analysis of the initial phase of Norway's mediation in Sri Lanka, tracing how neutrality-centred facilitation enabled entry and early achievements while simultaneously embedding structural weaknesses that later undermined the peace process. The period from 1999 to 2003 represents the high point of Norwegian mediation, culminating in the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement (CFA). However, it also reveals how the absence of leverage constrained the mediator's capacity to shape strategic behaviour from the outset. Norway's entry into the Sri Lankan conflict was unusual in that both principal belligerents explicitly requested it: the Government of Sri

Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Following years of military stalemate and failed domestic initiatives, President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government quietly approached Norway in 1999, seeking an external intermediary that was acceptable to the LTTE yet politically non-threatening to the Sri Lankan State (Uyangoda, 2007). The LTTE, for its part, viewed Norway as a potential conduit to international legitimacy without the risks associated with Indian or United Nations involvement (Rupesinghe, 2006). This consensual entry significantly enhanced Norway's relational authority at the initial stage of mediation. Unlike coercive interventions, Norway's role was framed as facilitation rather than arbitration or enforcement, reinforcing its image as a neutral and non-aligned actor (Höglund & Svensson, 2009). The absence of colonial ties, minimal strategic interests in South Asia, and Norway's reputation for humanitarian diplomacy further contributed to its acceptability. Norway's mediation philosophy during this phase closely adhered to the definition of pure facilitation in mediation theory. The mediator's role was limited to enabling dialogue, shuttling between the parties, clarifying positions, and assisting in drafting mutually acceptable texts, without proposing substantive solutions or applying inducements (Mitchell, 2002). Three features of the mandate are:

First, Norway adopted a strict interpretation of neutrality, declining to take any public position on the core political questions of the conflict, including state structure, sovereignty, or self-determination. This even-handed posture was intended to preserve credibility with both parties but also precluded the mediator from offering normative guidance on contested issues (Höglund, 2011).

Second, Norway emphasized confidentiality and elite-level negotiation, conducting extensive backchannel diplomacy between Colombo and the LTTE leadership in Kilinochchi. While this reduced public pressure and enabled exploratory dialogue, it also limited broader societal engagement and left the process vulnerable to domestic spoiler narratives (Stokke, 2012).

Third, the mandate excluded material leverage. Norwegian development assistance to Sri Lanka—substantial by small-state standards—was deliberately decoupled from compliance with the peace process. Aid conditionality was viewed as incompatible with neutrality and humanitarian principles (Höglund & Svensson, 2009). These design choices enhanced Norway's relational authority but simultaneously weakened its structural authority, creating a mediation architecture that relied heavily on voluntary compliance.

The culmination of this facilitative approach was the Ceasefire Agreement, signed in February 2002, shortly after Ranil Wickremesinghe's United National Front government won the elections. Norway played a central role in drafting the CFA, drawing on extensive shuttle diplomacy to reconcile the parties' positions on military disengagement, territorial control, and monitoring mechanisms (Goodhand et al., 2011). The CFA represented a significant short-term achievement. Hostilities declined sharply, transportation links between the north and south reopened, and economic activity resumed in previously war-affected areas (Stokke, 2009). International observers widely hailed the agreement as a breakthrough in one of Asia's most protracted conflicts. However, the CFA's structure also reflected the limitations of facilitation without leverage.

First, the agreement prioritized negative peace; the cessation of hostilities, while deferring resolution of core political disputes, including devolution, minority rights, and state restructuring (Goodhand & Walton, 2009). This sequencing assumed that confidence-building would eventually lead to substantive compromise, an assumption consistent with facilitative mediation theory but vulnerable in the absence of enforcement mechanisms.

Second, the CFA effectively froze territorial realities at a moment favourable to the LTTE, granting it *de facto* control over significant areas without requiring meaningful disarmament or political concessions (DeVotta, 2010). Disarmament was framed ambiguously as a future process, reducing

immediate incentives for compliance. Third, the agreement lacked credible sanctions for violations. Compliance depended almost entirely on goodwill, reputational concerns, and international attention, rather than material consequences.

Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM): Authority Without Enforcement

To oversee the CFA, the parties established the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), staffed primarily by Nordic personnel and led by Norway. While the SLMM was tasked with investigating ceasefire violations and issuing determinations, its mandate was strictly observational (Höglund, 2005). This institutional design embodied the tension between neutrality and leverage. The SLMM's credibility rested on its perceived impartiality, yet it lacked enforcement authority to deter systematic violations. By late 2003, thousands of ceasefire violations had been recorded, the vast majority attributed to the LTTE, including political assassinations and continued child recruitment (Goodhand et al., 2011). Government-linked paramilitary activity also persisted, often with limited accountability.

Norway's response to these violations was cautious and procedural. Public attribution of blame was minimized to preserve neutrality, and violations were treated as technical breaches rather than strategic defection (Höglund, 2011). While this approach maintained short-term access, it gradually eroded confidence in the monitoring regime among both parties and the broader public. By 2003, the limits of neutrality without leverage were increasingly apparent. The LTTE's suspension from talks in April 2003, citing exclusion from donor processes and lack of progress on interim governance, posed a direct challenge to the process of mediation framework (Uyangoda, 2007). Norway responded through shuttle diplomacy but avoided leveraging international aid commitments or political pressure to secure re-engagement.

Similarly, the Tokyo Donor Conference of 2003 highlighted the contradictions of borrowed leverage. While donors pledged substantial assistance conditional on progress toward peace, Norway resisted enforcing conditionality, fearing that doing so would compromise neutrality and humanitarian principles (Goodhand et al., 2011). As a result, donor leverage remained diffuse and weakly coordinated developments underscored a central empirical finding: while neutrality enabled Norway to broke the CFA and sustain dialogue, the absence of leverage limited its ability to respond decisively when cooperation faltered. The period from 1999 to 2003 illustrates the dual nature of neutrality-centered facilitation. Norway's strict adherence to neutrality and process ownership enabled entry, reduced violence, and produced a landmark ceasefire. At the same time, the deliberate avoidance of leverage embedded structural vulnerabilities that would later prove decisive. By privileging relational authority over structural authority, the mediation created a peace process heavily dependent on voluntary restraint in a conflict where both parties retained strong incentives for strategic defection. These vulnerabilities were exposed and amplified during the escalation and fragmentation of the peace process after 2003. The period from 2004 to 2006 marked a decisive turning point in the Norwegian-facilitated peace process. While the earlier phase exposed latent structural weaknesses in neutrality-centered facilitation, this phase demonstrated how those weaknesses translated into progressive loss of mediator authority under conditions of political fragmentation, domestic spoiler mobilization, and shifting power balances. Three interrelated developments- the LTTE split, domestic political realignment in Colombo, and the intensification of international counterterrorism dynamics—collectively eroded Norway's capacity to sustain the peace process. The defection of Vinayagamorthy Muralitharan (Karuna Amman), the LTTE's eastern commander, in March 2004 represented a critical shock to the mediation framework. Karuna's breakaway faction, reportedly facilitated by elements within the Sri Lankan security establishment, fundamentally altered the military and political balance within Tamil areas (Uyangoda, 2007; DeVotta, 2010). From a mediation perspective, the split posed two immediate challenges. First, it

violated key provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement that prohibit support for paramilitary groups. Second, it exposed the absence of enforcement mechanisms within the ceasefire regime. Although the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) documented the government's complicity in paramilitary activity, it lacked the authority to impose consequences or compel corrective action (Hoglund, 2005). Norway's response was procedurally consistent but strategically limited. The facilitator issued statements emphasizing restraint and dialogue while avoiding confrontation with the government, fearing that public pressure would compromise neutrality and access (Goodhand et al., 2011). This approach preserved short-term diplomatic engagement but signalled to both parties that systematic violations carried minimal costs, thereby weakening deterrence. For the LTTE, the episode reinforced perceptions that international guarantees were unreliable. The organization increasingly viewed the peace process as strategically disadvantageous, as the ceasefire constrained its operations while enabling state-aligned forces to weaken its territorial control (Stokke, 2012). Parallel to developments on the ground, Sri Lanka's domestic political landscape underwent a significant transformation. The collapse of the United National Front government and the subsequent consolidation of Sinhala nationalist forces intensified opposition to the peace process (DeVotta, 2010). The election of Mahinda Rajapaksa as President in November 2005 marked a decisive shift. Rajapaksa's coalition depended on nationalist parties and segments of the Buddhist clergy that viewed the Norwegian-facilitated process as a threat to state sovereignty and territorial integrity (Uyangoda, 2007). Norway was increasingly portrayed as biased toward the LTTE, accused of legitimizing separatism under the guise of facilitation (Höglund & Svensson, 2009). These narratives were amplified by domestic spoilers who exploited the mediator's non-coercive posture. Because Norway lacked leverage within Sri Lanka's domestic political arena, it was unable to counteract misinformation or build broader societal support for the peace process (Stokke, 2012). The December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami briefly created an opportunity for renewed cooperation. Norway played a central role in facilitating the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS), a joint mechanism intended to coordinate aid distribution between the government and the LTTE in affected areas (Goodhand et al., 2011). P-TOMS represented a rare instance of functional collaboration and was widely viewed as a confidence-building measure. However, its rapid collapse illustrated the fragility of facilitated agreements in the absence of political backing and enforcement. Sinhala nationalist actors challenged the arrangement in the Supreme Court, framing it as unconstitutional and a concession to separatism (DeVotta, 2010). Norway lacked the domestic political leverage to defend the agreement or shield it from legal and political obstruction. When the court suspended key provisions, the facilitator's role was reduced to expressions of regret and renewed calls for dialogue (Goodhand & Walton, 2009). The episode underscored a recurring pattern: Norway could broker agreements, but could not protect them from domestic spoilers once political opposition mobilized.

International Dynamics

International dynamics during this period further constrained Norwegian mediation. The global counterterrorism environment following September 11, 2001, increasingly shaped donor and diplomatic engagement with Sri Lanka. The proscription of the LTTE by key international actors between 2006 and earlier years altered the incentive structure of the peace process, reducing the LTTE's international legitimacy and bargaining position (Nissen, 2018).

Norway's attempt to compensate for its limited leverage by coordinating with international co-chairs, the United States, the European Union, and Japan, produced mixed results. While the co-chairs issued joint statements supporting negotiations, their priorities diverged, particularly regarding counterterrorism and human rights (Goodhand et al., 2011). The European Union's designation of the LTTE as a terrorist organization further narrowed the space for facilitation, reinforcing Colombo's

confidence in a military solution (DeVotta, 2010).

Rather than enhancing Norwegian authority, borrowed leverage increasingly entangled the mediator with broader Western agendas, undermining perceptions of neutrality. Domestically, these reinforced narratives portraying Norway as an external actor advancing foreign interests rather than an impartial facilitator (Höglund, 2011). In early 2006, Norway sought to revive the peace process through talks in Geneva focused narrowly on restoring the ceasefire. These efforts reflected a shift from transformative negotiation toward crisis management, aimed at preventing complete collapse rather than advancing political settlement (Goodhand et al., 2011). The Geneva talks failed to produce lasting results. Continued violence, mutual accusations, and lack of enforcement mechanisms rendered commitments largely symbolic. Norway's facilitative tools, dialogue, persuasion, and procedural management proved insufficient to reverse the parties' strategic recalculations, particularly the government's growing preference for a military resolution (Uyangoda, 2007).

The escalation period demonstrates how neutrality without leverage leads to the progressive erosion of mediator authority. Relational authority; Initially strong due to trust and access, was steadily undermined by the mediator's inability to deter violations, manage spoilers, or adapt to changing power dynamics. Structural authority remained absent, and attempts to borrow leverage were compromised rather than strengthened neutrality. By 2006, the peace process had shifted from negotiation to containment. Norway's role was increasingly confined to technical facilitation and humanitarian coordination, while core strategic decisions moved decisively toward renewed war. The period from 2004 to 2006 reveals the structural limits of facilitative mediation in asymmetric civil wars. Domestic spoilers, internal fragmentation, and international realignments interacted to expose the vulnerabilities embedded in the mediation architecture from the outset. Neutrality, once an asset, became a liability in a context where enforcement and political backing were essential. The period from 2006 to 2009 marked the definitive collapse of the Norwegian-facilitated peace process and the effective termination of third-party mediation in Sri Lanka. While earlier phases revealed growing structural fragilities, this final stage demonstrates how shifts in state strategy, regional geopolitics, and international priorities rendered neutral facilitation not merely ineffective but politically redundant. By mid-2006, the Sri Lankan government had fundamentally recalculated the costs and benefits of continued engagement in negotiations. The election of President Mahinda Rajapaksa consolidated a political coalition that viewed military victory as both feasible and preferable to negotiated compromise (DeVotta, 2010; Uyangoda, 2007). Improved battlefield performance, enhanced intelligence capabilities, and expanded military cooperation with external partners contributed to growing confidence in a war-termination strategy. From a mediation perspective, this shift was decisive. Facilitative mediation presupposes that parties perceive negotiation as preferable to continued violence (Zartman, 2001). Once this assumption no longer held, Norway's relational authority, based on access and trust, became insufficient to influence strategic decision-making. The government increasingly treated mediation as an obstacle rather than an asset, signalling declining political commitment through delayed talks, rhetorical hostility toward facilitators, and procedural non-cooperation (Goodhand et al., 2011). The LTTE, facing territorial losses and internal fragmentation, simultaneously hardened its positions. Rather than adapting to altered power balances through compromise, it reverted to militarized strategies, including renewed attacks on civilian and military targets (Stokke, 2012). This mutual recalculation closed the space for facilitative intervention. The structural weakness of the Ceasefire Agreement became fully evident with its formal abrogation. Although large-scale hostilities resumed gradually, the government officially withdrew from the CFA in January 2008, declaring the agreement obsolete and ineffective (DeVotta, 2010). This decision effectively dismantled the institutional framework underpinning Norwegian mediation, including the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). Norway's response to the abrogation was limited to diplomatic

protest and expressions of regret. Lacking enforcement authority, the facilitator could neither prevent termination nor impose costs for unilateral withdrawal (Goodhand et al., 2011). The SLMM was disbanded shortly thereafter, symbolizing the collapse of the ceasefire regime and the end of Norway's operational presence. This episode highlights a critical insight: ceasefires brokered through facilitation without enforcement mechanisms are highly vulnerable to unilateral exit once parties reassess their strategic interests (Walter, 2002). Neutrality, provided no safeguard against defection here. Following the CFA's abrogation, Norway's role shifted from mediator to peripheral diplomatic actor. Access to decision-makers diminished, and Norwegian initiatives increasingly focused on humanitarian concerns rather than political mediation (Höglund, 2011). Efforts to re-engage the parties were rebuffed, reflecting a broader rejection of external involvement in what Colombo framed as an internal security operation. International actors similarly recalibrated their positions. While rhetorical support for a negotiated solution persisted, major powers increasingly prioritized counterterrorism, regional stability, and state sovereignty over mediation (Nissen, 2018). India maintained a position of strategic distance, while China and Pakistan expanded military cooperation with the Sri Lankan government, further reinforcing Colombo's confidence in a military solution (DeVotta, 2010). Norway's attempts to borrow leverage through multilateral coordination became largely symbolic. Without coherent external pressure or credible sanctions, international engagement failed to alter the trajectory toward war (Goodhand et al., 2011). The final phase of the conflict between 2008 and 2009 was characterized by rapid territorial advances by government forces and the systematic defeat of the LTTE. As fighting intensified, concerns over civilian protection and humanitarian access mounted. Norway, alongside other international actors, sought to facilitate humanitarian pauses, evacuation corridors, and negotiations for the LTTE surrender (Stokke, 2012). These efforts achieved limited success. The government restricted international access to conflict zones, and the LTTE resisted surrender until its final collapse. The humanitarian consequences were severe, with tens of thousands of civilians killed or displaced, raising profound ethical and legal questions regarding the international community's role (DeVotta, 2010). Once war termination became the dominant strategic objective, the mediator's role was reduced to crisis management and humanitarian advocacy, devoid of influence over political outcomes.

Norway's Mediation: Irrelevance to Exit

Norway's exclusion from the final stages of the conflict was not abrupt but cumulative. The erosion of mediator authority observed during earlier phases culminated in outright irrelevance once parties, particularly the state, no longer perceived mediation as serving their interests. Neutrality, once valued, became immaterial in the absence of leverage and political backing. This outcome reinforces the distinction between relational and structural authority developed earlier. Relational authority can facilitate dialogue, but without structural authority, it cannot constrain unilateral action or prevent escalation (Touval & Zartman, 1985; Beardsley, 2011). The Sri Lankan case demonstrates how small-state mediators become vulnerable to marginalization when power asymmetries widen, and external patrons realign. Norway's facilitative approach enabled early engagement but could not withstand strategic recalibration by the conflict parties or geopolitical shifts favouring a military resolution. Once negotiation ceased to be mutually attractive, the authority of mediation collapsed, and external facilitation became obsolete. One of the central lessons of the Sri Lankan case is that neutrality is not an inherent or stable asset but a context-dependent and relational construct. While neutrality facilitated Norway's entry into the conflict and enabled early trust-building, it did not insulate the mediator from perceptions of bias once the political environment shifted. As demonstrated in Parts IV and V, neutrality was continuously reframed by domestic actors in Sri Lanka, particularly Sinhala nationalist elites, as covert alignment with the LTTE (Höglund & Svensson, 2009; Stokke, 2012). This finding challenges the normative assumption, prevalent in facilitative mediation theory, that neutrality

automatically enhances legitimacy and effectiveness (Mitchell, 2002; Pruitt, 2002). In Sri Lanka, the CFA's freezing of territorial control and the SLMM's limited enforcement capacity reinforced perceptions that neutrality enabled strategic exploitation rather than balanced restraint (DeVotta, 2010). The case thus supports a more relational understanding of neutrality, in which mediator credibility depends not only on even-handed behaviour but also on outcomes, power asymmetries, and domestic narratives. Neutrality, in this sense, is vulnerable to erosion when mediators lack the capacity to respond decisively to violations or spoilers. A second key insight concerns the relationship between facilitation and commitment problems in civil wars. Mediation theory emphasizes that negotiated settlements are particularly fragile in intrastate conflicts due to weak enforcement mechanisms and low trust between parties (Walter, 2002). The Sri Lankan case illustrates how facilitative mediation, when unaccompanied by leverage, struggles to address these structural challenges.

Norway's deliberate avoidance of coercive tools, such as sanctions, conditional aid, or security guarantees, meant that compliance with the CFA depended almost entirely on voluntary restraint. As Parts IV–VI demonstrate, repeated ceasefire violations carried few tangible consequences, signalling to both parties that defection was low-cost (Goodhand et al., 2011). Facilitation may be sufficient when parties already perceive negotiation as preferable to war, but it is structurally weak in contexts where military alternatives remain viable. In Sri Lanka, once the government recalculated that military victory was attainable, facilitative mediation lost its relevance. A further contribution of this study lies in its analysis of borrowed leverage. Facing limited owned leverage, Norway sought to strengthen the peace process through coordination with international co-chairs, including the United States, the European Union, and Japan. In theory, such arrangements allow small-state mediators to amplify influence without sacrificing neutrality (Beardsley, 2011). Divergent priorities among co-chairs, particularly regarding counterterrorism and human rights, undermined coherence and weakened the credibility of external pressure (Goodhand et al., 2011). The EU's proscription of the LTTE and the broader post-9/11 security environment shifted incentives in favour of a military solution, reducing the LTTE's stake in negotiations and emboldening the state (Nissen, 2018). Domestically, the mediator became associated with Western agendas, reinforcing narratives that the peace process was externally imposed (Höglund, 2011). These dynamics highlight a structural dilemma for small-state mediators: borrowing leverage may increase material influence but often reduces autonomy and reputational credibility. The Sri Lankan case has broader implications for small-state mediation in asymmetric conflicts. Small states can play valuable roles in opening channels of communication and facilitating early de-escalation. However, their effectiveness diminishes when conflicts enter phases of strategic realignment and escalation. Normative commitments to neutrality and non-coercion, while ethically appealing, may limit adaptability in adverse conditions. This does not imply that small states should abandon facilitation or attempt to emulate great-power coercion. Instead, it underscores the need for hybrid mediation strategies that combine facilitation with credible enforcement mechanisms, inclusive political engagement, and realistic assessments of power asymmetries (Aggestam, 2002; Richmond, 2011). Revisiting the core concept of this article, the Sri Lankan case demonstrates that "neutrality without leverage" is not merely a descriptive label but a structural condition with predictable consequences. Neutrality facilitates access but constrains influence; absence of leverage preserves autonomy but undermines authority. In asymmetric civil wars lacking a mutually hurting stalemate, this configuration renders mediation highly vulnerable to spoilers, strategic defection, and geopolitical shifts. The failure of Norway's mediation thus reflects not only contextual obstacles but the inherent limits of a facilitative model divorced from enforcement capacity. Recognizing these limits is essential for refining mediation theory and designing more resilient peace processes in the future. This article set out to interrogate the proposition of Norway's facilitation effort combined consensual entry,

sustained engagement, and a strong normative commitment to impartiality. However, despite early achievements, most notably the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement, the process collapsed, culminating in a decisive military outcome rather than a negotiated settlement. The Sri Lankan case, therefore, offers a critical vantage point for reassessing core assumptions in mediation theory and practice.

Analytical Perspective

The findings carry important implications for the design and practice of international mediation.

First, neutral facilitation needs not be treated as a universally applicable model. In conflicts characterized by severe power asymmetries and viable military alternatives, mediators must anticipate that neutrality alone be insufficient to sustain compliance. Early success in brokering ceasefires should not be conflated with long-term conflict resolution.

Second, mediation mandates should incorporate credible enforcement or incentive mechanisms from the outset. This does not require mediators to abandon impartiality, but it does necessitate clear strategies for responding to violations, managing spoilers, and maintaining deterrence. Hybrid mediation models—combining facilitation with formulation or limited conditionality—may offer greater resilience (Richmond, 2011).

Third, coordination among external actors must be coherent and conflict-sensitive. Borrowed leverage is effective only when external partners share priorities and reinforce, rather than undermine, the mediator's role. Fragmented international engagement, as seen in Sri Lanka, risks accelerating strategic recalculation toward military solutions.

Finally, mediators—tiny states—should invest in broader societal engagement alongside elite negotiations. While confidentiality can enable early dialogue, exclusive processes are vulnerable to domestic backlash and spoiler mobilization when political legitimacy erodes.

Conclusion

Norway's mediation in Sri Lanka represents both the promise and limits of neutral facilitation in intrastate conflict. For a brief period, Norway's impartiality, patience, and relationship-building produced what seemed like a breakthrough—a ceasefire, open roads, and renewed hope. However, as the conflict's underlying dynamics reasserted themselves—the government's preference for a unitary state, the LTTE's commitment to separatism, the availability of military options—Norway's lack of leverage proved fatal. It could convene talks but not compel compromises; it could monitor violations but not enforce agreements; it could express concern but not alter calculations. The tragedy of Sri Lanka is not that Norway failed where others would have succeeded given the parties' maximalist objectives and changing power balances, any mediator would have struggled. The tragedy is that a decade of intense diplomatic effort, genuine humanitarian commitment, and sophisticated process management proved so ultimately powerless in the face of determined belligerence. This outcome challenges the field of conflict resolution to move beyond facile celebrations of the "Norwegian model" toward more realistic assessments of what different mediators can achieve in different contexts. Neutrality may be a virtue, but in the unforgiving terrain of ethnic civil war, it is insufficient without leverage. As the international community faces new intractable conflicts from Yemen to Myanmar, the lessons of Sri Lanka remain painfully relevant: peace requires not just patient facilitators but capable guarantors; not just dialogue processes but enforcement mechanisms; not just relational trust but structural authority. Until mediation theory and practice fully integrate these lessons, well-intentioned efforts will continue to collapse when parties decide that war remains a viable option.

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Working Conditions of Female Domestic Workers: Evidence from Urban Punjab

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ABSTRACT

The informal sector in India plays a significant role in providing employment opportunities to a major segment of the workforce. Within this workforce, female domestic workers constitute the largest share of unorganised female workers. In this sector, large numbers of poor, illiterate women are engaged. Domestic work is largely considered feminine and remains unpaid within the household. Most of the workers in this occupation belong to marginalised sections of society. This paper examines the working and work-related problems of 150 women domestic workers in urban Punjab. The results highlight the poor working conditions of female domestic workers, as a majority of them are getting lower wages without any social security, which requires the immediate need for policymakers to improve their working conditions.

Key Words: Women, Domestic Workers, Occupation, Urban, Punjab.

Introduction

Domestic work is one of the world's oldest occupations. Domestic workers have done tasks that are largely uncompensated and traditionally assigned to women. These workers belong to the poorest segment of society, with limited access to other employment opportunities (ILO, 2012). Women as homemakers contribute greatly to nation-building. Domestic work is generally considered feminine work, and remains unpaid in the household sphere.

Women domestic workers are the most essential informal workers and are considered "silent" rather than "real" workers. Domestic workers often face various problems such as psychological abuse, economic and emotional exploitation, sexual and verbal assault, bonded labour, etc. (Adin & Singhe, 2016). Thus, domestic workers earn lower wages and face many social and economic problems. These workers are engaged in various household tasks, such as sweeping and cleaning, washing clothes and utensils, and fetching water, as well as a few outdoor tasks, including irregular marketing, shopping, and even childcare activities (Sarkar, 2005). Domestic work is an important occupation among women worldwide (Beri, 2020). ILO defines "a domestic worker as someone who carries out household work in private households in return for wages".

To improve the conditions of these workers, 'the Housemaid and Domestic Servants (Conditions of Service and Welfare) Bill, 2004' was presented in the Rajya Sabha. The bill defined a domestic worker as a "servant means any person who earns his livelihood by working in household Chores", and in this bill, a household maid is defined as "housemaid means a woman servant who performs household chores for wages" (GOI, 2004).

The Ministry of Labour and Employment's task force has proposed the working definition for

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the domestic worker: “Domestic Worker means a person who is employed for remuneration whether in cash or kind, in any household through any agency or directly, either temporarily or permanently, part-time or full-time to do the household work or allied work, but it does not include any member of the family of the employer”.

Domestic work remains undervalued and poorly regulated (Roberts, 1997). No doubt it has empowered many poor female workers to enter the labour market and benefited them economically. However, it does not lead to gender equality. Globally, household responsibilities and unpaid care work performed by women continue to pose noteworthy hurdles for their participation in the labour market (Agrawal, 2023).

The present paper is divided into four sections. Section I discusses the introductory part. Section II addresses the objectives and research methodology of the present study. Section III outlines the results and discussion. Finally, the last section draws conclusions and policy implications.

Objectives and Methodology

The objective of the paper is to analyse the working conditions of female domestic workers in urban Punjab. For the present study, primary data were collected from 150 female domestic workers in the urban area of Punjab during 2021. Initially, Fatehgarh Sahib district of Punjab state was selected. After that, Sirhind city was selected. Sirhind city has 23 wards, of which 3 wards have been selected based on the domestic workers' population in these wards. Primary data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire from 150 respondents (50 from each selected ward) using the personal investigation method.

Results and Discussions

In this section, the working conditions of female domestic workers are discussed. Domestic workers are involved in multiple tasks such as cooking, cleaning utensils, sweeping and mopping, washing clothes, etc. They perform cleaning, utensil washing, sweeping, and mopping as major tasks. The wages of domestic workers depend on the type of work they do (Neetha & Palriwala, 2011).

Table 1 presents the types of work performed by female domestic workers in urban areas of Punjab. The table shows that most of the workers (94.66 per cent) are hired for sweeping and mopping tasks, followed by 30 per cent of workers hired for cleaning utensils, followed by 26.67 per cent of workers hired for washing clothes, whereas 14.66 per cent of workers are hired for cooking, and 2 per cent of workers are hired for other tasks. Employers hire these workers for one or more tasks, so their numbers overlap.

Table 1: Type of Work Done by Female Domestic Workers (Multiple Responses)

Type of Work	No. of Workers	Percentage
Cooking	22	14.66
Washing Clothes	40	26.67
Washing Utensils	45	30.00
Sweeping and Mopping	142	94.66
Other*	3	2.00

*includes looking after children and elderly, etc.

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The number of houses worked per day by female domestic workers depends on the nature of the work they do and the wages they receive. As cooking is a time-consuming task, workers are not able to work in more houses, while sweeping and mopping consume less time. So, workers perform sweeping and mopping tasks in more than one house (McCann & Murray, 2010).

Table 2 shows the number of households worked by female domestic workers in a day. The data show that 35.34 per cent of workers worked in two houses, followed by 30.00 per cent of workers who worked in one house, followed by 19.33 per cent of women workers who worked in three houses per day, and 15.33 per cent of the workers who worked in four or more houses per day. The field survey revealed that some workers only completed one task, sweeping and mopping, in four to five houses per day. Those involved in cooking worked only in a single house. The reason may be that cooking is more time-consuming than sweeping and mopping. Basically, these women preferred to work in one or two houses because they were responsible for doing the work at their homes as well.

Table 2: Number of Houses Worked per Day by Female Domestic Workers

No. of Households Worked	No. of Workers	Percentage
1	45	30.00
2	53	35.34
3	29	19.33
4 and more	23	15.33
Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

There are no fixed working hours in a day for female domestic workers, so their wages are not fixed like in other unorganised sectors (Augustine & Singh, 2016). Working hours depend on household requirements. Table 3 shows the working hours of female domestic workers in a day. It indicates that two-thirds of the workers worked fewer than four hours per day. The table reveals that all female domestic workers worked fewer than eight hours, except for a few (1.33 per cent) who worked more than eight hours.

Table 3: Hours of Work done Per Day by Female Domestic Workers

Working Hours (in hrs.)	No. of Workers	Percentage
1-2	37	24.67
3-4	62	41.33
4-6	33	22.00
6-8	16	10.67
More than 8	2	1.33
Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The majority of the female domestic workers, i.e. 41.33 per cent, worked for 3 to 4 hours a day as domestic workers, followed by 24.67 per cent of workers who worked for 1 to 2 hours a day, followed by 22 per cent who worked for 4 to 6 hours, and 10.67 per cent of the workers worked for 6 to 8 hours per day. The field survey revealed that these workers preferred to work fewer hours per day because they have to work in their own houses. They can also manage their household responsibilities if they spend less time on paid work activities.

Every woman learns household chores from her mother or other female family members, who are already well trained in these activities. Table 4 represents the number of years of work experience of female domestic workers. The table shows that out of 150 sampled female domestic workers, the majority of them have experience of 1-10 years, i.e. 60.67 per cent; 22.67 per cent have experience of 11-20 years; 12.66 per cent have experience of 21-30 years, and only 4 per cent have experience of more than 30 years. A domestic worker's position in occupation changes with their experience. With this, they also experience mobility within this occupation (Sotelo, 1994).

Table 4: Years of Work Experience of Female Domestic Workers

Work Experience (in years)	No. of Workers	Percentage
1-10	91	60.67
11-20	34	22.67
21-30	19	12.66
31-40	6	4.00
Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 5 presents the reasons female domestic workers in urban Punjab undertake domestic work as a profession. Out of the total 150 workers, 62 women workers (41.34 per cent) have adopted this profession due to family needs, while 36 workers (24 per cent) have adopted this profession because of no other work available, lack of skill and no working member of the family. As many as 20 workers (13.33 per cent) adopted this profession because of the flexibility in their work schedules. 23 workers (15.33 per cent) have adopted this profession due to increasing expenses.

Table 5: Reasons for doing Work as a Domestic Worker

Reason	No. of Workers	Percentage
Family needs	62	41.33
Increasing expenditure	23	15.33
Time flexibility	20	13.34
No other work /skill/working member	36	24.00
Other reason*	9	6.00
Total	150	100.00

*includes repayment of the loan, etc.

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 6 shows the working conditions of female domestic workers in urban Punjab. The table shows that the majority (82.67 per cent) of the workers are not satisfied with their wages. Of the total women workers, 147 (98 per cent) report that their employer explains the work and wages to them. Nearly half of the workers admit that it is not the same after joining work. They have to work extra hours and do some extra work. They are also compelled to perform tasks outside their regular responsibilities. Their employers usually scold them when there is any delay or discrepancy in their work (Lalrempuui & Elizabeth, 2020). During the field survey, the women shared that their households sometimes impose extra work when guests visit. The extra money for additional work is inadequate. Sarkar (2005) in his study highlighted that “only a lump sum amount is paid for extra work”.

Table 6: Conditions of work for Female Domestic Workers

Work Conditions	Yes	No	Total
Satisfied with your wages	26 (17.33)	124 (82.67)	150 (100.00)
Employer explains work and wages	147 (98.00)	3 (2.00)	150 (100.00)
If yes, you get the same	79 (52.67)	71 (47.33)	150 (100.00)
Provided with safety measures (Gloves or mask)	73 (48.67)	77 (51.33)	150 (100.00)
Contact with other domestic workers	129 (86.00)	21 (14.00)	150 (100.00)
Discuss wages with other domestic workers	66 (44.00)	84 (56.00)	150 (100.00)

Note: The figures given in parentheses denote the percentages.

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Nearly half of the workers were provided with safety measures such as gloves and masks when performing dusting and other activities. The employer provides gloves and masks to the workers for their own safety. Of the 129 workers, 66 discuss wages with other domestic workers. Sometimes they are forced to remain silent out of fear of being removed from work.

Table 7 presents data on the leave facility available to female domestic workers in urban Punjab. The majority of women workers (70.67 per cent) are allowed to take leave when needed; 29.33 per cent are not allowed by their employers to be absent from work. In response to the question about loss of wages in case of emergency leave, the majority of female domestic workers (86 per cent) admit that they do not lose wages. However, 14 per cent of workers said their wages were deducted for emergency leave. In this work, there are no weekly or monthly offs. Domestic workers have to work seven days a week without any leave. In the case of emergency leave, employees must bear the loss of salary because the employer deducts it from their wages. However, all of this depends upon the nature of the employer.

Table 7: Leave Facilities Available to Female Domestic Workers

Particulars	No. of Workers	Percentage
Leave Facility		
Not allowed	44	29.33
Allowed, if needed	106	70.67
Total	150	100.00
Loss of salary in case of emergency leave		
Yes	21	14.00
No	129	86.00
Total	150	100.00
Get food to eat at the workplace		
Yes	34	22.67
No	68	45.33
Sometimes	18	12.00
Only tea (regular basis)	18	12.00
Sometimes get only tea (when demanded)	12	8.00
Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Employers also provide them with stale or leftover food, which is not good from a health and nutrition standpoint, and refuse to give them paid leave (Lalrempui & Elizabeth, 2020). Most of the workers (45.33 per cent) do not get anything to eat at the workplace. Only 22.67 per cent of workers get food at the workplace. In contrast, 12 per cent of workers admit that they get food only on some occasions or during festivals. Only 12 per cent of workers get tea at work daily, while 8 per cent admit they get it sometimes, mostly when they request it. Nevertheless, this again depends entirely on the employers' choice.

Domestic workers faced numerous work-related problems, including lower wages, longer working hours, lack of weekly rest and social security, and poor working conditions (Kodandarama, 2018; Kundu, 2008). Domestic workers also performed tasks beyond their regular duties without any additional pay. They often accept whatever the employer pays them. They fear that if they ask for higher wages, their employer will terminate them. Moreover, the abundant availability of workers keeps wages low. So, they remain underpaid (Kodandarama, 2018). Domestic workers' employment status is not secured, as there is no legal or written contract regarding their working conditions and wages (Kundu, 2008). Women domestic workers are less educated, lacking knowledge and unaware of their rights and obligations (Reshmi, 2003), which are the main reasons responsible for their exploitation.

Table 8 shows the work-related problems faced by female domestic workers. Of the 150 female domestic workers, the majority (89.33 per cent) have no fixed working hours. The working hours of domestic workers vary depending on how long it takes them to complete a task. It varies as every person has a different capacity to finish work. Of the total sampled workers, 53 receive overtime pay. The field survey shows that almost all workers have done more work than their regular duties, and for this they do not receive payment. Their humiliation is invisible because their greater dependence on the employer hides it.

Table 8: Work-related Problems faced by Female Domestic Workers

Working Problems	Yes	No	Total
No fixed working hours	134 (89.33)	16 (10.67)	150 (100.00)
Get overtime payment	53 (35.33)	97 (64.67)	150 (100.00)
A written contract with any employer	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)
Fixed weekly holidays	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)
Deduction of money from wages	25 (16.67)	125 (83.33)	150 (100.00)
No social security	143 (95.33)	7 (4.67)	150 (100.00)
Caste discrimination at the workplace	10 (6.67)	140 (93.33)	150 (100.00)
Ever faced any harassment at the workplace	32 (21.33)	118 (78.67)	150 (100.00)

Note: The figures given in parentheses denote the percentages.

Source: Field Survey, 2021

None of the workers has a written contract with any employer, nor do they enjoy a fixed weekly holiday. They have to work all seven days a week. As many as 25 workers (16.67 per cent) experienced a deduction from their wages. The money is deducted from their wages in case of loss of valuable belongings of the employer (i.e. breakage of glass and other articles, etc.) or in case of absence from work. The field survey found that the majority of women do not face any deductions from their wages because they work carefully and are not absent from work. Besides this, everything depends on the employer's nature and the employer-employee relationship. A large majority of them do not have any social security. Of the total workers, 143 have no social security. Only 10 women workers (6.67 per cent) face caste discrimination at the workplace. The results showed that the majority of workers do not receive notice before being terminated. Only 15 workers admitted during the field survey that they received prior notice of their termination, while others were of the view that they received no such notice or that none of their employers terminated them. Most of the workers (78.67 per cent) have not faced any harassment at the workplace.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

The above analysis highlighted the working conditions of female domestic workers and their involvement in different tasks such as cleaning, cooking, washing, etc. in urban Punjab. However, the majority of the workers (142 out of 150) are involved in sweeping and mopping tasks. They worked in one or more houses daily. Their working time each day is not uniform for all workers. They entered this profession for different reasons. However, the main reason for entering this profession is their family needs. They also faced many problems in both their work and personal lives. There are no fixed working hours and overtime payments in domestic work. Besides this, there is no proper relationship between employee and employer. There is an immense need to regulate their work. To address the

problems faced by female domestic workers, the state government should enact and effectively implement laws for domestic workers. There is an urgent need to properly implement and ratify the ILO Convention of 2011 to ensure they have decent working conditions.

The working hours of female domestic workers are highly unregulated and not fixed. Moreover, they neither get leave in times of need nor weekly rest. Sometimes they lose their wages when taking emergency leave. Most of the time, they do not get overtime payments. There is an urgent need to develop collective programmes to improve the social and working conditions of female domestic workers. It is suggested that they themselves should form local-level committees to share their feelings and knowledge and invest their small savings.

Domestic workers are getting low wages. They are not covered under the Minimum Wage Act. To protect them from this unfair treatment, the minimum wage policy for domestic workers should be strictly enforced by the central government. Their minimum wages should be fixed based on working hours and the type of work performed.

Some states of India have ratified the Minimum Wage Act for domestic workers. However, such a provision is not provided to domestic workers in Punjab. So, the Minimum Wage Act should also be ratified in Punjab for domestic workers. The majority of female domestic workers experience no wage increment, even though they have been working for the same employer for a long time. Wages for domestic workers should be increased periodically, as in other occupations.

There is a need to formalise domestic work to tackle all the problems related to their work-life. For this, enforcement of a written contract between the employer and the employee should be made mandatory. Contracts should clearly specify the working conditions of domestic workers, including their work, hours, and wages. So, domestic workers should be provided with decent working conditions.

Domestic workers often have limited awareness of their legal rights. Therefore, targeted awareness programmes should be conducted to educate them about their rights and entitlements. Government and non-government organisations should work together to create awareness among these female domestic workers.

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Democratisation Process in Uzbekistan: Changing Contours with the Change of Regime

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ABSTRACT

The political dynamics of Central Asia have been shaped by different factors after the demise of the Soviet Union. The five Central Asian states adopted varied political setups for effective governance. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union political elites who were the former leaders of republican structures of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union started to establish new authoritarian regimes (except Kyrgyzstan). Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan formally adopted a democratic political structure and established political institutions as part of its state-building process. The enactment of new Constitution established a formal democratic framework by incorporating provisions reflecting the essential principles of democracy; however, in practice, these provisions remained largely nominal and served more as formal symbols of democracy than as effective mechanisms of democratic governance. The strengthening of democracy is closely linked with the active participation of people in shaping the political system. In this context, democracy is understood in terms of political competition, popular participation, and civil liberties, while the process through which these democratic principles are established and strengthened is referred to as democratisation. The post-Soviet trajectory of Uzbekistan presents a significant democratisation puzzle: despite the establishment of formal democratic institutions and constitutional guarantees, democratic practices remained weak and executive dominance persisted. This raises the question of why formal institutions failed to produce substantive democratisation and whether the reforms under Shavkat Mirziyoyev represent a genuine transformation or a reconfiguration of the existing political order.

Key Words: Democracy, Democratisation, Authoritarianism, Political institutions, Central Asia, Uzbekistan

Introduction

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 transformed the political landscape of Central Asia, bringing Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan into the international system as sovereign states. Independence therefore confronted the newly sovereign states with the dual challenge of domestic political transformation and external state-building, requiring them to reconstruct political institutions, redefine state–society relations, and establish new diplomatic and economic relations beyond the Soviet framework. At the same time, their shared Soviet institutional legacy provided a common structural starting point, while subsequent variations in political institutions and regime trajectories produced significant differences in their processes of state-building and democratisation. The Central Asian states differ from one another in several respects and have

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undergone significant transformations since 1991. Uzbekistan, the most populous country in the region, emerged as an independent and important regional actor following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one of the most significant events in the post-war period. However, the period following the fall down of the Soviet Union was marked by strong sanguinity about the prospects for democracy after which a major shift has been seen in political landscape at international level. Uzbekistan as newly emerged independent state carried large number of reforms in many spheres including political sphere. With the adaptation of independent Constitution on August, 12,1992, containing the provisions based on the ideals of democracy. This paper has analysed the democratisation process in Uzbekistan after the disintegration of Soviet Union through analyzing the political institutions. Therefore, before analysing the political system and democratisation process of country it is important to understand the constitutional provisions and various constitutional developments in the country. The political system has been analysed under two regimes.

Constitutional Development and Political Institutions

The notable feature constitution is that it has guaranteed the transparency of governmental institutions and authorities, which means that each citizen's interests are now legally maintained and further protected. No matter how it is acquired, everyone has full equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan. It enables everyone to actively participate in all aspects of national life, including the political, legal, and cultural arenas. Article 1 of the country states that Uzbekistan is a Sovereign democratic republic. According to Article 7 of Uzbek constitution the sole source of state power are the people of the country. Article 10 states that the Oliy Majlis (Supreme Assembly) and the President of the Republic, who are elected by the people, have the only authority to act on their behalf. Article 11, provides for the separation of power between legislative, executive and Judicial branches of government. Article 18, states that the person who is a citizen of the Republic of Uzbekistan have equal rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, without regard to gender, race, nationality, language, religion, social background, convictions, individual or social rank. No group, political party, public association, movement, or individual has the authority to act on behalf of the people of Uzbekistan. According to article 32 of Uzbek constitution, all citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan have the right to participate directly and through representation in the management and administration of public and state issues. They exercise this freedom through self-government, referendums, and democratically formed governmental entities. Article 34 states that citizens of the country have right to form political parties, public associations and trade unions and they also have right of participate in mass movements (Constitution of Uzbekistan 1993) Referendums are significant political events in this sense since they allow the public to vote on the most crucial subjects, such the adoption or amendment of Republic of Uzbekistan laws. According to the constitution, the president can speak for the people (Constitution of Uzbekistan 1993).

According to Article 60 of the Uzbek Constitution, political parties are registered in line with the legal process and serve as a vehicle for the political expression of the various societal groups. According to Article 61, the government shall not meddle with religious organisations. Regarding media freedom, Article 67 states that media operates in accordance with the law. Oliy Majlis is the top state representative body with legislative authority, as stated in Article 76. According to Article 106, the Uzbek judiciary shall operate independently of the executive and legislative branches of government. According to the constitution, theoretically, the Uzbek political system is democratic, secular, and based on a presidential form of administration. The Uzbek government worked hard to establish the emergence of formal political institutions during the state's independence in order to show that the state's system was well on its way to becoming a democracy. However, the political system and democratisation process can be analysed by examining the working of political institutions of the state

that how political institutions are related to fundamental democratic values. And does the political institutions of the state functions according to the constitutional provisions?

Political Institutions and Authoritarian Consolidation under Karimov

Uzbekistan has established political institutions based on democratic provisions. For the success of a democratic state, there is a need for nation and state-building, without it a political system cannot survive hence Uzbekistan established political institutions and approved its new constitution in 2002. But in spite of establishing political institutions based on democratic provisions Uzbekistan Continued to remain under authoritarianism and the regime is unable to consolidate democracy. Thus, it is necessary to find out the reasons, why Uzbekistan not remained successful in strengthening political institutions and establishing democracy. Additionally, it is important to analyse the functioning of executive, legislature, judiciary, political parties, and media in the state's democratisation process.

The smooth evolution of Uzbekistan as a new post-communist state is undeniably a peculiar triumph. In the post-independence development of Uzbekistan as a state, the power of the President is regarded as critical for providing stability to society. Article 89 of Uzbek constitution states that President is the head of the state and executive authority in the state. The President has broad executive powers, including the ability to create the government, direct the government, appoint and dismiss Prime Ministers and Cabinet Ministers, appoint and recall diplomats, and form and dissolve ministries. Despite his long association with the communist movement and eventually the first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and the president of the Uzbek SSR), Islam Karimov was critical of the Soviet period. Karimov criticised Soviet Uzbekistan's political structure, without undermining the country's modernisation successes or undermining the country's rapid speed of modernisation during this period. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the executive branch of government comprises law enforcement agencies. The office of the President, which was founded in 1990, is the pivot position in Uzbekistan's administrative process. The President of Uzbekistan has enormous authority, as the first elections were held in the post-Soviet period in December 1991, and a referendum was held in March 1995 to extend Islam Karimov's tenure. The peaceful progression of transition allowed Islam Karimov to assertively run against a candidate of the opposition party, Erk, in the first presidential elections that were held in 1991. Karimov's competitor, Mohammed Salikh, gained 1.2 million votes and succeeded in defeating Karimov in only one district but he lost the presidential mandate, which gave Karimov 86 percent of the vote in elections (C 1992: 45). Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Uzbekistan faced many challenges. However, President Karimov was acutely conscious of the instability of his new country as he observed the situation from within (Starr 2018). As a result, he committed himself first and foremost to maintaining and enhancing the sovereignty of a newly independent Uzbekistan and by the mid-1990s, the process of designing political systems based on institutions and democratic governance procedures that seemed to be the first step towards democratisation. But there are some reasons that makes the democratisation process weak. Some factors supporting this argument are the Presidential elections held in 1991, 2000, 2007 and 2015 were considered as undemocratic by Organisation of Security Cooperation in Europe due to several reasons that is lack of competition between political parties, and due to lack of unfair elections, due to restricted work of journalists. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) refused to send an observer mission to these elections, citing the lack of a viable opposition candidate running against Islam Karimov. The frequent referendums showed that the president managed to influence the elections by avoiding comprehensive democratic reforms. This is clear from these facts that Uzbekistan adopted democracy but could not implement democratic governance successfully. In one of his interviews, President Islam Karimov admitted to his authoritarian tendencies. The interview of Karimov as quoted by C. in his paper:

I could explain it only by the following: In certain periods of history, during the establishment of a sovereign state, especially during a time of transition from one system to another, strong executive power is required. It is necessary to avoid bloodshed and reaction, to maintain inter-ethnic and civil peace and stability. If you like, it is also needed to move towards democracy (C 1992: 45).

Here, it can be analysed that for Karimov to maintain stability and peace in the country there is a need for a strong executive with control of powers in his hands. However, Karimov's initiatives to look to the past for Uzbekistan's future growth and development have had a significant impact on the country's progress. Islam Karimov's position as a President gave him authority and influence over the nation's political structure (Kangas 1992: 22-27). All of Uzbekistan's officially recognised political parties are subject to inspection by the authoritarian government and must answer to the President. As a result of political changes since independence, a system of one-man rule has been established with a strict hierarchy of executive power.

Oliy Majlis (Legislature)

The legislative branch in Uzbekistan consists of the National Parliament, known as the Oliy Majlis, and local representative bodies known as the Kengashes. Before 2002 Uzbekistan had a unicameral parliament of 250 seats and a new parliament was created after the referendum which consists of a bicameral legislature i.e Oliy Majlis (Anderson 1999: 825-827). The upper chamber of the parliament is the Senate which is the chamber of territorial representation. The lower chamber is Qonunchilik Palatasi (legislative chamber) which works permanently. The Supreme Assembly (Oliy Majlis) has 150 members in the Legislative Chamber (Lower House), elected for five years. The Senate consists of 100 members, 84 of whom are elected at the sessions of the district, regional, and city deputies, and 16 appointed by the President. In 2003 the post of Prime Minister was created through another amendment. In the Executive branch, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers are appointed by President. The legislative branch in Uzbekistan has few legislative powers to make laws. The Oliy Majlis is unable to exercise the powers that effectively check and balance the executive. Other state authorities were weakened and were more reliant on the executive branch as a result of the country's political power being concentrated entirely within it (Omeliicheva 2015:19-21). However, the establishment of bicameral legislature can also be seen as a step towards strengthening of democratisation process but the system witnessed only decorative elements of democracy although the real power remains vested only in the hands of the state executive. The evolution of parliamentary system in Uzbekistan consists of different stages. The first stage started from 1992- 1995 that was critical to establish the position of political parties as required components of Uzbekistan's electoral system. Taking into account the country's sociopolitical situation, the first law, adopted on December 28, 1993, On Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, envisaged the usual ways for holding multiparty elections that are customary throughout the world. The primary purpose for adopting this legislation was to counterbalance the PDPU party, which was predominated at the time and could achieve a monopolistic majority in the parliament through elections which ultimately did not correlate to the country's social and political development goals.

On the basis of the first stage's experience, efforts were made in the second stage (1995-2000) to continually enhance the legislative framework that regulated the composition of parliament. Several major addenda and revisions to the statutes governing elections to the Oliy Majlis and local representative power structures were introduced in 1999. The third stage of the establishment of a multiparty system began in 2002. Fundamental changes occurred at this period, including the transition from a one-chamber to a two-chamber parliament and the abolition of the procedure for nominating candidates for deputy from local state power institutions. As a result, political parties and citizen initiative groups have become electoral institutions.

Elections for the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as regional, district, and local Kengashes of people's deputies, were held on December 27, 2009. However it has been analysed that the elections were not free as the election process was manipulated by executive power. It has been clear from the fact that the deputies of legislative chamber had chosen before the elections. Furthermore, the referendums demonstrated their ineffectiveness in involving citizens in state and public management. On the one hand, each attempt to establish an electoral system and a pluralistic political structure emerges from executive power. Despite the noticeable evolution of liberal and democratic trends in national election legislation aimed at creating a true pluralistic system and elevating the role of political parties not only during elections, but also as entities of the political system, the executive power retains tight control over the process. And this control is much stronger during the election campaign and elections, while the function of political parties is negligible and largely overlooked the rest of the time.

In 2014 the first round of parliamentary elections were held in the state however in these elections no candidate received required votes so the re- elections were held in 2015 in which the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan remained the largest party and the elections were criticised by the Organisation of Security Cooperation in Europe due to the lack of genuine opposition and the president was elected for the fourth time without any opposition (Solovyov 2015). The first elections after the death of Islam Karimov were held in two rounds first in 2019 and second in 2020. In these elections the ruling party that is the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan remained the single largest party. All five political parties that contested the parliamentary elections were considered to be pro-government and broadly supportive of the President. However, despite the introduction of many changes the new electoral law under Shavkat Mirziyoyev (new president) the political system of the state has not changed much (Pikulicka 2019). After examining the parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan, it has been analysed that the elections lack genuine political competition. It has also been observed by the Organisation of Security Cooperation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights criticised the elections (Human Rights Report, 2019).

It has also been examined that the government has restricted several procedural expressions of democracy, including fundamental rights, free and fair elections, media freedom, the role of opposition parties, and responsible administration. As a result, Uzbekistan has degraded into an authoritarian government since 1991. Without any significant resistance or constitutional challenge, Islam Karimov continued as president and was three times re-elected (Spechler 2008: 82). Other state authorities were weakened and grew more reliant on the executive branch as a result of the concentration of all political power in the nation into the executive branch. Besides this, the survival of Islam Karimov as a Soviet elite in power does not mean that nothing has changed in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. However most of the Soviet institutions have been weakened, and the monopoly of the Communist party on political power has gone.

Elections are managed by the electoral system, which provides a framework for democracy. The Republic of Uzbekistan's referendum, the Oliy Majlis elections, and presidential elections are all conducted by the country's official electoral body. Lawfulness, independence, transparency, and fairness are the guiding principles of electoral commission operations. The constitution, the laws governing elections, referendums, and other legislative actions serve as guidelines for the Central Election Commission and its members. It takes the required steps to provide equal conditions (status) for candidates, political parties, and election campaigns. It also ensures equitable allocation of budgetary money allotted for the preparation and conduct of elections, a referendum, and accurate polling and tally of results. The Chairman of the Central election commission is selected from amongst its members on the nomination of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at a commission's

meeting It has been analysed that the state's referendums and amendments are the most successful parts of democratic reforms. However, amendments to election legislation are introduced by the executive branch, most commonly by the president himself. This illustrates that Uzbekistan's parliament is significantly affected by executive power structures.

Functioning of Political Parties under Karimov's Regime

The political nature of the country can be determined through elections, a multiparty system, and the role of opposition in the political system which is regarded as a sign of democracy. The functioning of a multiparty system depends on its election system, the model of governance followed by the country, and particular features of political order adopted by a country. The process of establishing political institutions in Uzbekistan seemed to be completed in the 1990s. The authoritarian character of Uzbekistan remains the main cause of poor governance and rule of law deficit in the country. There remains a lack of commitment toward the rotation of elites and the oppositional parties played a negligible role in the political system of Uzbekistan where they were not allowed to compete in elections. In the 1991 presidential election, Muhammad Salish was permitted to contest against Karimov and received only 14 percent of the vote. Since the opposition parties, Erik and Birlik, were outlawed in 1993 and their leaders departed the nation, there has been no role for them in the government. Since independence, the government has increased its control over opposition parties. In Uzbekistan, political parties lack openness and are dependent on a single figure, the president, who has limited ability to formulate policies (Gershman 2007: 31).

The People's Democratic Party, established in 1991, and the Social Democratic Justice Party, established in 1995, are both pro-government political parties in Uzbekistan. The National Democratic Party and the National Democratic Revival Party, which were both founded in 1995, amalgamated in 2008. In 2003, the Uzbek Liberal Democratic Party was established. Only political parties that cooperate with the government are allowed to exist and take part. The Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan is founded in 2008 but it does not take part in Parliamentary elections. Since 1991 Islam Karimov till his death has exercised authority over all aspects of Uzbekistan's governance and much of its public life. Although a multiparty system is guaranteed under the Uzbek constitution, theory and practice diverge significantly in which oppositional parties played a negligible role. However, in the words of Islam Karimov's excellence in democracy is not determined by the rising number of political parties (Karimov 1998). Other state authorities were weakened and grew more reliant on the executive branch as a result of the concentration of all political power in the nation into the executive branch (Omeliicheva 2015:19-21). Authorities in central Asia have always conceived of political authority in this manner, with patronage networks playing significant roles in the making of political choices and the government having complete control over political life. Pro-government political parties can only operate in Uzbekistan. President Karimov initiated amendments in parliament in 2011 that gave the political party with the most members in the lower house of parliament the authority to select a prime minister, who must then be accepted by the president. If two parties have the same number of seats, they nominate a candidate jointly. Since the prime minister is no longer the president's automatic successor since April 2011, the importance of his office has declined. It has been analysed that there remained a lack in genuine competition between political parties as a result of which voters have no alternate left behind other than choosing Karimov's policies (Pannier 2012).

Opposition parties, religious parties, and movements are prohibited in Uzbekistan. Because changes to the Elections Law in 2008 prohibited independent candidates from running, only pro-government parties are permitted to field candidates for parliamentary chamber elections It has been highlighted that the institution of political parties in Uzbekistan was multiparty, but Uzbekistan, like

other Soviet republics, lacked experience with the multiparty system. Since one party governed all aspects of society, including the country's sociopolitical factors.

The Judiciary under Karimov's Regime

Article 106 of Uzbek constitution deals with the independence of Judiciary and the Judicial system consists of Supreme courts, the Arbitration court of Republic of Karakalpakstan and the Constitutional courts. However, in reality the Judiciary in Uzbekistan did not act independently under president Karimov. The strict control was maintained by Karimov on Judiciary in spite of provisions of separation between executive, legislature and Judiciary in the Constitution. The Judiciary in Uzbekistan under Karimov remained controlled with no independence where the president dominated the Judicial system. Many reports have been released by Human Rights Watch which showed that Judiciary has remained controlled. In 2003, there was a report on torture in Criminal Justice system of Uzbekistan. In 2011, a report was released by Human Rights Watch which highlighted the erosion of habeas corpus in the state. On May 13, 2005, Uzbek government forces shot and murdered hundreds of citizens, the most of whom were unarmed, in the eastern city of Andijan, exacerbating the country's human rights problems. The Uzbek government's adamant reluctance to allow an independent inquiry into the widespread use of force, as well as its broad crackdown on civil society following Andijan, compelled the EU, and later the US administration, to openly condemn these violations and impose targeted penalties and sanctions on the state (No one Left to Witness 2011). The lawyers were also disbarred by authorities for their political views different from government. Controlled Judiciary many times targeted the political activists for imprisonment without any due process. There are many incidents which highlighted that judiciary is under the executive control which is an important factor contributing in the weak democratisation process.

Nature of the Political System under Islam Karimov

First, a strong democratic system is characterized by a free and independent media that facilitates public debate and holds the government accountable. In Uzbekistan, however, press freedom remained significantly restricted despite its constitutional guarantee. Under Karimov's rule, stringent state control and censorship limited media independence, while criticism of the government was closely monitored and often suppressed (Melvin 2005: 40). Second, the judiciary is an important guarantor of democracy. Here, the judiciary has failed to uphold democracy as it should. Thirdly, the nation has a robust bureaucracy that benefits the ruling class. Fourth, Uzbekistan prohibits opposition political groups from running for office. Public opinion and other crucial democratic institutions like free and fair elections have not established roots in the nation. People's preferences are honored in democracies, which allow citizens to have access to the fundamental facts and defense needed to develop an opinion.

The freedom of association and expression has been provided in Uzbekistan, but only on paper. The President has a hegemonic role in politics and limits the influence of the opposition parties. Uzbek citizens are a long way from enjoying the same freedoms and privileges as citizens of other democratic nations. Since the president has concentrated power, there is no actual separation of powers. Political institutions such as elections, governing bodies, regular elections, and political parties are crucial for establishing political responsibility in any state's political system. All of these things are in opposition to the political system of Uzbekistan, where these institutions are only under the jurisdiction of the executive, demonstrating that a non-democratic regime has been established there. Uzbek citizens are a long way from enjoying the same freedoms and privileges as citizens of other democratic nations. Since the president has concentrated power, there is no actual separation of powers (Kubicek 1998: 29-43).

External Actors and Democratisation Process in Uzbekistan

Many democracy promotion projects were started by the United States, European Union, Organisation of Security Cooperation in Europe, United Nations, International Financial Institutes, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) inspired by the democratic rhetoric of Central Asian governments. The US participation in Central Asia began with the enactment of the 'Freedom Support Act' in October 1992, which empowered the president to authorize aid to former Soviet republics. Central Asian countries joined NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EPAC) in the mid-1990s to improve security and stability. With the enactment of the Freedom Support Act in 1992, the United States gave multifaceted aid to Central Asian governments in the development of democratisation and free-market economies. For the United States, democracy promotion has been considered as the sole solution to the resilience of authoritarian regimes, which is why the US began different projects and programs in Uzbekistan. On February 27, 1998, Uzbek President Karimov paid a visit to the United States in order to strengthen bilateral relations (Majeed 2008). The United States defends its military, security, and geopolitical interests, as well as its energy access, while also promoting the growth and development of democracy and civil society in Uzbekistan. The creation of bilateral relations with Uzbekistan, as well as the transfer of American values of human rights, economic liberalism, and democracy, occurred between 1992 and 1994. The US was involved in the region during the region's first year of independence in the guise of promoting democracy, regional stability, and human rights preservation. Through its military projects, the United States made a significant contribution to regional cooperation. However, ties have deteriorated since 2002 due to a lack of progress in democratic reforms and ongoing violations of human rights. Because of the shared concern of Islamic extremism, Uzbekistan and the US have grown closer in bilateral relations, and the US has strengthened its strategic interest in the region. In March 2002, both countries signed the US-Uzbek Strategic Partnership Declaration. Following the declaration of the war on terror, Uzbekistan became a crucial US partner by providing an air base for the anti-terrorist campaign and under the guise of the fight on terror. It was a boon to the Uzbek leadership, as it permitted the US to establish a military post on its territory at Khanabad (Gershman 2007). However, after Andijan crises in 2005 the relations between both the countries suffered due to the violation of human rights. Since 2007, both countries have begun to rebuild collaboration on a variety of subjects such as economic relations, security, mutual concern, and political challenges. Since 2009, diplomatic visits, border security, civil society development, and individual rights have been increased between the United States and Uzbekistan (Nichol 2013). High-level visits between both countries were held in 2011 to further enhance relations. In 2013, Assistant Secretary of State Mike Hammer visited Uzbekistan and expressed US concerns about the country's press freedom. After 2016, there appears to be a shift in the relationship between the two countries, as the new President Shavkat Mirziyoyev supported deeper cooperation and increased bilateral contacts.

It has been analysed that the assistance provided by US to the Uzbekistan for democracy promotion utilized the government of the state for the consolidation of more power in the hands of executive. It has also been examined that the despite of lot of significant efforts made by United states for democracy promotion but not remained successful in bringing democracy in the region. The development of relations between Uzbekistan and European Union was witnessed since the independence of Uzbekistan and since then it has passed through various stages. A Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and the Republic of Uzbekistan, in effect since 1999, prepared the stage for a more comprehensive bilateral engagement. The present president of Uzbekistan initiated various reforms to improve judicial system, administrative accountability and transparency. The meeting between Central Asia and European Union foreign ministers was hosted in 2017 that was considered as an opportunity to highlight many issues including political, economic,

security, connectivity, rule of law (EU- Uzbekistan Relations). After independence European Union showed concern to many issues in Uzbekistan that became threat to the growth and development of democracy which included lack of functioning of democratic institutions, drug trafficking, illegal migration and many other issues. European Union was more anxious about human rights, to bring political reforms, for good governance and strengthening of democratisation after in Uzbekistan especially after attack of September 11, in Washington (Rakhimov 2010).

Additionally, the rise of radical Islam in Uzbekistan has also been considered as a threat and hindrance to democratisation by European union. However, after Andijan crisis resulted into the deterioration of relations between both the countries after which the partnership and cooperation agreement suspended and sanctions were imposed by European Union on Uzbekistan. The relations became improved after 2007 and the strategic importance of Uzbekistan was recognized by European Union after which human rights protection and democracy promotion became the main objective of European Union several significant matters such as democracy and commerce were discussed, and many official documents, such as the Agreement on the Establishment of an EU Delegation in Uzbekistan, were signed during the visit of former president Islam Karimov in European Union in 2011 (Omelicheva 2015). Additionally, EU through its organisation, Organisation of Security Cooperation in Europe wanted to strengthen democratisation process by monitoring elections, this also indicates that European Union tried to contributed towards the trajectory of transition in the state. However, its implementation remained difficult for European Union due to some reasons which includes lack of communication with the local population of Uzbekistan due to absence of structured civil society, which is essential to provide checks on the implementation of policies of European Union (Ismailov & Jarabil 2009), unwillingness of Uzbek's government to cooperate the priorities of European Union to strengthen Human rights and democracy in the state. (Hoffmann 2010). Other than European Union and United States security in the region is the principal interest of the Russia. Several projects were initiated by Russia which highlighted that Russia's interest in the region is more economic rather than strategic (Hill 2002). Two factors highlighted that Russia is more concerned with the security issue in the region are: First, in the CIS sphere the incorporation of Central Asian States is necessary to preserve the connections between former Soviet states and secondly, Russia wanted to make them close allies so that it does not remain easy for other extra regional powers to easily get strategic access to Central Asia for which Russia created two organisations namely Shanghai Forum and CIS.

The Collective Security Treaty Organisation signed by Uzbekistan in 1992, the main aim of which was to tackle the regional terrorist threats. However, Russia's historically prominent role as a regional security provider was eroding by the late 1990s, as financial difficulties and demands from Central Asian republics pushed it to diminish its security presence in the region as a result of which Western influence in the region increased which was a serious concern for Russia, in 1999 over a disagreement with Russia Uzbekistan withdrew from collective security treaty organisation, thus in 2000 Russia increased its foreign visits in order to show more active interest in the region. It has been analysed that Russia never desired the presence of United States in Uzbekistan, on the other hand Russia's interest are cultural, economic, historical, geographical in the region. Russia always wanted to re-establish itself as a prominent regional player by seeking to minimize presence of US. The United States' rising of democracy promotion into an existential struggle for victory over terrorism and an essential foundation for peaceful relations among states has put it squarely at odds with Russia, which has viewed the task of combating terrorism as a matter of defeating specific organisations and strengthening regime in power. Neither Russia has created a long-term vision for countering terrorism or a model for sustainable development in Central Asia and has worked to disrupt US initiatives to promote political and economic liberalisation in Central Asia, having apparently

assessed that these efforts posed a threat to their power and the region's stability. Even Russian President Vladimir Putin has emphasized the need of economic development in ensuring long-term political stability (Rumer 2006). The policies adopted by European Union and United States and Russia are diverse in nature, the policies preferred by United States are based on hard power on the other hand the policies adopted by European Union are based on soft power and the policies adopted by Russia are more economic in nature rather than political approach affects democratisation process differently as Uzbekistan adopted its own path of development. Another important factor that did not contributed in the strengthening of democratisation process were the different perceptions of both European Union and United States that is Central Asia is considered as part of Eurasia by European Union, on the other hand due to common borders US included Central Asia into its Afghanistan policy (Hoffmann 2010).

The Political Regime under Shavkat Mirziyoyev

Islam Karimov, who ruled Uzbekistan for nearly 27 years by establishing an authoritarian government, died on September 2, 2016. The passing of Karimov signals a serious crisis and the need to make changes to the authoritarian political structure, of which he was the main leading proponent (Lang 2016). Shavkat Mirziyoyev, his successor, who worked as a prime minister under his tenure took office as the country's new president on September 8, 2016 (Pannier 2018). First presidential election in Uzbekistan since Islam Karimov's passing occurred in 2016. Despite receiving 88.6 percent of the vote, the elections were regarded as unfair and riddled with irregularities. Although he started numerous programs for the process of modernisation after assuming power. Many reforms that can be viewed as helpful for the growth and stability of the country were made to retain tight ties with neighbors. Additionally, it has shown through more active engagement that it is willing to improve its ties with international organisations like the EU, OSCE, and NATO under the direction of the new President who recognised the need to shift from Karimov's isolationist foreign policy to the favor of one that is more dynamic and contemporary (Toktogulov 2022). The state is anticipated to move in the direction of prosperity and political stability under the President's new model of development through legal, judicial, sustained economic, and educational reform that emphasizes engagement with youth and strengthens regional collaboration. Shavkat Mirziyoyev's administration has started a series of reforms to ease repression, create a freer market to stimulate growth and bring foreign investment, replace Karimov-era leaders with young technocrats, and resolve relations with neighboring Central Asian states after decades of isolation and repression under President Islam Karimov, who passed away in 2016.

Numerous judicial reforms were initiated in year 2017 to improve the judicial system of Uzbekistan based on national and international best practices, strengthening the authority of courts, establishing the rule of law, and fostering public trust in the legal system with the aid of media and public communication. Through constitutional and statutory reforms, Uzbekistan's Supreme Judicial Council was created, and administrative courts were also established. Judge's terms of office have been extended an unlimited number of times to initial terms of five years and regular terms of ten years. However, no significant action has been taken to foster genuine political pluralism in the nation's political scene (Anceschi 2018).

The president authorised the "Decree on Measures to Guarantee the Rights and Freedom of Citizens," also known as the "Decree on Measures to Further Reform the Judicial and Legal System," in October 2016. It consists of an action plan referred to as "The Program" with the objectives of modifying the Uzbek constitution, the civil code, the criminal code, significant judicial reforms and anti-corruption measures, protection of rights and freedoms, and actions to increase public confidence in the court. To lessen the oppression that state citizens endured under Karimov, which included

widespread torture, state-approved child labour, particularly in cotton fields, and the incarceration of political prisoners, a new anti-corruption law went into effect in January 2017. This new paradigm has numerous benefits for state citizens. A new law aimed at combating corruption has been introduced by the president. On February 7, 2017, he gave his approval to the “Action Strategy on Five Priority Areas for Development and Reforms in the Country” (Bowyer 2018).

The major objective is to have an accountable, democratic, and responsible government, all of which are necessary for a democratic system. The goal of his government places a great priority on the renewal of a political system that would be unique from Islam Karimov's political system. To make the government an accountable defender of the common good was the primary goal of the Action Strategies (Salomov 2019). Direct elections were to be used by the President as a way to increase local government accountability. In his address to the nation, he made the point that in order to effectively represent the interests and concerns of the populace, one must first communicate with them in order to better comprehend their issues. To facilitate the adoption of improvements to political competition, the Oliy Majlis conducted its subsequent elections in 2019, as scheduled. The current President has been noted to be in favor of modernisation and is taking changes to the political system into consideration since the revival of political competition is one of the main objectives of President Mirziyoyev's Action Strategy (Bowyer 2018). However, the former President remained silent regarding the opening of the political system.

The President continues to exercise a personal hold on power. The first Parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan were held in 2019, and while they showed the electoral process to be more vibrant than previously, however, it lacked genuine competition (Human Rights Watch 2019). The true opposition groups were not permitted to participate, therefore the elections did not show “serious competition,” according to observers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Law on Mass Media was amended in 2018, yet despite this, the law still “fails to sufficiently protect and promote the right to freedom of expression as provided for by international law,” In December 2019, there were parliamentary elections. The OSCE observer mission's first findings stated that while improved legislation and increased tolerance for independent voices were present during the elections, genuine competition and full observance of election-day procedures were not seen and despite of adopting some reforms to its election code, the parliamentary election would not give vote (Human Rights Watch 2019). The major objective is to have an accountable, democratic, and responsible government, all of which are necessary for a democratic system. The goal of his government places a great priority on the renewal of a political system that would be unique from Islam Karimov's political system. To make the government an accountable defender of the common good was the primary goal of the Action Strategies (Bowyer 2018). Direct elections were to be used by the President as a way to increase local government accountability. In his address to the nation, he made the point that in order to effectively represent the interests and concerns of the populace, one must first communicate with them in order to better comprehend their issues. a true choice of candidates. The political party landscape is essentially unaltered despite the registration of a new political party, the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan (EPU). The parliament is comprised of representatives from the other four registered parties. None of the five parties has presented policies that conflict with those of the government or the president, and all five political parties support the government (Tufekci 2020).

Since 2019, Uzbekistan has seen many changes, including the abolition of the long-standing practice of child labour in the nation's cotton fields, according to a study by human rights watch. Women's rights and gender equality-related laws have been passed by the parliament, and Uzbekistan's society has also seen several other political, social, and economic developments (Salomov 2019). Social media networks now have a more accepting atmosphere than before. To ease

the registration requirements for media outlets government of Uzbekistan published draft amendments to the law of mass media in July 2020 (Human Rights Watch 2020). There isn't a registered party that specifically supports the interests of ethnic or religious minorities, and no other parties or actors have a chance to secure political representation. Despite having equal political rights in theory, women are nonetheless underrepresented in positions of leadership and are unable to organize freely to pursue their political objectives (Human Rights Watch 2019). Even with constitutional safeguards, journalistic freedom remains very restricted. Major media organisations and related infrastructure are under official control, and independent outlets were mostly shut down or prohibited under Karimov. Since Mirziyoyev came to power, domestic media, including news websites and live television programs, have become more careful in discussing social issues and criticizing local politicians. Even privately owned media organisations, though, continue to refrain from openly criticizing Mirziyoyev and the administration. In 2019, the government continued to be resistant to registering national or international NGOs that deal with human rights problems. In March, Huquqiy Tayanch (Legal Support), a group that advocates for the rights of inmates, had its application denied. Human Rights Watch (HRW), which has been operating in Uzbekistan since 2017 also remained unregistered. (Human Rights Watch 2020). However, many democratic reforms have been initiated by the new president but his power remains undisputed by other branches of government. No doubt many reforms have been taken by new president to build a New Uzbekistan. The Chambers of Oliy Majlis also established a Constitutional Commission to implement people's demands. A bill on the amendments and additions to the constitution was received by Constitutional Commission that was founded on the idea that people of Uzbekistan are the sole source of Constitution (Norling & Cornell 2016). However, The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) noted in its final election observation report that there were "serious irregularities inconsistent with national law and OSCE commitments, including proxy voting and indications of ballot box stuffing," adding that "the campaign lacked competitiveness and voters were not presented with a genuine choice of political alternatives" (World Report 2020). The US Commission on International Religious Freedom reported that the government "made considerable steps to address significant religious freedom concern," noting improvements in the nation. However, there are still many religious prisoners in the state. Shavkat Mirziyoyev received 80.1 percent of the vote in the presidential election that was held in October 2021. The majority of the economic, administrative, and administrative reforms required by the Action Strategy for development have been carried out, demonstrating that the country has started along the path to becoming a successful and welfare state under his leadership. However, OSCE found the presidential elections of 2021 were not free and fair because of the absence of transparent electoral procedures. However, the opposition was again prevented from contesting elections by denying registration. The political parties that got registered were pro-government. There isn't a registered party that specifically supports the interests of ethnic or religious minorities, and no other parties or actors have a chance to secure political representation. Despite having equal political rights, in theory, women are unable to organize freely to pursue their political objectives (World Report 2020).

The political system of Uzbekistan is still largely resistant to change and remains president-centered. Because of their inherent political weakness and the omnipresent "invisible hand" of the omnipotent presidential apparatus not to mention the president himself elected political representatives have historically had little ability to rule. The president and his administration are at the top of a pyramid-like structure that represents the political system in reality. In Uzbekistan, the judiciary is independent from and independent from the executive according to the constitution. In actuality, it has been subjected to executive pressure (World Report 2022).

Conclusion

Uzbekistan adopted a democratic model after winning independence from the Soviet Union. In 1992, Uzbekistan enacted a new constitution that made the president the head of state and administration of the nation. Several barriers prevented the growth of democratic processes in Uzbekistan despite the country's existence of political institutions. In order to keep hold of power, Islam Karimov's government in Uzbekistan openly disregards the rights of the population. Since Uzbekistan gained its independence in 1991, Islam Karimov has presided as president, and he did so until 2016. He has exercised individual authority over the government. All independent sources of opinion have been silenced by the government. All independent sources of opinion have been suppressed by the government and the general public and are not permitted to participate in decision-making. It has demonstrated that Uzbekistan was unable to shake off the political ramifications of the Soviet Union. However, under Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan established contemporary governmental structures that were nonexistent earlier under the Soviet Union. The formal democratic institutions required under the Uzbek constitution to ensure democratic choice are the Parliament, the Electoral Commission, the Press, and the Central and Local Administrative Branches. Democratic government is a responsible form of government in which the judiciary maintains its independence and the executive is answerable to the legislative as well as the people. Political institutions like parties and interest groups must function well to represent the wants, complaints, and demands of the general public. Despite several promises to bring about democratic change, the political elites of the country have pursued many anti-democratic trends. Political involvement is a requirement for the growth of a democratic system, all independent sources of opinion were suppressed by the authorities, and there were no significant changes in political participation regulations. There is no separation between the executive and judicial branches of government and much power is concentrated in the hands of executive.

After Islam Karimov passed away, President Mirziyoyev instituted a number of reforms, demonstrating that there have been many notable developments under the new leader, but the most crucial component of democracy true political party competition remains lacking. Even with a new administration, no new alternative political party developed, and the state continues to operate under a one-party system. The national economy, financial system, political system, regional relations, particularly with those countries with which relations had thawed for a number of reasons, as well as global integration, the protection of human rights, and bilateral and multilateral relations, have all undergone significant changes under the current president. No doubt, Shafkat Mirziyoyev as a new president took some steps forward to bring reforms to the development of the country. However, the process of democratisation is weak and Uzbekistan is still authoritarian under a one-party dominant system.

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Libraries, Social Inclusion, and Sustainable Community Development: A Comparative Study of India and Global Best Practices

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ABSTRACT

The library is situated in a special place where education, social equity and democratic participation meet. This paper explores the potential of libraries as facilitators of social inclusion and sustainable community development, based on a comparative analysis of India and selected contexts in the worldwide including Finland, Canada and South Africa. The study demonstrates that well-funded and equitably-distributed library systems can meaningfully support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through an examination of the legislative frameworks, programmatic interventions, and measurable outcomes. Although libraries have played an important role in India's history, the country still has many structural issues such as underfunding, geographic disparities, and the lack of digital infrastructure. The paper suggests a roadmap for roadmap reform with a framework based on best practices around the world and adapted to India's sociocultural diversity. Results indicate that as community knowledge hubs, libraries have the potential to be effective tools for combating inequality, engaging citizens in their communities, and enabling lifelong learning.

Key Words: Information Access; Library Services; Social Inclusion; Sustainable Community Development; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Introduction

Libraries have traditionally been referred to as the heart of a democratic society and they have long been viewed as equal and open access to knowledge for all regardless of their economic status, gender, caste or geographical location. Conceptualisation of libraries as tools for social inclusion, however, has received a boost in the academic and policy arena in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations [UN], 2015). The public library is a place for contestation and a place that is necessary in debates about who has access to information and on what terms, in an age of rapid digitalisation and of ongoing structural inequality.

The development of the library system in India has been influenced by its colonial history, post-colonial policies and the current national digital literacy campaigns. However, with an approximate population of 1.4 billion people, the country has 54000 public libraries, which is less than other middle-income nations (Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation [RRRLF] 2022). This density problem coupled with persistent underfunding, under-investment in infrastructure, and shortage of trained library professionals, especially in the rural and tribal regions, exacerbates the issue.

This paper places the Indian context of challenges to the library in comparative perspective on the global scene. Based on examples from Finland, Canada and South Africa, countries that are

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known to be leaders in inclusive library service delivery, it examines the structural, programmatic and policy conditions that have to be in place for libraries to be a true driver of social development. The paper is divided into five themes: Legislative and policy environments, social inclusion programs, digital equity, community development outcomes, and recommendations for the library sector in India.

The key point of this paper is that libraries are not just book repositories but are also living organizations that can be responsive to the social inequalities that are ubiquitous. With proper funding and placement in the wider development plans, libraries can be a source of service to populations which are not well served by the state, such as the urban poor, the tribes, the disabled, and children and women.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Social Inclusion and the Knowledge Commons

Social inclusion, as defined by Silver (1994), is about the processes by which marginalised individuals and groups are able to participate in social, economic, cultural and political life in meaningful ways. Libraries are public institutions that provide free and universal access to knowledge and are thus a physical embodiment of the knowledge commons, which is an informational space in which information is regarded as a public good, not a commodity of private holders (Kranich, 2004).

Pateman and Williment (2013) believe that the real challenge is to shift from a passive to an active approach to a library, going beyond mere provision to a proactive approach to the underserved groups. This community-based approach has had a significant impact on today's library policy debates and has served as a basis for national library policies in Canada, Australia and Scandinavia.

2.2 Libraries and Sustainable Development

In 2015, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) formally aligned libraries to SDGs in the Lyon Declaration, which declared access to information as essential to sustainable development (SDGs) (IFLA, 2015). Libraries have a direct impact in at least 12 of the SDG 2020 goals, most notably SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

The linkages are confirmed by empirical research. Studies in sub-Saharan Africa by Streatfield and Markless (2009) have shown that mothers' health literacy increased because of public library use, and in Norway by Vårheim (2011) it was shown that having been using the public library was positively associated with generalised social trust—a key indicator of civic cohesion. In India, Bavakutty and Salih (2008) and Majumder (2019) have reported the functions of rural libraries in the context of agricultural extension, adult literacy and women's self-help groups.

3. India's Library Landscape: Comparative Analysis with World Wide Files

3.1 Comparative Overview

There are significant differences in density, funding, and service orientation between library systems. The key indicators are presented in Tab.1 for India and the three comparator countries.

Table 1: Comparative Library System Indicators: India, Finland, Canada, and South Africa

Indicator	India	Finland	Canada	South Africa
Public Libraries (per 100,000 pop.)	0.43	8.20	4.10	1.80
Annual Library Visits per capita	0.31	9.80	5.20	1.50
Digital Access (% libraries)	12%	98%	96%	54%
Library Budget (% of education spend)	0.8%	3.2%	2.7%	1.4%
Marginalized Community Programs	Limited	Extensive	Extensive	Moderate

Note. Data compiled from RRRLF (2022), IFLA (2023), Statistics Canada (2022), and Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA, 2021).

India's Library density of 0.43 per 100,000 population is quite different from that of Finland (8.20), not only in terms of the population size, but also in basic policy differences as illustrated in Table 1. The Public Libraries Act of 2016 (MoEC, 2016) ensures equal access and offers libraries a civic duty to serve all citizens, even those living in remote areas, both physically and digitally. Canada, although decentralized across provinces, has a strong level of investment by municipalities and close ties with community health and social services (Federation of Ontario Public Libraries [FOPL], 2021).

A more instructive comparison for India is that of South Africa which is a post-colonial state faced with inequalities, linguistic diversity and geographic dispersion. The South African Libraries Act of 1998 provided a framework for community library services, and included specific reference to previously disadvantaged communities. However, implementation has not been even, and funding is a constant challenge (Hart, 2018).

3.2 India's Legislative Framework

There is no national legislation for libraries in India. Library development is a state subject under the constitution and hence, it is a patchwork of state level Acts of different scope and effectiveness. Summary of the legislative situation in selected states is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Public Library Legislation Across Selected Indian States

State	Library Act	Year Enacted	Key Provision
Tamil Nadu	Tamil Nadu Public Libraries Act	1948	Mandatory library cess; branch network
Maharashtra	Maharashtra Public Libraries Act	1967	State Library Authority established
Kerala	Kerala Public Libraries Act	1989	Grassroots library movement recognized
Karnataka	Karnataka Public Libraries Act	1965	Village library mandate
Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act	1960	Three-tier system; mobile libraries
West Bengal	West Bengal Public Libraries Act	1979	District library authority system

Note. Adapted from Majumder (2019) and RRRLF (2022).

The lack of a national library law has always been an issue of agitation, starting from the 1950s when S. R. Ranganathan, the pioneer of library science in India, campaigned for national library law (Ranganathan, 1931). The Draft National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS) circulated in 1986, failed to be adopted as a formal policy and the subsequent reform process also failed to take the policy stage (Gohain, 2016).

Tamil Nadu library system, which is considered to be most developed in India, has more than 4200 branch libraries and there is a dedicated funding pathway through the library cess. The model of Kerala, which involves libraries in the overall Kerala literacy programme, has been internationally recognised for its contribution to achieving near-universal literacy (Krishnakumar, 2018). The achievements of these state-level successes illustrate the potential that exists within the current constitutional order, and highlight the importance of a national coordination.

4. Program Evidence in Libraries as Agents of Social Inclusion:

4.1 Literacy and Education Programs

It is recognized that libraries play a critical, enabling role in promoting literacy. In India, National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) has been engaged in collaborations, with state library authorities, at periodic intervals to provide adult literacy services, although the coordination has not always been robust (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2023). The library-school nexus is formalised in Finland: school libraries are part of the municipal public library system, and there is continuity in reading support, from early childhood to secondary schooling (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

The public library programs of First Nations in Canada are especially interesting to tribal populations in India. The First Nations public library program in Ontario offers culturally focused collections that are available in Indigenous languages, storytelling events, oral history preservation events, and opportunities for community governance activities (FOPL, 2021). This blending of cultural identity with information access is a strong statement to the challenges of serving India's 705 Scheduled Tribes in varied linguistic areas.

4.2 Digital Equity and the Rural-Urban Divide

Digital divide is one of the biggest equity issues that library systems face around the world. As per RRRLF (2022), only 12% of public libraries have a secure internet connection in India and less than 5% provide formal digital literacy training. According to RRRLF (2022), only 12% of public libraries have a secure internet connection in India and less than 5% provide formal digital literacy training. In contrast, nine out of ten libraries in Finland have broadband internet and in cooperation with employment authorities (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016), digital skills courses.

Common Service Centres (CSCs) and selected libraries were identified as digital access points by the Government of India under the National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) which was launched in 2014. However, the program has been restricted due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of training for librarians, and a lack of awareness among the communities (MoE, 2023). In 2020, the PM eVidya programme introduced digital learning resources in libraries but with no investment in infrastructure, the adoption was restricted especially in rural and semi-urban libraries.

The Broadband Infraco project in South Africa for making public libraries connected to national broadband is a model for India's Digital India programme. As of 2022, more than 2,000 South African libraries were linked on this programme to facilitate access to e-government services, online learning and Telehealth consultations (LIASA, 2021). More such targeted infrastructure development in aspirational districts in India could significantly enhance library mediated digital access.

4.3 Gender Inclusion and Women's Empowerment

Libraries are environments that are safe and open to the public and may be important for women and girls, especially in more conservative or patriarchal societies. Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2005) suggest that the library is a 'third space' that is different from home and formal school that allows young women to make intellectual choices for themselves. This role assumes increased importance in rural India in view of the mobility limitations of women.

Co-location of library resources in self-help groups in Andhra Pradesh (Stree Shakti) led to measurable changes in women's financial literacy and civic participation for a five-year evaluation period (Naidu, 2017). The percentage of female participants who achieved a job or educational qualification within 12 months of completing the 'She+ Library' digital literacy program operated by the Toronto Public Library is reported as 78% (FOPL, 2021).

4.4 Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Accessibility in the public library system remains a big issue in India for persons with disabilities. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act, 2016) requires public places to be accessible, however, only 8% of public libraries are making infrastructure, tactile collections and screen-reader software accessible (Sharma, 2020). In Finland, on the other hand, library standards mandate that all new and renovated library facilities must comply with universal design requirements and people who provide services in the library are trained in assisted technology services.

The deployment of Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) audio books, which is partially achieved through the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped (NIVH), is a positive step, but has to be scaled up and integrated into the mainstream library network (Sharma, 2020).

5. Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: An Alignment Framework

The SDG framework offers a helpful organising principle for thinking about the relationship between the role of the library and the development priorities. The alignment of key library functions with selected SDGs with examples of programs in India and comparator countries is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Library Functions and SDG Alignment: Selected Program Examples

SDG Goal	Library Function	Example Program	Country Case	Impact
SDG 4	Literacy & Education	Adult literacy camps, e-learning centers	 scheme	High
SDG 8	Economic Empowerment	Job skill workshops, microenterprise info	Canada – WorkBC Centres	Moderate
SDG 10	Reducing Inequalities	Tribal/SC/ST outreach programs	India – DLIS initiatives	Moderate
SDG 11	Inclusive Communities	Community hubs, cultural spaces	Finland – Municipal libraries	High
SDG 16	Access to Information	Legal aid desks, right-to-info services	South Africa – Libraries Act 1998	High

Note. Compiled from IFLA (2023), MoE (2023), FOPL (2021), and LIASA (2021).

There is more than just a rhetorical connection between library and SDG. Nordic evaluation studies have confirmed causal links between access to the library and educational outcomes (Svanhild Aabø & Audunson, 2012), and an economic analysis of the benefits of public libraries in Canada found that for every dollar invested in public libraries, there are CAD \$5.26 in benefits to be gained from employment, education and social cohesion benefits (Toronto Public Library, 2021). Although there is limited evidence of impacts on India specifically, available evidence indicates that similar returns can be attained through structural reform.

The SDG 16 focus on access to information and transparent institutions has a special significance for India, as libraries, particularly in rural areas, can act as gateways to government schemes, legal aid and civic information. Properly extending the Nyaya Mitra programme to public libraries as knowledge dissemination centres could be beneficial for the programme (MoE, 2023).

6. Performance Benchmarking and Targets for India

The second exercise, a performance benchmarking exercise, compares the existing library indicators in India with the world instead and sets targets in line with the SDG 2030 horizon. This benchmarking matrix is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Library System Key Performance Indicators: Benchmarking India Against Global Comparators

KPI	India (Current)	India (Target 2030)	Finland	Canada	Global Avg.
Library density (per 100K)	0.43	2.00	8.20	4.10	3.50
Digital literacy programs	1,200	10,000	4,800	6,200	—
Community outreach events/yr	~8,000	50,000	92,000	75,000	—
Female membership share (%)	34%	50%	61%	57%	48%
Rural libraries (%)	22%	45%	68%	42%	35%

Note. Current figures from RRRLF (2022); target figures are author projections based on IFLA (2023) benchmarks and SDG commitments.

The benchmarking exercise identifies some key areas of deficit in India as digital infrastructure, low library connectivity in rural areas and gender parity. To close the library density gap to 2.00 per 100,000 population would require the establishment of around 21,000 public library facilities; of which, 10% of the existing Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) facilities can be utilized for library service and funding can be availed from RRRLF 2022 (Centrally Sponsored Scheme).

The gap is especially pronounced for women. India's female membership of the library is 34%, which is lower than the global average of 48% and the progressive library systems. Various outreach campaigns, reading hours for women only and co-location in Anganwadi centres and SHG networks are low cost interventions which can scale up female participation in the medium term.

7. Discussion: Toward a Transformative Library Policy for India

7.1 The Case for National Library Legislation

The most basic change which is needed in the Indian library world is to have a national library law which lays down the minimum requirements for library service, spells out the distribution of libraries in an equitable way and provides a viable national funding source. Such legislation has been advocated for more than 60 years (Ranganathan 1931, Gohain 2016), but has yet to be realized. The brief reference to school libraries in the 2023 National Education Policy does not reflect a significant commitment to the sector; it is too limited and cannot lead to a systemic change as is required (MoE, 2023).

The national model of 2016 Finland – which defines library services as a public service obligation, calls for services to be provided by municipalities and demands national monitoring of

access equity – could be used as a source for developing a national library act that would lead to a fruitful outcome. Such a law could be adapted for the Indian federal setup and have minimum norms, with state governments having flexibility in approaches to implementation. The RRRLF is already a coordinating institution at its very heart and could be granted the authority of the national library authority as a statutory body, with a budgetary power.

7.2 Funding Reform

Indian library funding is estimated to be 0.8% of education expenditure which is not adequate to support meaningful expansion of services. A separate library development fund, funded by central allocation, state matching grants and a small levy on commercial publishing, can provide the regular and consistent financing needed for the development of the infrastructure, digital connectivity and human resources. One model is that of Tamil Nadu where a separate library cess is collected, and another model is the Finnish one of funding per capita through the municipalities (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

7.3 Human Resource Development

A trained and competent library professional are the essence of quality library services. India has had a serious backwardness in providing a good number of professional librarians especially in rural and tribal areas. Library and information science is recognised as a subject by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and while there are more than 150 universities, there are very few that offer LIS programs. The curriculum, however, tends to be outdated and lacks focus on community engagement, digital services and inclusive practice (Bavakutty & Salih, 2008). It is a matter of great urgency that curriculum reform should be done, in sync with IFLA's Global Vision competency framework, and incentives be provided to encourage rural posting of library professionals.

The focus of 7.4 is on technology and digital inclusion. 7.4 is about technology and digital inclusion.

Digital India is the policy framework presented by the Government of India which is conducive for digitalisation of libraries. The BharatNet broadband rollout, which will ensure that all gram panchayats are connected with optical fibre, may help overcome the connectivity gap at relatively low marginal cost, with public libraries becoming a part of the initiative. Libraries in aspirational districts and tribal subplans should be prioritized because they provide the greatest digital access gap in these areas. Ndlri (National Digital Library of India) at IIT Kharagpur operates a content platform which can be adapted for public libraries with suitable adaption of interface for the low-literacy users.

8. Conclusion

The present comparative study has shown the extent to which, when well funded, distributed and programmed, public libraries can be effective instruments of social inclusion and sustainable community development. There are amazing islands of excellence in the Indian Library sector such as the Tamil Nadu Network of Cess-funded Libraries, the Andhra Pradesh Network of Gendered Outreach and its libraries and the Kerala Network of Literacy Movement libraries, but these have not been systematically scaled and institutionalised in India.

The countries compared in this paper, namely Finland, Canada and South Africa, have much in common: they all have laws and policies that explicitly recognize the library as a universal public service – not an optional accessory. There are reliable funding systems, professionally trained staff and an orientation to community need instead of collection management that accompany this commitment.

Hence, three changes are essential for the transformation of India's library system by 2030: a national library bill, a fund to develop libraries, and linking public libraries to national programmes for digital infrastructure. These reforms are not just technical in nature, but political, and they call for ongoing advocacy efforts from civil society, professional and academic institutions. In fact, the argument for libraries as places of social justice is the argument for democratic access to knowledge, which is in line with India's constitutional promises and its vision of inclusive development.

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BUSINESS STUDIES

Usage of Helmet among Two-Wheeler Riders in Lucknow City: An Observational Study

Nishant Bhola*

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the research is to observe the usage of helmet among two-wheeler riders in Lucknow city, Uttar Pradesh, India. In order to obtain the research objective, a cross-sectional roadside observational study (spot-check) was conducted at selected traffic intersections and road segments in Lucknow city. Petrol stations, Roundabouts, and Red lights were selected to capture a representative sample of traffic. The result was shocking in which it was found that only 30% of the sample population were wearing helmets while driving two-wheelers. Usage of helmet also varies by the gender of two-wheeler riders. It was observed that only 35% of male two-wheeler riders were wearing helmets, and only 25% of female two-wheeler riders were wearing helmets. It was also found that there is an association between "Gender and Usage of Helmet" while driving a two-wheeler. In the end, it can be concluded that in spite of strict laws in the city, more awareness needs to be raised for the safety on the roads.

Key Words: Helmet, Two-Wheeler, Accidents, Disability, Lucknow

Introduction

A Report on Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India 2023, published by National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, describes Accidents as "An accident is an unplanned event that results in injury, deaths, damage to property, or some other losses. For statistical purpose, Accidental Deaths have been classified as deaths that could be due to forces/factors of the nature, which have been termed as 'Accidental Deaths due to Forces of Nature' or could be due to deliberate or negligent conduct of human beings, which is termed as 'Other causes of Accidental Deaths'. Table 1 provides the causes of Accidents in India.

Table 1: Causes of Accidents in India

FORCES OF NATURE	OTHER CAUSES
1) Exposure to Cold	1) Air-Crash
2) Cyclone	2) Ship Accidents
3) Tornado	3) Collapse of Structure
4) Tsunami	4) Drowning
5) Earthquake	5) Electrocuting
6) Epidemic	6) Accidental Explosion
7) Flood	7) Falls
8) Heat/Sun Stroke	8) Factory/Machine Accidents
9) Landslide	9) Accidental Fire
10) Lightning	10) Firearm
11) Torrential Rain	11) Mines or Quarry Disaster
12) Forest Fire	12) Traffic Accidents (i) Road accidents (ii) Railway accidents
13) Causes other than above	13) Stampede
	14) Sudden Deaths
	15) Deaths of Women during Pregnancy
	16) Deaths due to Consumption of Illicit/Spurious Liquor
	17) Killed by Animals
	18) Poisoning
	19) Suffocation
	20) Drug Overdose
	21) Causes other than above
	22) Causes Not Known

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Source: Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India 2023 Report by National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India.

In the year 2023, in India, a total number of 7,30,821 (Seven Lacs Thirty Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty One) accident cases had been reported whose cause was other than the force of nature. In these cases, 4,91,190 (Four Lacs Ninety One Thousand One Hundred Ninety) were Traffic accidents. There were 4,64,029 (Four Lacs Sixty Four Thousand and Twenty Nine) cases of road accidents, claiming 1,73,826 (One Lac Seventy Three Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Six) lives as shown diagrammatically in Figure 1.

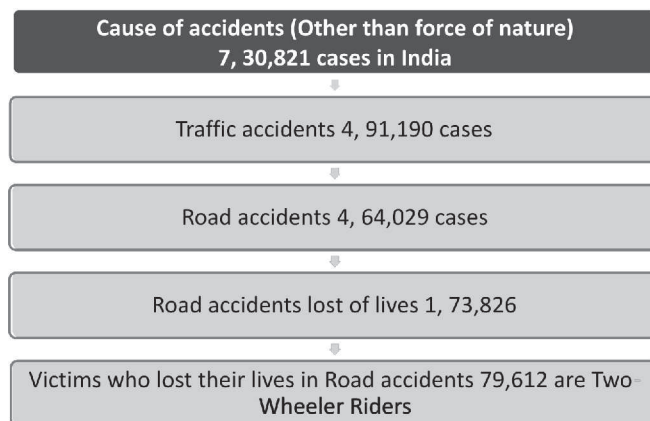


Figure 1: Flow chart showing cases of road accidents

Source: Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India 2023 Report by National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India

Review of Literature

Tirwa et al., (2022) conducted a study, “A Study to Assess the Awareness and Practices of Helmet Use among two-wheeler Riders in Delhi”, in which it is mentioned that 84% of the population is aware of the fact that wearing a helmet is mandatory. It is also found that there is a weak correlation between the awareness and practice. Around 45.7% of the sample population wore helmets irrespective of the purpose and distance travelled.

Jaiswal et al., (2016) conducted a study, “Awareness of the Helmet Use, Using Cell Phones and Alcohol Consumption while Driving and Impact of Helmet Use on Severity of Head Injury in Motorcyclists in Northern India, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh” in which it is mentioned that female riders are more aware of following traffic rules and wearing helmets. It is also found that patients who were wearing helmets had less severe injury, and the severity of injury was reduced by 29% through usage of helmets.

Times of India (TNN, 2026) in a recent news article, “Price for not wearing helmet: Death, brain injury, disability”, has mentioned that in the case of an accident, riding two-wheelers without helmet is a major cause of death and disability. Mostly, these road accident victims were young and below the age of thirty-five. In the report, it is mentioned that wearing a good quality of helmet helps in saving the head against major fractures.

Turner et al., (2001) conducted a study “Helmet Use by Motorcyclists: Florida Observational Survey Results” in which it is mentioned that 99.5% of the sample population wore helmets while

riding the two-wheeler, and the female counterparts exhibit lower rates of compliance.

Research Gap

While extensive research has explored the use of helmets by two-wheeler riders, there is a notable lack of research and data of large sample size. Hence, this study fills this gap by analyzing large data and providing data to policymakers and for further research.

Need of the Study

- * In the year 2022, there were around 260 million two-wheelers on Indian roads, out of which 35 million were in Uttar Pradesh.
- * Two-wheeler riders are the major victims of death, accounting for about 45.80% of total road accident deaths during 2023, as shown in the figure 2 below.

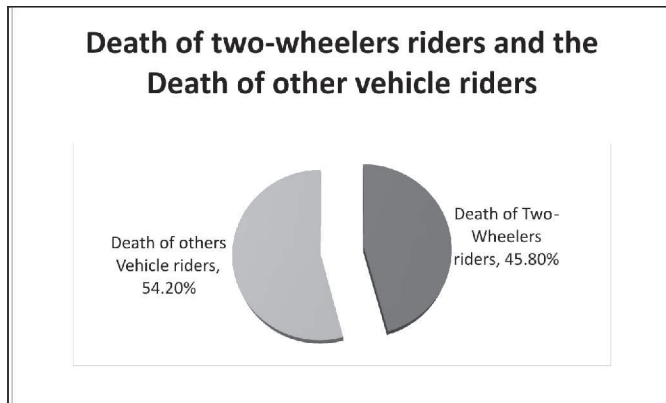


Figure 2: Chart demonstrating the death of two-wheelers riders and the death of other vehicle riders

Source: Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India 2023 Report by National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India.

- * India has the highest number of total persons killed due to road accidents, followed by China and the United States.
- * Uttar Pradesh had the highest number of fatalities due to road accidents (13.4%).
- * A helmet is a form of protective gear made from strong, hard, and lightweight material which is worn on the head and tightened by a strap in order to protect two-wheeler riders from head injury in case of a road accident (shown in Figure 3). Several studies suggest that riding a two-wheeler without a helmet increases the risk of injury, with the risk of death 2.5 times higher.



Figure 3: A standard full-face helmet used by two-wheeler riders

Picture credit: <https://www.idoceonline.com/dictionary/helmet>

Under Section 129 of India's Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, two-wheeler riders and passengers are required to wear helmet. This law, after amendment in 2019, also got strengthened by increased penalty of Rs 1,000 (Rs One Thousand Only) and license suspension up-to three months. Therefore, a need was felt to conduct a study to observe the usage of helmet among two-wheeler riders in Lucknow city.

Objectives of the Study

1. To observe the usage of helmet among two-wheeler riders in Lucknow city.
2. To find out and compare the percentage of usage of helmet among male and female two-wheeler riders.
3. To test the association between "Gender and Usage of Helmet" while driving a two-wheeler.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis

H0: There is no association between "Gender and Usage of Helmet" while driving a two-wheeler.

Alternate Hypothesis

H1: There is an association between "Gender and Usage of Helmet" while driving a two-wheeler.

Research Methodology

The present study is a cross-sectional roadside observational study (spot-check) which was conducted at selected traffic intersections and road segments. Petrol stations Round-about and Red lights were selected to capture a representative sample of the traffic.

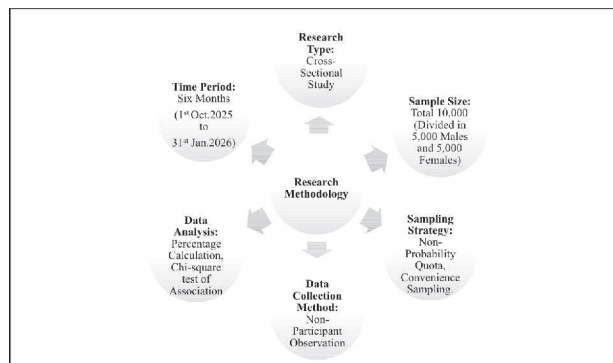


Figure 3: Research Methodology adopted for the Research

Sampling Strategy & Observation Plan

Non-probability, Quota sampling on a convenience strategy was chosen to get wide coverage of the sample. In Lucknow city, major busy areas such as Powerhouse Chauraha, Aashaina Chauraha, Powerhouse Petrol Station, Sector G Chauraha, and Bangla Baazaar Chauraha were selected as observation sites.

- * Time period: Six months i.e., 1st October, 2025 – 31st January, 2026.
- * Different times of day were included, e.g., morning rush hour, afternoon, evening peak hour, and off-peak periods, in order to avoid bias from a particular time. The researcher collected

data at different hours, but comparison of data from different times of the day is not the objective of the present study.

- * At each site, the researcher observed for 60–90 minutes.
- * The sampling technique for the present study is Non-probability Quota Sampling. In total, 10,000 (Ten thousand) two-wheeler riders were observed, which is divided into 5,000 males and 5,000 females.

Data Collection

For each two-wheeler rider, the following things were observed-

- * Helmet worn: Yes or No
- * Gender of two-wheeler rider: Male or Female

Data Management & Analysis

- * A structured observation record-sheet was used to note down each observation. (Appendix 1)
- * The data was converted to percentages through M.S. Excel software for analysis.
- * Percentages of two-wheeler riders were calculated.
- * The observed data was compared on the basis of the gender of two-wheeler riders.
- * Testing of the hypothesis will be done by the Chi-square test of Independence.

Findings

Objective 1: To observe the usage of helmet among two-wheeler riders in Lucknow city.

Finding: It was found that out of the total 10,000 (Ten Thousand) two-wheeler riders, only 3,007 (Three Thousand and Seven) were wearing helmets, that counts to 30%. On the other hand, 6,993 (Six Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Three) were not wearing helmet that counts to 70% of riders.

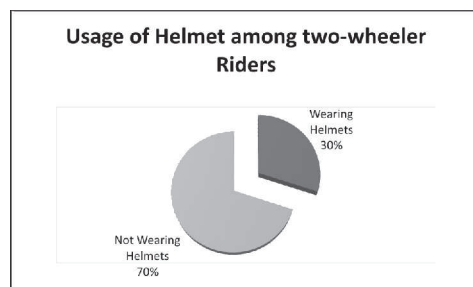


Figure 4: Chart demonstrating usage of helmet

Objective 2: To find out the percentage of usage of helmet among male and female two-wheeler riders.

Finding: It was found that out of 5,000 (Five Thousand) male two-wheeler riders, only 1,757 (One Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Seven) were wearing helmets, that counts to 35%. On the other hand, 3,243 (Three Thousand Two Hundred Forty Three) were not wearing helmet that counts to 65% of riders.

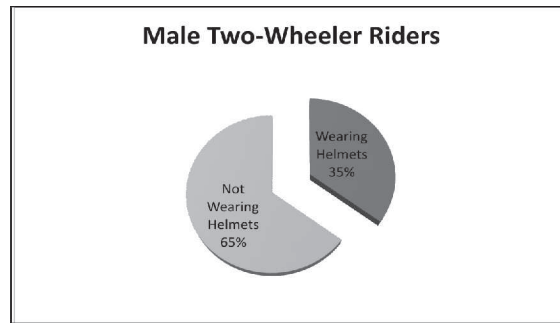


Figure 5: Chart demonstrating usage of helmet among Male riders

In females, it was found that out of 5,000 (Five Thousand) two-wheeler riders, only 1,250 (One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty) were wearing helmets, that counts to 25%. On the other hand, 3,750 (Three Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty) were not wearing helmet that counts to 75% of riders.

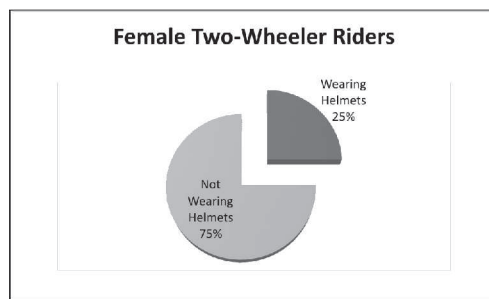


Figure 6: Chart demonstrating usage of helmet among Female riders

Objective 3: To test the association between “Gender and Usage of Helmet” while driving a two-wheeler.

Finding: o test the association between “Gender and Usage of Helmet”, while driving a two-wheeler, the Chi-square test of association, also known as the Chi-square test of independence, is used. There are two methods of interpretation of the Chi-square test of independence. Method 1: The Critical Value (Chi-Square Table) Method and Method 2: The p-value Method. For more clarity, the interpretation of the test is done by both methods. Detailed calculation and interpretation of the test are shown in Appendix 2.

By the Critical Value (Chi-Square Table) Method, it is found that the calculated χ^2 is 122.2416, which is greater than the critical value 3.84 in the Chi-square distribution table; this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant. By p-value Method it is found that the calculated p-value is 0, which is less than to chosen significance level, i.e., 0.05.

After considering the test results of both methods, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is an association between “Gender and Usage of Helmet” while driving a two-wheeler.

Discussion

The observations in the present study show that 65% of male riders and 75% of female riders were not wearing helmets while riding two-wheelers, which is a frightening situation. Not wearing helmet makes the rider more prone to head injuries in case of accidents. This is supported by research done by Bette C. Liu and others, who found that Motorcycle helmets were found to reduce the risk of

death and head injury in motorcyclists who crashed. Many other researchers have shown that accidents with head injuries in the majority of cases lead to death, and this affects not only the person, but if the deceased is the only earning member of his/her family, it completely ruins his/her family.

The findings of the present study indicate that the usage of helmet varies with the gender of the two-wheeler rider. More female riders are found not to wear helmet, which is not a general perception. It might be related to the length and purpose of the ride, like for female riders generally the ride is shorter.

Different observation sites have shown different behaviours of riders, like riders near red light and roundabouts tend to wear helmet because of fear of getting challan. But this behaviour doesn't make the rider safe and doesn't serve the purpose of wearing a helmet.

Road accidents can also occur because of low light on roads, fast and heavy traffic, potholes, stray animals, and a lack of awareness of rules. With such a large number of causes of accidents, a person riding a two-wheeler without a helmet is taking a severe risk to his/her life.

Limitations of the Study

- * The present study is only based on Lucknow city.
- * This study is an observational study in which the researcher has not made any direct interaction with the participants, so the quality of the helmet, whether it is ISI-marked or not, could not be taken into consideration.
- * The time constraints and money constraints limit the study.
- * Since it is a non participant observational research there may be an error in observing the gender of the two-wheeler rider. Like a female gender with short hair may be perceived as a male rider from a distance.

Scope of Future Work

The present study estimates the usage of helmet among two-wheeler riders in Lucknow city, which can be extended to other cities. Further studies may include a pillion rider in observation. Other comparative researches focusing on the usage of helmet during different times of the day (morning rush hour, afternoon, evening peak, off-peak) might give more depth to the behaviour of riders. The present study provides data to inform targeted public-health interventions for enhancing enforcement (awareness campaigns, stricter checking, distribution of standard helmets)-especially for groups with low compliance. The study provides baseline data that can be repeated over time (longitudinal / periodic surveillance) to monitor trends.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The increasing number of road accidents and their lethal nature call for preventive measures of these. For two-wheeler riders, wearing helmets is an important step for saving oneself from severe head injury.

The present study aimed at observing the usage of helmet among two-wheeler riders in Lucknow, found that out of a total of 10,000 (Ten Thousand) two-wheeler riders, only 30% of the sample population were wearing helmets. Variation in helmet use by gender was also seen, i.e., 35% of the male population were wearing helmets, on the other hand, only 25% of the female population were wearing helmets while riding their two-wheelers.

As per the newspaper report published in the Hindustan Times, the Uttar Pradesh State Government has launched a Campaign "No Helmet No Petrol" from 1st September, 2025, where two-

wheelers without wearing helmet will be denied petrol at petrol stations. This is a great step towards encouraging safe and responsible riding. So, it can be concluded that in spite of strict laws in the city, more awareness needs to be raised for the safety on the roads.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix 2

Calculation of the Chi-Square test of Independence

Observed Frequencies			
	Wearing Helmet	Not Wearing Helmet	Row Total
Male two-wheeler riders	1757	3243	5000
Female Two-wheeler riders	1250	3750	5000
Column Total	3007	6993	10000
Expected Frequencies			
	Wearing Helmet	Not Wearing Helmet	
Male two-wheeler riders	1503.5	3496.5	
Female two-wheeler riders	1503.5	3496.5	
Chi-Square Components			
	Wearing Helmet	Not Wearing Helmet	
Male two-wheeler riders	42.7418	18.3790	
Female two-wheeler riders	42.7418	18.3790	
Chi-Square formula	$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{O-E}{E}^2$	$\chi^2 = 122.2416$	
Degrees of freedom (df)	df=(r-1)×(c-1)	df = 1	
Methods used to interpret the results of a Chi-Square test	Method 1	Method 2	
	The Critical Value (Chi-Square Table) Method	The p-value Method	
Method 1: The Critical Value (Chi-Square Table) Method is as below			
Critical Value in Chi-square Distribution Table	At significance level of (alpha = 0.05), df=1		
	= 3.84		

ARTS & HUMANITIES

A Study of Infrastructural Facilities of Art Integrated Learning Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu

Renu Nanda* and Romy Kumar**

ABSTRACT

Art education acts as an integral and most important element of holistic and multidisciplinary approach to learning. National Curriculum Frameworks of 1975, 1988, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2022 and 2023 put special attention on art education. National Education Policy (2020) brings revolutionary changes in the teaching learning process by focusing on visual arts and performing arts in school education curriculum and teacher training institutions. In Jammu and Kashmir, Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu, a 4 years bachelor degree course of visual and performing arts is the only institute of art education in Jammu region. The purpose of the present study is to be familiar with the present infrastructural facilities, to study art integrated learning activities performed by the learners in the Institute, to understand the pedagogy used by the teachers in the Institute and to seek suggestions to improve the quality of art education in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu. Data was taken from students (100) and all teachers (20) from the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu. Self-prepared interview schedule for teachers and self-made questionnaire for students were used. Both reliability and validity of the tools were also established. For the analysis of data, percentage analysis and content analysis were used. The findings of the current paper will help the teachers, administrators and stakeholders to take necessary steps to integrate art in learning teaching and make this process interactive, innovative and enjoyable.

Key Words: Infrastructural Facilities, Art Integrated Learning, Art Integrated Pedagogy, Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu.

Introduction

“Art-integration is a cross-curricular pedagogical approach that utilizes various aspects and forms of art and culture as the basis for learning of concepts across subjects”

(NEP, 2020, p. 12)

NEP 2020 focuses on art education. Art integration is a curricular method that utilizes various forms of art for the study of different curricular disciplines. This art integrated learning is expected to establish the linkage between culture and education (NEP, 2020, p. 12). Art integrated learning helps a lot for the development of creativity and imagination among students. NEP 2020 advocates for the integration of music, dance, drama, theatre, painting, drawings, and crafts in the teaching learning process. It encourages an inclusive educational framework for students to excel and explore in artistic domains. Art education is a vital element in the all-round development of a student's life. Art integrated

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learning provides experiential learning to all learners. Learners learn by doing some creative activities.

Art Education

Art education has always been an integral part of school education and in the present times it is even more required right from the foundation stage of learning. Almost all nations of the world focus on art education. Even philosophers have focussed on art education in their respective philosophies. Aristotle, the father of political science, gave importance to hands free drawing. He also stressed that drawing and painting must be included in school education. John Locke, Comenius etc. gave more emphasis on drawing and paintings. Froebel also included drawing in his Kindergarten school. Rabindranath Tagore rightly said that 'Literature, music and the craft, all are necessary for the development and flowering of a student to form an integrated total personality' (NCERT, 2006, p. 4).

Art education is generally included at all stages of education. Many students pursue this to make their careers in art education. To unleash the innovative and creative temper of the learner's art education is very important and helpful. This further leads to the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations. In India, arts mostly flourished and developed in families where domestic rituals were imbibed in the younger generation by the elders through domestic arts. NCERT has always elevated the status of arts education. NCERT has a separate department on art education i.e., 'Department of Arts and Aesthetic Education' established in 2005. The main aim of this department is to develop and promote all types of arts from the school level.

Historical Evolution of Art Education

Art education in India has always been a rich and significant part of the educational tradition, existing since ancient times, when knowledge of painting, music, dance and sculpture was passed through the Vedic age i.e., Gurukul system (Rajput, 2025, p. 156). During the medieval period, art continued to flourish under royal patronage, where students learned various artistic skills in courts and cultural centers. In modern times, art education remains an important component of the curriculum, helping students explore their creativity and cultural heritage. Rather than being a problem, art education is a powerful tool for holistic development. At the global level, Director-General of UNESCO (2006) was also focused on art education. The Director-General appeals to promote art education and creativity in the schools (NCERT, 2006, p. 2). After the independence of India, various commissions and committees have put special focus on art education.

University Education Commission (1948-49)

This commission suggested the inclusion of music, dance, painting, craft work, drawing etc in school curriculum. For the Humanities stream, it was compulsory for the students to choose one subject from art education like Fine Arts, Classical Languages etc.

Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)

The Mudaliar Commission recommended a diversified curriculum at school education level. It recommended that 'at the middle stage and secondary stage school education, art, dance, music, craft etc. must be taught.' It focused on activity based and project-based curriculum to make the teaching learning process enjoyable and interesting.

Indian Education Commission (1964-66)

Indian Education commission (1964-66) recommended that 'arts, crafts, heritage, sculpting, painting, dance, drama, music should be taught in the curriculum and some creative activities must be included for the lower primary level students.'

Report of the Review Committee on Education (1966)

This report recommended art education for all stages of school education, starting from the pre-primary stage of school education. This committee also recommended the establishment of art education in different teacher training institutes (NCERT, 2006, p. 1).

National Policy on Education (1968)

India's first educational policy came in 1968 under the Indira Gandhi Government and it was based on the suggestions of Kothari commission (1964-66). This national education policy also focused on art and drama for the school education students.

National Curriculum Framework (1975)

NCF (1975) mentioned that art education being totally neglected in school education and only little arts education has been given to learners. NCF (1975) states that 'Art education is a neglected area in the school curriculum wherever little art education is imparted, the emphasis is on the learning of skills, whereas the goal of art education should be to develop the aesthetic attitude which permeates all activities' (NCF, 1975, p. 25).

National Policy on Education (1986)

National Policy of Education (1986) focused on "art, craft, oriental studies, folklore, music, fine arts etc. It recommended that art education should be given to the students.

National Curriculum Framework (1988)

It recommended that art education should be included in the school level curriculum. Art education is an interactive teaching learning approach for all students. National Curriculum Framework (1988) states that 'Art education should be treated as an important area of curricular activity for all round development of the child' (NCF, 1988, p. 29).

National Curriculum Framework (2005)

It recommends that 'The arts, visual and performing need to become an important component of learning in the curriculum. Art education must become both a tool and a subject taught in every school as a compulsory subject (up to class 10th) and facilities for the same may be provided in every school' (NCF, 2005, p. 55).

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009)

It emphasizes the significant role of art education in fostering the overall development of learners. Furthermore, it stresses the need for teacher educators to inculcate an understanding of the value of art education and its application in the teaching-learning process, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to nurture creativity in their students.

'Trainees would learn to use stories as a medium to facilitate expression, imagination and the creative use of language in learners; create bulletin boards, story-poem folders and organize reading corners in classrooms. They would learn to use drama and arts as learning tools and as strategies for classroom management' (NCFTE, 2009, p. 57).

National Education Policy (2020)

It places significant emphasis on the integration of arts in education. It envisions a 'broad approach where art education, including visual arts and performing arts are embedded in the school curriculum at all stages to foster creativity, critical thinking and holistic development.' NEP 2020 advocates for art-integrated learning, which encourages the use of various art forms to teach other

subjects, making the teaching learning process more engaging, meaningful and joyful for both teachers and students.

National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023)

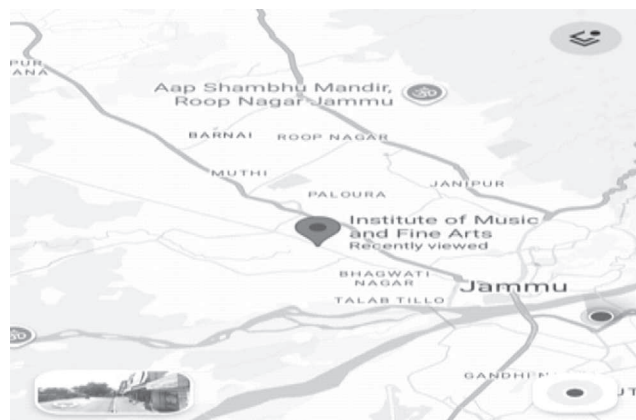
It emphasizes the integration of art education across all stages of school education to foster creativity, critical thinking and cultural appreciation among students. It advocates for a holistic approach where art is not only a standalone subject but also interrelated with other disciplines. 'Art education in schools should give all students adequate opportunities to openly express their ideas and feelings through a variety of art forms' (NCFSE, 2023, p. 353).

History of Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu

In 1965, the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu was established by the Jammu and Kashmir Academic of Art Culture and Languages as a hobby centre for Music and Fine Arts. The Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu was affiliated with Jammu University in 1974. In 1974, The Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu started bachelor degree courses in Music and Fine Arts. Since then Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu has trained more than 38 batches of Music and Fine Arts. Those who have done their Graduates from the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu, are serving society in various capacities such as teachers in colleges, modellers in various government departments, music directors in television industry and freelance artists. The alumni of the institute get enrolment in various prestigious institutions like Sir J.J School of Arts Mumbai, Shanti Niketan, Banaras Hindu University, Delhi College of Art etc. Many graduates from the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu have won national and state awards, Fellowship/scholarships offered by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education) (www.jammuuniversity.ac.in). Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu is located in Poonch house, Talab-Tillo, Jammu (www.indiacollegeshub.com).

Figure 1

Map of Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu



Source: (https://www.google.com/maps/place/Institute+of+Music+and+Fine+Arts/@32.7379572,74.8238486,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x391e85ac95a31585:0x48cf5164544a6431!8m2!3d32.7379572!4d74.8264235!16s%2Fg%2F11ckvwgkvs?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQxNS4wLWkxMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D)

Review of Related Literature

Srivastava (2023) concluded that when art education is integrated into different subjects, it can help students to better understand the material and retain information. Art integration can also be applied in a traditional approach whereas Mohalik and Basu (2020) studied the effectiveness of art integrated learning in developing conceptual understanding in geography and concluded that using art integrated in classroom teaching significantly develops the conceptual understanding of students in geography as compared to the traditional methods of teaching.

Wu et al. (2024) concluded that arts education not only enhances artistic skills but also promotes emotional expression, cultural sensibility and cognitive development. Piazzoli (2023) concluded that arts in education and drama in education helps a lot to understand about aesthetic experiences, similar results were given by Schonmann (2023) that theatre education awakens the moral and aesthetic experiences of the young audiences.

Kumar et al. (2016) conducted research on the sample of 200 and the researcher applied a questionnaire to collect data. Out of 200 students, 120 students responded that they are listening to music while studying whereas 80 learners admitted that they listen to music while studying. Hence the author concluded that the majority of the population favoured listening music while studying and the music had a positive effect on academics of the students. Indira et al. (2018) concluded that listening to music during study had positive effects on the concentration of the students and also improved the academics of the learners. Similar research undertaken by Annet (2024) concluded in his research that art education boosts academics of the students across diverse subjects. Hetland and Winner (2001) conducted a similar kind of study and found that integrated arts into curriculum makes the teaching learning process more interesting for pupils and teachers.

Guggenheim (2006) conducted a study entitled the role of arts education in improving the literacy skills among students. This research found that students in the programmes performed better in six categories like reasoning, description, hypothesizing etc. The current research also found that there is a linkage between arts education and literacy skills.

Nutten and Phelma (2011) conducted a study entitled Art in schools and art-based teaching model that improves school engagement, academic, social and cultural learning. This study concluded that arts help a lot for the academic and social learning of the students. A similar study was done by Tylor and Likove (2012) concluded that art is fundamentally a communicative medium in the process of creation and appreciation of arts consists of a special kind of communication. Both arts learning and arts production involve a complex interplay between multiple sensory motor and higher cognitive mechanisms to achieve full understanding of the process involved in any art as well as the way they influence the learning in other domains.

Agarwal (2017) conducted study to study the scope of fine arts and concluded that fine arts is not a good career options for middle class people, because the scope of fine arts in India is very low, contrary results were given by Verma (2018) and concluded that there is good scope of fine arts in India but it may take time as it is a lengthy process. There are a number of career options like painting, drawing, architecture, interior design, graphic design, textile design etc. These multiple options totally depend on one's choice.

From the above-mentioned studies, it can be concluded that there is a need to focus more on art integrated learning. Various studies have been conducted on art integrated learning in India but no study has been done on art integrated learning in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

Significance of the Present Study

Students today often experience anxiety, pressure and tension due to competition and academic expectations. This stress can negatively impact their learning as well as their overall well-being. Art-integrated learning offers a creative and engaging approach teaching learning, making the teaching-learning process more enjoyable, interactive and less stressful. By incorporating art like visual arts and performing arts into lessons, students can express themselves freely, develop critical thinking skills and understand concepts more easily and effectively. This holistic approach of teaching learning not only enhances understanding but also fosters a positive and relaxed learning environment, reducing anxiety and making education a joyful experience. The Government of India has been paying special attention to art education. The present central Government of India has launched many programmes which help to develop and flourish art education in India e.g. skill India programme. Visual art and performing art collectively play a prominent role in Childs' life. Visual art and performing art improve the academics of the learners and it has been concluded by researchers (Nutten & Phelma, 2011). The self-confidence, self-esteem and self-reliance get rooted with active participation in this area and also help to improve co-ordination skills among learners. NCERT has included art education in the school curriculum so that young minds will learn the utility, significance and relevance of art education throughout the country. Different National Curriculum Frameworks like NCF 1975, NCF 1988, NCF 2000, NCF 2005 and NCFSE 2023 have recommended integrating art education in school education. Though a lot of research has been done but no documented evidence is available with regard to the same in Jammu district in the area of visual and performing art education. Therefore, this study is significant to understand the art integrated learning activities conducted by the institute of music and fine arts Jammu and to understand the pedagogy adopted by the teachers in the institute of music and fine arts Jammu. The overall findings of the present study will be significant and helpful for the students, teachers in general and teachers in particular, researchers, practitioners and administrators to understand in detail about the art integrated learning.

Operational Definitions of the Key Terms Used

Infrastructural Facilities

In the present study, the infrastructural facilities include the material resources i.e., visual arts equipment and performing arts equipment, which are available in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu.

Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu

Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu is a four-year bachelor degree programme located in Jammu.

Objectives

The objectives of the current study were:

1. To be familiar with the present infrastructural facilities available in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu
2. To study art integrated learning activities performed by the learners in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu
3. To understand the pedagogy adopted by the teachers in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu.
4. To seek suggestions to improve the quality of art education in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu

Research Questions

The current study has the following research questions:

1. What are the present infrastructural facilities available in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu?
2. What are the art integrated learning activities performed by the learners in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu?
3. What is the pedagogy adopted by the teachers in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu?

Research Methodology

In the present study, the researcher has adopted a descriptive cum survey method. The population of Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu (IMFA, Office, 2020) comprised 160 (140 students, 20 teachers). Out of 140 students, the investigator selected 100 students by using simple random sampling through a lottery method. The investigator has collected data from all (20) teachers by using a self-structured interview schedule.

Tools of the Present Study

Self-Structured Questionnaire for Students

The researcher used self-structured questionnaire for students to get data from the learners of the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu. The pilot study was done to find reliability of the tool. A test-retest method of reliability was used to find out the reliability of the tool.

Subject experts and language experts were requested to give suggestions related to appropriateness and structure of the tool. The panel scrutinized the tool, based on their suggestions, the tool was modified. Hence face validity and content validity were established by the subject and language experts.

Interview Schedule for Teachers

The investigator adopted a self-structured interview schedule to get data from teachers from the institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu. The validity, reliability of the interview schedule was done. Face validity and content validity was found by the subject and language experts. Inter-rater reliability of the interview schedule was also done by the investigator.

Results and Discussion

The investigator has adopted a questionnaire for students and interview schedule for teachers in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu. The investigator calculated percentage and content analysis to analyze the collected data.

Objective 1:

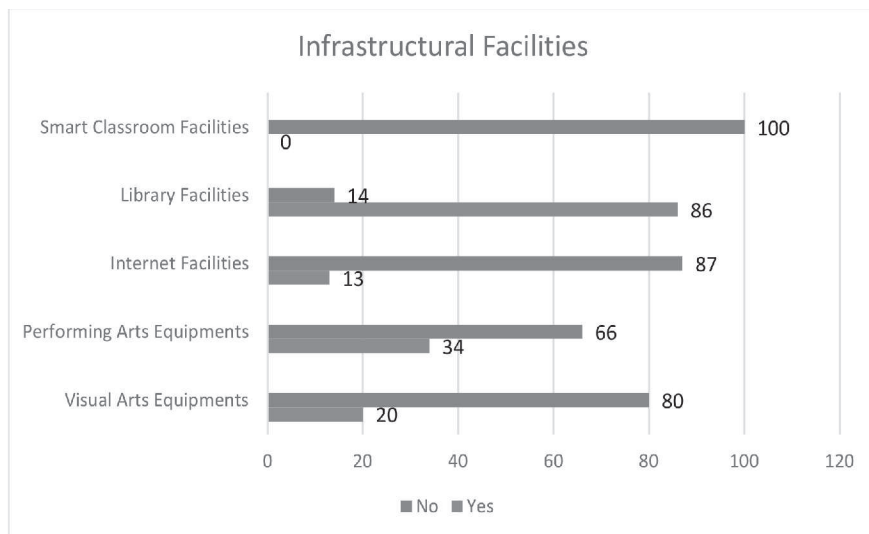
To be familiar with the present infrastructural facilities available in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu

R Q 1: What are the present infrastructural facilities available in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu?

For achieving the first and second objective, the investigator adopted a self-structured questionnaire for taking data from the students.

Figure 2

Percentage Analysis of Present Infrastructural Facilities Available in the Institute of Music and Fine arts, Jammu



Interpretation

The above figure 2 shows the infrastructural facilities available in the institute of Music and Fine Art Jammu. 20% respondents responded that the institute has proper visual art equipment. 34% responded that the institute has proper music equipment. Only 13% responded that the institute has an internet facility for students and teachers. 86% responded that the institute has a library facility for students. All respondents responded that the institute has no smart classroom facility for students. Hence it can be understood from the above data, that there is a dearth of basic facilities in the institute and also a shortage of proper visual and art equipment in the institute. These findings underscore the need for substantial infrastructural improvements at the institute. The shortage of basic facilities like smart classrooms, internet facility, library facility etc. indicates a lack of modern teaching learning resources which are important for the overall learning experiences of the students.

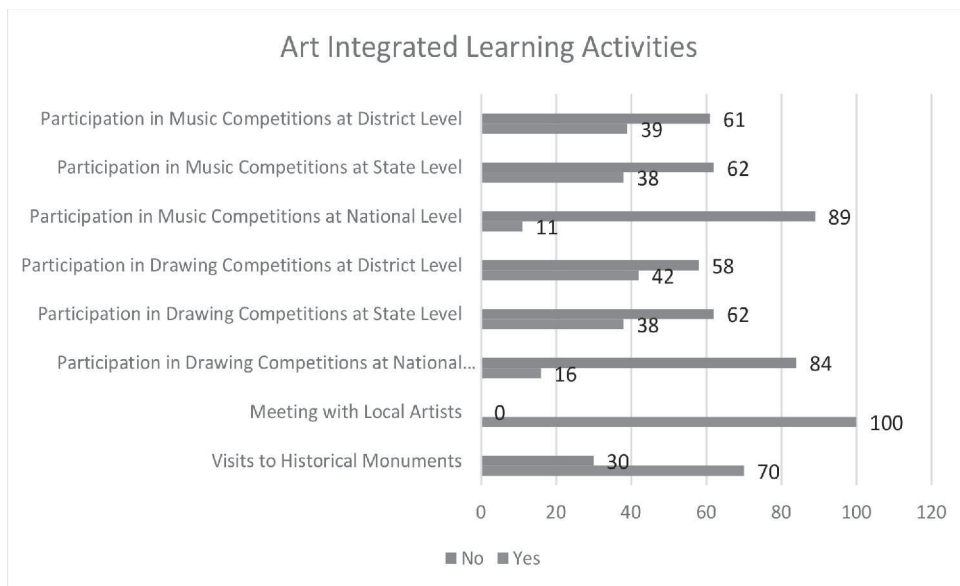
Objective 2

To study art integrated learning activities performed by the learners in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu

R Q 2: What all art integrated learning activities are performed by the learners in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu?

Figure 3

Percentage Analysis of Art Integrated Learning Activities Performed by the Students in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu



Interpretation

The above figure 3 depicts the different activities conducted in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu. Only 16% learners responded that they have ever participated in national level drawing competitions whereas only 11% participants responded that they have ever participated in national level music competitions. 38% responded that their institute has organised music competitions at state level, 39% learners responded that their institute has organised music competitions at district level. 38% respondents revealed that their institute has organised drawing competitions at state level, 42% respondents found that their institute has organised drawing competitions at district level. All respondents responded that they interacted with local artists and 70% responded that they visited local historical places, which gives them a lot of practical knowledge. Hence we can say that the institute organised different activities but only at district level and very less activities at state and national level. The majority of students participated at district level activities; it shows a gap in the encouragement of the learners to participate in state and national level activities.

Objective 3

To understand the pedagogy adopted by the teachers in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu

R Q 3: What is the pedagogy adopted by the teachers in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu?

For achieving the objective third and fourth, the investigator adopted an interview schedule for collecting data from the faculty members working in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu.

Table 1

Percentage Analysis of Art Integrated Pedagogy Adopted by the Teachers in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu

S. No	AIL Pedagogy	Percentage (%)
1	Storytelling	35
2	Demonstration	55
3	Field Visits	30
4	Hands on projects	60
5	Dance	40
6	Painting	45
7	Drama	45
8	Sculpting	35
9	Poster making	55
10	Music	45

Interpretation

The above table 1 shows the pedagogy used by the teachers in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu. To identify the pedagogy of teachers, the investigator adopted a self structured interview schedule to get data from the teachers. The study revealed that teachers in the institute used different art integrated pedagogical methods that helped a lot to develop creativity and understanding among students. The above table shows that dramatization (55%) and hands-on projects (60%) were the most frequently used teaching methods. These teaching methods allow students to engage in different hands-on activities like role play, learning by doing etc. These methods are very useful especially for languages, social science etc. Storytelling teaching methods was used by 35% teachers in the institute; it enables the students to clarify their doubts easily and effectively. This method is useful in teaching various concepts like historical events, scientific discoveries, and folklore. Field visits (30%) provide real world experience to the students and help them to connect to the real world. Visiting at museums, art galleries and cultural sites gives first hand experiences to the students. Dance (40%) and music (45%) are also the integral pedagogy used by the teachers in the institute. These methods help students to learn rhythm, pattern, and movements and provide kinaesthetic learning experiences to the students. Painting (45%) poster making (55%) and sculpting (35%) are also used by the teachers in their teaching. These methods help a lot for the students to express their thoughts and emotions.

Finally, it can be concluded that teachers in the institute of music and fine arts Jammu adopts a dynamic, interactive and holistic teaching methodology, integrating various arts forms to enhance student learning. The combination of these teaching methods like demonstration, storytelling, field visits, dance, painting, drawing, dramatization etc. not only provides theory-based knowledge to the students but it also develops practical skills among students.

Objective 4

To seek suggestions to improve the quality of art education in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu

Responses of Teachers

It has been concluded from the data taken from the teachers at the institute of music and fine arts, Jammu that they are facing several significant challenges which hinder the successful implementation of art integrated learning. These challenges/obstacles limit their ability to fully utilize creative teaching methods and provide students with a comprehensive and enriching learning experience. All respondents (100%) responded that lack of funds, lack of visual and performing arts equipment in the institute were the problems which almost all teachers are facing. Teachers teaching in the institute suggested that there should be proper visual and performing art equipment in the institute. Majority of teachers (90%) responded that the need of proper infrastructural facilities for students and teachers, appointment of more teachers in the institute, provision of smart classrooms are the main measures to overcome the problems faced by teachers in the institute of music and fine arts Jammu.

To ensure the successful implementation of art integrated learning in the institute, it is very significant to address these issues like improving infrastructural facilities, incorporating modern technological resources etc into the curriculum. Addressing these issues enables the institute to provide effective art education in the institute.

Discussion of the Results

The present research revealed significant results which need attention for the development of art education. Arts education is the new area in the field of school curriculum. As we know, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) organized many programmes to promote and develop arts education in India. But still, art education in India is still underdeveloped. The overall findings of the study revealed that students facing many problems like no proper toilet facilities for students, no safe drinking water facilities for students, no proper study rooms for students, no wireless facility for students, no playground facility for students. Similar findings were given by Morris and Bratty, (1980), Kumar and Raj, (2022). In the current study, the investigator revealed that students are not taking part in arts education competitions. Similar findings were given in the study of Julie and Brown (2017). The current research also revealed that arts education is not given attention in Jammu and Kashmir. Similar study was done by Palmer (2012) and concluded that fine arts was not given attention by the Nigerian Government. This led to more and more poverty in Nigeria. The present study revealed that visual arts and performing arts have less career opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir. A similar study was undertaken by Markrusen and Brown (2014) and found that fine arts were less occupations and arts education was not thought of as valuable for other kinds of careers. The present study also found that arts education is neglected in the early stage of life; there is a great need to make arts education as a compulsory subject in primary education. Similar results were given by Witter (2017) and revealed that visual arts must be made a compulsory subject in all stages of school education.

The present research revealed that art integration into different disciplines lead to better academic performance and enhances conceptual understanding of the learners, these findings are supported by Srivastava (2023), and Mohalik and Basu (2020). However, Wu et al. (2024) concluded that arts education promotes emotional expression, cultural sensibility and cognitive development of the learners where as Piaozoli (2023) concluded that arts in education and drama in education helps a lot to understand about aesthetic experiences, Schonmann (2023) revealed that that theatre education awakens the moral and aesthetic experiences of the young audiences.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings from the above analysis reveal that teachers in the institute of Music and Fine Arts Jammu have used very less art integrated pedagogy in teaching students. There should be provisions

of continuous professional development of the teachers. Teachers must be provided adequate visual arts and performing arts equipment, to nurture art education among different students. Teachers must organize parent-teacher meetings to create awareness about art education. So, more and more students get enrolled in art education courses. Teachers must organize various careers guidance programs for students for creating more career opportunities in art education. Teachers must organize seminars, conferences, and workshops etc., regarding art education for students so that new comers in art education must understand the basics of art education. Information and communication technology must be incorporated in the art classrooms. Educational administrators must ensure the presence of necessary and needy teaching equipment in the institute like music equipment, visual art equipment, so that both teachers and students pay attention to art education. Educational administrators must provide wireless fidelity facilities to the students. Educational administrators must organize competitions for students at district, state and national levels. Educational administrators must conduct various refresher courses for teaching faculty in all stages of school education, so that their knowledge must be updated from time to time. Students must understand the basics of art education. They show interest in art education and do not think that art education has less career options. Students choose art education as their compulsory subject, not optional subject. Students must attend conferences, seminars, workshops regarding art education. Finally, there should be interaction programs for learners and teachers so that they get opportunities to interact with local artists and understand the traditional art of India.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

There are several limitations with suggestions for further study. First, a descriptive method was used in the present study; an exploratory method can be taken in the future research. Second, only one institute i.e., institute of music and fine arts Jammu was selected for the study, institute of music and fine arts Kashmir will be taken for further research, Third, survey method was employed in the present study, comparative analysis of institute of music and fine arts Jammu and institute of music and fine arts Kashmir will be done for further investigation.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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Metacognitive Awareness as a Predictor of Future-Ready Competencies among Preservice Teachers

Ankita Shukla* and Geetha C A**

ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, there is a need of preservice teachers to build skills like critical thinking, digital literacy, and adaptability. This study focused on whether metacognitive awareness predicts these future-ready skills among 412 preservice teachers in Kerala, India. Using a “predictive-correlational design” for this study, data were collected through the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory and a new Future-Ready Competencies Scale. Analysis with multiple regression in IBM SPSS 26 showed a strong positive relationship ($r = .61$, $p < .001$). “Metacognitive awareness” significantly predicted all these skills, which accounted for 37.2% of the variance. In the study, Planning and evaluation were the strongest predictors. There were no gender differences, but students from government colleges scored higher than those from self-financing colleges. The findings suggest that B.Ed. Programs should include activities that improve self-monitoring skills. The Future-Ready Competencies Scale was confirmed as a reliable tool for this group.

Key Words: metacognitive awareness, future-ready competencies, preservice teachers, multiple regression, self-regulated learning.

Introduction

The traditional role of a teacher has now shifted, and Modern educators act as facilitators who design active, hands-on experiences rather than just presenting facts. Technology allows teachers to customize lessons to fit each student's specific learning environment, strengths, and needs (Chapman et al., 2026). Instead, the wider use of artificial intelligence, blended learning, and project-based collaborative tasks has changed as per the effective means of use for teacher educators (Sat, 2025). Some skills like critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, collaboration, and adaptability emerged as indispensable professional assets for educators (Ismail et al., 2024). For preservice teachers, these skills are essential because they serve not only as professional competencies but also as teaching resources that shape their students' readiness for future learning and work (Patterson & Hartley, 2026). Although the importance of these competencies is well established, research has yet to fully explain the psychological factors that support their development in the context of Indian teacher education (Pandey & Sharma, 2024). Metacognitive awareness, commonly understood as the ability to reflect on and regulate one's own thinking, is considered a key factor in the development of future-ready competencies. It involves planning appropriate strategies before beginning a task, monitoring understanding throughout the learning process, and evaluating performance after the task has been completed (Flavell, 1979). Cognitive psychology research has consistently shown that learners with well-developed metacognitive awareness are more likely to succeed in challenging, open-ended tasks, as they can evaluate their progress and refine their strategies throughout the learning process. (Abdelrahman, 2020). The relationship between

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metacognition and future-ready competencies is supported by established theoretical and empirical evidence (Winne & Azevedo, 2022). According to the self-regulated learning model, metacognition plays a central role in fostering the adaptive behaviours that enable learners to respond effectively to changing learning demands. In the constructivist tradition, learners and professionals do not merely absorb information passively. Instead, they actively create knowledge by comparing new experiences to their prior understanding (Woodward et al., 2021). However, there is little empirical research linking these two ideas in preservice teachers. Most current studies focus on metacognition in relation to general academic success (Agrawal et al., 2025), rather than specific 21st-century skills. NEP 2020 prioritizes experiential learning, continuous professional development (CPD), and learner autonomy over rote memorization (Damayanti et al., 2021), which explicitly mandates that teacher preparation programs promote critical thinking, digital competencies, and reflective practice (Tondeur et al., 2025).

Research Objectives

1. To measure the levels of metacognitive awareness and future-ready competencies among preservice teachers in Kerala.
2. To examine the relationship between the various components of metacognitive awareness and future-ready competencies.
3. To determine whether metacognitive awareness serves as a significant predictor of future-ready competencies.
4. To compare the scores of participants based on demographic variables such as gender and institution type.

Research Hypothesis

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between metacognitive awareness and future-ready competencies among preservice teachers.

H_{02} : Metacognitive awareness does not significantly predict future-ready competencies.

H_{03} : There is no significant difference in metacognitive awareness and future-ready competency scores based on gender.

H_{04} : There is no significant difference in metacognitive awareness and future-ready competency scores based on the type of institution.

2. Review of related literature

2.1 Metacognitive Frameworks and Teacher Education

Metacognition was first established as a core concept in educational psychology, who described it as a person's knowledge and control over their own cognitive processes (Seel, 2012). (Prawat, 1989) expanded on this by discussing executive control. For research, the model created by (Schraw & Dennison, 1994a) It is the most popular. This matches (Omprakash et al., 2021) model of self-regulated learning (SRL), which views learning as a cycle that includes planning, performance, and self-reflection. In this cycle, metacognition acts as the internal engine that helps a teacher change their approach when a lesson isn't effective (Panadero, 2017).. Researchers like (Negi & Dwivedi, 2024) found that while B.Ed. Students show moderate levels of awareness. Some skills are often grouped into the "Four Cs": creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, along with digital literacy (Care et al., 2018). The World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2020) and India's National Education Policy (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020) have broadened

this idea to include adaptability and problem-solving in uncertain situations. For a teacher, being future-ready means moving beyond subject expertise to become what (Vignare et al., 2011) call "adaptively creative."

True digital literacy involves the critical evaluation of online information and the creation of digital content (Hussain & Phulpoto, 2024). Here, critical thinking, the ability to make purposeful, self-regulatory judgments, is often neglected (Sheikh & Nath, 2026). (Molin et al., 2020) argue that real critical thinking requires a "metacognitive orientation," or the willingness to check one's own reasoning for bias and errors. (Double, 2026) defines it as the ability to adjust one's emotions and behaviors in response to new or uncertain situations. This trait is developed through the same self-monitoring and reflective adjustment processes that define metacognitive regulation.

2.2 Conceptualizing Future Ready Competencies

The concept of future-ready competencies has been shaped by multiple international frameworks. The widely cited "Four Cs" model of creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration has been supplemented by (Gardeli & Vosinakis, 2025). Digital literacy, a central dimension of future readiness, extends beyond basic technological proficiency to include the critical evaluation of online information and the purposeful creation of digital content (Zhang, 2025). During periods of unpredictability, individuals actively track their internal psychological states. This process relies on self-reflection to detect escalating anxiety, assess the efficacy of ongoing actions, and recognize the exact moment a strategic shift is required (Jacobs et al., 2026).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three complementary theoretical perspectives to explain the development of future-ready competencies among preservice teachers. (Flavell, 1979) The theory of metacognition provides the conceptual foundation by emphasizing that learners who consciously monitor and regulate their thinking are better able to deal with unfamiliar and complex tasks. Building on this perspective, (Schraw & Dennison, 1994) proposed a multidimensional framework that distinguishes different aspects of metacognitive awareness, making it possible to examine how individual components contribute to professional competence. (Zimmerman, 2000) model of self-regulated learning further extends this understanding by describing learning as a cyclical process involving forethought, performance, and self-reflection. Within this process, planning, monitoring, and evaluation enable learners to regulate their learning and continuously improve their performance.

From this perspective, future-ready competencies can be understood as outcomes that develop through continuous self-regulated learning. For example, a preservice teacher who plans lessons carefully, monitors students' understanding during instruction, and reflects on teaching practices afterward is actively engaging in metacognitive regulation. These processes support the development of competencies such as critical thinking, adaptability, and creative problem-solving. Therefore, the relationship between metacognitive awareness and future-ready competencies is supported not only by statistical evidence but also by established theoretical perspectives, which suggest that self-regulatory processes play an important role in professional learning and development.

2.4 Research Gap

Although these theoretical perspectives provide a strong basis for understanding the relationship between metacognitive awareness and future-ready competencies, empirical evidence in the context of Indian teacher education remains limited. Most existing studies have examined metacognitive awareness in relation to traditional academic outcomes (Dr. Rajvir Singh, 2025), while

research on future-ready or 21st-century competencies has largely focused on describing these competencies rather than investigating the cognitive processes that support their development (Voogt et al., 2013). As a result, limited attention has been given to examining whether metacognitive awareness predicts future-ready competencies among Indian preservice teachers. The present study seeks to address this gap by employing a predictive-correlational research design and a purpose-developed, validated instrument.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative predictive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between metacognitive awareness and future-ready competencies among preservice teachers. This design was considered appropriate because it enables the investigation of whether different dimensions of metacognitive awareness are associated with variations in future-ready competencies under naturally occurring conditions, without manipulating the study variables (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Population and Sample

The study population comprised preservice teachers enrolled in the two-year B.Ed. programme offered by government, government-aided, and self-financing colleges in Kerala, India. Kerala was selected as the study area because of its well-established teacher education system and the diversity of its teacher training institutions. The accessible population included first- and second-year B.Ed. students from eight colleges located in the districts of Thrissur, Ernakulam, Palakkad, and Kozhikode. Cluster random sampling was employed, with colleges serving as the sampling units. Based on Cohen's (1988) recommendations for multiple regression with eight predictors, the minimum required sample size was 114 participants. The final sample consisted of 412 preservice teachers, which exceeded this requirement and provided adequate statistical power for the analyses. The sample was predominantly female (72.3%) and represented a range of academic disciplines, including Science (34.5%), Social Science (31.8%), and Languages (21.1%).

3.3 Instrumentation

Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI). Data were collected using two research instruments together with a demographic information sheet. Metacognitive awareness was assessed using the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) developed by Schraw & Dennison (1994). The inventory comprises 52 self-report items designed to measure two broad dimensions of metacognition: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. These dimensions are represented through eight subscales, namely declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, conditional knowledge, planning, information management, monitoring, debugging, and evaluation. Participants responded to each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never true of me) to 5 (Always true of me). In the present study, the MAI demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .91.

Future-Ready Competencies Scale (FRCS). As no validated instrument was available to assess future-ready competencies among preservice teachers in the Indian context, the Future-Ready Competencies Scale (FRCS) was developed for this study. The scale development process followed the framework proposed by Lamm et al. (2020), which includes domain specification, expert validation, item refinement, pilot testing, and final psychometric evaluation.

The development process began with an extensive review of the literature to identify the core domains of future-ready competencies. Five domains were selected for inclusion in the instrument:

Digital Literacy, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Adaptability. Drawing on these domains and existing frameworks, including the World Economic Forum (2020) and the National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020), an initial pool of 55 items was prepared. To establish content validity, the preliminary items were evaluated by a panel of ten experts. The panel included five teacher educators with doctoral qualifications in education, three specialists in educational technology, and two professionals with expertise in curriculum development. Each expert assessed the relevance, clarity, and representativeness of every item. Item-level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) values were calculated, and following the recommendation of (Polit & Beck, 2006) items with I-CVI values below .78 were excluded. Based on this criterion, eleven items were removed from the initial pool. The remaining 44 items were then revised to improve wording and ensure their suitability for the target population. These revisions were guided by the qualitative feedback provided by the expert panel. The revised instrument was pilot-tested with 60 B.Ed. students who did not participate in the main study. Exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring with Promax rotation supported a five-factor structure, accounting for 58.6% of the total variance, with all retained items demonstrating factor loadings greater than .40. Further examination of factor loadings and item-total correlations resulted in the removal of nine additional items, leading to a final instrument comprising 35 items, with seven items representing each competency domain. The final version of the FRCS was administered to the main sample of 412 preservice teachers. Reliability analysis demonstrated excellent internal consistency for the overall scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$), while the reliability coefficients for the five subscales ranged from .79 to .84, indicating satisfactory reliability across all competency domains.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles for educational research. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the heads of the participating teacher education institutions. Before completing the questionnaire, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided their voluntary consent to participate. They were also informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. To protect participants' privacy, no personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were treated confidentially. The data were used solely for research purposes and were securely maintained by the researcher.

3.5 Data Analysis

All analyses were carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. The research followed four stages. In Stage 1, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, minimum, maximum, skewness, kurtosis) were calculated for all MAI subscales and FRCS dimensions. Normality was assessed using the criteria set by George and Mallery (2010), which state that absolute skewness values below 2.0 and kurtosis below 7.0 are acceptable for parametric analysis. In Stage 2, exploratory factor analysis (principal axis factoring, Promax rotation) and Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis were performed for the FRCS on the main sample ($N = 412$) to confirm the five-factor structure found in the pilot study. In Stage 3, Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated between total MAI and total FRCS scores. Independent-samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA (with Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons) were used to investigate group differences based on gender and institution type. In Stage 4, multiple linear regression was performed with the eight MAI subscale composite scores as predictors and the total FRCS score as the dependent variable, allowing for an assessment of both the total and unique predictive contributions of each metacognitive component. Effect sizes were reported according to (Cohen, 2013) guidelines.

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary Analysis and Normality

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all subscales of the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) and dimensions of the Future-Ready Competencies Scale (FRCS) to check distributional assumptions. As shown in Table 4, the skewness values ranged from -0.44 to -0.18, and the kurtosis values ranged from -0.34 to 0.22. These values are within acceptable limits for parametric analysis (George & Mallery, 2021), confirming that the data follow a normal distribution. Participants showed a high level of total metacognitive awareness ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.61$). Among the subscales, "Evaluation" had the highest mean ($M = 3.77$), while "Monitoring" had the lowest ($M = 3.65$).

4.2 Validation of the Future-Ready Competencies Scale (FRCS)

For future-ready competencies, the sample showed a moderate overall level ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.57$). Within the FRCS dimensions, "Collaboration" ($M = 3.67$) and "Critical Thinking" ($M = 3.61$) were the strongest areas, while "Adaptability" ($M = 3.46$) was the lowest. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal axis factoring and Promax rotation confirmed the five-factor structure of the FRCS. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .91, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(595) = 8,412.34$, $p < .001$). These five factors explained 61.3% of the total variance. As shown in Table 5, factor loadings ranged from .46 to .79, with no significant cross-loadings. The internal consistency for the total scale was excellent ($\alpha = .92$), and subscale reliability coefficients ranged from .79 to .84, confirming the instrument's technical quality.

4.3 Pearson Correlation: Relationship Between Metacognitive Awareness and Future-Ready Competencies

Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated to examine the relationship between total MAI scores and total FRCS scores, as well as between each MAI subscale and each FRCS dimension. Table 6 shows the complete correlation matrix, and Figure 4 presents the scatter plot of the total scores.

4.4 Level Distribution of Metacognitive Awareness and Future-Ready Competencies

Mean scores were grouped into three levels: Low (1.00-2.49), Moderate (2.50-3.49), and High (3.50-5.00), following practices in previous research in the Indian educational context (Singh et al., 2018). Table 5 shows the frequency distribution across levels for both constructs.

4.5 Multiple Linear Regression: Predicting Future-Ready Competencies from Metacognitive Awareness

Multiple linear regression was performed using the eight MAI subscale scores to predict the total FRCS score. Before interpretation, all regression assumptions were checked: normality of residuals (Shapiro-Wilk $p = .341$), homoscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan test $p = .218$), absence of multicollinearity (all VIF < 5.0 , tolerance > 0.20), and independence of errors (Durbin-Watson = 1.94). Tables 8-10 provide the model summary, ANOVA, and regression coefficients, respectively.

4.6 Group Comparisons: Gender and Institution Type

4.6.1 Gender Differences (Table 9)

Independent-samples t-tests examined differences by gender. The 'prefer not to say' category ($n = 4$) was excluded, yielding a comparison between female ($n = 298$) and male ($n = 110$) participants. Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variance ($p > .05$) for both variables. No statistically significant gender differences were found for either MAI total ($t(406) = 0.91$, $p = .364$, $d = 0.10$) or

FRCS total ($t(406) = 1.48, p = .140, d = 0.16$). Both effect sizes were negligible. Hypothesis H03 was retained.

4.6.2 Institution Type Differences (Tables 10-11)

One-way ANOVA examined MAI and FRCS score differences across government ($n = 96$), government-aided ($n = 168$), and self-financing ($n = 148$) colleges. A significant institutional difference was found for MAI total scores ($F(2, 409) = 4.21, p = .016, \eta^2 = .020$). Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis indicated that government college students ($M = 3.84$) scored significantly higher than those in self-financing institutions ($M = 3.64, p = .014$). No significant difference was found for FRCS scores ($F(2, 409) = 2.87, p = .058$). Hypothesis H04 was partially rejected.

5. Discussion

5.1 Levels of Metacognitive Awareness and Competency

It is encouraging that over half of the participants, 55.8%, showed high metacognitive awareness. This suggests that the competitive nature of teacher entry in Kerala may naturally select individuals with strong self-monitoring skills. However, the fact that "Monitoring" had the lowest subscale mean is concerning. Monitoring involves tracking one's understanding in real time during a task. In a classroom, a teacher who cannot keep track of their own cognitive load or the lesson flow in real time will struggle to meet the demand for adaptability. In terms of competencies, the moderate levels found in Digital Literacy and Adaptability reflect a wider trend in Indian teacher education. As (Amzalag et al., 2025), many B.Ed. programs focus on content transmission and exams instead of adaptive problem-solving. This may explain why students feel confident in "Collaboration" but less so when asked to "Adapt" to unexpected changes in teaching.

5.2 The Predictive Relationship between Metacognitive Awareness and Future- Ready Competencies

The most important finding is that "Planning" and "Evaluation" are the strongest predictors of future-readiness. Planning means clearly defining goals and strategies before starting a task. This is a key step for critical thinking and creating digital content. Likewise, the significant role of "Evaluation" supports the view of Schraw and (Golden, 2023) that reflecting on learning outcomes fosters the corrective mindset needed for flexibility. These results build on the work of Tican, who found similar connections in Turkish populations. However, our study shows a slightly stronger relationship ($r = .61$ compared to $r = .52$). This difference may be due to the specific design of the FRCS instrument, which captured aspects more relevant to the Indian context, including digital readiness and cultural adaptability.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine metacognitive awareness as a predictor of future-ready skills among preservice teachers in Kerala, India. The evidence points to a clear and meaningful conclusion: metacognitive awareness is a strong positive predictor of future-ready skills, accounting for 37.2% of their variance through a multiple regression model made up of eight metacognitive subscales. Planning and Evaluation stood out as the strongest individual predictors, highlighting the need for intentional strategy-setting before tasks and reflective reviews after tasks as essential metacognitive skills for future-ready teaching. The score distribution showed significant variation within the sample. While more than half of the participants displayed high metacognitive awareness, Monitoring was relatively weaker. Adaptability and Digital Literacy had the lowest scores among the future-ready competency skills. These patterns indicate specific areas where B.Ed. Curricula could be most effectively improved.

7. Educational and Policy Implications

The findings carry substantive implications for the design of B.Ed. curriculum and pedagogy. Given the significant predictive association between Planning and Evaluation and future-ready competencies, teacher education programmes should deliberately incorporate metacognitive strategy instruction as an explicit curricular component rather than treating it as an incidental outcome. (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020) aims to produce skilled teachers. Our findings offer evidence to support this vision. We suggest that NCTE accreditation frameworks should include measurable outcomes linked to metacognitive growth. They should not focus only on "input criteria" like infrastructure or faculty qualifications.

8. Limitations and directions for future research

There are a few things to know about this study. So we began with self-report surveys. That suggests that students might have given answers that portray them in a more favorable light than they deserve. Future studies should try to observe students in actual classrooms to see if they really use these skills. Secondly, this was a one-off survey, so we can't be 100% sure about the cause-and-effect over a long period of time. Finally, this study was limited to Kerala. Teacher training may vary in other parts of India, so more research in other states is needed to see if these findings are valid everywhere.

AI Declaration: The authors used AI-assisted tools only for language editing and manuscript refinement. All scientific content, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Sample (N = 412)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	298	72.3
Gender	Male	110	26.7
Gender	Prefer not to say	4	1.0
Age	24-26 years	187	45.4
Age	24–26 years	163	39.6
Age	27 years and above	62	15.0
Year of Study	First year	214	51.9
Year of Study	Second year	198	48.1
Subject Stream	Science	142	34.5
Subject Stream	Social Science	131	31.8
Subject Stream	Languages	87	21.1
Subject Stream	Commerce / Mathematics	52	12.6
Institution Type	Government	96	23.3
Institution Type	Government-aided	168	40.8
Institution Type	Self-financing	148	35.9
Locality	Urban	189	45.9
Locality	Semi-urban	134	32.5
Locality	Rural	89	21.6

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Note. Percentages may not sum exactly to 100 due to rounding.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for MAI Subscales and FRCS Dimensions (N = 412)

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis	Level
MAI Subscales							
Declarative Knowledge	3.81	0.64	1.60	5.00	-0.41	0.18	High
Procedural Knowledge	3.74	0.68	1.40	5.00	-0.38	0.09	High
Conditional Knowledge	3.69	0.71	1.20	5.00	-0.35	-0.14	High
Planning	3.76	0.66	1.40	5.00	-0.44	0.22	High
Information Management	3.68	0.69	1.20	5.00	-0.31	-0.08	High
Monitoring	3.65	0.73	1.00	5.00	-0.28	-0.21	High
Debugging	3.71	0.67	1.40	5.00	-0.36	0.04	High
Evaluation	3.77	0.65	1.60	5.00	-0.39	0.11	High
MAI Total	3.72	0.61	1.55	5.00	-0.37	0.06	Mod-High
FRCS Dimensions							
Digital Literacy	3.48	0.72	1.14	5.00	-0.22	-0.31	Moderate
Critical Thinking	3.61	0.66	1.29	5.00	-0.33	0.07	High
Creativity	3.49	0.70	1.14	5.00	-0.19	-0.28	Moderate
Collaboration	3.67	0.63	1.57	5.00	-0.41	0.19	High
Adaptability	3.46	0.74	1.00	5.00	-0.18	-0.34	Moderate
FRCS Total	3.54	0.57	1.43	5.00	-0.26	-0.09	Moderate

Note. Level classification: Low = 1.00-2.49; Moderate = 2.50-3.49; High = 3.50-5.00 (Kumar & Singh, 2018). Skewness and kurtosis are within acceptable ranges for parametric analysis (George & Mallery, 2010).

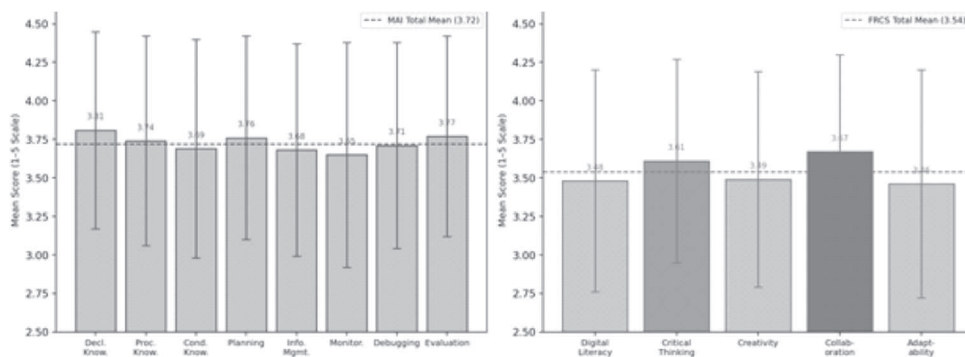


Figure 1. Mean Scores for MAI Subscales (1a, left) and FRCS Dimensions (1b, right) with Standard Deviation Error Bars (N = 412)

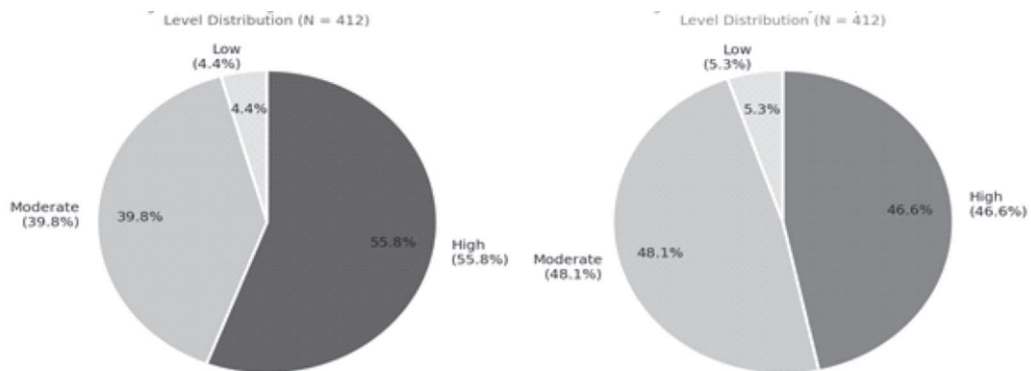


Figure 2. Level Distribution of Metacognitive Awareness (2a, left) and Future-Ready Competencies (2b, right) Among Preservice Teachers (N = 412)

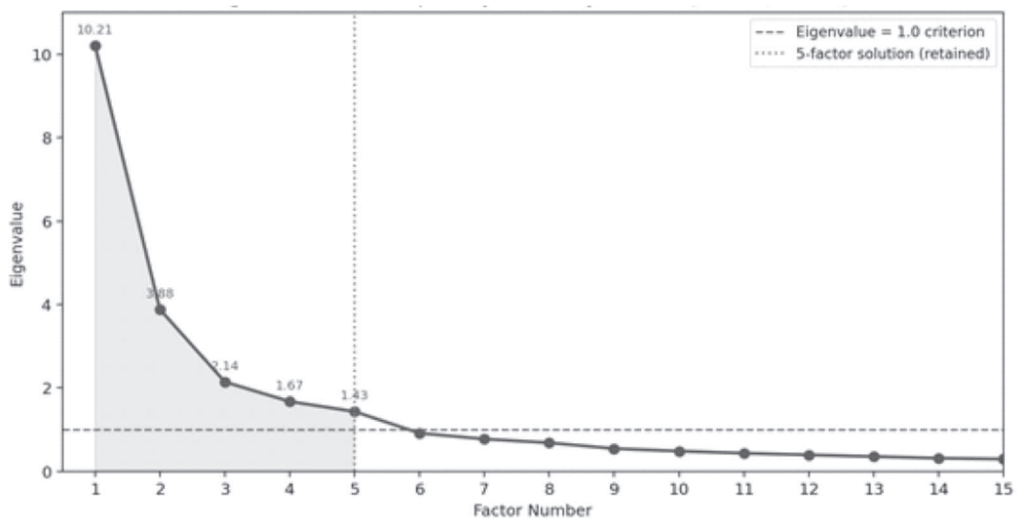


Figure 3. Scree Plot from Exploratory Factor Analysis of FRCS (35 Items, N = 412)

Table 3

EFA Results for FRCS: Eigenvalues, Variance Explained, and Reliability Coefficients (N = 412)

Factor / Dimension	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Cumulative %	Cronbach's α
1. Digital Literacy	10.21	29.17	29.17	.84
2. Critical Thinking	3.88	11.09	40.26	.81
3. Creativity	2.14	6.11	46.37	.82
4. Collaboration	1.67	4.77	51.14	.79
5. Adaptability	1.43	4.09	55.23	.83
Total FRCS	-	61.3% (5 factors)	-	.92

Note. All five eigenvalues > 1.0. KMO = .91. Bartlett's $\chi^2(595) = 8,412.34$, $p < .001$. Factor loadings ranged from 0.46 to 0.79. Cronbach's α values confirm acceptable to good internal consistency.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Matrix: MAI Subscales and FRCS Dimensions (N = 412)

MAI Variable	DL	CT	CR	COL	AD	FRCS Total
Declarative Knowledge	.44**	.49**	.41**	.38**	.37**	.48**
Procedural Knowledge	.42**	.46**	.43**	.36**	.39**	.46**
Conditional Knowledge	.39**	.43**	.40**	.34**	.41**	.44**
Planning	.51**	.54**	.47**	.43**	.44**	.53**
Information Management	.40**	.44**	.38**	.35**	.36**	.43**
Monitoring	.38**	.46**	.39**	.33**	.40**	.43**
Debugging	.41**	.45**	.42**	.36**	.38**	.44**
Evaluation	.47**	.52**	.44**	.41**	.43**	.50**
MAI Total	.53**	.61**	.55**	.48**	.51**	.61**

Note. DL = Digital Literacy; CT = Critical Thinking; CR = Creativity; COL = Collaboration; AD = Adaptability. ** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). All correlations are significant at $p < .001$. $r = .61$ between MAI Total and FRCS Total represents a large effect (Cohen, 1988).

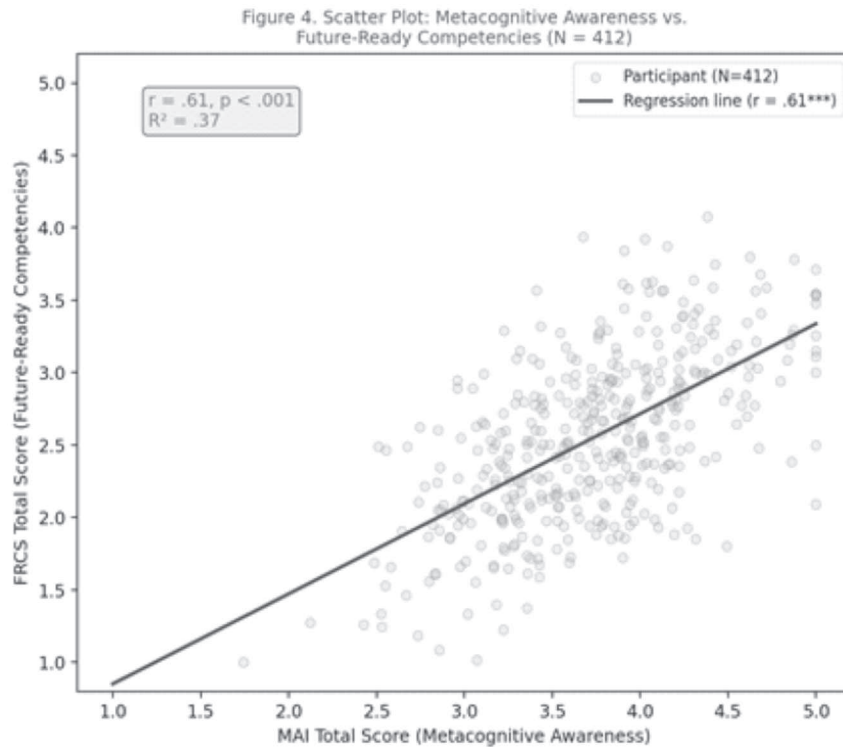


Figure 4. Scatter Plot: Total MAI Score vs. Total FRCS Score with Regression Line (N = 412; $r = .61$, $p < .001$)

Table 5

Distribution of Participants by Level of Metacognitive Awareness and Future-Ready Competencies (N = 412)

Level	MA Score Range	MA n (%)	FRC Score Range	FRC n (%)	Interpretation
Low	1.00-2.49	18 (4.4%)	1.00-2.49	22 (5.3%)	Needs substantial development
Moderate	2.50-3.49	164 (39.8%)	2.50-3.49	198 (48.1%)	Developing room for growth
High	3.50-5.00	230 (55.8%)	3.50-5.00	192 (46.6%)	Well-developed competency
Total	-	412 (100%)	-	412 (100%)	-

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Note. MA = Metacognitive Awareness; FRC = Future-Ready Competencies.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Model Summary (N = 412)

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F(8, 403)	p
.610	.372	.360	0.457	29.84	< .001

Note. The full 8-predictor model was statistically significant. $R^2 = .372$ indicates that the eight MAI subscales collectively account for 37.2% of the variance in future-ready competencies.

Table 7

ANOVA for Multiple Regression Model Significance (N = 412)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	49.87	8	6.23	29.84	< .001
Residual	84.18	403	0.209	-	-
Total	134.05	411	-	-	-

Note. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(8, 403) = 29.84$, $p < .001$.

Table 8

Multiple Regression Coefficients: MAI Subscales as Predictors of FRCS Total Score (N = 412)

Predictor Subscale)	(MAI	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI	VIF
(Constant)		0.62	.142	-	4.37	< .001	[0.34, 0.90]	-
Declarative Knowledge		0.09	.028	.13	3.21	.001	[0.03, 0.15]	2.14
Procedural Knowledge		0.07	.027	.08	2.59	.010	[0.02, 0.12]	2.08
Conditional Knowledge		0.05	.026	.07	1.92	.055	[-0.00, 0.10]	2.21
Planning		0.15	.030	.22	5.00	< .001	[0.09, 0.21]	2.33
Information Management		0.07	.028	.09	2.50	.013	[0.01, 0.13]	2.19
Monitoring		0.08	.026	.11	3.08	.002	[0.03, 0.13]	1.98
Debugging		0.07	.027	.10	2.59	.010	[0.02, 0.12]	2.12
Evaluation		0.12	.029	.18	4.14	< .001	[0.06, 0.18]	2.27

Note. β = standardised regression coefficient; SE B = standard error of B; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor. All VIF values < 5.0 confirm no multicollinearity. Conditional Knowledge ($\beta = .07$, $p = .055$) was

the only non-significant predictor at $\alpha = .05$.

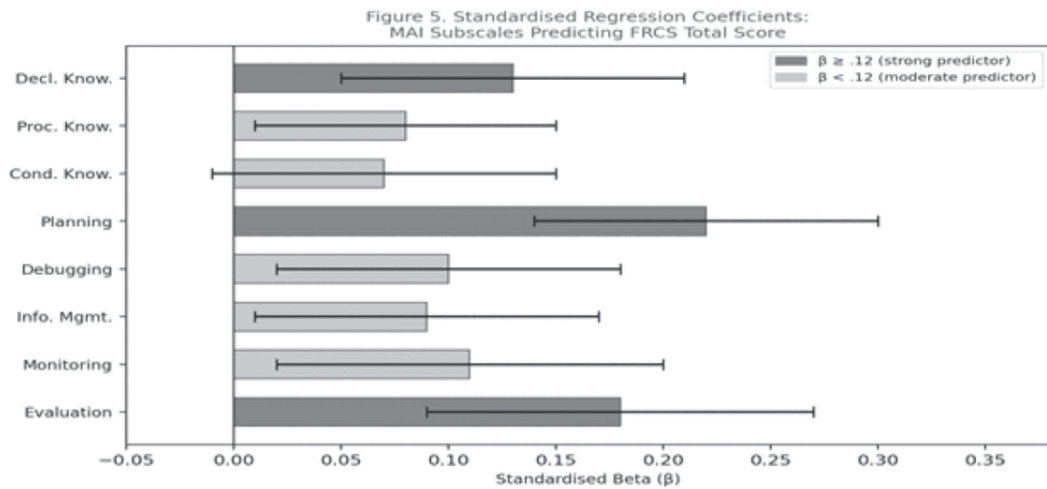


Figure 5. Standardised Regression Coefficients (β) for MAI Subscales Predicting FRCS Total Score with 95% Confidence Intervals (N = 412)

Table 9

Independent-Samples t-Test: MAI and FRCS Scores by Gender

Variable	Female (SD)	M	Male M (SD)	t	df	p	Cohen's d
MAI Total	3.74 (0.60)		3.68 (0.63)	0.91	406	.364	0.10
FRCS Total	3.57 (0.56)		3.48 (0.59)	1.48	406	.140	0.16

Note. Cohen's $d < 0.20$ = negligible effect. Levene's test: $p > .05$ for both variables (homogeneity of variance confirmed). Two-tailed p values.

Figure 6. Mean MAI (6a, left) and FRCS (6b, right) Scores by Institution Type with Standard Deviation Error Bars (N = 412)

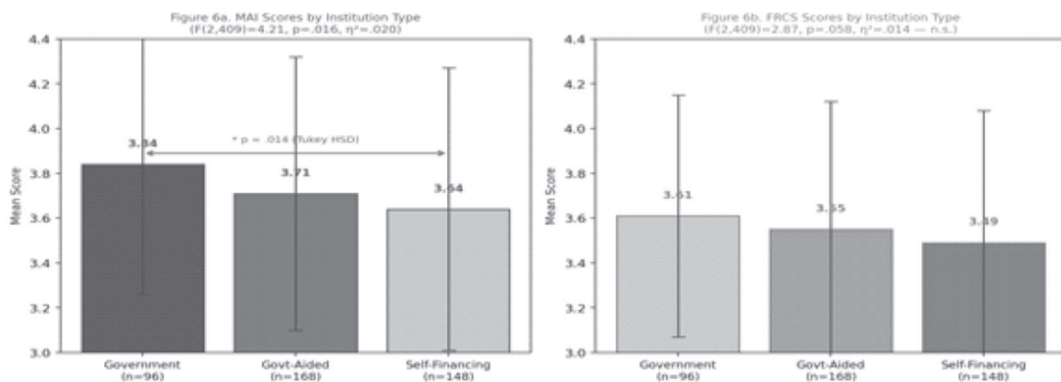


Figure 6. Mean MAI (6a, left) and FRCS (6b, right) Scores by Institution Type with Standard Deviation Error Bars (N = 412)

Table 10

One-Way ANOVA: MAI and FRCS Scores by Institution Type

Variable	Institution Type	n	M (SD)	F(2,409)	p	η^2
MAI Total	Government	96	3.84 (0.58)	4.21	.016*	.020
MAI Total	Government-aided	168	3.71 (0.61)			
MAI Total	Self-financing	148	3.64 (0.63)			
FRCS Total	Government	96	3.61 (0.54)	2.87	.058	.014
FRCS Total	Government-aided	168	3.55 (0.57)			
FRCS Total	Self-financing	148	3.49 (0.59)			

Note. * $p < .05$. η^2 effect sizes: $< .01$ = small, $.06$ = medium, $.14$ = large (Cohen, 1988). Tukey HSD: Government vs. Self-financing, $p = .014$ (significant); all other pairwise comparisons non-significant. Levene's test: $p > .05$ for both variables.

Table 11

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Outcomes

Hypothesis	Test Used	Key Statistic	p Value	Decision
H01: No significant relationship between MA and FRC	Pearson r	$r = .61$	$< .001$	Rejected
H02: MA does not predict FRC	MLR (8 predictors)	$F = 4.21$	$< .001$	Rejected
H03: No significant gender difference	t-test	$t = 0.91 / 1.48$	$.364 / .140$	Retained
H04: No significant institutional difference	One-way ANOVA	$F = 4.21 / 2.87$	$.016 / .058$	Partially rejected (MA only)

Note. MA = Metacognitive Awareness; FRC = Future-Ready Competencies; MLR = Multiple Linear Regression.

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From Myth to Modernity: Exploring Theatricality in Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*

Vikram Singh Thakur*

ABSTRACT

Girish Karnad has been one of the most significant pillars of Indian theatre. He began writing at a time when theatre in Indian playwrights were struggling to find a direction in the wake of decolonization. Karnad not only provided a direction to his contemporaries but also re-imagined the way traditional theatre could be brought in sync with modern and urban drama. His Hayavadana, originally written in Kannada in 1971, became the harbinger of a very influential movement known as "theatre of roots". The present paper attempts to study Hayavadana as a quintessential piece of post-colonial theatre by analyzing its theatricality and Karnad's dramaturgy which relies heavily on the conventions of folk and classical theatres of India.

Key Words: Syncretism, post-colonial theatre, *Natyasastra*, folk theatre, decolonization, theatre of roots.

Introduction

Modern Indian theatre initially evolved under the influence of Western theatre brought by the British colonists to India. However, it soon evolved into a distinct theatrical mode by combining Western proscenium with folk and classical performance traditions. Such theatre, best represented by the popular Parsi theatre of the 19th century, exemplifies what postcolonial theorists like Christopher Balme, a century later, would call "syncretic theatre". Balme explains syncretism as follows:

The term 'syncretism' is borrowed from the discipline of comparative religion and denotes the process whereby elements of two or more religions are merged and absorbed into one another. ... In contrast to religious syncretism ... theatrical syncretism is in most cases a conscious, programmatic strategy to fashion a new form of theatre in the light of colonial or post-colonial experience ... (2).

During the nationalist struggle, folk theatre acquired renewed significance in the hands of Indian People's Theatre Association which used its appeal and accessibility to disseminate socially and political charged messages among the masses. Folk theatre, along with classical theatre, further gained a fresh lease of life in post-Independence India, both at the individual and institutional levels. Supported by the efforts of *Sangeet Natak Akademi*, all major playwrights and theatre directors employed elements from various traditional forms of performance in their endeavor to create a unique Indian theatre. Suresh Awasthi, the former secretary of *Sangeet Natak Akademi*, labeled the conscious move to delve deep into Indian traditions a 'return to roots' and termed this performative exercise 'theatre of roots' (48). One of the earliest and most significant creative efforts in this direction was Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* (1972). This essay attempts to examine *Hayavadana* as a post-colonial play and analyses how folk and classical theatrical conventions affect Karnad's dramaturgy.

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Erin Mee Bee in her influential study titled *Theatre of Roots* refers to the postcolonial predicament of playwrights and compares them to *Hayavadana* “the human with a horse head, still trying to grapple with an acute identity crisis, being torn between the cultural past of the country and the more recent colonial legacy, which gave birth to a curious mélange that can be termed neither exactly Western nor precisely Indian, but perhaps both 'Western' and 'Indian' at the same time (142). Karnad too had acknowledged this creative dilemma with respect to his dramaturgy by referring to the cultural tensions which needed to be resolved in independent India, “tension between the cultural past of the country and the colonial past, between attractions of the Western modes of thought and our own traditions, and finally between the various visions of the future that opened up once the common cause of political freedom was achieved” (1994, 1). As a young playwright, he struggled to find an indigenous model for his first play *Yayati* (1960). By his own admission, though he reworked the myth borrowed from the Mahabharata he wrote it in a form “entirely borrowed from the West.” (1989, 90.) Then came *Tughlaq* (1964) inspired partly by the Western conventions and partly by the conventions of company natak. However, it was with his third Kannada play *Hayavadana* (The Man with a Horse's Head) written in 1971 that Karnad seemed to have found a theatrical form he had been searching for. It has often been considered as the harbinger of the influential theatre movement of the 1970s – “theatre of roots”. While it had a considerable influence on Indian theatre, the play also gave a new direction to Karnad's own dramaturgy leading to his much acclaimed plays like *Nagmandala* (Play with a Cobra, 1988) and *Agni mattu male* (The Fire and the Rain, 1995).

I. Theorizing Post-colonial Theatre

[T]he return to and discovery of tradition was inspired by a search for roots and a quest for identity. This was part of a whole process of decolonization of our life style, values, social institutions, creative forms and cultural modes. The modern Indian theatre, product of a colonial theatrical culture, felt the need to search for roots most intensely to match its violent dislocation from the traditional course.

--Suresh Awasthi (48)

Before examining *Hayavadana* as a quintessentially postcolonial drama, it is pertinent to consider as to what constitutes postcolonial theatre. Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins in their foundational text *Post-colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (1996) define post-colonial performance as:

- acts that respond to the experience of imperialism, whether directly or indirectly;
- acts performed for the continuation and/or regeneration of the colonised (and sometimes pre-contact) communities;
- acts performed with the awareness of, and sometimes the incorporation of, post-contact forms; and
- acts that interrogate the hegemony that underlies imperial representation (11).

While the range included in this definition is quite extensive and can accommodate a variety of performances under the rubric 'post-colonial', yet it cannot apply to every drama or performance in post-colonial nations. Postcolonial drama, in fact, can take innumerable forms choosing their own permutations and combinations and may well go beyond the scope defined above. The existence of a postcolonial nation does not automatically ensure the emergence of postcolonial theatre; similarly, theatrical practices in a colonised society need not always be reduced to imitations of the coloniser's forms. There have been very many examples of theatrical experiments in colonial India that had

appropriated Western theatrical forms and plays. On the other hand, it is still possible to encounter Indian theatrical productions today that remain faithful to Western theatrical conventions. My contention is that term 'post-colonial' be understood ideologically rather than spatially or temporally in order to appreciate the complexities involved in understanding colonial/postcolonial theatre. In fact, Gilbert and Tompkins also acknowledge this problem, although in the endnotes, and encourage scholars to explore more works that go past the categories defined by them. While discussing post-colonial theatre, it is also interesting to note that Indian scholars like G.P. Deshpande have questioned the use of the term post-colonial theatre itself in the Indian context. He argues,

[W]ith the arrival of political independence, we do not quite have post-colonial theatre. In fact the phenomenon of the 'post-colonial' is more than doubtful and debatable. It is not even a phenomenon. It is the usage of the post-ideological world looking at the emergence of a political independence in the third world ... 'Post-colonial' seemed to suggest that the colonial was over and gone. 'Post-colonial' was and is a post-political category. (xiv)

Deshpande's dismissal of the term 'post-colonial' merits mention since the 'post' in 'post-colonial' has been a subject of heated debate within the discourse on post-colonialism. Deshpande seems to point out both – the temporal and the ideological 'post' in 'post-colonial' as problematic since political independence does not guarantee ideological independence. He further argues that the post-Independence Indian theatre was neither postcolonial nor post-modern but one that “seemed to hark back to tradition and the ethnic.” (xiv) While Deshpande's argument is partly true, my contention is that this “hark(ink) back to tradition and the ethnic”, at least during the first few decades after Independence, should be considered, though cautiously, as a form of what Gayatri Spivak calls “strategic essentialism” – “an approach ... which describes the political use of what is considered to be an “essence” with a critique and recognition of the essentialist nature of the essence itself” (qtd. in Ritzer and Ryan). Such a strategy becomes crucial to postcolonial decolonisation, as it seeks to recover, revalue and creatively rework indigenous cultural forms. While it is important to look back, one also needs to continually and critically negotiate the past since there lies the danger of romanticising it. This is particularly relevant to India, a modern nation-state whose rich precolonial inheritance emerged through the historical convergence of various cultures, religions and communities. While a move back to tradition might suggest an anti-modern stance, it is imperative to suggest here that postcolonial playwrights like Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Habib Tanvir, Chandrashekhar Kambar, Ratan Thiyam and Kavalam Narayan Panicker borrowed from Indian traditional theatres with an awareness of its cultural mutations in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial India.

II. Influence of Folk and Classical Theatres on Hayavadana

In post-Independence India, Aparna Dharwadker notes about the renewed interest of playwrights and theatre directors in traditional Indian theatres in the following words:

Most of the critical and creative engagement with indigenous forms in the post-independence period has come to center on the folk performance genres popular in various rural regions throughout the country because the category of “folk” brings into play the most complex range of ideological, political, sociocultural, and aesthetic polarities in contemporary India. (311)

Hayavadana exemplifies this approach since it borrows heavily from folk theatre which, like some other folk forms, reflects considerable influence of the *Natysastra* with respect to its performative principles. Karnad especially found *yakshagana*, a folk dance-drama from Kannada that

he had familiarised himself with since his childhood days, quite helpful and borrowed its formal aspects in writing *Hayavadana*. Despite its classical influence, *yakshagana* retains its regional and folk character. Although the main action of the play is set in remote past, the play cannot be called a folk drama in the strict sense, especially because it is bound by a fixed script written by a playwright while folk theatres are governed by flexibility, orality and improvisation. *Hayavadana* is a modern play – complex in both form and content. Referring to B.V. Karanth's production of *Hayavadana* (1972), Suresh Awasthi, the former general secretary of *Sangeet Natak Akademi*, claimed that "its innovative and improvisatory production ... with music, mime, and movements heralded the return of Lord Ganesha, the presiding deity of traditional theatre. With this event, we might say, contemporary theatre began its encounter with tradition." (49)

As for the narrative, Karnad borrows it from *Kathasaritasagar* – an 11th century Sanskrit collection of folktales and Thomas Mann's German reworking of it in his novella - *The Transposed Heads* (1940). Following the conventions of *Yakshagana* (literally meaning the song of the yaksha/celestial beings), *Hayavadana* begins with the ritualistic *chowki pooje* (ritual worship) of the deity followed by *sabhalakshana* – an invocation to Lord Ganesha – sung by the Bhagavata (the classical equivalent to classical *sutradhar*) along with his musical ensemble (*himmela* in *yakshagana*) before the main play begins:

O Elephant-headed Herambha
 whose flag is victory
 and who shines like a thousand suns,
 O husband of Riddhi and Siddhi,
 seated on a mouse and decorated with a snake,
 O single-tusked destroyer of incompleteness,
 we pay homage to you and start our play (105).

The sequence forms an essential constituent of what *Natyasastra* calls *purvaranga*. As soon as the invocation is over, the Bhagavata, following the traditional peetike (the introductory musical prelude), introduces the *prasanga* – the story to be performed, its main characters, the background of the story – and mentally prepares the audience. The play then features the traditional trigat – a triad involving sutradhar, nata and vidushak – and presents the eponymous character *Hayavadana*. A typically comic sequence, it also provides the playwright an opportunity to introduce the conflict of the sub-plot. As soon as the nata and *Hayavadana* exit, the *Bhagavat*, the most important part of the himmela, introduces the audience to the main conflict of the inner play. The female chorus joins the Bhagavata and sings "Why should love stick to the sap of a single body? When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning, of the many-petalled, many-flowered lantana, why should it be tied down to the relation of a single flower?" subtly suggesting the main theme of the play – Padmini's desire to have both Kapil and Devadatta in her life (116-17).

Karnad also draws upon other conventions of *yakshagana*. The play, for instance, makes use of the yakshgana half-curtain called tere. Curtains/half-curtains, in fact, have a long history in Indian theatre dating back to classical Sanskrit theatre. Goverdhan Panchal informs us that:

Bhasa (*Pratimanatakam*, II, Chowkhamba Series) as well as Bharata (*Natyashastra*, V-B-15) both use the same word – *yavanika* and in some other of their manuscripts, its variant javanika for the curtain. Bhasa also mentions in one single play, and there too, only once, another word for the curtain – *apati* (*Charudatta*-II. Bharata too uses the

word *apati* (NS. XXXII-470) as well as *pata* (NS. XIII-2 and xxxni-227) for the same. Later playwrights, such as Kalidas, *Vishakhadatta*, Shudraka, Harsha, Bhavabhuti, Murari, Jayadeva, etc., continue to use these words, namely, *pata*, *pati*, *apati* and *yavanika-javanika*. Kalidas also uses the word *tiraskarinee* (*Malvi-I* and *Shakuntala-VI*) (23).

Karnad uses *tere* to accomplish varied dramatic purposes. It conceals Hayavadana's entry creating a suspense only to reveal moments later a man with a horse's head. Karnad uses it the second time to introduce Goddess Kali. The stage directions inform the reader:

A tremendous noise of drums. Padmini shuts her eyes in terror. Behind the curtain one sees the uplifted blood-red palms of the goddess. The curtain is lowered and taken away and one sees a terrifying figure, her arms stretched out, her mouth wide open with the tongue lolling out. The drums stop and as the goddess drops her arms and shuts her mouth, it becomes clear she has been yawning (140)

Towards the end, the *tere*, held by stage-hands, is used to depict the blazing fire in which Padmini commits sati.

Poetry and music have always been an integral part of classical and folk theatres of India. They are not merely decorative but combine together with other elements of performance to achieve the desired *rasas*. Their centrality can be gauged by the fact that Bharata in the *Natyasastra* dedicates the maximum number of chapters to poetry and music covering metrical patterns, various kinds of musical instruments, rules of *tala* and varieties of songs. Drama, in fact, is considered *drisya-kavya* (visible poetry) by Bharata in the *Natyasastra*. Folk theatres, too, accord the same importance to poetry and music. Drawing on the musical nature of *yakshagana*, Karnad introduces several songs in the play. Unlike in *yakshagana* in which the Bhagavata, Karnad introduces a female chorus to sing. Used early in the play, the song, "Why should love stick to the sap of a single body?" foreshadows the main thematic of the inner play as mentioned earlier (116). Padmini's tragic end is also accompanied by the same song:

Why should love stick to the sap of a single body? When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning of the many-petalled, many-flowered lantana, why should it be tied down to the relation of a single flower? A head for each breast. A pupil for each eye. A side for each arm. I have neither regret nor shame. The blood pours into the earth and a song branches out in the sky (177-78).

The coda-like ending is important as it emphasizes Padmini's dual desire and her inability to fulfil it. In act II, she sings her son a lullaby, "Here comes a rider!/From what land does he come?" (159) The song is quite symbolic as the image of the masculine rider, riding a white horse, with a sword in his hand resembles Kapila and suggests that she is still attracted to him. Apart from the chorus, *Hayavadana* sings patriotic songs nation like "*Jhanda Ooncha Rahe Hamara*", (May our flag fly high) "*Sare Jahan se Acchha Hindostan Hamara*" (Our India is better than the whole world), "Rise, Rise my Kannada Land" and "*Vande Mataram*" in a bid to become a complete human but in vain (179). Karnad seems to suggest that patriotism alone shall not suffice in post-Independence India. He also questions identity – both of an individual and nation – as a fixed essence.

A very significant element in the *Natyasastra* is *abhinaya* (acting) since it is through the *abhinaya* that a performance expresses its meaning. Bharata in Chapter VIII of the *Natyasastra* defines *abhinaya* as follows:

अभिपूर्वस्तु णीञ् धातुराभिमुख्यार्थनिर्णये।
यस्मात्पदार्थान् नयति तस्मादभिनयः स्मृतः॥ (Rastogi 327)

Abhipūrvas tu nīñ dhātur ābhimukhyārtha-nirṇaye:
yasmāt padārthān nayati tasmād abhinayaḥ smṛtaḥ.

Adya Rangacharya translates the shloka as: “The root *ni* – with the preposition *abhi* which means 'towards', gives the word *abhinaya* because it carries (*ni* –) the performance towards (the audience)” (78). Bharata divides *abhinaya* (acting) into four categories – *vachika* (speech), *angika* (gesture), *aharya* (costume and make up) and *sattavika* (emotional reaction). Mime constitutes part of the *angika abhinaya* which is further divided as an expression of – body, face and movements. Like classical theatre, Indian folk forms also employ mime for narrating a story. *Hayavadana* employs mime extensively in the play. Kapila, for example, mimes knocking on Padmini's door in the beginning while Padmini later mimes putting her child to sleep. The journey to the Ujjain fair is presented as mime with Kapila driving the cart and then miming a load of the Fortunate Lady's flowers in his arms for Padmini. Devadatta and Kapila mime chopping off their heads and Padmini, ironically, mimes putting them back on wrong bodies. Just as *yakshagana* does, *Hayavadana* also employs stylized movements. For instance, the climactic duel between Kapila and Devadatta towards the end is not choreographed realistically but as a highly stylized dance composition with their swords never coming in contact with each other.

The play also features two unusual characters – the speaking 'wooden' dolls. Karnad might be inspired by various forms of Indian puppetry like *kathaputli*, *gombeyatta*, *pavakoothu*, *bomalatta* etc. for their characterization. The use of dolls, usually played by children or young women, is an ingenious strategy and fulfil multiple dramatic functions. Most importantly, they present the inner workings of Padmini's psyche to the audience. Since they have access to Padmini's dreams, it is through their conversation that the audience know that she had been dreaming about Kapila. They also provide audience with a sense of time elapsed in the play. For instance, the dolls refer to the physical changes in Devadatta since the time he brought them home:

DOLL I: His palms! They were so rough once, when he first brought us here. Like a labourer's. But now they are soft— sickly soft—like a young girl's.

DOLL II: I know. I've noticed something too.

DOLL I: What?

DOLL II: His stomach. It was so tight and muscular. Now...

DOLL I: I know. It's soft and loose (158).

Thus, they become an important device that conveys Devadatta's going back to his original self.

The play is highly symbolic in its representation like other traditional theatres of India. Its anti-realism is suggested by its use of the 'wooden' dolls, *deus ex machina* as in the case of goddess Kali's intervention, Hayavadana's struggle with his horse-head, use of masks (for Hayavadana, Kapila and

Devadatta) and mixing of different worlds and times – all of which are in line with the conventions of folk theatre where meaning is conveyed through symbolism and stylization rather than realism. The play also exhibits folk theatre's structural flexibility. For instance, the Bhagavata towards the end enters the inner world of the play and not only interacts with characters but also serves an important dramatic function. As Padmini prepares to perform sati, she places her son in the Bhagavata's care entrusting him with the responsibility of taking him to Devadatta's father in the city. Like a typical *yakshagan* ending, *Hayavadana* ends with a *mangalam* thanking gods for the successful completion of the play:

Grant us, O Lord, good rains, good crop,
Prosperity in poetry, science, industry and other affairs.
Give the rulers of our country success in all endeavours,
and along with it, a little bit of sense (186).

However, Karnad does not leave the opportunity to bring contemporaneity to the play one last time by concluding the mangalam with a sarcastic suggestion to give the post-colonial politician success and “a little bit of sense” in order to contribute to the nation-building process.

III. Conclusion

Although the main action of *Hayavadana* is borrowed from a centuries old Sanskrit text, locates itself temporally in a remote past, and it is heavily influenced by folk, traditional and classical theatres, *Hayavadana* is neither folk nor classical. It would not be wrong to claim that there is *yakshgana* in *Hayavadana* and not vice versa. Its primary audience has always been urban or semi-urban. Just as *Hayavadana*, the character, who is composed of incompatible body parts, *Hayavadana*, the play, also seems to be composed from eclectic sources that might seem to diverge initially. However, as the play progresses, *Hayavadana* ultimately achieves completeness, though ironically as a horse and not as a human. Similarly, the play is also successful in putting across its meaning – both at the narrative and the performative levels – as a whole despite being constituted by seemingly disparate elements. The flexibility of the folk performance allows Karnad to create a form that can accommodate the temporal and spatial requirements of the play's narrative. Gilbert and Tompkins have well encapsulated the creative potential of folk forms in post-colonial societies:

Apart from being more complex than most western commentators generally allow, traditional enactments have special functions in post-colonial societies and are often key sites of resistance to imposed values and practices. Rooted in folk culture, these enactments are not only mnemonic devices that assist in the preservation of history but are also effective strategies for maintaining cultural difference through specific systems of communication—aural, visual, and kinetic—and through specific values related to local (often pre-contact) customs (54).

Hayavadana demonstrates how traditional theatres can be adapted to articulate deep social, political and cultural concerns of the time if treated with contemporary sensibility, critical insight and creative imagination. In doing so, Karnad's dramaturgical approach does not remain a simple return to the past but a critical strategy through which the play asserts a distinct cultural identity while resisting the lures of Western theatrical models.

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Gendering History: A Study of Dalit Women's Assertion and the Politics of Exclusion in the Dalit Movement

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to highlight an important but often overlooked aspect of Dalit history, the significant role played by Dalit women in political and literary movements. While the broader Dalit struggle has gained recognition, the specific contributions of Dalit women have remained underexplored. Though the Dalit movement has succeeded in keeping the cause of the Dalits as an important subject, but unfortunately, Dalit women remain veiled in the periphery. Their dual marginalization both within Hindu society and their own community has nurtured a unique Dalit feminist perspective. This perspective challenges the limitations and oversight of mainstream Dalit leadership and movements and advocates for a feminist philosophy of Dalit liberation that addresses both caste and gender oppression.

With special reference to select Dalit women narratives, this paper argues that Dalit women's protestation emerges from a Dalit feminist standpoint that questions and challenges not only Brahmanical caste oppression but also patriarchal exclusion within the Dalit movement. It aspires to look at Dalit women as agencies of socio-political transformation, who have made a mark on history with their participation in the grassroots movements against untouchability, women's rights and social exclusion thus representing their efforts to reevaluate the definition of Dalit politics itself, making it all-encompassing, egalitarian, and committed to gender justice.

Key Words: Dalit history; Dalit women consciousness; Dalit feminist standpoint; Dalit liberation, Ambedkarite movement.

Introduction

Despite the recognition gained by Dalit movements through literary and political assertion, the contributions of Dalit women on the same question remain largely overlooked and unexplored. The fight for Dalit dignity and liberation would have been incomplete without their active participation and contribution. These women played a crucial role in shaping the movement, engaging alongside men in both political and literary spheres. They were deeply involved in the Satyashodhak, Ambedkarite and non-Brahmin movements, particularly the labour and land rights, access to education, untouchability, and caste-based sexual violence, fearlessly challenging the hierarchical structures of the Indian society. Known for their intelligence, wit, and sharp sense of humor, they pursued lives of dignity and self-respect. Their resilience was marked not by self-pity or submissiveness but by strength and determination (Moon and Pawar 173). Their activism has been instrumental in shaping the discourse on caste-based discrimination, yet their contributions have frequently been marginalized within both

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mainstream feminist and Dalit movement. This article therefore adopts a Dalit feminist standpoint that is grounded in their lived experiences. It challenges both Brahmanical patriarchy and patriarchy existing within the Dalit politics. The paper seeks to explore the crucial role of Dalit women in the Dalit movement, both in the historical and contemporary contexts, accentuating their resilience and resistance in their search for social equality and dignity. Their assertion is a demand for a revolutionary political intervention that challenges the gendered power structure working within the anti-caste struggle.

Dalit women leaders have played a decisive role in grassroots activism, challenging violence and caste-based discrimination, advocating for rights and laws that would ensure their safety and dignity. They have been in forefront together with men in building strong community networks to challenge the dictates of the upper-castes out rightly. Additionally, their intersectional approach where they recognize how caste and gender are inextricably linked makes them more assertive towards their goal. Savitribai Phule, wife of Jyotirao Phule, has been one of the earliest women to fight for the cause of Dalit women. She was deeply involved in social activism with her husband and was herself a pioneering figure for Dalit women's education and their social rights. She was the first among the earliest women to promote education and eventually established schools for Dalit girls. Likewise, Ramabai Bhimrao Ambedkar, wife of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, was also another significant woman who was the silent force behind Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's revolutionary work. While history often revolves around the prominent figures like Ambedkar, Ramabai's staunch commitment and calm resilience have been crucial foundation for Dalit movement. She has remained his strongest source of moral and emotional support and her life reflects the countless unseen contributions of women who have shaped history from the below. These early Dalit women activists shaped the course of the Dalit discourse, bringing in the question of both, the oppression of Dalits and the double oppression and subjugation of Dalit women within the Dalit discourse. They opened the path for the future generation to fight caste oppression and social exclusion.

Inspired by these women and under the guidance of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Dalit women developed a strong social and political consciousness, leading them to organize their own independent conferences and meetings by the 1930s. These women played a crucial role in political agitations and satyagrahas. During the Mahad Satyagraha in 1927, Dalit women stood alongside Ambedkar and other Dalit men, resolute in their commitment to the cause. They marched to the Chavdar tank to assert their right to access water, actively participating not only in the demonstrations but also in meetings where resolutions for Dalits' equal human rights were discussed. Shantabai Bhalerao, as documented by Pawar and Moon, recalls her involvement in the satyagraha: "Clutching the folds of my nine-yard sari in one hand and the written-out speech in the other, I read the paper and firmly announced that the Satyagraha would go on" (Pawar and Moon 240). The Nasik Kalaram Temple Satyagraha, which began in 1930 and continued until 1935, was a significant movement in the history of the Dalit liberation struggle. Initiated by Ambedkar, it aimed to challenge caste-based discrimination and assert the right to equality. Although he understood that temple entry alone would not resolve the deeper issues faced by Dalits, he saw the movement as a means to awaken their collective consciousness in the fight for equal rights.

Women participated in large numbers, staging 'sit-in' protests in front of temples, chanting bhajans, and enduring imprisonment. Their activism extended to the 1946 Satyagraha of the Scheduled Caste Federation, where many were again jailed for their involvement. These women also took the lead in organizing conferences and meetings to discuss strategies for social reform. Shantabai Bhalerao recalls her experience of the satyagraha, stating, "[w]e used to hold meetings where everybody gathered. We would sing various songs in these meetings, to rouse people against untouchability" (Pawar and Moon 241). Similarly, Baby Kamble (2014) asserts, "I am

the product of the Ambedkarite movement. I came in contact with the movement when I was a child of hardly seven or eight years of age ... I grew up in that charged atmosphere" (125). These women passed significant resolutions advocating for a ban on polygamy, the right to divorce, the establishment of hostels for Dalit women, free primary education, and scholarships for secondary and higher education for Dalit girls. Their activism and commitment towards Dalit women's progression is a proof of what Ambedkar said in one of the conferences: "I measure the progress made by untouchable society by seeing how much progress our women have made" (Pawar & Moon 173).

Dalit women have long recognized the importance of secular education, viewing it as a powerful tool for their empowerment and the primary path to modernization and liberation from the clutches of poverty and ignorance. During Ambedkar's time, a Dalit woman activist wrote in a newspaper: "[Women] should not confine themselves to the kitchen and the children; they must develop themselves. We must seek out grains of knowledge for ourselves. Women must remember that their progress can only come from education" (Pawar and Moon 172). Despite their hardships, Dalit women prioritized education, believing it to be the only means to gain economic independence and to facilitate upward social mobility in a casteist society where such recognition was otherwise difficult to attain. In her autobiography, Shantabai Dani recounts how her mother deeply valued education and regularly visited her teacher to ensure that Shantabai's studies remained uninterrupted. She pleaded with the headmaster, saying, "Master, my daughter must learn. She can stand on her own feet only if she is educated. Please see to it, Head Master, that she doesn't have any problem" (Rege, *Writing Caste* 137). Shantabai's mother, having endured oppression from her father, had one unwavering wish for her daughter—to receive an education. She firmly believed that "only a person who earns money can live with self-respect" (Rege, *Writing Caste* 137). Similarly, in her interview, Kamble highlights the determination of Dalit women to educate their children. To overcome financial obstacles, they sought various means to ensure their children's enrollment in school. She recounts a powerful instance of a woman's dedication, who, in her commitment to her sons' education, sold the food grain reserved for the rainy season and endured hunger to pay their secondary school fees.

When her husband left for work, she called her sons, took out all the jowar with their help and quietly sold it to a merchant. The money was adequate for paying the fees. When her husband came to know of this, he, of course, thrashed her. Besides, they had to starve throughout the rainy season. But she did not allow her sons' education to suffer. They passed their matriculation examination and later on even went to college. (Kamble 136-7)

These women made education a fundamental instrument to overcome systemic barriers and transform the socio-economic reality of their generation. They placed their faith in Ambedkar, who urged them to educate their children, instill self-respect, and prevent the growth of any feelings of inferiority. Kamble quotes Ambedkar's powerful appeal: "[Y]ou believed in god. You gave away generations to him. Now give me a chance. Give me this generation! Make sacrifices for twenty years. Enroll your children in schools. Go hungry if you must! But educate your children. After twenty years, you yourself will come and tell me what is better—god or education?" (Kamble 138).

In a letter to G. T. Meshram, chairman of the Welcome Committee for the All-India Depressed Classes Conference, Ambedkar expressed his satisfaction at witnessing "educated, committed, and conscious women who expressed their views lucidly and confidently at the meeting" (Pawar and Moon 144) of the Dalit Women Federation. He remarked that the women's conference left a profound impact on him. A strong advocate for women's participation in social activism, he emphasized his desire to see them more involved. Describing the event, he noted that the sight of thousands of women

gathered at the conference was so remarkable that even the gods would have wished to witness it. He was particularly moved by their attire, their neatness, and the confidence with which they conducted themselves (Pawar and Moon 145).

Their dedication and determination in various conferences “demonstrated an increased ideological awareness” among them (Pawar and Moon 146). These women were aware that their community needed to advance and strive for progress, ensuring their presence in educational, social, economic, and political spheres (146). However, their contributions to the fight against the caste system and their assertion of equal human rights are rarely acknowledged in the writings of Dalit men. Even Dalit movement leaders, despite their commitment to resisting dominant power structures, have often mirrored the same Brahmanical mechanisms to suppress the voices and agency of Dalit women. Pawar, in *The Weave of My Life*, vividly recounts the humiliation she endured at the hands of Dalit male leaders while attending various programs organized by and for Dalits. The excerpts from *The Weave of My Life*, proves their men's attitude:

But there was nobody to receive me there except the man whose loudspeaker was hired. So I quietly sat down on a bench outside. For a long time, nobody came and I was bored to death. Then a huge crowd of men arrived with some Member of Parliament, whom they ushered into the hall with great fanfare, with many garlands and flowers...I was about to get up and leave when somebody remembered me. ...Finally I spoke something on Phule and Ambedkar and left, saying I was getting late. But nobody took any notice of that either. (Pawar 235)

Although the Dalit movement has successfully highlighted the cause of Dalits, Dalit women, unfortunately, remain marginalized and overlooked. Sharmila Rege expresses Pawar's concern for Dalit women, saying that she is “disturbed with what she could see around- only men- both in the worlds of activism and of literature” (Rege, Afterword 331). Dalit women played a crucial role in Ambedkarite movements, actively participating in key struggles. Whether it was the political radicalization at Mahad in 1927, the conferences organized by the Scheduled Caste Federation in the 1940s, the satyagraha against the Pune Pact in 1932, or the establishment of the Dalit Mahila Federation and Buddhist Mahila Mandals in the 1950s, they were intensely engaged in every aspect of the movement.

Baby Kamble was profoundly involved in the Ambedkarite struggle. Reflecting on her journey, she writes, “Social work became an alternative source of sustenance. A new fire began to burn in my heart” (Kamble 127). From a young age, she became aware of the caste system's hypocrisy with Ambedkar's arrival, transforming into a rebel. Her first act of defiance occurred when, as a schoolgirl, she and a few classmates boldly entered a temple of Lord Ram to ‘pollute’ him. This experience led her to reject the deity entirely. With a mix of humor and defiance, she recalls, “I will die but never again will I think about this horrid god. I will stay away from him forever. I swear. Otherwise, I will change my name. I won't be called Baby anymore!” (132). Kamble describes this as her first active participation in the Ambedkarite movement.

Women of that time were sincerely committed in claiming their rights. As a young girl, Kamble attended meetings in place of her mother, who was restricted by her father from leaving the house. In the early days, Phaltan, Maharashtra, saw the establishment of the first women's club, Mahila Mandal, which was initially dominated by upper-caste women. However, Queen Lakshmibai of Phaltan made the decision to include Mahar women as well. During one such meeting, Brahmin and Maratha women occupied all the chairs, leaving the Mahar women standing to the side. Witnessing this discrimination, a Mahar woman named Thakubai confronted Queen Lakshmibai, declaring, “Your women are not allowing ours to sit. Our Ambedkar has taught us to demand our rights. I will remove them from the

chairs and seat my women there.” Momentarily taken aback, the queen quickly arranged chairs at the front for the Mahar women (133). Such was the strength Ambedkar instilled in Dalit women. Kamble affirms, “It is because of him that my pen could scribble out some thoughts. It is because of him that I have understood truth; that I can now see how morality is being trampled upon. It is because of him that I got the inspiration to join the struggle against oppression and contribute my small might to it” (102).

Baby Kamble recounts numerous instances where her growing caste consciousness compelled her to stand up against upper-caste girls who mocked their customs and traditions. When these girls insulted Ambedkar, she and her friends would boldly respond, saying, “Our Ambedkar looks like a sahib. Do you know why your Gandhi is toothless? Because our Ambedkar kicked his teeth out! Haha... That's why your Gandhi has no teeth. And do you know why Gandhi is bald? Because our Ambedkar shaved his head! That's the kind of man he is!” (p. 110). They would even sing in unison, “Where's Gandhi's spinning wheel gone?/Bhim has shaved Gandhi's head off” (109). Knowing that their touch was considered polluting by the upper castes, Kamble and her friends would mischievously brush against upper-caste girls on purpose and run away laughing. She describes how the act of 'defiling' them with their touch gave them an exhilarating sense of defiance and joy, making them feel as if they were in the seventh heaven (110).

Shantabai Danaji Dani was another prominent Dalit woman actively involved in the Ambedkarite struggle. Under the mentorship of Dadasaheb Gaikwad, she played a significant role in the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) and later in the Republican Party. Alongside other women, she was imprisoned in Yerwada jail, where they collectively demanded to be treated as political prisoners. In her work *For Us—These Nights and Days*, Dani documented women's political activism and their contributions to the Ambedkarite movement.

Pioneering Dalit women like Baby Kamble, Shantabai Danaji Dani, and Shantabai Kamble were among the first generation to actively participate in Ambedkar's movements. They possessed a keen awareness of how caste and patriarchy were intertwined to create hierarchies that marginalized them. Their writings provided some of the earliest critiques of this dual oppression, addressing both caste-based and gendered discrimination. These women boldly challenged the oppressive practices sanctioned by Hindu religious doctrines and also confronted the patriarchal structures within their own communities. Their works offer a mature and insightful discussion of the violence and injustices they endured. Commenting on their activism, Maya Pandit observes that “they were markedly different from their male counterparts, both in the perception of gendered inequalities and a sense of agency” (para. 4).

Kumud Pawde, a Mahar woman activist, writer, and professor of Sanskrit, was one of the earliest pioneers to challenge both casteism and patriarchy. Through her active involvement in the women's movement and the Dalit liberation struggle, she fought these oppressive structures singlehandedly. One of her most significant acts of defiance was her decision to study Sanskrit—an area of knowledge historically denied to Dalits. Reflecting on this achievement, she writes, “For several centuries that which we were not even allowed to touch has become comprehensible, that which was kept in a hard shell has become accessible. The knowledge wrapped in the mantle of a mystique has been embraced by one whom religion has declared to be the equivalent of a lowly insect” (Rege, *Writing Caste/Writing Gender* 325).

Similarly, Jyoti Lanjewar, a Marathi Dalit poet, uses her poetry to critically examine the complex interplay of caste and gender. Her verses intricately depict the contributions of Dalit women in the Ambedkarite movement. In her poem *Mother*, she powerfully portrays the unwavering dedication of a poor, illiterate yet fiercely committed Dalit woman to the *Namantar Andolan* (1978–1994)—the

movement advocating for the renaming of Marathwada University in Aurangabad after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

I have seen you
 At the front of the Long March
 The end of your sari tucked tightly at the waist
 Shouting "Change the name"
 Taking the blow of the police stick on your upraised hands
 Going to jail with head held high. (Zelliot 207)

The poem powerfully highlights the significant contributions of Dalit women to the larger Dalit cause. Lanjewar, as a member of the Republican Party of India, strategically utilized her position to amplify the voices of Dalit women and advocate for a more inclusive political space for them.

Inspired by revolutionary thinkers like Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dalit women were deeply committed to documenting their struggles through writing. Dalit women's literature has become a vital part of the broader Dalit literary movement, emerging in various forms. While early Dalit writers were predominantly men, from the 1960s onward, women began to narrate their histories through poetry, short stories, essays, critical analyses, and autobiographies. Writers such as Sugandha Shende, Babytai Kamble, Hira Banode, Kumud Pawade, Meena Pawar, Dr. Asha Thorat, Urmila Pawar, Meenakshi Moon, Shantabai Kamble, Dr. Jyoti Lanjewar, Bama, Kusum Meghwal, Kausalya Baisantri, and many others played a crucial role in advancing the Dalit liberation movement through their writings while carrying forward Ambedkar's legacy. Their works highlight the deep-rooted caste inequalities faced by Dalit women and examine the intricate intersections of caste with class and patriarchy (Rawat and Satyanarayana 7). More than just personal expressions, these writings serve as historical records of their struggles and powerful tools in the ongoing fight against exploitation. As Shailaja Paik notes, these narratives document Dalit women's challenges to the idea of a singular, homogenous Dalit identity, their experiences of social, economic, religious, and political marginalization, and their ongoing struggles for equality (Paik 4).

Dalit activism has been a fusion of both political and literary movements. Unlike their male counterparts, Dalit women's writings are less frequently translated, contributing to their invisibility. It was only in the 1990s that translations of their works began gaining traction. Yet, the consciousness of Dalit women had already begun evolving in the early twentieth century with Ambedkar's influence. Positioned at the margins of a deeply unequal society, their assertion of a distinct identity gained momentum in the 1970s through literary discourse. Ruth Manorama describes Dalit women as "the thrice alienated"—oppressed by class, patriarchy, and caste (Dietrich 69). Despite these barriers, they emerged as rebels, using literature as a means to reclaim dignity and agency. Baby Kamble was the first Dalit woman to articulate her awareness of caste and gender oppression, shedding light on women's participation in the Dalit struggle and their growing sense of self-awareness. Her work demonstrates "a clear progression in the way they have interpreted and re-constructed the realities of their gendered existence" (Pandit, para. 1). Later, Urmila Pawar and Meenakshi Moon authored *We Also Made History*, one of the earliest and perhaps the only historical work dedicated to restoring the agency of women involved in the Ambedkarite movement.

The Dalit literary movement has largely been shaped by Dalit men, whose perspectives often overlook the lived realities of Dalit women. Auto-narratives by Dalit men across India predominantly focus on their own struggles and experiences of caste oppression, presenting these as universal to all Dalits, irrespective of gender differences. As a result, Dalit women occupy only a marginal space in

these writings. Rege observes that Dalit women are “only selectively remembered as sacrificing wives and mothers, or victims of caste-based practices” (Rege, *Debating the Consumption* 98). Moreover, within the Dalit liberation struggle—often perceived by Dalit men as a male-led cause—women are positioned as passive supporters rather than active allies. The deeply embedded patriarchal structures within the movement often remain unchallenged (98). With few exceptions, Dalit male writers have failed to do justice to Dalit women's narratives. Criticizing the works of male Dalit writers such as Daya Pawar's *Baloota*, Shankarkumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi*, Shankarrao Kharat's *Taral Antara*, Laxman Mane's *Upura*, and Rustam Achalkhamb's *Gavaki*, poet Jyoti Lanjewar highlights this exclusion and the limited representation of Dalit women's voices.

In all these autobiographies, Dalit woman has been portrayed a suppressed and shattered. Dalit writers, with a few exceptions, have not paid attention to the fact that Dalit women's life is worth contemplation. Because women have not got the justice they wanted, the autobiographies of these Dalit writers are self-centred. In the autobiographies of Dalit men, nowhere there is a mention of her different identities, of her capability, her inner and outer conflicts. He expresses an awareness of how Dalit male was made, how he struggled, how he advanced. But there is no expression of how, because of wife or beloved, he reached that stage. (Lanjewar 199)

Maya Pandit contends that Dalit writers like Daya Pawar and Laxman Gaikwad “hardly ever saw their women as agencies of socio-political transformation” (Para, 3). In contrast, Dalit women's writings engage with their community's culture with greater nuance and sensitivity. Their narratives not only document their struggles within and beyond the household but also acknowledge the role of Dalit men in the movement, recognizing their support as fathers, husbands, and colleagues (Lanjewar 199). More importantly, these works expose the “composite apparatus of Brahmanical dominance perpetrated through superstitions, illiteracy, ignorance, and oppressive practices” (Pandit xiv).

The emergence of Dalit feminist consciousness in the 1990s critically questioned the Dalit movement's singular focus on caste while also challenging mainstream feminist historiography in India. The 1990s marked a significant shift in their perspectives. The implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendations in 1990 highlighted the centrality of caste in the lives of Hindu women, many of whom took to the streets in support of their men, protesting against the new reservation policies. Their placards reflected their anxiety over securing employed caste Hindu husbands. Rawat and Satyanarayana observe that “such a public display of caste arrogance and upper-caste identity by sections of Hindu women also revealed the social divide between Dalit and upper-caste women” (19). This moment challenged the so-called 'inclusiveness' of India's feminist movement and exposed its failure to acknowledge difference.

Mainstream Indian feminism, primarily led by upper-caste, urban, educated, middle-class women, has largely been concerned with “Brahmanic sexual controls over women” (Dietrich 77). As a result, it has often disregarded caste as a fundamental factor in gender-based violence, adhering to the dominant narrative that Dalit women exist in a more democratic space and enjoy greater sexual and economic freedom than their upper-caste counterparts. Dalit women have critiqued this form of feminism as Brahmanical, accusing upper-caste women of perpetuating patriarchal norms and furthering their male counterparts' legacy. In response, they established

the National Federation of Dalit Women in 1995 to challenge mainstream feminism and assert their right to represent their own experiences. Identifying themselves as 'the thrice alienated'—marginalized by caste, class, and gender (Dietrich 69)—Dalit women sought to reclaim their agency. Like the Dalit Liberation movement, mainstream women's movements have often erased the struggles, potential, and achievements of Dalit women. Since its inception, Indian

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feminism has been preoccupied with upper-caste women's experiences—their conflicts with patriarchy, their tensions with tradition, and their aspirations for modernity (Rege, *Debating the Consumption* 66).

Both Dalit and feminist political and literary movements have historically marginalized Dalit women. Dalit movements subsuming their voices within broader caste assertions, while feminist movements have often overlooked their distinct struggles under the broad framework of universal sisterhood. Understanding their location within both the movements, they carved out a distinct space to mark their oppression and establish their distinct position. This leads Dalit women to establish their own standpoint to mark their unique social location. They developed Dalit feminism, which acknowledges the intersection of caste, gender, and class oppression. Dr. Sharmila Rege's work on Dalit feminism introduced Ambedkarite feminist perspectives into academic discourse. She called for a Dalit feminist standpoint, which recognized that Dalit women faced both caste-based and gender-based oppression, making their experiences different from upper-caste women. It critiqued Savarna (upper-caste) feminism for not addressing caste inequalities in their movements and advocated for an intersectional approach that considered caste, class, and gender together. Through her work, she encouraged Dalit women to embrace Ambedkarite feminism, which promotes social justice, education, and political activism as tools for empowerment. Dalit women's contribution to the Dalit movement is immense, as they have challenged both caste and gender oppression. Their activism, literature, and leadership have been instrumental in shaping the fight for equality and justice in India. They have reshaped, legal, political and feminist movements, demanding a radical rethinking of social justice. Their experiences and contributions produce a distinct epistemological standpoint that reveals their social realities. However, their struggles continue, demanding greater representation, recognition, inclusion and justice within both the Dalit and feminist movements.

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Sustainable Craftsmanship and 'Rights to Repair': Navigating the GI Frameworks for Protectionism

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ABSTRACT

Traditional handicrafts represent far more than economic exchange or commercial activity; they embody the cultural, accumulated knowledge, skills, and identities of societies that have evolved over generations. However, these handicrafts are gradually facing challenges arising from mass industrial production, consumerism, and the increasing tendency towards the culture of disposability. Against this background, the paper explores the relationship between Geographical Indications (GIs) and the concept of the Right to Repair (RtR), proposing an outline that places cultural continuity, sustainability, and community welfare at its core.

Many GI-protected products are inherently durable, repairable and also designed for long-term use, making them natural examples of sustainable craftsmanship. Indian examples such as Kanchipuram Sarees, Banarasi Sarees, Channapatna Toys, and Jaipur Blue Pottery, where maintenance, repair and restoration remain integral to the life cycle of the product and to the dissemination of artisanal knowledge. These examples show that repair is not merely a mechanical activity but also a means of preserving and protecting cultural heritage and sustaining local livelihoods.

The paper concludes that integrating repair rights within GI protection frameworks can significantly contribute to sustainable development by encouraging responsible consumption, strengthening local artisans, protecting traditional knowledge systems, inclusive economic growth and providing means of livelihood.

Key Words: Sustainable Craftsmanship, Geographical Indicators, Right to Repair, TRIPs, Artisans, and Handicrafts

Introduction

Historically, Traditional Art represents the cultural fabric of a locality and the values of an era, and handicrafts are carried over by future generations. These handicrafts are intangible cultural and civilisation heritage that supports livelihoods, fortifies local economies, and develops identity. Traditional art forms are significant not only as artistic expressions but also incorporate spirit lines or living cultural representations of identity. In India, customary art forms show living legacies of knowledge, identity, and sustainability.

India's handicrafts are an icon of the nation's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and boost means of livelihood based on generation-to-generation transfer of skills, values, and techniques. India's handicrafts industry faces existential challenges from technological development,

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industrialisation, limited market access, climate change, and decreasing cultural appreciation in spite of their economic and cultural significance. Further, many artisan communities face economic marginalisation due to limited market access, low consumer awareness, and local community disintegration. This trend is driving away the young generation from the traditional handicrafts and art.

At present, the global economy is navigating a double evolution, i.e. the digital shift and the green transition. Vital to the latter is the "Right to Repair," a movement devoted to changing the culture of planned obsolescence. Through the linking of the "Right to Repair" to the "Rights of Origin," There can be a sustainable development and economic sustainability model.

The evolution of the GI-based repair framework is necessitated by a great storm of industrial upsurge and environmental urgency. Contemporary industrial production and manufacturing have largely adopted planned obsolescence, with a limited practical and usable lifespan. Customary handicrafts are historically the exact opposite of this trend, created for inter-generational use. Through the process of codifying durability and reparability into the GI product requirement, ensuring that the product's name remains synonymous with durability and longevity, rather than eventual breakdown and failure.

When a traditional industrial good (e.g., a high-end Swiss timepiece or a specialised textile loom) can only be serviced by a single business entity, which is generally the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), the local "repair culture" of the community stops and eventually dies. A GI-linked repair framework provides that the know-how of maintenance remains a public-private good within the geographical region, preventing business entities from locking and blocking the repair process away from the original artisans. The humankind is currently witnessing a knowledge haemorrhage. As traditional goods are replaced by disposable industrial alternatives, the specialised and dedicated skills required to maintain and restore these items are not being passed to the next generation. Youth are less likely to learn a craft if the primary market is one-off sales. By legalising the "Right to Repair" as part of the GI, it creates a permanent, specialized and dedicated job market for restoration and repair. This ensures that artisanal skills and knowledge are not just a monumental piece but present an economically viable skill set. Environmental and Cultural Sustainability concerns, as the crossroads of the throwaway economy and the erosion of cultural identity, present a dual crisis. Every discarded and unused handicraft represents wasted raw materials and high embodied energy. In contrast, repair is the highest form of carbon sequestration or removal in the product lifecycle. When an artist and region loses its ability to repair its own traditional handicraft, it loses a piece of its cultural autonomy and sovereignty. Furthermore, integrating repair into GI frameworks aligns with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). It moves the GI label from a mere marketing tool to an emblem of "Ethical Stewardship."

The Structural Conflict

Current intellectual property systems (Patents, Copyrights, and Trade Secrets) frequently prioritise the manufacturer's right to control the sale and usage over the consumer's right to enjoy and maintain their property. In patent law, the line between a "permissible repair" and an "infringing reconstruction" is extremely blurry. For a high-end and sophisticated industrial GI product, replacing a proprietary component may be legally interpreted as "making" the product anew, leading to potential infringement action against independent artisans. As traditional tools of the artisans (like looms or kilns) become "smarter," manufacturers use Digital Rights Management (DRM) and trade secret protections to hide diagnostic data and schematics, effectively locking out local repairers who have maintained these tools for generations. Standard intellectual property tools like Trademarks or Patents are often individualistic, monopolistic and expensive, which does not align with the collective

and ancestral nature of craftsmanship. Individual artisans lack the capital to defend their "right to fix" against large business entities that may have patented specific "improved" artisanal processes of manufacturing. Without a well-defined legal framework to protect the repair aspect of a craft, the technical "savoir-faire" shifts from the local craftsman's workshop to the global corporation's authorised service centres, stripping the craftsman community of its economic agency and benefits.

The most significant gap is the "silo-ed" nature of current legal regulations. Historically, GIs are treated as "origin labels" that stop at the point of sale. They confirm where a product came from, but recommend no legal protection for what happens during its lifespan. There is currently no integrated legal mechanism that says: "To use this GI name, you must also provide the spare parts and knowledge required to keep it functional for the extended lifespan." This disconnect allows "craft-washing", where companies use a traditional name to sell a product that is designed to be un-repairable and disposable in nature.

Current GI Specification	"Repair-Inclusive" GI
Focuses solely on raw materials and initial assembly.	Includes maintenance protocols and component accessibility.
Protects the brand from clones.	Protects the entire lifecycle from obsolescence.
Knowledge is for production.	Knowledge is for stewardship.

Sustainable Craftsmanship

Sustainable craftsmanship is defined as a production model where the preservation of the future (environment) is achieved through the refinement of the past, i.e. traditional techniques. It moves beyond "eco-friendly" labelling to address the systemic durability of both the object and the community that produces it. While industrial sustainability often focuses on "passive" durability, sustainable craftsmanship focuses on Active Durability. A key element is that the product is designed to be unmade. In traditional industrial goods, this is seen in the use of screws instead of glue, or hand-stitched seams instead of heat-welding. Unlike synthetic materials that "fail" (crack, peel, or yellow), the materials in sustainable craftsmanship (vegetable-tanned leather, solid wood, hand-forged steel) develop a patina. This aesthetic evolution increases the emotional value of the product over time, further discouraging replacement. Sustainability in craftsmanship is indivisible or inseparable from Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). In a mass-production factory, a worker may only know one part of a process. In sustainable craftsmanship, the local knowledge is not redundant and shared across a community of artisans. This ensures that if one workshop closes, the "repair DNA" of the region survives. A product is sustainable if the skill can be handed down through generations. The GI framework acts as a legal protector for this continuity, ensuring that the story of the object remains intact alongside its physical form.

THE LEGAL AND COLLECTIVE FRAMEWORK

Earlier, a geographical indication was considered as *prima facie* non-distinctive under the Trade and Merchandise Marks Act, 1958; it was subject to the limited exceptions and could be registered only upon the production of sufficient evidence establishing its capacity to distinguish goods. This approach shows the traditional trademark-centric approach of distinctiveness, under which geographical names were generally excluded from protection. However, the international legal position undergoes a noteworthy shift with the adoption of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects

of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which prescribes and regulates minimum standards for the protection of geographical indications. Part II, Section III of the TRIPS Agreement, encompassing Articles 22 to 24, mandates that World Trade Organisation (WTO) Members provide a minimum baseline level of protection to geographical indications. In conformity with its obligations under TRIPS, India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which came into force in 2003, along with the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Rules, 2002. This legislative framework introduced a distinct and comprehensive regime for GI protection in India; it has adopted a new statutory definition of geographical indications. Under the TRIPS Agreement, a geographical indication is understood as a sign that identifies goods as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or locality within that territory, where a given quality, reputation, or other characteristic of the goods is essentially attributable to their geographical origin.. Thus, the international legal standard governing geographical indications is firmly anchored in the WTO-administered TRIPS framework.

Article 22.1 of TRIPS defines GIs as "indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin." Many nations and the EU have moved beyond basic trademark law to sui generis systems. For instance, the Indian GI Act, 1999 and the EU CIGI Regulation, 2023, specifically include handicrafts and industrial goods, recognising that human skill is as much a part of the geographical environment as soil or climate. Contrasting patents or trademarks, which are usually owned by a single business entity, a GI is a Collective Right or Community Right. Any producer and artisan in the designated region who follows the "Product Specification" can use the GI label for the products. It cannot be sold or licensed to an outsider. This collective and community ownership is vital for repair; it ensures that the repair knowledge belongs to the guild or region or community, not a single manufacturer or craftsman who might go bankrupt or decide to stop servicing a product. A GI does not just protect a name or brand; it protects the *Savoir-Faire*.

The international legal framework for Geographical Indications is primarily based on the WTO's TRIPS Agreement, which establishes a minimum baseline for protecting products whose quality or reputation is tied to their place of origin or region. However, the modern thrust for repair rights finds deeper support in the evolving efforts of WIPO, particularly the 2024 Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge. This treaty, alongside ongoing WIPO negotiations and discussions, shifts the focus from simple market protection to the safeguarding of "living heritage." Of mankind Further, UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognises "traditional craftsmanship" as a domain requiring vital and urgent safeguards and protection. Furthermore, by viewing repair as a form of "cultural maintenance," these international instruments collectively provide that intellectual property protection should not end at the factory gate but must extend to the skills required to keep a cultural craft in the lifespan of use.

In India, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, creates a robust sui generis system that already includes handicrafts and industrial goods within its ambit. While the GI Act mainly focuses on protecting the collective brand, it can be harmonised with the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which grants every consumer the "Right to Choose" and "Right to Repair", a right that is effectively denied when manufacturers or business houses create repair monopolies or practice planned obsolescence of the product. Recent discussions by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs have emphasised that a comprehensive "Right to Repair" framework is essential for the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Mission. By linking GI specifications with these consumer rights, India can create a unique legal ecosystem where the protection of a GI product (e.g., Banarasi Saree or a Jaipur

Blue Pottery item) includes a mandate to provide the knowledge and materials necessary for its restoration, thereby aligning intellectual property with environmental and competition law concerns.

A comparative examination reveals that the European Union is the current global leader in this integration. The EU Right to Repair Directive, 2024, and the CIGI Regulation, 2023, together create a mandatory repairability standard for craft and industrial goods, requiring manufacturers and original equipment manufacturers to provide spare parts and manuals for up to ten years. Similarly, in the US, various state-level Right to Repair legislation, e.g., in New York and California, has begun to remove proprietary barriers to maintenance.

These global precedents offer an important lesson: GI protection is most effective when it is proactive rather than reactive. For traditional crafts, this means moving beyond "defensive" protection of a name and adopting "positive" lifecycle maintenance and repair obligations. Integrating and adopting these lessons allows GI frameworks to evolve from static identifiers into dynamic tools for economic development and growth.

GI and the Right of Repair

In the world of traditional craftsmanship, repair is not a modern "sustainability feature" added after the sale; it is a foundational part of the craft's identity and usage. Within craftsman communities, the act of mending and repair is often indistinguishable from the act of creation and production. This is sustained through inter-generational skill and knowledge systems, where apprentices learn not only how to manufacture and produce an object but also how to diagnose its wear and restore its functionality. By recognising repair as a core component of *savoir-faire*, Geographical Indications can move beyond protecting a static product and begin protecting a continuous process of care and service. When a community's identity is tied to the longevity of its product or craft, repair becomes a ritual of cultural preservation or protection, ensuring that the "living history" of the product or craft remains unbroken.

It is pertinent to mention that the case of Kanchipuram Silk Sarees offers a compelling illustration of how repairability is embedded within traditional systems of production protected by the Geographical Indications legal framework in India. Under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, Kanchipuram Sarees derive their authenticity not merely from their visual appearance but from the materials used and the methods of weaving practised by local handicraft artisans. Traditionally woven with pure mulberry silk and zari with silver content, these Sarees are intended for long-term use and are often passed on from one generation to the next generation. Repair is therefore not treated as an exception but as a routine and valued practice by the handicraft artisans. Artisans regularly rework worn borders, replace damaged zari threads, and strengthen weakened sections of the fabric, all while maintaining the original design and structure. Such repair work is undertaken within the weaving community or by artisans themselves, ensuring that the Saree retains its cultural and geographical identity. By protecting the process rather than the product alone, the GI regime also safeguards the knowledge and skills associated with manufacturing and repair, reinforcing collective rights that stand in contrast to monopolistic and exclusionary intellectual property models.

A similar relationship between authenticity, repair, knowledge and skill continuity can be observed in the tradition of Banarasi Sarees, which received GI protection in 2009. Banarasi weaving is distinguished by complex and specialised techniques such as Jamdani, brocade, and Tanchoi, each requiring a high degree of skill, precision and artistic skill. Given their ceremonial importance and frequent use on special occasions, Banarasi Sarees are commonly repaired for extended use rather than discarded. Repair practices include restoring motifs, reinforcing silk threads, and addressing

wear without disturbing the aesthetic harmony of the fabric or Saree. Essentially, such interventions are not viewed as diminishing the value of the Saree; instead, they are understood as part of its life cycle and use. Authenticity under the GI framework is therefore linked to the continuity of knowledge, technique and skill, rather than to the novelty of the final product. Repair work also provides a crucial source of livelihood for smaller weaving units and home-based artisans, particularly women, thereby sustaining the economic and social fabric of the craftsman community. In this way, GI protection supports a decentralised and inclusive repair ecosystem, unlike industrially produced textile markets where repair is often discouraged or contractually restricted.

For example, Channapatna toys, registered as a GI in 2005, further highlight how repairability operates as a cornerstone of sustainable craftsmanship in India. These toys are crafted and manufactured from locally available wood and finished with natural lac and vegetable dyes, using traditional hand-lathe techniques passed down through generations. Their design prioritises durability, sustainability and safety, especially for children, which naturally encourages repair rather than replacement. Common repair practices include reapplying lac coatings, replacing damaged wooden parts, and polishing surfaces using non-toxic and safe materials. Such repairs extend the usable life of the toy while preserving its essential character. The GI legal framework plays a crucial role here by preventing the entry of plastic or chemically treated imitations that undermine both safety and sustainability. At the same time, it protects the collective knowledge of the artisan community, ensuring that both production and repair remain rooted in local knowledge and skill systems. This stands in sharp contrast to many contemporary consumer goods, where repair is increasingly limited by proprietary controls and technological barriers imposed by the manufacturer.

In the case of Jaipur Blue Pottery, repairability takes on a more nuanced form due to the inherent fragility of the material used in the manufacturing of the product. Characterised by a quartz-based composition, low-temperature firing, and distinctive Persian-inspired motifs, blue pottery is often susceptible to cracking and surface damage. Nevertheless, traditional methods of repair exist and continue to be practised by the artisans. Artisans employ natural binders to seal cracks and reglazing techniques to restore surface designs, not to achieve factory-level perfection but to preserve the visual and artistic continuity of the product. Minor imperfections are culturally accepted and even valued as markers of handcrafted authenticity. Repair knowledge and skills in this craft are highly specialised and shared within artisan families and the community, reinforcing inter-generational skill and knowledge continuity. By recognising and protecting these traditional processes of production, manufacture and repair, the GI legal framework contributes to a culture of care and reuse, discouraging disposability and promoting more sustainable patterns of use and consumption.

Keeping in view, these case studies demonstrate that GI-protected handicrafts operate within repair-oriented systems that prioritise longevity, collective knowledge and skill, and cultural continuity. Repair, in this context, is not framed as a consumer right negotiated against manufacturers but as an intrinsic component of the craft manufacturing tradition itself. The GI regime, by emphasising process-based authenticity and collective ownership, enables craftsman communities and artisans to retain control over both production and maintenance practices. This creates an important corrective to dominant industrial models, where repair knowledge and skills are frequently proprietary and tightly controlled. The functioning of these traditional craft systems, therefore, provides valuable insights for reimagining the Right to Repair beyond consumer protection discourse, situating it instead within broader concerns of sustainability, cultural preservation, and economic development.

The most compelling advantage of using GIs for repair is their ability to combat the monopolisation of repair techniques by the manufacturer. Whereas in the case of patents, which can lock diagnostic tools or spare parts behind corporate walls, GIs operate on the principle of collective

rights. Because the "Product Specification" belongs to the entire producer community or group, the methods, tools, and material sources required for repair remain a "communal asset." This ensures that no single large entity or corporate house can seize control over the maintenance of a regional craft. By codifying these methods into the GI's legal framework, it will ensure that the "Right to Repair" is held by the many in the local community and artisans rather than the few, thereby anchoring the economic development and cultural value of the craft within its original locality.

Policy Implications of Sustainable Development

The integration of repair rights into GI frameworks offers a potent antidote to the mounting crisis of industrial and artisanal waste. GIs act as a catalyst for a circular economy model, which maintains priority of maintenance over disposal. While traditional "Right to Repair" movements have focused on the reduction of waste, GI-protected handicrafts and industrial goods can address the "hidden" waste of the luxury and home-goods sectors. A repair-centric GI ensures that products are not merely recyclable but are physically and aesthetically durable enough to stay out of landfills for generations. It can transform the GI label into a resource efficiency, significantly lowering the carbon footprint of a product's utility. Global trade focuses upon dis-empowering local artisans by commodifying their "origin" so as to boost profitable after-sales and repair markets in the hands of third-party corporations. By sedimentary, the right to repair to the geographical origin, the economic value of the product's entire lifespan can be reclaimed by the local community. Such a market trend can boost localised "repair ecosystem", providing stable, high-skilled employment and preventing the "brain drain" of artisanal talent to urban industrial centres. Furthermore, it ensures skill preservation; when the law protects the right to fix, it effectively protects. The transmission of the intricate "savoir-faire" of a region to the next generation through the practical, daily act of restoration.

This framework directly advances the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by aligning Intellectual Property law with three key SDGs. First, it champions SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by breaking the cycle of planned obsolescence and promoting a "culture of care" among consumers. Second, it supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by revitalising traditional industries and ensuring that artisanal work remains a viable, dignified livelihood in the modern economy. Finally, it reinforces SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by protecting the cultural heritage and local identities that give regional communities their resilience. Ultimately, linking GI protection with repair rights demonstrates that heritage preservation is not a backwards-looking endeavour, but a forward-thinking strategy for a sustainable global future.

Issues and Perspective

Integration of "Right to Repair" into GI frameworks can significantly transform the path for sustainability, yet not without friction. The mandating of repair protocols can lead to the GI becoming an overly restrictive instrument, stifling innovation or imposing impossible burdens on small-scale artisans. It can cause potential dilution of GI standards, as the focus will shift from maintaining originality standards to reparability standards. There can also be issues of enforceability standards, scarcity of spare parts or availability of genuine and authentic spare parts. The availability of GI produced internally can also raise jurisdictional challenges with respect to the reparability.

Concluding Observation

The intersection of Geographical Indications (GI) and the "Right to Repair" (RtR) puts forth a transformative arena for IPR. When repair protocols, spare-part authenticity, and maintenance know-how are legally protected in GI law, the resulting "Sustainable Craftsmanship" can emerge as a powerful antidote to planned obsolescence. Such efforts can safeguard the "living archives" of artisanal communities and ensure that traditional goods are functional icons of the circular economy.

However, this vision requires a robust, interdisciplinary approach to legal reform. It is no longer sufficient for IP regimes to operate in isolation. Therefore, regulators have to blend trademark and GI laws with consumer protection and environmental concerns to create a "Repair-Inclusive" GI specification. By bringing a shift in jurisprudential thought process, one can align economic growth with the urgent mandates of cultural and environmental sustainability.

The navigation of the complexities of a resource-constrained world, the integration of repair rights into GI frameworks can empower local producers, and protect the consumer's investment. Ultimately, this approach can ensure that the heritage of the community becomes the blueprint for a sustainable and repairable future.

Therefore, the reforms must aim to amend GI laws to explicitly recognise repair rights as an inherent component of a product's quality and characteristics. By legally defining a GI product to include "repairable good," regulators can ensure durability as a binding legal requirement that protects the integrity of the geographical product throughout its entire lifespan.

Therefore, authorities should grant GI-linked certifications for repairability within the GI framework. This certification would serve dualists of purpose: ensuring consumers' interests, certified product's modularity and ease of maintenance, and allowing producers to market their goods as superior, long-term investments.

Such integration can be considered as a tool of monopolization as the functional and long-term existence of a product is more necessary for environmental concerns. Moreover, the emergence of global e-platforms can necessitate the availability of genuine spare parts globally. Therefore, there will be a limited chance of jurisdictional issues.

However, mere legislative changes cannot lead to building an economy centred on local craftsman but constant administrative efforts are also required to boost it further. The crippling effect on local craftsmen in the finance sector, therefore, requires a transformative approach to be adopted by the financial institutions so as to support the local craftsmen. Such efforts will not only boost the local production but will also reduce the pressure on the major cities on account of migration. It will also lead to engagement of rural men and women at the local level and will lead to refinement and protection of local artistry.

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