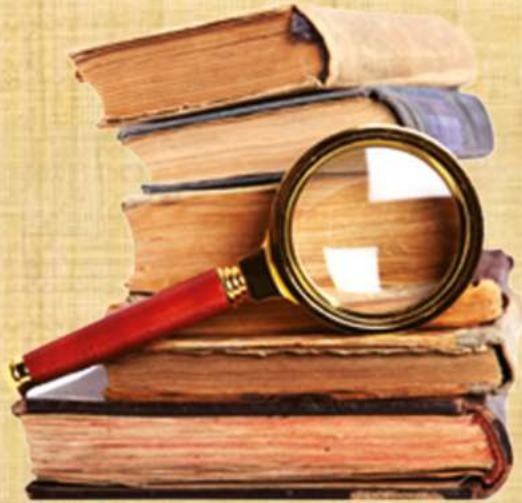


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# **SOUTH CALCUTTA GIRLS COLLEGE ACADEMIA**

**Vol. 4  
Annual**

**Issue 1  
Kolkata**



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Principal & Secretary

**SOUTH CALCUTTA GIRLS' COLLEGE**

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## **EDITORIAL :**

It gives me immense pleasure to pen this editorial for the latest edition of our Academic Journal, a platform that continues to reflect the intellectual vibrancy and academic rigor of our college. As the Principal, I feel proud to witness the consistent efforts of our faculty and researchers, in contributing to scholarly work that not only expands knowledge but also inspires critical thought and innovation.

In this age of rapid technological advancement and global interconnectedness, the role of academic research has become even more vital. Our journal serves as a testament to our institution's commitment to fostering a culture of inquiry, creativity, and academic excellence. Each article included in this volume has its originality, relevance, and potential impact, and I commend the authors for their dedication and scholarly contributions.

I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Editorial Board, peer reviewers, and all contributors who have worked diligently to maintain the quality and integrity of this publication. Their efforts ensure that the journal continues to be a credible and respected medium for academic discourse.

As you explore the pages of this issue, I encourage you to engage critically with the ideas presented and consider how they might influence or inspire your own academic journey. Let this journal not only be a repository of knowledge but also a catalyst for further research and collaboration.

With warm regards and best wishes,

**Professor (Dr.) Aparna De**

Principal

South Calcutta Girls' College



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# Structural Violence and Voices

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## Abstract

Structural violence is a state of conflict whose origin is embedded in the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of a society. It is the result of an unequal allocation and distribution of wealth and resources among the citizens. Norwegian thinker Johan Galtung coined the term in his article “Violence, Peace and Peace Research” in 1969. Structural violence means a situation of hostility and animosity between the perpetrator on one hand and victim on the other, though it may be latent in nature. Such a condition produces deprivation of some people who do not have access to basic necessities required for their survival and well-being. This kind of affair threatens the fundamental human rights and disrespects the important pillars of democracy, namely, equality, justice and liberty. Patriarchal social structure is an example of this kind of violence that promotes gender discrimination and exploitation. In order to attain the sustainable goals envisaged by The United Nations, this kind of violence should be eradicated from society. What is required is intense study and investigation of the social structure and identification of its loopholes. Proper and adequate adoption of policies as well as vigilance are need of the hour. Healthy communication and dialogue among the stakeholders are required that should be strengthened by proper feedback from people at large. The endeavour should be taken both in individual and collective ways to remove injustice in society.

A liberal and just social infrastructure enable the flowering of the potentials of all human beings that help to establish a peaceful society in the long run. (261 words)

## Key words

Deprivation, Patriarchy, Justice, Wellbeing, Peace.

## Introduction

The famous oil painting titled “Guernica” by Pablo Picasso is a remarkable contribution in the field of art that exhibits a vibrant and shocking image of violence. Incidents and occurrences of violence in local, national and international fields are quite a common



affair. In the first part of this paper, I have tried to discuss about structural violence, its nature and how it impairs the well-being of a certain section of the population. In the second part, I have discussed about the voices that speak out against various kinds of inequalities like caste and gender discriminations at different periods of history.

Johan Galtung articulated the notion of structural violence. The “Galtung Triangle of Violence” divides violence into three types, namely, direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690> ) Structural violence is also described as indirect violence. There are differences between direct and indirect violence. Whereas acts of direct violence have overt manifestations of physical assault and fury, indirect violence is somewhat camouflaged and hidden from our vision. The former, mostly a sudden outburst of wrath, usually has a particular time frame whereas the latter works surreptitiously and silently through a longer period of time. It is possible to identify the perpetrator of direct violence easily whereas it is difficult to do so in the case of indirect violence that may be caused by various layers of a social institution, maneuvered by a group of people who are powerful in the social ladder. It is mainly visible in a hierarchical relationship within a society where the privileged section of the population dominates over the underprivileged placed at the lower rung of a society. The conflict among the two groups arises out of unequal distribution of wealth and resources. It is mainly a battle of power where the powerless are deprived of the basic needs of life like food, clothing and shelter. In most of the cases, the social infrastructure is poor and inadequate. Professor Amartya Sen reminds us about the state of “Matsya Nyaya” where the big fishes consume the smaller ones. (Sen, Amartya. *Niti o Nyajyota*, pg.37) In this way, the lawmakers of ancient India have explained the state of injustice. The victims of structural violence are mostly the silent bearers of pain and suffering that are not redressed. It is the cause of deprivation of a certain section of population that obstructs their development of potentials and well-being.

Galtung clarifies his concept of violence by pointing out that violence with a specific subject-object relation is manifest since it is visible as action. On the other hand, without this relationship, violence is structural in the sense that it is ingrained in the social system. When people are starving in a situation that can be avoided objectively, then there is violence, although the subject-object relationship cannot be perceived clearly. He notes that in a static society, personal violence is registered whereas the structural one seems to be as natural as the air around. On the other hand, in a highly dynamic society, personal violence is considered as wrong and evil whereas the structural violence seems to be like a big rock in a creek that obstructs free flow and creates various

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kinds of eddies and turbulences. (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690> pp.171-173.)

## Well-being

Sir Isaiah Berlin in his essay “Two Concepts of Liberty” has made a vital distinction between negative and positive liberty. (Khullar, Ruplekha. Freedom, in Chaturvedi, Bibha and Sahani, Pragati edited Understanding Ethics, pg. 142). In the negative sense, freedom can be viewed as “freedom from”. It means freedom from any sort of interference or obstruction. In other words, it means absence of coercion. It should be taken into account that any kind of hindrance cannot be considered as a type of coercion, for instance, if a person is unable to travel to a distant land owing to flood or any kind of natural disaster. A person may be said to be coerced by another person or a group of persons or an institution when the latter intentionally stops the former to reach his intended goal. In the positive sense, it is “freedom to” that indicates a human being is free to control his life and achieve his goals.

This notion of negative freedom was prevalent in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith. “On Liberty”, the famous essay of John Stuart Mill throws light upon the significance of this idea. He praises the qualities like spontaneity, innovativeness and fearlessness as means of self-development and self-fulfillment. In the inner core of human consciousness man is absolutely free to decide his path where no external agency like state plays any part.

On the other hand, philosophers like Kant and Hegel criticized the above notion of freedom by saying that defining liberty only in the negative manner is incomplete. It should be defined in terms of presence of some factors that enable a person to live his life according to his choice and pursue his desired goal. However, Isaiah Berlin cautions us that what appears as positive freedom may actually hide the authority of a few who are considered as the political and moral guardians of society.

Individual well-being is characterized by provision of basic human needs, namely, food, clothing, shelter and security. Different welfare schemes of the government provide the satisfaction of the primary needs of its citizens. Unfortunately, in the third world countries, a large section of the population suffers deprivations not because of lack of resources but due to improper distribution and mismanagement of necessary goods that hamper their physical and mental developments.

In this connection, we can mention the observation of Professor Amartya Sen regarding the causes of the Bengal famine that ravaged millions of lives in the pre-independence time. (Madhukar, Kashide Yadav, Amartya Sen on Poverty and Famines, Quest Journals

Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Volume 10-Issue 4 2022, pp.18-21) He recollects his childhood memory of the disastrous famine in Bengal and observes that the cause of the famine was lack of democracy during the colonial British rule. The British newspapers maintained absolute silence regarding this incident. The British Parliament too was apathetic till the newspaper, The Statesman was vocal about this disaster, although much later. The government policy instead of controlling the situation aggravated it. When the matter intensified, the government banned the transaction of rice and crops within the Indian states. Hence, the price of rice in Bengal soared up and at the same time, the supply of rice was stopped. Moreover, the government decided to export rice to Sri Lanka even when the famine has already started in Bengal in 1943.

Sen comments that the colonial rulers adopted hasty and irrational policies to combat the famine. Although crop production was quite sufficient in Bengal, yet the demand rose in an alarming rate due to inflow of soldiers who were the added food consumers. The victims were the poor village farmers who could not buy the crops at a high rate and faced starvation. There was dearth of public policies to increase the income of the poor farmers so that they can buy the crops. Hence, the cause of famine was not the dearth of production of crops in Bengal but the sudden increase in demand and high pricing.

The distribution of crops too was not uniform. The government purchased the crops at a high rate from the villages that reached a small group of people through ration system, particularly in Kolkata. The price of food in the villages accelerated that led to starvation of the village folk because they were poor economically. The observations of Professor Sen bring into light the bare fact that the actual cause of famine was government apathy and adoption of wrong policies. There was no scheme of rehabilitation and emergency measures to save the people from poverty and hunger. The film “Asani Sanket (also called “Distant Thunder”) directed by Sri Satyajit Ray depicts the horrific and painful picture of the Bengal Famine.

## **Racial Discrimination**

The mass killing of the Jews during the Second World War by Hitler who advocated antisemitism is a painful episode of human history. The policy of Apartheid in South Africa was an evil and unjust practice that instigated political, economic, educational and social discrimination between the white and the non-white people. The Black people were forced to live in areas away from the households owned by the Whites. They were debarred from enjoying public facilities that took a heavy toll upon their

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health, education and security. In America, a recent incident of brutal torture and murder of George Floyd, a black American man by a white police officer came as a shock to the entire world. It brought to light a long history of slavery, exploitation and victimization of the Black people. Structural violence present in a society for a long period that threatens some people of neglect, abuse and subordination can crystalize into a rebellion and mass upsurge at any point of time.

## **Caste Discrimination**

It is an evil practice in a society that discriminates among people on the basis of their birth and social status. It enjoins a social hierarchy in which the people belonging to the upper caste exploits the people positioned in the lower strata. Often it is believed that such an unequal social hierarchy is divinely ordained. The lower caste people who are considered as the untouchables, are obstructed from enjoying public facilities. “Achhut Kanya” is a famous Hindi film by the Bombay Talkies that portrays the deplorable condition of girls belonging to a lower caste in the social system.

## **Religious Discrimination**

The religious fundamentalists throughout the world have a blind conviction that a particular religious faith that they profess is the one and the supreme religion. They disrespect other religious faiths and develop animosity towards them. Such a kind of discrimination sometimes burst like a volcano as “The Great Calcutta Killing” that occurred in the pre-independence period. Professor Sen recalls a sad incident during this time that he himself witnessed. A poor Muslim gentleman was brutally murdered in a Hindu neighborhood because he entered the locality to earn his daily living. (Sen, Amartya. *Parichiti o himsa*, pg. 181)

## **Gender Discrimination**

Professor Sen has highlighted upon the various kinds of gender inequality, some of which are survival inequality, natal inequality, unequal facilities, ownership inequality, unequal sharing of household activities and chores. (Sen, Amartya. *The Argumentative Indian*, pg. 224.) Inequality in property ownership is a significant kind of social inequality. The ownership of basic assets like land and homes are asymmetrically divided between man and woman. Many women in rural and even in urban society actually do not have claims to property and their voices are silenced by the male members. Inequalities in gender relationships in family have serious impact upon the areas of health, education and nutritional needs. It is quite unfortunate that in societies

where there is no overt gender discrimination, there is a deep-rooted division of labour among the members in the areas of daily household activities like cooking, childcare and services to the elderly members. It is commonly believed that men will work outside the home while women will look after the household work. Even if a woman works outside home, she cannot shun her household responsibilities that actually need to be shared by her husband gracefully. In this context, I like to mention the comment of Galtung that runs as follows, “Thus, when one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence.” (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690> pg. 171.)

Professor Sen mentions that when he had first started working on gender discrimination in the 1970s, he was quite astonished to notice that calorie requirements for various categories of people as mentioned in the famous Handbook of Human Nutrition Requirement regarded household work as sedentary activity. World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) appointed an Expert Committee whose report was reflected in the Handbook. Professor Sen repents that dearth of experience of household works of members of the Committee must be the cause of this wrong conclusion. (Sen, Amartya. *The Argumentative Indian*, pp.224-240).

The masculine perspective towards women in a patriarchal social structure is responsible for different malpractices and injustice meted to women at large. Physical assault and torture are common manifestations of gender discrimination that are often connected to the evil practices like dowry. Women are the targets of domestic violence and physical victimization like acid attack. The female fetuses are killed in many parts of India.

Witch hunting remains a wicked and sinful practice even today. Its root lies in misogynistic ideology whose targets are mostly widows and women of marginalized communities. The 2023 Annual Report of the United Nations Human Rights Council States comments that a large number of women become the victims of witchcraft every year in India, Africa, Papua New Guinea. A research organization named The Nirantar Trust made a survey in Bihar. Out of 145 women across 114 villages in 10 districts, 78% has suffered mental torment, 32% were verbally abused and 28% were socially ostracized. The National Crime Records Bureau data revealed that more than 2500 women had been killed on charges of witchcraft in India since 2000. 97% of the victims were tribal people, 75% of them were aged between 46 and 66, that indicates a vicious othering of women who have passed their reproductive period. More than 50% of the

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victims held leadership roles and 42% reported that their improved financial conditions made the relatives and neighbors jealous who labelled them as witches. (Old Scourge, The Telegraph Editorial, 16th December, 2024, pg. 10.)

These brutalities refer to the physical aspects of coercion and exploitation. The psychological aspect creates a sense of shame and trauma. The entrenched social system that sustains unequal distribution of power and opportunities and ascribes low and degraded status to women seems to justify the social order as natural. But actually, it is discriminatory in nature. Disdainful attitude towards women is to be condemned. Each human being, irrespective of sex, has the formidable right to live with respect and dignity.

However, the picture of redressal of sexual crimes and punishment of the offenders is grim in poor countries that lack sufficient infrastructure. There is lack of judicial support like fast-track courts, free legal advice and financial help. The emergency helpline phone numbers do not function in remote areas. One stop crisis center is minimal in number that should look after the physical and psychological conditions of the victims on an urgent basis and seek redressal. Hence, inadequate and poor facilities lead to disappearance of evidence and distortion of actual facts. Absence of proper investigation helps the perpetrators to escape from punishment and sometimes they pose a threat to the victims who suffer from physical harassment, humiliation, mental trauma and social exclusion.

## Voices

Mahatma Gandhi fought relentlessly against the inhuman practice of Apartheid. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an advocate of Civil Rights Movement who protested against poverty, discrimination and violence. His Nobel Peace Prize speech named “I have a Dream” created a significant milestone in history. In 2013, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi initiated a movement known as # “Black Lives Matter” against racism and violence. It was a revolutionary step to raise protest against exploitation and oppression of the Black people.

Mahatma Gandhi considered untouchability as a social evil and protested against it vehemently. Dr. Ambedkar, the Father of the Indian Constitution belonged to the Dalit Mahar caste and faced humiliation since his childhood days. Throughout his life, he struggled to establish social equality and justice. Meena Kandaswamy, E.V. Ramasamy are significant pioneers of the movement against caste difference and oppression.

The concept of religious pluralism has been cultivated in India through various



movements like The Bhakti movement. The contributions of Kabir, Dadu and Sri Chaitanya deserve special mention who fought against irrational religious customs, superstitions and caste distinctions.

Women's empowerment is a key element of social progress. The unfortunate victims of structural violence maintained in a patriarchy should have access to education and basic amenities of life. It will help them to understand their degraded social position and claim their rights at par with the male members. Mary Wollstonecraft was a nineteenth century feminist who championed the female right to vote. Irrespective of sex, each individual has natural rights in a society. A woman has the right to live with dignity and the primary requirement is access to education. She should not be confined within the private domain, that is her home. She should be allowed to act freely outside of her domestic sphere. However, the feminist philosophers have commented that the personal sphere is also a playground of male politics of subjugation and exploitation of women.

Frances Wright was a feminist and social reformer who advocated right to education and birth control. It was her view that religion and institutions are responsible for degradation of women. Both Wollstonecraft and Wright insisted on rational judgment and critical thinking by women. Sarah Grimke realized that women as a class is dominated by men as a class and suffer indignations. Equal pay for equal work should be a universal principle in society irrespective of gender.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, John Stuart Mill are significant precursors of women's educational, political and legal rights. Michelle Barrett observes that patriarchy through different phases of history and culture, generates ideology of the role of women that is derogatory. Domestic sphere is particularly identified as private sphere of love and affection. This ideology specifies the gendered roles in a society that is associated with specific expectations, duties and responsibilities. The oppressive structure of the family as a natural institution has been eulogized with the ultimate motive to establish male supremacy and dominion. It opens up the room of physical and psychological insult, torture and abuse. Nancy Chodorow brought into light the primary truth that patriarchal system is structured by the ideology of mothering that is related to capitalism. Simon De Beauvoir in her famous book "The Second Sex" has observed that woman is the "other" in a society. This "otherness", according to her, is constituted by female biology of reproduction, nurturing and care. These characteristics are considered unimportant in comparison to masculine features of strength and power. A woman is mainly in a state of subjection. She perceives herself and makes her choices in the way that men perceive her. The patriarchal infrastructure where a woman is born and



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matures compels her to view herself from the masculine standpoint. She fails to think of herself as a self-conscious being. Her otherness dictates her compliance with the male members of her household and she cannot transgress her subjugated position. (Mazumder, Rinita. *A Short Introduction to Feminist Theory*, pg.46)

In recent times, as a victim of heinous sexual assault and mass rape, Ms. Gisele Pelicot has shown exemplary courage to file a case against her husband Dominique Pelicot who was proven guilty by the court. The men who tortured this woman were instigated by none other than her husband. In most of these cases, the perpetrators, particularly within the family compel the victims to suppress their voices on the pretext of public shame. However, the courage of this lady to speak out against such violent act is really commendable. She could foresee that her decision to protest will help millions of women against sexual harassment, exploitation and injustice.

## **Conclusion**

Johan Galtung has described the condition of structural violence as social injustice. Unequal power structure that hampers the enjoyment of educational, employment and medical facilities of a certain section of the society has to be identified, investigated and changed with the ultimate goal that no person is deprived of the basic amenities of life. In this connection, we can recollect the famous dictum of Immanuel Kant that we can treat a person only as an end and never as a means.

The measures to abolish structural violence have to be adopted with sincerity and care, both at the individual and collective level. Since this kind of violence is ingrained in the social, economic and political structure of the society, there is a need to analyze the primary causes. Revision and remodeling of infrastructure are to be done by keeping in mind the goal of universal human welfare.

In this connection, we can mention the Entitlement and Capability Approach envisioned by Professor Amartya Sen. Inequal opportunities are to be removed to abolish social injustice. It has been found that discriminative social structure deprives some people of life-chances to enjoy basic human rights like voting right and educational right. Proper education and training will make people capable to utilize his skill and apply it in practice. Educated mothers particularly try to assure their children's education that in the long run pave the way to social development. Professor Sen has beautifully crafted the notion of agency freedom. He affirms that the role of women's agency is interconnected with her well-being aspect. Empirical studies have brought into light the fact that women's agency can remove or at least diminish the asymmetries in society.

Her educational facilities, income and employment opportunities, ownership rights, participation in decision making within the family escalate her power and prestige. Consequently, it enables her to question the masculine power structure that deprives her of basic needs and prohibits her all-round growth.

Factors like literacy, educational opportunities, economic status, ownership rights may seem to be separate and unlinked at the first glance, but Professor Sen discovers that each of these factors contribute to strengthen the women's agency by empowering women in various ways. Woman's financial standing makes her more informed and confident; it enables her freedom of choice and decision making. It has a positive impact on other family members, particularly the children. According to him, economic independence as well as social emancipation have important effects on the principles that govern family divisions. He points out to the constructive aspect of women agency not only in the increase of her knowledge base but also the ability to think freely and critically. It is the ability to think without being impelled by conformist social regulations that threaten an individual to think differently and protest against the traditional value system. He observes that informed and critical agency are tools to obliterate social inequalities in various forms.

Women empowerment schemes like Standup India, Mudra loans, Udyogini, Mahila Shakti Kendra are laudable programmes initiated for women empowerment. The self-help groups in rural belts of India have taken measures to engage women of different age-groups in varied occupations. They have helped in the improvement of economic and social condition of women and members of marginalized communities. The micro-credit initiatives too have received satisfactory feedback from the poor section of the population.

Violence originating from religious differences spread like forest fire in different corners of the world. We should put an end to this kind of violence and stringent legal measures should be adopted and applied against the culprits who endanger the unity and solidarity of the country. We should recollect the teachings of the Jaina philosophers that the reality is varied and diverse; it can be known from different perspectives by different individuals. Hence, separate beliefs and ideologies can co-exist in the world in a harmonious manner with least chance of conflict. This kind of attitude is beneficial to build up a peaceful and tolerant world.

In this context, we can solemnly remember the foresight and rational bend of mind of Emperor Akbar. He followed the path of Reason (Rahi Aql) and propagated a new religion, called "Din-Ilahi" that encompassed the good qualities of all religions. He

emphasized on dialogue and communication for exchange of ideas. In order to ameliorate structural violence, the government should listen to the voices of the sufferers patiently and the media may take an active role in this endeavor. Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint adopted by the United Nations to achieve a sustainable future. Removal of poverty, inequality and gender discrimination are some of the significant goals. The eradication of structural violence can help us to reach the desired ends and build up a peaceful world. (3970 words approx.)

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# **The Silent Script : Dynamics and Cultural Constructions of Women's Voices**

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## **Abstract**

This essay investigates the complex dynamic of women's silences and voices across social and cultural settings. Based on feminist theory, sociological critique, and literary theory, it interrogates how patriarchal formations both silence and strategically amplify women's voices. Silence, conventionally conceived as a sign of subordination, is investigated here as an emergent site of resistance and agency. The research explores central texts, movements, and case studies in trying to chart historical and contemporary negotiations of power through speech and silence.

## **Keywords**

Women's voices, silence, patriarchy, feminism, cultural studies, resistance.

## **Introduction**

The politics of women's silences and speech have been at the heart of feminist cultural critique and scholarship for decades. The practice of speaking, conventionally linked to agency and power, and with silence, commonly read as submission and marginalization, constitute a dialectical couple that decides the lived realities of women across cultures. In her seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) famously posed "the issue isn't so much if women speak but whether their speech is heard in dominant discourses.". This paper seeks to critique the way that culture and society have consistently bounded, delimited, and, in some ways, celebrated the voices of women.

Whereas patriarchal values frequently provide the terms of feminine expression, feminist critics have also made it clear how silence can be a strategic, in fact empowering, option. Cheryl Glenn (2004), for example, maintains that "silence is not always submission; it can also be a powerful form of rhetorical action." Therefore, if one is to comprehend women's roles in society fully, then their silences and speech must be studied in the socio-cultural context.

The aim of this research is threefold: first, to investigate how patriarchal systems repress or enable women's voices; second, to describe how silence can be used as both repression and counter-repression; and third, to suggest directions towards empowering women's genuine voices in social and cultural contexts. The essay will refer to literary examples, feminist activism, and sociological case studies to develop a rich vision of the topic.

## **Theoretical Framework**

It is feminist theory that forms the underlying analytical framework for holding together this research. Subalternity as theorized by Spivak (1988) describes the manner in which power is used to silence women's speech not in a failure to speak but through exclusion by design. Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity also describes the manner in which women's speech acts are regulated and constructed socially through norms and expectations so that speech becomes a performance as well as the site of potential transgression.

Michel Foucault's (1972) discursive analysis is also operating here, i.e., his argument that power and knowledge are combined. It is an implication then that women's silences are not simply lack of speech but are created and recreated by structures of discourse whose exclusion is to their disadvantage. Together, these theories give solid grounding to research on the interlocked relationship of speech, silence, and power.

## **Women's Voices in Patriarchal Societies**

Throughout history, patriarchal societies have maintained strict control over when, where, and in what ways women would voice their opinions. In ancient Greek tragedies, where women were often mute characters despite occupying the focus of the plot, to political campaign stages today where women's roles remain constrained, silencing women has been both symbolic and material (Beard, 2017).

In literature, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) is a powerful critique of women's material and intellectual statuses that constrain women's artistic voice. Woolf states that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf, 1929, p. 4), which speaks the economic blockades to women's voices. Likewise, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) investigates how slavery's horrors quell Black women's histories and experiences in power narratives, yet illustrates how one can reclaim that voice as an empowering and redemptive exercise.

The modern media environment provides women with new spaces of voice but also reproduces old silencing strategies. The #MeToo movement is a powerful example of women shattering decades-long silences about sexual harassment and assault (Burke, 2017). The backlash against many women who testified, however, demonstrates the continued dangers of speaking out, particularly in misogynistic and patriarchal contexts (Gill & Orgad, 2018).

## **Silence as Both Oppression and Resistance**

Silence has classically been portrayed as a badge of oppression, a sign that women are being withdrawn from political and public existence. But writers have complicated this picture, highlighting the ways that silence can itself be a tactical, strategic action. Cheryl Glenn (2004) reminds us that, under some circumstances, silence can serve as a strategy of resistance, enabling women to preserve dignity, avoid punishment, or convey subversive meanings in coded languages.

For instance, within patriarchal communities where overt insurrection can lead to violent suppression, women have employed silence as armor and ammunition. James C. Scott's (1990) theory of the "hidden transcript" addresses how subaltern individuals, women included, employ non-verbal forms of opposition—gestures, symbols, or even deliberate silence—to sabotage dominant power relations short of actual conflict.

Besides, silence in literature is usually stratified. In Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976), the narrator struggles with silences about women within her Chinese-American community and finally finds voice again through narration. Kingston shows how silence can be burdensome and the beginning of self-expression.

## **Case Studies**

### **1. Literary Landscapes: Articulating Women's Struggles**

Literature has been a rich source of women's silences and voices since centuries. A glaring example is *Draupadi* (1997), a short story by Mahasweta Devi, which tells us of the extreme suppression of tribal woman Dopdi Mehjen by the state. As Dopdi is raped and beaten physically and sexually—an attempt at silencing her in the literal sense—she upends enforced silence in a gesture of defiance that culminates in her standing naked before her tormentors and inviting them to confront her as a human being. *Draupadi* has been read by Spivak (1981) as a figure of the subaltern via enforced silence, and it has been maintained that even when speech fails, the body itself may be a locus of speech

and opposition.

Similarly, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) narrates the coming-of-age of Kambili, a girl growing up in a repressive household and society. Kambili's initial silence—marked by fear and trauma—gradually transforms into a tentative but powerful voice as she begins to question and resist patriarchal authority. This journey symbolizes broader feminist struggles in postcolonial societies, where women often traverse from silence into speech, negotiating their identities in the process (Adichie, 2003).

## **2. Media and Movements: The #MeToo Phenomenon**

The #MeToo movement, initiated by Tarana Burke in 2006 and becoming viral globally in 2017, marks a milestone in the expression of collective women's voice. The movement encouraged survivors of sexual assault and harassment to speak out for the first time, making visible the ubiquity of gendered violence (Fileborn & Loney-Howes, 2019). Social media played a crucial role in amplifying these voices, cutting through institutional gatekeepers of discourse.

But the backlash which followed also testified to the ancient cultural unease with women's speech, specifically where it infringes on men's control. For Gill and Orgad (2018), the movement exemplified both promise and limitation of digital feminism. While visibility and solidarity were conferred on some women, others, most notably, women of color and other women of non-dominant groups, were sidelined in the overarching narrative, focusing on the demand for intersectional approaches to feminist action.

## **3. Grassroots Activism: The Gulabi Gang**

In India, Sampat Pal's establishment of the Gulabi Gang in 2006 is a good example of marginalized women using collective action to speak out. Wearing pink saris and sticks, the gang resists domestic violence, child marriages, and corruption, especially in rural regions where women's voices are muffled (Somasundaram, 2014). The practice of the Gulabi Gang uses speech and body presence, both being used to assert justice and visibility.

This bottom-up revolution dispels the stereotype of rural women as passive victims and instead presents them as agents of change. It also highlights the power of collective voice, where the masses bring out individual voices, offering security and strength in numbers.



## Discussion

The case studies present a complex portrait of silences and voices of women. One common thread is that women's silence is never absolutely or passively so but a strategic move in response to outside forces. This complicates the simplistic dualisms that read voice as empowering and silence as oppressive.

## Cultural Constructs and Intersectionality

Culture is also important in determining voice and silence meaning. For example, silence has traditionally been associated with virtues like respect and humility in the majority of Asian societies (Ng & Metz, 2015). Under such settings, women's silence is not oppressive but acceptable behavior in their culture. Under patriarchal power, though, such cultural practices can be deployed to perpetuate gender hierarchies.

Intersectionality, as theorized by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), is crucial to such understanding. Women's experiences of voice and silence are mediated not only by gender but also by race, class, caste, and sexuality. For instance, whereas middle-class urban women may have such spaces to voice their concerns, Dalit women in India or Black women in America tend to have experiences of cumulative silencing because of intersecting oppressions (Paik, 2014).

## The Body as Voice

When language is censored, the body is a site of expression. The bodily protest of Dopdi Mehjen in Draupadi and the pink-bodied women of the Gulabi Gang illustrate how women speak their resistance through their bodies. Butler's (1993) theory of performativity is in operation here; she argues that the body is not a passive surface but an active co-constructor of meaning and identity.

## The Digital Turn

The internet age has opened up new spaces for women to speak out about their experiences. Hashtag activism, blogs, and online communities offer spaces for women to tell, mobilize, and resist hegemonic discourses. However, internet spaces are also surveillance spaces, harassment spaces, and exclusion spaces. As Citron (2014) points out, online harassment disproportionately targets women, seeking to silence them by intimidation. This cyber backlash confirms that technological innovations cannot by themselves dislodge the deeply ingrained structures that govern women's speech.

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## Voice, Silence, and Agency

Agency is key to grasping women's negotiations between voice and silence. As Mahmood (2005) contends in her analysis of Muslim women's piety movements, agency is as much not a resistance to norms but could also be a working inhabiting and reinterpretation of norms. What this implies is that voice and silence can both be activities of agency, depending on the situation and intention.

## Conclusion

The examination of women's silences and voices reveal a richly textured landscape where power, culture, and identity converge. In literature and social movements, women have operated within these relations in varied and frequently creative terms. While patriarchal structures continue to patrol women's speech, they also inadvertently open up space for the possibility of resistance—through deliberate silences, corporeal protest, or mass mobilization.

This essay has demonstrated that silence and voice are on a spectrum, not as absolute dichotomies. Silence, even though enforced at times in the hope of dominating, can be a deliberate, empowering choice. Likewise, speech is not always unfettered; its liberty is based upon who hears and how what is spoken will be received within the socio-cultural dynamic. The case studies—from Draupadi by Mahasweta Devi to the #MeToo movement and the Gulabi Gang—emphasize the various ways in which women exercise agency, either by shattering silence or by converting it into a resistance language.

Of special importance here is an intersectional analysis in an effort to comprehend these dynamics in their entirety. Women's silences and voices are constructed not merely on gendered terms but also along intersecting lines of identity like race, caste, class, and sexuality. Intersectionality makes feminist praxis aware of being sensitive to the multiple realities of women's lives.

In stepping forward, building institutional and cultural contexts that support and amplify women's voices genuinely and sustainably is essential. This involves shattering patriarchal narratives, facilitating ground-up movements, and securing virtual and physical spaces for women's speech. There must be concerted efforts involving researchers, policymakers, and activists to see to it that multiple voices of women are not only heard but valued and operationalized.

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## **Ensuring Quality of Life Through Education**

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### **Abstract**

The sole purpose of education is not to provide instruction and teaching, but rather to infuse education within an individual the journey of life. The overall development, such as critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, reasoning, physical and spiritual growth of the individual, has been made accountable with the help of education. Numerous visions are given out, of which the most important is to provide a fulfilled life to the individual. Every individual living on this planet wants to have a quality of life through health, well-being, lifestyle, culture, relationships, and personal values, etc. This paper aims to understand how education helps in improving the quality of life.

### **Key words**

Education, Quality

### **Introduction**

Many definitions elucidate the term education, some individuals use the term as instruction, teaching, imparting knowledge, and so on. In the broader term, education according to Nunn, is the complete development of individuality. Indeed, there are dissimilarities in imparting education in the traditional system and the modern system of education, but a lot has not yet changed in its aim because both the traditional system and the modern system focus on the progression of the individual along with the society. Society is dynamic; it evolves with time and need, but education has always been working on the success and fulfillment of the individual and community. As quoted from the Rig Veda, "Education is something which makes a man self-reliant and selfless". A complete individual possesses knowledge, perseverance, and skills to sustain in society, to ascertain himself, others, and the world. A knowledgeable person never disappoints in showing sympathy, empathy, and kindness to everyone in the environment. The sense of awareness about the environment can only be brought by education.

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Education is a never-ending process. Pestalozzi said, “Education is natural, harmonious, and progressive development of man’s innate powers”. The progressive community needs a kind of education that is natural and can blend with the individual’s interests and capacities. Because education not only has a narrow focus, restricted to schools, classrooms, and curriculum, but also in the broader spectrum, the scope is limitless, which enables the individual to adjust to a transient environment and problem-solving attitude. As Dumvile said, education, in its widest sense, includes all the influences which enlightens an individual during his progression from cradle to the grave.

Quality of life is a multifaceted concept that showcases an individual’s overall sense of well-being, fulfilment, and satisfaction with life, incorporating both objective conditions and subjective perceptions. Objectively, it includes essential factors such as physical and mental health, access to quality healthcare, sufficient income, stable employment, quality education, safe and adequate housing, environmental cleanliness, and personal safety. These provide the groundwork for meeting rudimentary needs and achieving personal and societal goals. Subjectively, quality of life is shaped by emotional well-being, happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, autonomy, and the presence of strong social connections such as family, friends, and community support. Opportunities for personal growth, cultural and recreational participation, spiritual expression, and the freedom to make meaningful life choices also enhance one’s perceived quality of life. It varies across individuals and cultures, influenced by values, expectations, and life experiences. Ultimately, quality of life is not just about living longer but about living well—feeling healthy, secure, valued, and able to pursue one’s goals and enjoy meaningful experiences.

## **Meaning of Education and Quality of Life**

The terminology of education denotes “to nourish”, “to bring up”, and “to raise”. Education suggests raising the upcoming generation physiologically and intellectually. Mahatma Gandhi explained education as an "all-round drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind and spirit." The definition gives a holistic view on how education nurtures and prepares an individual for growth and development. As education is never a never-ending process, which never starts with the three Rs and ends with securing good marks in the subject rather goes with life-long learning; how an individual learns to grab toys and cry for food, attention, care, and so on. An individual’s inborn capacity to learn never allows him to rest and stop at a certain level; he learns every day and

imitates what others do in society. The virtues he possesses and the character he develops while growing up in his environment exists throughout his life. The above definition gives a clear view of how an individual who is born with certain talents and capabilities not only grasps the knowledge in school, rather he/she discovers himself/herself in the best manner as a human being to share his day in life with other fellow humans. It also gives the practical side of education, i.e., nurturing the latent talent to practice properly. A sound individual possessing a healthy physique, mind, and spirit can solve all problems in their life and adjust to others in society. Mahatma Gandhi, a believer of morality and ethics, also believes the individual has the best scope of improvement through education because it is the medium to walk towards a new horizon.

By the law of nature, human beings drafted rules for themselves to discover through their own experiences and surroundings. Each day brings a new opportunity to be wise and experienced. Learning has always addressed processes and outcomes. As Rabindranath Tagore said, “The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.”

Society is dynamic and changes with time, with emerging needs of societal reforms and changes to the school system. The various strata of society need the kind of individual who reflects and blends. An individual who is learning today inside the classroom should not merely know transferred from the teacher but also teach them to live and understand everyone, despite caste, creed, culture, language, etc. The school curriculum, co-curricular activities, and other educational programmes must provide values and culture for every individual to participate holistically in society. The healthy attitude, the ‘we feeling’, and a feeling of belongingness are the key to a healthy society created by the individual. As a naturalist philosopher, he believed in learning in harmony with nature. An individual works as the mediator between education and society for the promotion of education.

The vision of education is not merely limited to an individual or society, it is lifelong and associated with each other for the betterment of society. J. J. Rousseau communicates that “True education is something that happens from within the individual: it is the unfolding of its latent powers.” The sole vision of education focuses on the development and growth of an individual’s interests, abilities, and how they behave and act in society and in their leisure time.

John Dewey holds that “school is the miniature of society” as a socialistic vision of



education. The small citizens grasp how to act in society, as society has more significance than the individual. No man can live without society. For every individual, the school is the initial society where they meet other human beings just like themselves. The school prepares the individual about the future to adjust to culture, ethics, laws, values, morals so on. The all-round development also aims to provide for the progression of the environment and atmosphere where they live.

The growing demands and needs, discoveries and inventions, desires and achievements may create tough times for any individual to fulfill all the demands of society. As the poem *Leisure* by William Henry Davies says, “.... no time to stand and stare.” Some believe that having a healthy body and mind brings quality of life. But can a good relationship, healthy living conditions, personal values, education, and cultures bring quality of life? Well, everyone has their perceptions, and many individuals define it as what influenced them in their lives the most. It changes from individual to individual.

It is dynamic and covers health, circumstances, lifestyle, state of mind, happiness, economy, politics, cultures, and other aspects of life. Quality of life is defined by the WHO as “individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and about their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”. Quality of life cannot be explained with a single term. It covers physiological health, psychological state, personal belief, social relationship, their affiliation with the environment, and their relationship with oneself.

Robert Cummins (and operationalized by the Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale 3). Cummins (1997:132) defines quality of life in terms of both subjective and objective dimensions, with each dimension consisting of seven domains: “material well-being, health, productivity, intimacy, safety, community, and emotional well-being. Objective domains comprise culturally relevant measures of objective well-being. Subjective domains comprise domain satisfaction weighted by their importance to the individual.”

Education is deeply intertwined with quality of life, as education is not only a way to acquire knowledge or vocational skills, but a transformative process that cultivates the mind, enriches the soul, and enables individuals to lead examined, meaningful lives. Rooted in the traditions of thinkers like John Dewey, who emphasized education's role in personal growth and independent participation, and J.J. Rousseau, who viewed education as a natural, developmental journey aimed at nurturing the innate goodness and autonomy of the individual, education empowers people to introspect, make intellectual decisions, and act ethically. It broadens one's understanding of self and the

world, fostering empathy, independence, and a sense of purpose—essential components of a life well-lived. In this way, education is not just a tool for improving material conditions but a foundational element of well-being, allowing individuals to engage deeply with life's moral, social, and existential dimensions and thereby enhancing their overall excellence of life.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, education is not merely a process of acquiring academic knowledge; it is a comprehensive and lifelong journey of nurturing an individual's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual faculties. As Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, J.J. Rousseau, and John Dewey all emphasized in various ways, true education extends beyond the classroom, aiming to harmonize the individual with society and nature. It allows each person to discover and develop their innate potential while fostering values like empathy, cooperation, and ethical living. Education equips individuals not just for economic success, but to become thoughtful, responsible, and compassionate members of a dynamic and ever-changing society. By cultivating both personal excellence and social consciousness, it becomes the bridge between self-fulfilment and collective progress.

Furthermore, the quality of life—an outcome influenced by education—encompasses a wide range of subjective and objective dimensions, including health, relationships, productivity, emotional well-being, and social belonging. As defined by the WHO and scholars like Robert Cummins, quality of life is shaped by individual perceptions within cultural and social contexts. Education, therefore, plays a pivotal role in shaping these perceptions and enabling individuals to adapt, grow, and contribute meaningfully. Education teaches us to balance aspirations with values, and personal goals with communal responsibilities. A well-educated individual is better equipped not only to tackle the difficulties of modern life but to lead a life of purpose, harmony, and dignity.

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# **Advertising as a Catalyst for Mental Health Awareness: Strategies, Impact, and Challenges**

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## **Abstract**

Advertising has been increasingly taking the form of a potent means of social change, which has traditionally been considered a commercial tool. The purpose of this article is to examine how advertising affects the public opinion towards mental health, focusing on the successful campaigns and assessing their social impact. It also examines how awareness campaigns can destigmatize mental illness and encourage help-seeking behaviour in the case of India's rising mental health issue.

## **Key Words**

Importance of Social Awareness Advertising Campaign, Effective campaigns frame mental health as a universal concern.

## **Introduction**

Advertising is no longer limited to the promotion of consumer products—it is now a leading instrument in creating public discourse on key social issues. In the past decade, advertising has been used to make people aware of things ranging from environmental sustainability to gender equality and public health (such as mental well-being).

In the digital world, emotionally engaging and informative ads can bring the public's attention and change behaviour. They are humankind simplified to bring complex social issues out in simple narratives based on emotional appeal, storytelling, and visual media of reiterating urgent messages to mass audiences. Advertising has been able to alter the perception of the public and this has helped society become more involved with issues such as mental health, domestic violence and health equity.

Collective consciousness is highly power by advertising. This is, for example, for social responsibility projects (CSR) and public service announcements (PSA) based on the government's initiatives to promote discussions on mental health. India's COVID-19 awareness initiative, which used both mass media and community influencers to spread

awareness about the COVID-19 vaccine, is an example of how mass awareness could be achieved through advertising nationwide.

## **Mental Health and the Need for Public Awareness**

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a condition of well-being in which each individual may reach their full potential, manage everyday stressors, and contribute positively to society. The value of mental well-being is both intrinsic and instrumental in enabling social and economic participation. But mental health is an area of public health that is still neglected everywhere. Specific structural factors, including poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and exposure to violence, further increase mental health risks among vulnerable populations. While some people stand out for their example of resilience, others stand out for facing long lasting barriers to treatment and support.

On March 25, 2025, WHO introduced a new guidance framework titled Optimizing Mental Health Services. The guidelines call for the integration of quality, rights-based mental health care into national health systems. Key recommendations include:

- Aligning services with international human rights standards;
- Providing holistic, person-centered care;
- Addressing social determinants such as housing, education, and employment;
- Promoting preventive care and early intervention;
- Involving individuals with lived experience in shaping policy.

Despite the need for comprehensive mental health services, access remains a challenge. Up to 90% of people with serious mental health issues in some nations go untreated. The existing services are based on outdated techniques, which do not promote human dignity and clinical efficacy. The expected economic cost of mental health problems in India during the period of 2012 to 2030 is over USD 1.03 trillion which indicates the need to create public awareness and address the issues of system reform at the earliest.

## **Advertising's Influence on Mental Health Perception**

Advertising can shape public attitudes, reduce stigma, and encourage people to seek help when it is logically deployed. Effective advertising campaigns frame mental health as a universal concern, try to normalize conversations around emotional struggles, and humanize individuals with lived experiences. Campaigns such as Every Mind Matters (UK) and It's Okay to Not Be Okay (UK) have successfully introduced mental health

terminology into public discourse. By using testimonials from public figures and relatable storytelling, these campaigns have made mental wellness more approachable and less taboo. Advertising's potential lies in more than awareness; it can facilitate early diagnosis, support treatment adherence, and promote emotional resilience. In some cases, advertising directly connects audiences to support systems, such as helplines or therapy platforms that makes help more accessible.

## **Case Studies: Notable Mental Health Campaigns**

Several global campaigns exemplify the effectiveness of advertising in promoting mental health:

- **#SpeakYourMIND Campaign:** This is a student-led campaign originating with the University of South Carolina, who developed the idea for the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge all about mental health. The campaign was made up of nearly all jokes and virality which featured celebrities like Peyton Manning and James Charles. In April 2025, the campus "Mental Illness Needs Discussion" (MIND) club, in partnership with the national nonprofit Active Minds, launched the USC Speak Your Mind Challenge, also called the #SpeakYourMIND Ice Bucket Challenge. This challenge is a contemporary version of the 2014 ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, but this time, you pour ice water in support of mental health awareness. With parodies or viral videos of people grudgingly getting soaked after being nominated, the challenge has gone popular on "TikTok" and "Instagram" in recent weeks. But the message of the challenge is far more comprehensive than a cold splash. High-profile individuals who have joined in to spread the word around the country include USC football head coach Shane Beamer, James Charles, and Peyton Manning. "Wade Jefferson, founder of USC MINDS, said the goal is to increase awareness about mental health and encourage people to know that they are not alone and to get rid of the stigma of mental health discussion." There's someone out there that would listen and everyone struggles. "That is proof of this challenge." Raising money for the campaign isn't the only thing; that is, changing how mental health is discussed and thought about.
- **NHS "Every Mind Matters" (UK):** This initiative provides tailored mental health guidance through online assessments. Promoted via a national media campaign narrated by members of the Royal Family, it emphasizes proactive self-care and accessible resources. A project that has been in the works for eighteen months has received broad support from academic associations, mental health organizations, and a variety of talented people, including members of the Royal Family. A number of well-

known faces appear in the short film they produced, which was narrated by Harry, Megan, William, and Kate and produced by Rankin & Richard Curtis. The three-minute commercial was shown on ITV, Sky, C4, C5, and MTV all at once.

- **“It’s Okay to Not Be Okay”:** This UK-wide campaign by the Anti-Stigma Alliance challenges the silence and shame around mental illness. It encourages people to talk freely about mental wellness along with to get help without worrying about being stigmatized. This might make someone feel alone, prevent them from receiving the support and assistance they require, and cause them to pass up opportunities that their peers might take for granted. If “It’s Okay” is a campaign that is being undertaken throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales by members of the Anti-Stigma Alliance in an effort to change this. "It's okay not to be okay" is a well-known slogan in mental health advocacy. That may not always be the case, though, for a large number of individuals dealing with mental illness. People with more complicated or chronic diseases may experience discrimination, exclusion, judgment, and isolation even when they wish to discuss their experiences. They are pushed to experience shame instead of being told that it is acceptable to not feel okay.
- **Spotify:** “Take a Beat”: Spotify brings users on the path of mental health by enabling them to curate playlists involving relaxation and mindfulness with music. Everyday habits are used to make a point of the therapeutic potential. Music therapy is nothing but just a buzzword, nothing but proven way of handling mental health disorders. In the hope of motivating you to take mindful pauses with relatable and calming curated playlists, Spotify’s initiative is serving users. Listening to music integrates itself in our daily routine as listeners get a source of solace and fortitude. It is a straightforward yet effective method of encouraging individuals to take a moment to reconnect with themselves.
- **ASICS:** “The Desk Break”: This campaign illustrates short activity breaks during work hours that promote mental health with actor Brian Cox and underscores the mind body connection. It encourages taking short, planned breaks throughout the day in order to increase one’s mental health. The commercial highlights the close connection between physical activity and mental health and stars Succession actor Brian Cox. It tells viewers not to be slaves to their desk. So, choose to “move your mind” instead of being a victim to your well being. The ad draws the attention into the transformative power of movement which can just undo the damage of prolonged sitting by 15 minutes worthy activity that improves mental and physical health.



- **Maybelline: “Brave Together”:** This campaign is targeted at Gen Z audiences and it speaks about the anxiety brought about by social media. It offers either emotional support or professional intervention through its partnership with Ditch The Label. The aim of this campaign is to help those who are suffering from anxiety and depression. The aim of this initiative is to provide free resources that give the opportunity to people to come together and to voice their thoughts freely about mental health. With Maybelline’s break down of the stigma, those who need it can seek that help without fear of judgment. This advertisement, which was made in collaboration with the youth charity Ditch the Label, depicts the story of a girl who grows increasingly engrossed in social media. She spends her time constantly looking at herself, comparing herself to others online and becomes withdrawn, inadequate, and deeply unhappy. This campaign is clearly tapping into younger people’s experiences, with 18% of Gen Z admitting being effected by social media and that causes them anxiety.
- **McDonald’s: “The Meal” :** McDonald's took the smile off of its Happy Meal packaging in honor of Mental Health Awareness Week as they wanted to bring awareness to emotional health of children. The ad accompanying the ad was designed to help families start talking about feelings. Mental Health Awareness McDonald's is commemorating the week with "The Meal," a potent mental health campaign. In an effort to increase awareness of children's mental health, the fast food chain took the famous smile off of millions of Happy Meal boxes in the UK. In a heartwarming commercial, a young child expresses their sadness, normalizing the conversation about mental health at an early age.

## Challenges and Recommendations

Advertising campaigns have played a great role in mental health awareness but the long term effect on such awareness depends on its continuous active participation. Viral campaigns often suffer from brief attention spans, while sustained efforts such as Every Mind Matters achieve deeper behavioral impact due to integrated support tools.

To improve reach and relevance, campaigns should incorporate culturally sensitive messaging and low-tech media (e.g., radio, SMS, WhatsApp) to engage rural and underserved communities. Messaging in regional languages and use of local influencers can improve trust and accessibility. Above all, advertising must move beyond awareness to action. Campaigns should include links to professional support, promote preventive mental health practices, and challenge harmful stereotypes. Collaboration between governments, NGOs, and private sectors is essential to ensure accurate, inclusive, and

impactful messaging.

## Conclusion

Advertising plays an increasingly vital role in public health communication. By making mental health a part of everyday conversation, it can reduce stigma, promote help-seeking behaviour, and enhance community support structures. As mental health becomes a global priority, advertising must evolve to be more inclusive, sustained, and resource-driven—ensuring its messages result in lasting behavioural and systemic change. In the age of digital media, every issue can be discussed freely in a public sphere without any hesitation. Social media has immense power to motivate public. In “#SpeakYourMIND Ice Bucket Challenge” campaign it was viral and its strength was celebrity involvement, which helped it to be a success. However, the weakness of this advertising campaign was short-term engagement. The NHS “Every Mind Matters” advertising campaign however sustained behavioral change strategy by using the practical mental health plans through mass media and digital media simultaneously. India’s “It’s Okay To Not Be Okay” Campaign localization and cultural sensitivity was used to make it successful. However, to make the awareness about mental health issue the advertising campaign makers must use low-tech media like radio and WhatsApp, which will be helpful to community level behavioural shift. Mass media campaigns especially those using local languages and cultural symbols can reach rural and marginalized communities, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in social messaging. Future campaigns should blend emotional storytelling with practical support system. To change the mind-set of older generation this type of advertising campaign must be broadcasted in traditional media and not just digital platform.

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## **Nutritional Level Assessment Based on Body Mass Index (BMI) Among The Female College Students of South Calcutta Girls' College, Kolkata**

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### **Abstract**

A cross-sectional study assessed the anthropometric profile and nutritional status based on body mass index (BMI) among female college students in South Kolkata. The study was performed on a total of 49 female college students, who were selected randomly from the South Calcutta Girls' College of Kolkata due to easy availability of female students. A total of 49 female college students were classified into two categories. Age Group- I and Age Group-II. Age Group-I was mainly the age group of 18-year-old to 19-year-old college students. Age Group-II was mainly the age group of 20 year-old to 21-year-old college students. Two age groups were selected due to less wide range of age groups. Anthropometric measurements, including heights were measured, and weights were also measured to calculate the BMI. The primary goal of the study was to assess the nutritional status. was to evaluate the nutritional status according to BMI among the female college students of South Kolkata. Study results indicated that 51.02% of female college students were found to be undernourished, and 46.93% of the female college students were of normal weight, whereas only 2.04% of female college students were obese.

### **Keywords**

BMI, Female college students, Nutritional status, CED I, II, III.

### **Introduction**

Nutrition is increasingly viewed as an indicator of living standards, alongside

anthropometric measurements are integral to nutritional assessment (Das, 2018). According to the World Health Organization (1995), anthropometry can assess adults' nutritional and health status (Fryar et al. 2021). The BMI is the most commonly used method for assessing adult nutrition, as it is simple, cost-effective, and suitable for large-scale studies.(Bose and Chakraborty,2005). In consequence, BMI is the most common anthropometric measurement used to assess nutritional status (Lee and Nieman, 2003). Especially in developing countries, the BMI is regarded as a good indicator of both nutritional status and socioeconomic standing. (Das and Bose, 2010).

An important biomarker for assessing nutritional status is body mass index (BMI). There are several advantages to this method, including its simplicity, low cost, and noninvasive nature. According to research, health-promoting behaviors account for nearly half of the factors affecting the body To maintain a healthy lifestyle, one must adhere to a diet rich in nutrients, engage in physical activity, maintain emotional stability, and get adequate sleep. Adolescents often make lifestyle mistakes due to inadequate exercise and inappropriate nutrition (Hasemi et al. 2018). Physical activity and appropriate nutrition are crucial for maintaining good health, particularly during adolescence, a key developmental period. Physical activity encompasses all muscle work that increases energy expenditure beyond resting levels. When practiced regularly and tailored to individual abilities, it positively influences the development of adolescents and supports overall health by benefiting all body systems. Gradually increasing physical activity intensity and varying stimuli enhance physical fitness and resilience to physical and psychological stressors (Zota et al. 2016).

Nowadays the adolescents are much more aware about of health. This study also tries to evaluate whether the female college students are suffering from under nutrition or not. The primary objective of this study was to assess and compare the nutritional status of female college students across various age groups in South Kolkata. This paper also focused on socio-demographic factors as they affect the nutritional status of female college students in South Kolkata.

## **Methods**

### **I) Site Selection :**

This study was conducted at the South Calcutta Girls College in South Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

## ii) Subjects Selection :

This study involved 49 students (aged 18 to 22), who were randomly selected and also agreed to participate. A prior permission from the college principal was obtained.

## iii) Assessment of socioeconomic standing :

Socio-demographic results were collected using a questionnaire by asking questions among the female participants.

## iv) Anthropometrical measurement :

The stature and mass of female college students were measured using Martin's Anthropometer and a "Crown" weighing machine manufactured by Raymon Surgical Co. Height and weight were recorded while the participant was barefoot and wearing only light clothing. Height and weight were measured using standardized, calibrated scales to the nearest 0.1 cm and 0.5 kg, respectively. The weighing scale was periodically calibrated against known standards and was reset to zero before each measurement. Additionally, the Body Mass Index (BMI) of all participants was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{BMI (kg/m}^2\text{)} = \text{Weight (kg)} / \text{height (m}^2\text{)}$$

and the body surface area (BSA) (Banerjee and Sen, 1955) to assess diseases severity of all the subjects was also computed.



## v) Nutritional status assessment:

The nutritional status was assessed using the Body Mass Index (BMI) guidelines

established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1995. The following cut-off points were applied: Undernutrition:  $BMI < 18.5$ ; Normal:  $18.5 \leq BMI < 25.0$ ; Overweight:  $BMI \geq 25.0$ . (Bose and Chakraborty, 2005). Undernutrition is classified into two categories: moderate malnutrition and severe malnutrition. A BMI of less than 18.5 but greater than or equal to 17 indicates undernutrition, while a BMI below 17 and above 15 is classified as moderate malnutrition, and a BMI below 15 is identified as severe malnutrition. (Cole et al., 2007).

## vi) Statistical Analysis:

Student “t” tests were done to evaluate any significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the stature, weight, BSA, and BMI among the different groups of female college students. The chi-square test was utilized to compute the differences in different age group students in nutritional status among the female college students for the chosen level of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## Results

The result of the study in Table 1 shows that among the 49 female college students. The Table 1 result also shows that among all the 49 students 4.08% were from 18+ year’s age group, whereas, 30.6% students were from 19+ years of age, again, 30.6% students were from 20+ years and 21+ years of age, lastly out of 49 female college students 4.08% were from 22+ year’s age group. In this study, out of 49 female college students, 32 students were categorized as Group I (65.30%) and 17 students were categorized as Group II (34.70%). Due to the small age range group of female college students, only Age Group I and II were considered in this study. In this study, it was found that most of the college students were in the age group of 19-20 years.

**Table 1.** Socio-Demographic characteristics of the female College students

Variables	No of subjects	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Females	49	100%
<b>Age structure</b>		
18 years	2	4.08
19 years	15	30.6
20 years	15	30.6
21 years	15	30.6
22 years	2	4.08
<b>Group on Age</b>		
Group I	32	65.30
Group II	17	34.69



Physical characteristics of the two groups (According to age groups) of the female college students are presented in Table 2. The mean heights of the male and female college students were almost same. The other physical parameters like weight, BSA and BMI, no significant difference was observed.

**Table 2.** Physical parameters of the female College students

Variables	Age Group I (18-20 years) (n=32)	Age Group II (21-22 years) (n=17)	t Value	P Value
	Mean SD	Mean SD		
Height(cm)	179.81±6.23	180.0 ±7.24	0.928	0.358
Weight(kg)	56.87±10.25	60.11± 11.58	0.339	0.736
BSA	1.71±0.19	1.77±0.26	0.418	0.677
BMI(kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	17.65±3.17	18.47±3.23	0.401	0.690

Table 3 shows that the majority of the female college students (46.9%) had a normal weight, i.e., BMI (18.00-24.99 kg/m<sup>2</sup>). The result of the study also shows that 10 (20.4%) female students faced severe thinness, in which the 18-20 years of age group students suffered most (25.0%). Whereas, in the case of moderate thinness total of 10 female students (20.4%) suffered, of which 07 (21.9%) and 03 students (17.7%) suffered from moderate thinness. The result of the study also shows that there is a significant change in mild thinness (BMI) among the age group I female students and the age group II female students. From this study, only one student of the age group 18-20 years was found to be obese.

Table 4 shows that the majority of the female college students 23, 46.9%) had a normal weight with a BMI of 18.00- 24.99 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Whereas, out of 49 students, only 10 female college students found severe thinness (BMI -below 16.00 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) (age group 18-22 years) and again same in case of moderate thinness (BMI 16.00- 16.99 kg/m<sup>2</sup>), the same age group of 10 female students (20.40%) found moderate thinness. Besides that, 05 (10.2%) female students found mild thinness (BMI 17.00- 17.99 kg/m<sup>2</sup>). In this study, only 01 female college student (2.04%) was found to be obsessed.

**Table 3.** Nutritional status of female college students based on Body Mass Index

Chronic Energy Deficiency	BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	Age Group I (18-20 years)		Age Group II (21-22 years)		$\chi^2$	P Value	Remarks (p<0.05)
		(n=32)	(%)	(n=17)	(%)			
CED Grade I	BMI (<16.00) Severe Thinness	8	25%	2	11.76%	1.197	0.2738	NS
CED Grade II	BMI (16.00-16.99) Moderate Thinness	7	21.9%	3	17.7%	0.122	0.7266	NS
CED Grade III	BMI (17.00-18.5) Mild Thinness	1	3.12%	4	23.5%	5.044	0.2470	S
	BMI (18.5-24.99) Normal Weight	15	46.9%	8	47.0%	0.002	0.9902	NS
	BMI (25.00-29.99) Over weight	1	3.12%	0	0	---	---	---

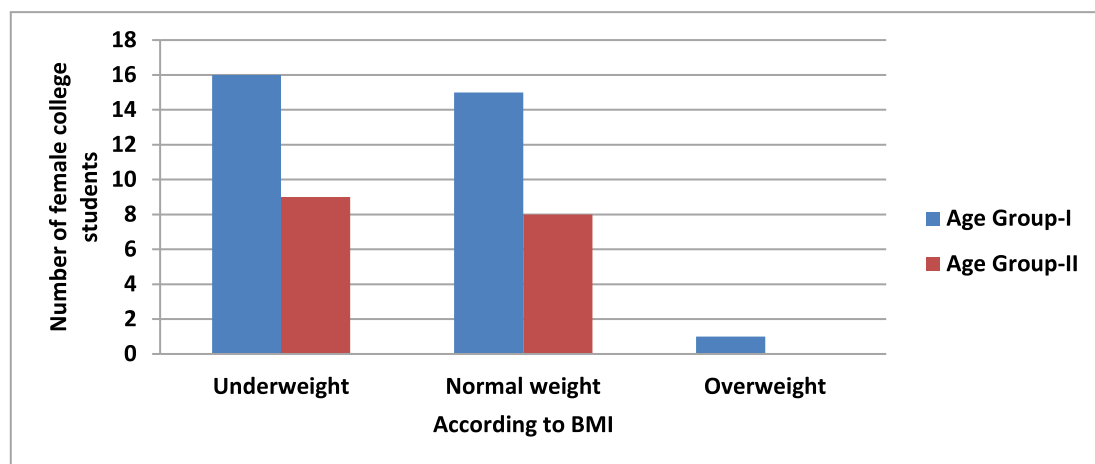
**Table 4.** Nutritional status of female college students based on Body Mass Index and different age group

Age (in years)	BMI				
	(<16.00) Severe Thinness	(16.00-16.99) Moderate Thinness	(17.00-17.99) Mild Thinness	(18.00-24.99) Normal Weight	(25.00-29.99) Over weight
18	1 (2.04%)	1 (2.04%)	Nil	Nil	Nil
19	3 (6.12%)	2 (4.08%)	Nil	9 (18.36%)	1 (2.04%)
20	4 (8.16%)	4 (8.16%)	1 (2.04%)	6 (12.24%)	Nil
21	2 (4.08%)	3 (6.12%)	3 (6.12%)	7 (14.28%)	Nil
22	Nil	Nil	1 (2.04%)	1 (2.04%)	Nil

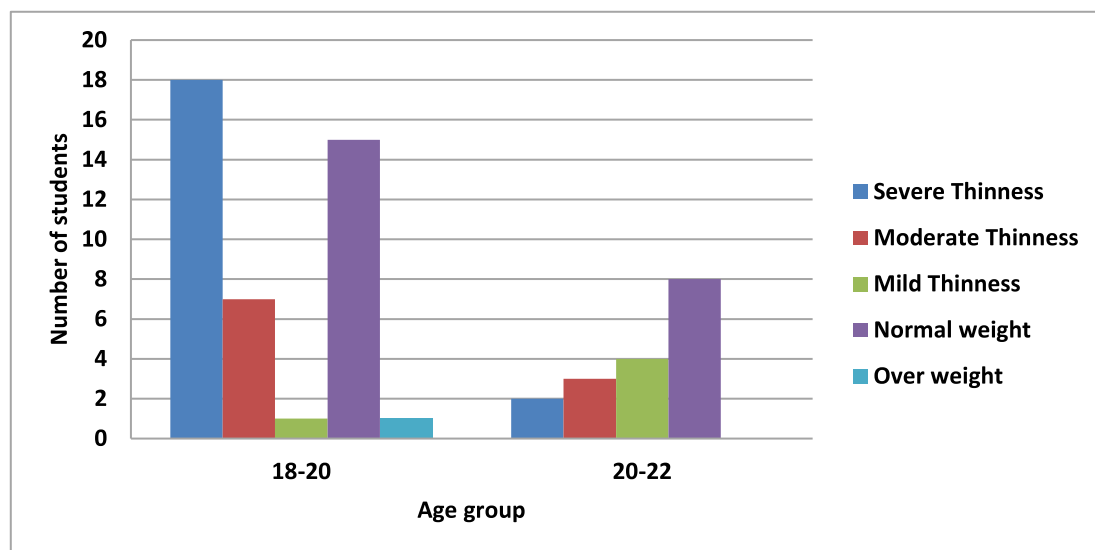
Figure 1 shows that most of the female college students were found to be underweight (51.02%) according to the classification of BMI. Whereas, 46.93% of female students found normal weight according to the BMI classification. Only 2% of female college students were found over weight in this study. Figure 2 indicates that the

Age group I (18-20 years) found a maximum number of severe thinness students, followed by moderate and mild thinness. Again, only overweight students also found in this age group. In Age Group II, no students were found to be overweight.

**Figure 1.** Nutritional status of female college students according to body mass index (BMI).



**Figure 2.** Prevalence of Nutritional status according to the different age group of female college students



## Discussion

The human body must be nourished with a well-balanced diet to fulfill its requirements and maintain its basic physiology. The result of improper nutrition is

either excessive calorie consumption (overnutrition) or insufficient intake of essential nutrients (undernutrition). The threat of overnutrition increases body weight and causes several non-communicable diseases. In developing countries like India, undernutrition is a significant health issue caused by insufficient intake of energy and nutrients.(Bhattacharjee et al. 2019). Adult malnutrition is more common than many people realize. Body mass index (BMI) is determined by dividing weight in kilograms by height in meters squared. It is a crucial indicator of nutritional status for both individuals and communities.(Bailey and Ferro-Luzzi, 1995). The present study attempts to establish the most precise method of assessing nutritional status. As a non-invasive and less expensive indicator of nutritional status, anthropometry has been used for decades. Using anthropometric measurements, BMI can be calculated, which provides a simple and convenient way to measure nutritional status. Nutritional assessments often use Body Mass Index (BMI) for its simplicity and efficiency, despite its limitations. Undernutrition is a significant health issue, especially in developing countries like India, where it poses serious public health concerns. The result of the study shows that among the female college students, 51.02% found malnutrition.

Malnutrition impacts individuals in every country. The causes of malnutrition include not only excess or insufficient nutrition but also social conditions. The most effective way to illustrate the prevalence and distribution of undernourishment using anthropometric markers is to assess the nutritional status of communities. One of the most reliable indicators of an adult's nutritional status is the commonly known body mass index (BMI), which is universally accepted (Bailey and Ferro-Luzzi 1995). Despite the significant variation in weight and height among human populations, BMI is likely more related to nutrition than genetics. In a diverse nation like India, using BMI as an anthropometric indicator of nutritional status may be more appropriate. (Khongsdier 2002).

The result of the study found that there is a significant difference between Age Group-I and Age Group-II in the case of mild thinness. Whereas, in the case of severe and moderate thinness, no significant found. Similar types of findings were found in the case of the study Das (2017) in his previous research. He also found that mild thinness has been found between different age groups of female prawn seed collectors. The result of the study also shows that most of the female college students suffered from undernutrition. Similar types of findings have been found by other researchers (Manna et al. 2018). They also claimed that female college students suffered from undernutrition by consuming low-calorie food diets and habits in Paschim Medinipur of West Bengal.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that a major percentage (51.02%) of the female college students was undernourished, which might be related to their excessive health consciousness or may be low socioeconomic status. This study also revealed that more age group II female college students (52%) than more age group I female college students (50%) were undernourished based on BMI. This study also indicated that very female college students were found to be obese. This study concludes that the 20-year and 21-year age groups of female college students age group does have more severe, moderate, and mild thinness.

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## **An Issue Relating to Sundaramisra and Raghavabhatta as Seen in The Manuscript of A Work on Dramaturgy (Natyapradipa)**

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The present paper is devoted to a chronological issue relating to Raghavabhatta and Sundaramisra. Raghavabhatta is a well known commentator of Kalidasa's Abhijnanasakuntalam and Sundaramisra, a dramaturgist, who is almost passing into oblivion. When I was editing Sundaramisra's Natyapradipa, which was only a solitary and highly corrupt manuscript, the present issue relating to Sundaramisra and Raghavabhatta found to be very interesting.

Before I proceed to the discussion I would like to state here my experience relating to the access to the manuscript of the work.

In course of my search for MSS of text, I came to know about the existence of two MSS of Sundaramisra's Natyapradipa in the Indian Office Library, London No. 1148d and No. 843A both belongings to H.T. Cole Brooke Collection, IOL Catalogue entry No.1199 and 1200 respectively. While asking for the copies of these two MSS from IOL, I came to know that MSS 1148d got lost in transit from London to Allahabad University around 1946<sup>1</sup>. The other manuscript of which I got a microfilm copy is too corrupt to offer full access to the NP. Thus at present we have at our disposal only one manuscript which is complete, but highly corrupt and illegible in many places. It is unfortunate that Surendranath Shastri in his book, Laws and Practice calls NP an 'inextant work<sup>2</sup>, in spite of one MSS still in existence in the IOL, London, however, illegible it may be, it is an important work i.e., worthy of the effort I have put in it through my research.

Details of MSS given below :

MS no 843A, entry number 1200 in the IOL catalogue, folios 35, size 12X4.25 inches; modern Devanagari writing, careless, eleven lines a page, about forty syllables a line, very incorrect, material seems to be paper. (H. T. Colebrook Collection).

Details of MS are given below :

MS No. 843A, entry No 1200 in the 10.1. Catalogue, folios thirty-five. size 12 inches by 4/4 inches, modern Devanagari writing, careless, eleven lines a page, about



forty syllables a line, very incorrect material seems to be paper (H.T. Colebrooke Collection).

Sundaramidra composed the treatise in the Saka year 1535 ie, 1613-14 A.D. as mentioned in the colophon of the work which runs as follows:

śake Saragramasarendutulye 1535

grame varisthāśramatah prasiddhe/

tad etad aujāgarina nibaddhani

nude kavinām kavisundarena// (MSS Folio 35)



Plate: Photocopy of MS Foil NO. 35 showing date of Sundara Mishra (1535)

The poet Sundara belonging to the family of Ojagara composed this for the pleasure of poets in the śaka year to be measured by arrows (five). ancient musical scale called grama (three3), arrows (five), and indu the moon (one), that is, 1535 Saka era (1613-14 AD) in a village famous after vasisthāśrama (the hermitage of Vasistha), or varisthasrama (the greatest hermitage).

Our MS has the reading yame for grāme, this does not give any comprehensible meaning. In our MS the syllable ri (रि) varistha (वरिष्ठ) is not clear.

Raghavabhatta who is well-known as the commentator of Kalidasa's Abhijñāna Sakuntala has quoted at least two verses from a Natyapradīpa but does not mention the name of its author. One of these verses explains the meaning of the term nandi but the verse is not found in our MS. The verse runs thus4:

nandanti kävyäni kavindravargah  
 kuṣilavah pärisadas ca santah /  
 yasmad alam sajjanasindhuhamsi  
 tasmād iyam sã kathiteha nandi //

Nāndi is so called because with it the literary composition appears much appealing; the host of poets, actors and spectators find delight in it and because it verily appears as a female swan amidst the ocean of connoisseurs.

There may be two explanations of the omission of this verse in our MS either a portion of SM's text is missing in our MS, or the verse in question might have been cited from another Natyapradipa which is different from the work of SM. From the same Raghavabhatta might have taken the second verse, which is found in our NP, The verse runs thus:

Slokapadam padam kecit suptinantam athapare/

Pare vāntaravakyaikam padam ahur visararadah5 // (NPMS, FOLIO 1)

Some call the quarter of a verse a pada, others say that it means a word with a nominal or verbal suffis, other learned persons say that the pada is a unit in the form of a subordinate clause.

On the other hand, SM seems to refer to Raghavabhatta who does not accept the episode of Matali in the drama Abhijñāṣakuntala (Act V, p.10) as forming the subplot prakari, on the ground that it is not conducive to avamarśasandhi, a view rejected by SM, who establishes the episode as connected with the incident of conquering a demon by Dusyanta and his union with Sakuntala. The line runs thus:

evam sati śakuntalaṭikaya(m) rtuvarnanasyavamarśa  
 sandhau prakarivṛttatvam..... matalivṛttasyāva  
 marśanganuvidhāyitvābhāvāt prakrivṛttatvam

nāstīti rāghavabhāttena yad uktam tad asad iva (NP. Folio.9 )

Under the circumstances, the view of Raghavabhatta as found in the commentary on the Sakuntala is not tenable. The view is that, the description of season in the avamarśasandhi forms the subplot prakari and that the episode of Mātali being not

conducive to any part of avamarsa cannot be prakari.

Rapavatadena in our MS appears to be a corruption of raghavabhattacha. Actually this particular view regarding the episode of Matali we get in the printed text of the commentary of Raghavabhattacha which runs as follows:

iti laksananusarena matalivrttāntam prakarivrttam  
ahus tan na sandhisamaptivisaye tasyoddesad anganam  
tadanugāmitvam nāyāti<sup>6</sup>

By this definition the episode of Mātali does not form the subplot prakari as claimed by some, because a prakari is meant for the completion of avamarśa sandhi, and mere parts thereof cannot have that claim.

This view as stated by Raghavabhattacha in his commentary on the Sakuntala is unsound according to SM.

Under the circumstances, it appears to stand that SM knew Raghavabhattacha, his predecessor. In that case, it was not possible for Raghavabhattacha to have borrowed anything from SM. It strength thens our surmise that Raghavabhattacha borrowed from another NP the verse nandanti kāvyāni.....cited above. More than one work under the same name and on the same subject is not very uncommon in the history of Sanskrit literature and literary criticism. The most noteworthy example being the Kavyalankara by Bhamaha, Vāmana and Rudrata.

In the light of above discussion, the present author finds it difficult to appreciate S.N. Shastri who seems to understand Raghavabhattacha's citation from NP as being from SM's work. This appears from his reverence to NP and its entry in the Conspectus of Textbooks of this book as a work of SM7.

Incidentally, since SM himself has given the date of the composition of his work as mentioned before, this would give us the lower limit of Raghavabhattacha's date.

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1. Letter of Mr MJCO' Keefe of the British Library No IOLR/PB/209 dated 10th April, 1991 addressed to my teacher Professor Pratap Bandyopadhyay of the University of Burdwan. Photo copy of the letter and the relevant document are given in the Appendix.

2. The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama, Preface, p. XXI. That the author is referring to NP of Sundaramiśra is evident from his Conspectus of Text Books p. 514 where he notes citations only from a MS of this work and not work. any other
3. Ṣadjamadhyamagandhāras tryo grāmaḥ prakirtitah/  
bhurlokāj jayate ṣadjo bhuvarlokāc ca madhyamah //  
Nārādīśikṣā(1.2.6.)
4. Abhijñānaśakuntala of Kālidāsa, edited by M. R. Kale. Eighth Edition, Act 1, p. 5.
5. Ibid, Act I, p. 6
6. Op. cit Act V. p. 186
7. See Note no. 2

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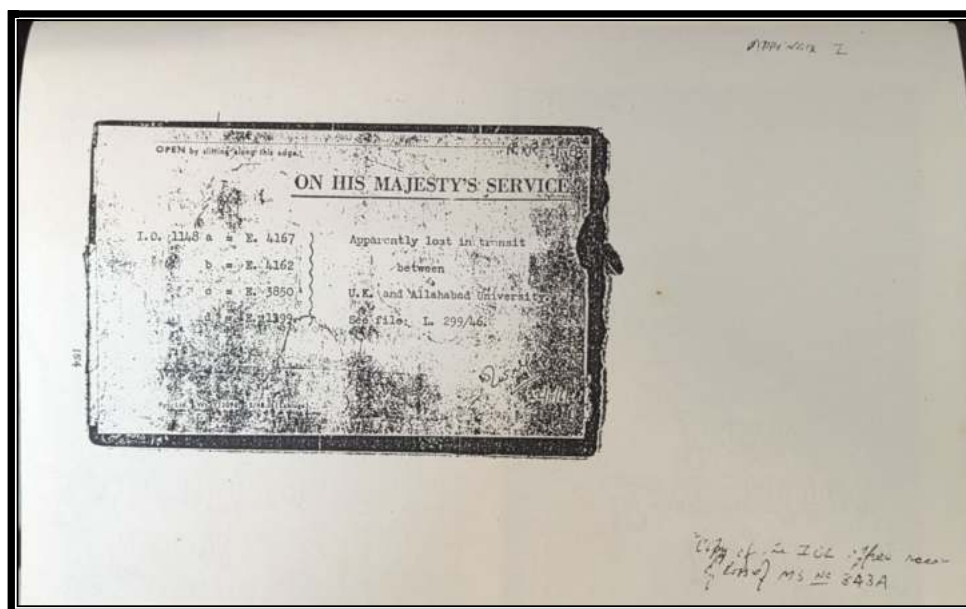
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## Appendix:



## Environment-Conscious Ancient India

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People face various environmental problems. Three major problems are: i) Pollution of air, water and other substances, ii) The overuse of natural resources e.g. oil, forest & aquatic minerals, iii) The extinction of plants and animals and the consequent loss of biological diversity.

These problems made people bound to rouse a worldwide environment-consciousness wave. Experiments are done for the search of remedies and workshops and seminars are arranged to make mass aware about the burning problem.

Ancient India, depicted in Sanskrit literature, undoubtedly had no environmental pollution issue, yet their environment-consciousness is seen in their customs, in food-habits, in rituals etc. witnessed by the Vedas (4000 B.C.), the Ramayana (300 B.C.), the Mahabharata (400 B.C.), Bhasa (300 A.D.), Kalidasa, Bana Dandi (700 A.D.).

Aryan sages talk about five elements which constitute animal and human bodies. These are ksiti, ap, tejah, marut & vyom. So, natural resources are into us. Bodies of plants, animals and human beings are created out of these five essential elements and after death their bodies are disintegrated and converted back to these elements.

“Atra chatvari bhutani bhumivaryanalanilah |

Chaturbhyarh khalu bhutebhyaschaitanyamupajayate ||”

Rivers full of water, forests filled with trees, fertile soil ready to grow plants, hills showering water into the rivers fascinated the sages. They describe our country as a country made by devas- “Sarasvati-drivadatyordevanadyoryadantaram |

Tam devanirmitam devam brahmavartam prachaksate ||”

In this tone Maxmueller pronounced that India is the best in beauty and resources in the whole world. He said that it is no exaggeration.

There is Jyotish Vedanga where whole earth is discussed. That the earth is round-shaped and narrow in north and south is discovered many many years back-

“Kapitthaphalavat visvam

Daksinottarayoh samam-naksatrakalpah”

Solar and lunar eclipse, cycles of the stars, zodiac cycles, high tide and low tide theory, tithi-bara etc. are discussed by the ancient Indians.

It surprises the Aryan sage after seeing Ursa Major as he wants to find the reason behind it being visible only at night and not during the day.<sup>1</sup> That the moon shines by the glow of the sun is stated in ‘Taittiriya Sanhita’. Rg Veda says that the sun is the controller of seasons.<sup>2</sup>

Almost one thousand years before the birth of Western astronomers-Galileo, Copernicus etc. the Indian astronomer Aryabhatta announces that the Earth possesses diurnal motion. The round-shaped Earth is described in a sloka.<sup>3</sup>

The Aryan sages recognised the beneficial roles of sun, soil, air, water, plants etc. and they were scared of the natural calamities-heavy downpour, drought, storm too. At that time technological advancement did not rise to present height to control those adverse natural powers and therefore the sages used to worship nature.<sup>4</sup>

The Vedas are full of Suryasukta, Varuna mantras etc. Surya, Varuna, Indra, Agni are considered as gods to perform certain works. Clarified butter, meat etc. were offered in the sacrifices dedicated to them. Receiving the oblations happy gods bestow rainfall, protect wealth paddy and cattle etc.<sup>5</sup>

In the Vedic age pasuyagas were practised by the Aryan-sages. The animals were offered in the sacrifices and were believed to go to heaven after death.

Criticising the Vedic point of view Carvakas said that if the killed animals in the sacrifices go to heaven, the man who performs the sacrifice for self should kill his father to let him go to heaven.<sup>6</sup>

The term ‘ahimsa’ is seen in ‘Manusamhita’ which approximately was written in a time between the wide limits of 200 B.C. to 200 A.D.<sup>7</sup>

The Buddhist and the Jain era created a mass-awareness conservation of nature and natural resources. Killing of animals was discouraged and all sorts of violence, animosity, warfare were condemned. Love, reasoning and respect were praised in the search for eternal truth of nature.

There are two aspects of ethical world-anthropocentrism or ethics for the use of the environment and non-anthropocentrism or ethics of the environment. According to the first aspect, humans are the most important on the earth. In Western civilisation, this



aspect grows from the Bible and Aristotle. It is so told by Aristotle, “Plants’ existence is for living beings, animals’ existence for humans, cattle’s existence is for humans’ food and other necessities and the wild animals’ existence is for dress and various purposes of the human-race.” This opinion is supported by St. Aquinas. It is clear here that humans are responsible only to humans, not to the nature, though it is objectionable.

Indian civilisation deals with “sarababhute samadristih”. A man is born with five debts: Devrin- debts to nature, Pitirir- debts to forefathers, Risirin- debts to great teachers, Nririn- debts to humanity at large, Bhutrin- debts to all living beings. In this way we can say that anthropocentrism is not effective in Indian civilisation.

The concept of hermitages originated in ancient India. These hermitages were no dense forests full of wild animals, rather the trees and the animals were tied by a bond of affection and friendship with the residence of hermitages.<sup>11</sup> ‘Abhijnanasakuntalam’ bears many such instances while King Dusyanta, proud of his strength, with his bow strung was beyond the area of the hermitage of the hermit Kanva a deer was running away at the sight of the king apprehending own killing. But the case was reversed, when he entered the peaceful atmosphere of the hermitage the deer did not flee at the sight of the armed king and his charioteer with rattling chariot.<sup>8</sup>

Brought up in the peaceful lonely hermitage Sakuntala learned to love the entire creation.<sup>9</sup> She used to besprinkle the sore-abating ingudi oil upon the fawn’s mouth, pricked by the kusa grass. The fawn was like her foster child. Sakuntala was anxious for the safe delivery of the doe. She asked her father to give the news when she was departing for her husband’s place. When Sakuntala goes to in-laws the motherless fawn follows her and Sakuntala persuades it with tearful eyes to remain in the hermitage.

Wildlife Protection Act was formulated in 1972 only and Kalidasa lived approximately in fourth century A.D.

It is not only an instance of secure co-existence of human beings and animals, but also the existence of love and affection between two species.<sup>10</sup>

All dwellers of the Kanva-hermitage felt responsibility to protect the animals of the hermitage. King Dusyanta, ready to poach the deer, was restrained by a sage Baikhanasa. The three slokas uttered by Baikhanasa here not only show the beauty of simile used by Kalidasa, but also manifest the mercy of a sage for that tiny deer.

*“Baikhanasa-Oh! King, the deer belongs to the hermitage, it should not be killed, it should not be killed. Not indeed this dart should be allowed to descend on the tender*

*body of this fawn-not indeed to be allowed, like fire on down in masses. Where forsooth, is the existence of these poor fawns all fickle, and (ponder) where are your adamantine shafts with keen tips? Withdraw, therefore, your arrow that has been well-aimed. Your weapon is to protect the distressed and not to smite the innocent”.*

It is to be noted that we see the traces of animal-protection at the time when the concept of protecting biodiversity did not constitute. In India Wildlife Protection Act was formulated in 1972 only and Kalidasa lived approximately in fourth century A.D.

Another important component of environment is plants. It obstructs land-erosion, leaves oxygen and attracts rain. The beneficial roles played by plants cannot be counted. That a plant also is a living being like the animals was discovered by Jagadish Chandra Basu. But it was far before that discovery when Acharya Manu uttered this sloka- i.e. it becomes possible for individuals living in society to enjoy privileges only because no one can stand in the way of such enjoyment due to the fear of royal punishment. The ‘cara’ movable can enjoy privileges, how can a sthabara, the immovable? This sthabara refers to plants, rather than the inanimate object. To have the chance to grow old and have flowers and fruits in time, rather than being cut down in a tender age are the privileges enjoyed by the plants. In ‘Abhijnanasakuntalam’ it has been stated that even the sprouting of the trees is dependent on the attitude of the king. The mental disposition of the king exerts certain amount of influence on the surrounding atmosphere.<sup>12</sup>

In another way the commentators say that out of fear of being cut down trees become fit to be enjoyed by means of their fruits, flowers, twigs, barks etc. i.e. they do not transgress the law according to which they must give fruits etc. at the appointed time. We can have support of Jagadish Chandra Bose-

“Tasya sarvani bhutani sthavarani charani cha |

Bhayad bhogaya kalpante svadharmanna chalanti cha ||”

And it was Sakuntala, whose heart was overflowing with the milk of human kindness which extends not merely to the animals of the hermitage, but also to the trees and creepers therein. She cannot drink water without watering the trees and creepers; she never plucks a tender leaf even to decorate herself, and her joy knows no bound when the trees first put forth their blossoms. At the time of her departure for her husband’s place, with a heavy heart she bids farewell to the trees and creepers of the hermitage and entrusts them to the care of her friends.

New stone age started in this subcontinent almost six thousand years ago. They did not

preserve for us any sign of their love for flowers; but there are signs of love for trees in Mohenjodaro. They kept print of the leaf of the fig tree in their coins four thousand years ago. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata stored instances of flower fullakes, gardens, forest with full of champaka-trees, asoka-trees, sala-trees, lilies, blue lotuses etc.

Trees are so much helpless. They have lives, but they cannot move. Axe can cut them, storm can break them, thunder can burn them anytime. Their loneliness is drawn in a sloka in Rg Veda which says *“Oh! Forest, you become invisible quickly. Why don't you ask the path for village? Are not you afraid of being lonely?”*<sup>13</sup>

The value of the big trees also was not denied by Rg Veda which did not give sweet fruits or beautiful flowers, but only bestowed shadows.<sup>14</sup>

Trees were the best landmark in the age of Rg Veda.<sup>15</sup> Vedic literature prefers silk-cotton tree to be the tallest.<sup>16</sup>

According to Atharva Veda, the fig tree and the catechu-tree grown together bear a specific value described in the tantras. It is to be noted that Sanskrit literature expresses these thoughts for trees when deforestation or desertification was not a threat to environment and the human civilisation in a large scale. Old Indians were habituated with trees but they did not deny their contribution ungratefully like the scientifically advanced present people. We see in the Rg Veda that forest life is a happy one where there is no apprehension of being slain by cruel animals and sufficient sweet fruits are to take.

*“A virgin forest is the product of all the millions of years that have passed since the beginning of our planet”* -Peter Singer (Practical Ethics)

It is repeated by Peter Singer that environmentalists so said that silent forest is the heredity of the world. We should save it for our successors.

It is so told by Paul Taylor in respect for nature that every lively thing follow its welfare in its own way. If we once understand it then we as look at ourselves so look will look at themselves. As we evaluate ourselves so we will evaluate their existence also.

*“Today's human environment presents people with a number of hazards- biological, chemical, physical and cultural that might produce health problem.”* – Mac Millan Encyclopedia of Environment. Many diseases are caused at least partly by various environmental conditions. Plant-rich pollution-less ancient India supplied many herbs to fight with diseases. Atharva Veda is the source of the Ayurveda. We see the Bhaisajyasuktas and Poustikasuktas in Atharva Veda. In Rudrasukta of Rg Veda we see

the prayers to Rudra to live 100 years with medicinal plants given by Rudra.<sup>17</sup>

Population was not a threat in ancient India yet ancient Indians did not encourage the unplanned election of the houses, ponds etc. Architecture was introduced. There were two gharanas (relating to one's family) in architecture-Dravida and Nagada. The popular books of Dravida gharana are '*Manasara Mayamatam*' etc. '*Aparajitaprabha*' belongs to Nagada gharana. Factory buildings, community buildings, schools, hospitals, kitchens, ponds and lavatories were planned to be built properly. Entrance of light and air also were discussed.

Environment does not only mean sun, stars, water bodies, trees etc, things of outer existence. Inner self directs a man on whom his world, his family depend. There are *Saddarsanas*, four Vedas, various *Upanisads*, Shree Gita and Puranas to carry on a successful life and family.

*"Yatha vayum samasritya bartante sarvajantavah |*

*Tatha grihasthasritya bartante sarva asramah || "*

*-Manusamhita*

Men and women are the two pillars of a family and society. But it is a trend of modern India also discriminate between male and female but *Manusamhita* says- "*Kanyapi palaniya siksaniyapi yatnatah*"

The fundamentals of conservation ethics were brilliantly formulated in the '*Isopanisad*'-

*"Ompurnmadah purnamidam purnat purnomudachyate|*

*Purnasya purnamadaya purnamevabasisyate|| "*

i.e. that (first cause Brahman) is full, this (cosmos) is full. The Full (cosmos) comes out of the Full (first cause). (At the time of the cataclysm) taking the fullness of the Full (cosmos) there remains the Full.

The recognition of the environment depicted in our ancient scriptures is in conformity with the outlook of the present-day world to save the nature and formulate an effective strategy for the conservation of nature and natural resources.

Environment is nature also prakriti. It does not always create problems. Beautiful, wild nature or village nature fascinates us. Picturesque of roaring sea, deserted deserts, fiery volcanoes enchant us. We present a beautiful utterance of Bibhutibhusan

Bandyopadhyay's 'Aranyak'- "*Kata rupe kata sajei je banyaprakriti amar mugdha anabhyasta dristir sammukhe asiya amay bhulailo! Kata sandhya asila apurva raktamegher mukut mathay, dupurer kharatara roudra asila unmadini bhairavir beshe,*".

## Footnotes

1. Ami ya riksa nihitasa uccha nktam dadrise kuha chiddivesu |
2. Abhiyajnam grinihi no glavo nestah piva rituna |
3. Vritto bhapanjaramadhye kasaparivestitah khamadhyagatah|
4. The worship was prevalent in the shape of various sacrifices kariri etc. in the Vedic age. The concept of puja came lately in the age of Puranas.
5. "Rasanupradanam bhitrabadho ya cha ka cha balakritirindrakamaiva tat " |
6. Pasuschennihatah svargam jyotistome gamisyati |  
Svapita yajamanena tatra kasmanna himsyate ||
7. Ahimsyendriyasmgairvidikaischaiva karmabhih
8. Bisvasopagamadabhinnagatayah savdam sahante mrigas
9. Apasritapandupatra munchantyasruniva latah
10. cf. Nriyam mayurah kusumani briksa darbhanupattanvijahurharinyah | -  
Raghuvamsam
11. Na khalu na khalu vanah sannipatyoyamasmin
12. cf. Chutanam chiranirgatapi kalika
13. Arnyaranyanyasou ya prava nasyati | - Rg Veda 146/1
14. Anjanagandhim surabhim bahvannamakrisivalam – Rg Veda 146/6
15. Vriksa iva stabdha divi tisthatyekah
16. Shalmalou vriddhim dadhati tasmal salmalih vanaspatinam vardhisava vardhate  
– Satapathabrahman 13.2.7.4
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# **Beyond Borders: Citizenship and the Quest for Global Justice**

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## **Abstract**

In an increasingly interconnected world, the conventional understanding of citizenship as a state-centric concept is being re-examined due to global interdependence and cross-border challenges. This study investigates the dynamic relationship between citizenship and global justice, exploring how emerging international norms question the exclusionary nature of national citizenship frameworks. By integrating insights from liberal, cosmopolitan, and critical justice theories, the paper examines the conflict between localized loyalties and universal moral duties. It focuses particularly on migration, statelessness, and global disparities. The study advocates for a redefined citizenship model that embraces global justice principles while upholding democratic accountability. Through a blend of theoretical analysis and real-world examples, this work contributes to discussions on global ethics, institutional transformation, and the future of democratic engagement in a globalized era.

## **Keywords**

Citizenship, Global Justice, Cosmopolitanism, Migration, Statelessness, Human Rights.

## **Introduction**

The concept of citizenship has transformed significantly from its roots in ancient political philosophy to its contemporary manifestations in democratic societies. In classical civilizations, such as ancient Greece and Rome, citizenship was defined by active civic involvement and military obligations, restricted to a select group of free, property-owning men. During the medieval era, feudal allegiances and ecclesiastical authority largely eclipsed the notion of citizenship. The emergence of the modern nation-state in the 17th and 18th centuries, fueled by Enlightenment ideals and liberal revolutions, revitalized citizenship as a legal and political identity rooted in individual rights and national affiliation. Philosophers like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

articulated the social contract and the concept of inherent human rights, laying the groundwork for liberal-democratic citizenship models. In the 20th century, T.H. Marshall's framework of civil, political, and social rights further expanded the scope of citizenship. Today, globalization, migration, and transnational issues have prompted a reimagining of citizenship beyond national borders, giving rise to notions such as post-national, transnational, and cosmopolitan citizenship that reflect the ethical and interdependent nature of the globalized world.

Traditionally, citizenship has signified legal and political membership within a sovereign state, encompassing rights, responsibilities, and a sense of community. However, the rapid pace of globalization—characterized by cross-border mobility, economic interconnectedness, and supranational institutions—has reshaped our understanding of political belonging and justice. These shifts have sparked critical debates about global justice, questioning whether rights and obligations should remain confined to national boundaries (Pogge, 2002; Nussbaum, 1996).

Recent scholarship has challenged the assumption that individual citizens can exercise rights independently of their social contexts, such as class, race, ethnicity, or gender. Since the 1980s, concepts like multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion have become central to rethinking citizenship (Acharya, 2012). This paper explores the evolving interplay between citizenship and global justice, addressing a pivotal question: Is it possible to construct a global justice framework that transcends the constraints of nation-based citizenship while preserving democratic principles?

## Theories of Citizenship

Citizenship is a complex and evolving concept, interpreted through various theoretical lenses that reflect changes in political membership, rights, and identity. Key perspectives include liberal, civic republican, multicultural, and cosmopolitan approaches.

Liberal theories prioritize individual rights and legal equality within the nation-state, viewing citizenship as a formal status that ensures civil liberties and political participation (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). Conversely, civic republican perspectives emphasize active civic engagement, collective responsibility, and the pursuit of the common good, framing citizenship as a participatory practice (Pettit, 1997). Multicultural theories advocate for the recognition of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, arguing that equitable citizenship requires group-specific rights for marginalized communities (Young, 1990). Cosmopolitan theories, however, reject the

nation-state as the sole basis for citizenship, asserting that individuals are global citizens with moral and political obligations that transcend borders, rooted in universal human rights and justice (Pogge, 2002; Nussbaum, 1996).

Despite their differences, these frameworks often rely on territorial and exclusionary assumptions, which pose challenges when considered in the context of global justice.

## **Global Justice: Normative Foundations**

Global justice questions the moral legitimacy of borders in determining access to rights and resources. Cosmopolitan scholars argue that all individuals belong to a unified moral community, deserving equal consideration regardless of nationality (Pogge, 2002; Nussbaum, 1996). Global egalitarianism calls for redistributive justice on a worldwide scale (Beitz, 1999). In contrast, statist perspectives, such as those articulated by Rawls (1999), maintain that justice obligations are primarily owed within defined political communities with shared institutions. This tension between universal rights and particularistic obligations is central to global justice debates.

The inquiry addresses fundamental issues of human dignity and the scope of moral responsibility, tackling challenges like poverty, hunger, homelessness, and global inequality. Echoing Amartya Sen's (1999) perspective, global justice emphasizes that globalization must account for interdependence to be ethically valid and broadly accepted. Advocates propose organizing societies around shared values of equity, justice, and empowerment, fostering collective agency and self-determination across borders. This vision underpins various global movements for justice and reform.

## **Migration, Statelessness, and the Limits of National Citizenship**

The shortcomings of nation-centric citizenship are starkly evident in the experiences of migrants and stateless individuals. Migrants and refugees often navigate legal and political marginality, lacking full rights in host nations and maintaining fragile connections to their countries of origin (Benhabib, 2004). Stateless persons, unrecognized by any state, face complete exclusion from the global rights framework (Blitz & Sawyer, 2011).

Migration raises critical questions about who qualifies as a rights-bearing individual. Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers frequently occupy ambiguous legal spaces, denied access to essential services, subjected to precarious statuses, and confronted with discriminatory policies (Gibney, 2004). Statelessness represents an even more

profound form of exclusion, as individuals lack any national recognition, depriving them of basic rights like education, employment, healthcare, and political participation (UNHCR, 2023). Hannah Arendt (1951) described stateless persons as embodying the “right to have rights,” underscoring the reliance of human rights on national membership.

The exclusionary nature of naturalization processes, refugee policies, and border controls further highlights the limitations of national citizenship. Seyla Benhabib (2004) critiques the “bounded inclusion” logic of nation-states, which grants rights to insiders while excluding outsiders. This practice conflicts with the cosmopolitan ideal of equal moral worth and poses urgent ethical questions for global justice.

From a cosmopolitan viewpoint, citizenship should not be an arbitrary privilege determined by birthplace or geography but a status grounded in universal dignity and shared responsibility. Proposals for post-national or transnational citizenship seek to extend legal protections and political voice beyond state boundaries (Soysal, 1994). These models aim to ensure that migrants and stateless individuals are recognized within the global order.

Ultimately, migration and statelessness expose the structural flaws of a citizenship model tied to state sovereignty, necessitating a redefinition of political membership that embraces mobility, interdependence, and global ethical commitments.

## **Towards Cosmopolitan Citizenship?**

In his 1795 essay *Perpetual Peace*, Immanuel Kant introduced the notion of cosmopolitan right (*Weltbürgerrecht*), advocating for a global framework to ensure lasting peace. He recognized that in an interconnected world, injustices in one region reverberate globally, emphasizing that “a violation of right in one place is felt everywhere” (Kant, 1991). This insight underscores the moral and political implications of globalization.

Cosmopolitan citizenship envisions individuals as members of a global moral and political community, entitled to dignity and hospitality by virtue of their shared humanity. Kant’s cosmopolitan right establishes a baseline for global justice, ensuring respect for individuals beyond their national affiliations (Brown & Held, 2018).

Seyla Benhabib builds on Kant’s ideas, proposing a nuanced cosmopolitanism that emphasizes democratic iterations and flexible boundaries of political membership. In *The Rights of Others* (2004), she argues that transnational migration and international

human rights norms necessitate a rethinking of political belonging. Cosmopolitan norms, such as the right to asylum or non-refoulement, reflect the ongoing evolution of Kantian principles through democratic reinterpretation in global institutions and civil society.

Benhabib's concept of "democratic iterations" suggests that global norms are not imposed but adapted through participatory processes, reshaping national frameworks to align with universal rights (Benhabib, 2004). Cosmopolitan citizenship, in this view, is both a moral aspiration and a practical process of dialogue and contestation over rights and inclusion.

Cosmopolitan citizenship responds to transnational issues like migration, inequality, climate change, and human rights violations by advocating for universal moral consideration (Pogge, 2002; Nussbaum, 1996). Scholars propose transnational democratic institutions, such as a global parliamentary body, enhanced International Criminal Court powers, and global regulatory frameworks for labor, finance, and the environment (Held, 1995; Caney, 2006). These reforms aim to ensure that individuals affected by global decisions have a voice in shaping them.

However, critics from communitarian, realist, and nationalist perspectives challenge cosmopolitan citizenship. They argue it lacks cultural grounding and undermines the shared identity needed for democratic cohesion (Miller, 2007). Realists question its feasibility, citing global power imbalances and the primacy of state sovereignty (Rawls, 1999). Michael Walzer, for instance, contends that global citizenship lacks the institutional and symbolic infrastructure of national citizenship, rendering it aspirational rather than practical (Linklater, 2002).

In response, scholars like Andrew Linklater (2002) argue that cosmopolitan citizenship can emerge through transnational solidarity and institutional reform, even without a global state. Despite challenges, cosmopolitan citizenship remains a compelling vision, highlighting the need for global institutions that reflect the interconnectedness of the modern world.

## **Nested Citizenship and Global Democratic Reform: A Cosmopolitan Framework**

Rather than abolishing national citizenship, Seyla Benhabib (2004) proposes a "nested" citizenship model, where individuals retain membership in local and national communities while holding rights and responsibilities at the global level. This multi-

layered approach balances state sovereignty with the demands of global interdependence.

Benhabib advocates for a shift from the rigid “bounded demos” of the nation-state to more inclusive models of democratic legitimacy, where universal human rights inform national laws. Through democratic iterations, global norms are adapted within domestic contexts, fostering a grounded cosmopolitanism (Benhabib, 2004). This model supports institutional reforms for inclusive global governance, enabling individuals to participate in shaping global policies while retaining national agency.

## Conclusion

In an era of global interconnectedness, traditional citizenship models rooted in national borders are increasingly inadequate. By reimagining citizenship through a cosmopolitan lens and pursuing global institutional reform, we can move toward a more equitable and inclusive world order.

This study has examined the evolving relationship between citizenship and global justice, emphasizing the need to transcend territorial conceptions of political membership. In addressing transnational challenges like migration, climate change, and inequality, justice frameworks must extend beyond sovereign states. A cosmopolitan citizenship model—rooted in universal respect, shared governance, and inclusive participation—offers a viable path toward a just, peaceful, and interconnected global society.

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## **Forged in Fire: Decoding the Politics of Violence in Utpal Dutt's Titumir.**

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“The one who has never sinned should throw the first brick.” The eponymous character roars in his opening dialogue from the play *Titumir* by Utpal Dutt. With this war cry Syed Mir Nisar Ali, aka Titumir, calls for a collective attack against British exploitations – thus embarking on a journey, as perilous as it seems to be, for retribution, and in search of inner peace. As a historical character, Titumir has been a part of many glorious narratives that addressed the Indian freedom struggle against the British Empire. It's only apropos that a dramatist like Utpal Dutt would convincingly capture his revolutionary spirit on stage and present it gloriously, albeit in liaison with contemporary times. This play produced with great success by People's Little Theatre in 1978, re-explored one of the epicentres of peasant uprising in colonial Bengal while attempting a critical assessment of colonial history - offering a detailed depiction of the armed resistance led by Titumir in Barasat. The play is in true spirits with Utpal Dutt's idea of revolutionary theatre. Upon being asked about the concept behind such a form of theatre he explained: “Our "program" is to bring the stories of the gallant revolutionary struggles of another people to our own people so that they too will be inspired to fight.” He further explains:

We want to create plays, songs, ballets, to recapture for the people the important episodes of their past when they took up arms against landlords and the British army. We try to tell them nonviolence and passivity are recent interpolations, alien to their nature and history. Several plays by various groups have carried this idea to the workers and peasants in the hope that the strength of previous generations will reassure them that violence in a just war is their birth right.<sup>1</sup>

*Titumir* portrays the struggle against British colonialism in India during the mid-19th century. The portrayal of colonialism is complex, with the British authorities being shown as oppressive and exploitative, but also as individuals with their own fears and failings. In the play, violence is portrayed as an inevitable outcome of the oppressive

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<sup>1</sup> Gunawardana, A. J., and Utpal Dutt. “Theatre as a Weapon. An Interview with Utpal Dutt.” *The Drama Review: TDR* 15, no. 2 (1971): 225–37.

regime. The British authorities as well as the native Zamindars are shown as brutal, conniving individuals who use aggressive tactics to put a clampdown on the revolutionary movement. In the face of such adversity Utpal Dutt depicts the violence of the revolutionaries as an essential act of resistance against the oppressors. However, the playwright never shies away from showing its embittering effects on the individuals. The use of brutality in the play is not glorified or celebrated, but depicted as a necessary evil in the fight for freedom. Thus, it becomes symbolic of the larger struggle for independence.

“War is an act of force...and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. Each side, therefore, compels its opponent to follow suit; a reciprocal action is started which must lead, in theory to extremes.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Historical context:**

Born in 1782 in the village of Chandpur, Titumir grew up in a pious background. His perspective of life was altered during his travel to Mecca. Influenced by Wahabi speaker and military commander Syed Ahmad Barelvi, he vowed to live a simple life and to encourage his Muslim brothers and sisters to do the same. Titumir's supporters were mostly poor peasants who were fed up with the zamindars and the British government's agricultural extortions. His return heralded the era of Islamic resurgence, during which he encouraged his fellow brothers to keep their beards and moustaches clipped, while women were to wear burqas. To isolate Titumir and to limit his growing popularity among the masses, the zamindar of Purha, Krishnadeva Rai imposed a biased tax on Muslims. As is revealed from the conversation between General Crawford Pyron and Krishna Dev from the play:

PYRON: Do you know that he is travelling from village to village and instructing the farmers to hold their heads high?

KRISHNA DEB: No sir! Your report is incorrect. Do you know that he is instructing the Muslim farmers to keep their beards? But I have taught them a lesson.

PYRON: And what lesson is that?

KRISHNA: I have imposed a tax on beards and moustaches.

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<sup>2</sup> Hesse, Carla. “Revolutionary Historiography after the Cold War: Arno Mayer’s ‘Furies’ in the French Context.” *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 4 (2001): 897–907. <https://doi.org/10.1086/340149>.

Even when the crisis erupted violently, the peasants openly revolted against the zamindars under the capable leadership of Titumir. Inspired by Krishna Deb Rai's conduct, other zamindars began imposing similar taxes, and peasants' voices went unheard. After seeking legal aid, which clearly failed Titumir and his followers, he felt it was time to take matters into their own hands. And thus, a socio-religious protest evolved into a violent political-economic class struggle. The fire was fuelled by rapid changes. A direct confrontation with British forces was unavoidable. Titumir, unfazed, swiftly relocated his base to Narkelberia to assemble a trained militia. Titumir's army had grown into a formidable force by October 1830.

Their first mission was to avenge the wrongdoing of Krishna Deb Rai. After ransacking his residence, other oppressive money-lenders also faced the brunt of the attack. Titumir, knowing of the growing tension, built Banser Kella, or a bamboo fort, to resist the British forces. At this time, the zamindars and the British authority banded together to put down the revolt. However, their failed attempts to conquer Titumir raised fresh questions about British imperialism.

Utpal Dutt, a lifelong Marxist, through his plays reiterates Lenin's declaration in *The State and Revolution* that '[t]he replacement of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution.'<sup>3</sup> In this play, Titumir sees violence as an essential tool to defeat the colonizers because it acts as a cleansing force. Violence not only physically removes the colonizer, but it also unites the people; it is an inclusive gesture that restores the natives' self-esteem. In her essay "On Violence" Hannah Arendt reflects that, like war, revolution was indelibly marked with the occurrence of violence to such an extent that the two phenomena tended to mutate into one another.<sup>4</sup> Also, probably Dutt understands the significance of violence not simply in its unswerving, instrumental value, but in the transformation of a consciousness that is revolutionary in nature.

However, the genius of Utpal Dutt lies in the fact that he doesn't strive to portray his protagonist merely as a one-dimensional character. Though Titumir largely remains uncorrupted throughout the play, he is shown as a conflicted character searching his soul for redemption while committing serious acts of violence. In his conversation with A. J. Gunawardana Utpal Dutt explains:

To portray the proletarian hero as a giant without weakness

<sup>3</sup> Lenin, Vladimir. 1992. *The State and Revolution*. Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics. London, England: Penguin Classics.

<sup>4</sup> Arendt, Hannah. 1963. *On Revolution*. New York: Viking Press.

or conflict is to tell the audience that it's impossible to be a revolutionary. The worker or the peasant in the audience, watching, concludes: "I can never be like him, because I have many weaknesses." Our hero must be as complex as any other human being. He may have many wrong attitudes about life. He may be unhappy at home. He may be a bad lover, or a tyrannous father, or an ungrateful son. In one thing alone he must be simple, direct, and uncompromising: his class-attitude.<sup>5</sup>

There are many moments in the play where Titumir questions the effectiveness and moral implications of his choices. His inner conflicts are reflected in his emotional responses which add depth and complexity to his character. In one of his conversations with Miskin Shah and Jonjali, his internal conflict is apparent:

MISKIN: Why are you pushing your end with your own two hands? TITU: My End?

MISKIN: Yes, martyrdom is waiting for you. you ought to be a martyr. for how long do you intend to live? why are you trying like a fool to prevent what is inevitable?

TITUMIR: No! I am an ordinary man, a man smeared in poverty. Why am I wearing this barbed crown?

There are numerous other instances from the play, like the time when he cries to be seen not as a saviour but as a simple human being., "I am a frightened human being. I am a human being after all." Or when in another particular instance in the play when Jonjali clamours for revenge he says: "Listen to me, know that we don't want this. We are sons of poor, deprived farmers, we don't want any bloodshed. It's not a matter of shame. We are not warmongers like them" we see Titumir as a victim of violence. As the drama unfolds, Titumir's brutality is on full display. He murders Hakim Mollah (a mole in his group who was working for the company) and Deb Nath Roy, on stage which solidifies his position as a purveyor of violence.

Utpal Dutt never underestimates the price that a leader has to pay to carry out a revolution. He asks legitimate questions concerning the psychological causes of aggression. He seeks to inquire about the sociological roots of violence. The irony is not

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<sup>5</sup> Gunawardana, A. J., and Utpal Dutt. "Theatre as a Weapon. An Interview with Utpal Dutt." *The Drama Review: TDR* 15, no. 2 (1971): 225-37.

lost on the audience when they watch Titumir, albeit for a greater cause, being forced to continue his violent crusade, acting against his will, desire, inclination, or intention. Also, to make his protagonist come to life, Dutt constantly presents him in relation to his class, and, as he fights with the enemy, and with himself – Dutt insists that his fellow workers like Miskin, Jonjali or others be shown, and their contributions highlighted, so that the people, and not any individual warrior, is held up as the real maker of history. Dutt is aware that the history of class reform includes periods of peaceful interchange and transition; but, the history of class transformation has only been one of tremendous and deadly violence.

As the play progresses Dutt's morbid rhetoric is not lost on the readers or the audience. Here Dutt contrasts Titumir's struggle with his brutal acts with another character from the play, Brandon. Brandon is a general of the British army who despite being a ruthless commander is seen as someone who wants to uphold women's rights. But gradually when Titumir rages past the British soldiers, mutilating them on his way, his sense of morality takes a hit. He orders his fellow soldiers to rape and kill around thirty village girls in order to exact revenge on Titumir. When a character from the play Chapa, whom Brandon had kept as his mistress, asks him about the said crimes, his reply is very telling of his condition:

CHAPA: You were the protector of women, kind, considerate – how did you become so dead inside in such a short of period of time? When did you become so ruthless?

BRANDON: Titumir did this to me. The Bengali outlaws have done this. They have hanged my soldiers in Laughati, Baduria. [Screams] I will inflict so much pain and punishment on the Bengalis that they will tremble with fear hearing my name.

What follows is a war of words where Chapa tries to reason with Brandon but to no avail. Brandon, consumed by the motif of revenge, also commits acts of brutality. He, like Titumir, gets consumed by violence to the point of no return.

While reading the play, or watching it unravel on stage one can see various interpretations of violence from the victim's as well as the assailant's point of view through examining, perhaps, the problems of suffering and denial. It becomes even more comprehensible that the act of colonialism, and the preservation of a colony depends on violence. Utpal Dutt and his protagonist Titumir, like Frantz Fanon, investigate the justification of violence, focusing on the claim that 'violence is the only

language spoken by the colonist' and that violence is the only way to respond to a fundamentally violent society. Dutt emphasizes in his book, using strong language, that violence is not an abstract concept for those who are subjected to it, but rather a lived experience with a tangible past. It is not so much a single act that disrupts a presumed continuum of nonviolence or peace. It is better seen as a historical pattern of violence and counter-violence. It is a double act that binds humans, including the titular character, in a repeated pattern from which they are incredibly difficult to escape.

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# **Gender disparity in Employment by caste and education – An Analysis with Indian Survey Data**

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## **Abstract**

The present study examines the current labour market scenario of India using Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23 data by exploring the relative share of working age (15-65) male and female workers in the principal activities. The main aim is to find out the relative position of the women in the labour market which also infers their position in the society. The analysis reveals that most of the women under the working age cohort are primarily engaged in domestic work in the households whereas men are distributed among different principal activities. Among different principal, the men are mostly engaged into own-account work where women are mostly engaged in performing unpaid care work. Caste and level of education of the workers are considered as two important determinants which can affect the distribution of employment. Finally the study concludes with the policy suggestions.

**Keywords: Employment , Gender, Education, India, PLFS**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The status and position of women has been the subject of research interest since the post reform period. The discrimination faced by women in every respects is a matter of serious concern of the policymakers as women constitutes an important part of the society and they reflects culture of their own society. Though in the recent years different survey reports claimed that that female labour force participation rate has been increasing since the post COVID period, but most of the concentration remain on low skilled self-employment works, which again proves the backward situation of women. In this background, this study analyses the distribution of male and female workers in usual principal activities during 2022-23 in India. The main objective is to examine the relative position of the female workers inside and outside the households which helps us to understand the discrimination faced by them. Instead of focusing only on females, this study considers the employment distribution of both male and females by different



factors to clearly examine the existing disparity between them. Disparity in employment is defined as the difference in share of type of activities and quality of jobs between males and females. Though different laws and rights exist in our society related to labour market, which acts as the safeguards of the women and try to enhance active participation of women in the labour market, but still the recent figure of female labourforce participation of India (FLFP) doesn't reflect any positive vibrant of these existing laws and policies. The distribution provides us a preliminary picture of the concentration of women towards different activities and how it differs from men. In analyzing the distribution, social status and level of education of the workers are considered to be the two important determinants.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

Among the vast area of literatures, we have selected some few which are very closely related to our study. The participation of females in the labour force in comparison with the economic growth is supposed to be U-shaped as the womenfolk were mostly illiterate or with low levels of education face shortage of work in the home and have to work as manual labour in the non-agricultural sector. Majumdar (2012) first provides an overall picture of female labour supply in India in time periods using NSSO datasets of 1996 and 2010. The author argued that there have been many determinants at individuals, households and state level which affect as well as constraints for women regarding their decision related to work participation. Mahapatra (2013) investigated the declining trends in female labour force participation using NSSO datasets of 1999-00 to 2009-10 where the author found that age and period changes can account for a substantial decline in labour force participation. The author suggested that provision of higher education and creation of employment opportunities to younger cohorts of women will increase the labour force participation rate. Mallaiah (2014) pointed out that the largest number of working women in India is engaged in farming operations either as cultivators or as agricultural laborers and the author also identified the reasons for low participation of women with special reference to state of Uttar Pradesh. Sharma and Saha (2015) basically focussed on disadvantaged women workers for improving the employment potentialities of women in India. They found that the female workers have much lower participation rates than their male counterparts and hence comprise a marginalized section. Chand and Singh (2022) using PLFS data series from 2017-18 to 2019-20 found that the participation of women in agriculture has been rising and youth have a higher preference to work in the non-agricultural occupations as compared to an older age group. Fernandez & Puri (2023) using the PLFS 2021-22 explored that the highest proportion of women in rural India were engaged in low paid unskilled own-

account work where urban women were mostly engaged in high paid regular salaried jobs.

### 1.3 Data Description

For this study we use the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) unit level data for the period 2022-23. The primary source of information on economically active population at the household level is employment and unemployment survey (EUS) and recently available periodic labour force survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The EUS provides information which are used to estimate parameters of various labour force characteristics at the national and subnational level. The estimates of status in employment, industrial distribution and occupational distribution of the workers can also be made from these survey data. The PLFS is an independent of the usual survey on employment and unemployment of NSSO although the basic concepts are similar. In the schedule 10.4 of the survey round, activity status is classified into 13 groups consisting mainly different forms of self-employment, wage employment and other activities. Here persons who are either employed or unemployed during the reference period together constitute the 'labour force' and persons who are neither 'working' nor 'seeking or available for work' for various reasons during the reference period are considered to be 'out of labour force'.

Self-employed are those who independently engage in their own farm or non-farm enterprises. The self-employed are further categorised into own-account workers, employers and unpaid workers in household enterprises. Wage employment is divided into regular wage employment and casual employment. Regular wage workers are those workers who are working on a regular basis and also paid according to that. On the other hand, casual workers are those who work may be on a contractual basis and get paid only when they work.

### Distribution by activity status

Table 1 represents the distribution of principal activities across gender during the study period in overall India. The principal activity refers to the period where the person spent the maximum days in the reference period of 365 days. There are different categories of activity status as mentioned in the survey schedule like self-employed, wage employed and others. The self-employed persons are of three types: own account worker, employer, and unpaid family work. Wage employment is of two types: employment on regular basis and employment on casual basis. The dataset we have used also considers activities like domestic duties, students and unemployed.

The Table 1 infers the contrasting features of principal activities among men and

women. It is observed that the maximum economic activities have been dominated by the men worker, whereas women were mainly concentrated in performing domestic and household activities. Among several economic activities, the share of men was highest in own account activity followed by the regular salaried work whereas, women was mostly concentrated towards own account work followed by unpaid family work. The share of women in regular salaried work was very low compared to the share of the men workers, which again reflects the poor condition of women workers in the Indian labour market. It is examined that where most of the men workers were distributed in performing different economic activities, the women workers were mainly engaged in performing domestic and other household activities with unpaid care work. The scenario reflects that above 50 percent of women were engaged in performing domestic activities and only around 30 percent of women were engaged in performing economic activities. On the other hand, around 78 percent of male workers were engaged in different economic activities in overall India during the study periods, which infers the disparity between male and female workers in performing economic activities.

The scenario of unemployment reveals that female workers were relatively less unemployed than the male workers during the study periods though the difference in their share was very low. It may be because of the higher participation of women workers in the self-employment work, mainly in the unpaid family work. In case of education, it is observed that the share of females in education was marginally lower than their male counterparts, which may be due to the several restrictions and social prejudice, especially in the rural parts of India.

Table 1: Distribution (in percentage) of principal activities across gender during 2022-23

Principal Activities	Male	Female
Own account worker	30	9
Employer	4	0.2
Unpaid family worker	6	9
Regular salaried work	23	8
Casual work in the public sector	0.1	1
Casual work in the private sector	15	4
Unemployment	4	2
Attended educational institutions	17	14
Attended domestic duties only	1	38
Attended domestic duties with other household works	0.1	15

Source-Author's own calculations from PLFS 2022-23 data

## 1.5. Distribution by caste of the workers

Table 2 depicts the caste wise distribution of male and female workers in India during 2022-23. It is observed that the self-employment activities have been mostly performed by the ST female workers whereas upper caste females mainly dominated the regular salaried work. In case of casual activities the share of SC female workers were higher than other caste workers. The rate of unemployment was highest among upper caste female workers followed by ST female workers during the study period. In case of attending education institutions, the rate was marginally higher among ST male and female than other caste. Notably, the share in performing domestic and other household activities was highest among upper caste females followed by OBC females, whereas it was lowest among ST females.

Table 2: Distribution (in percentage) of principal activities across social groups of male and female workers during 2022-23

Principal Activity	ST		SC		OBC		Others	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Own account worker	34	15	24	8	32	9	31	8
Employer	1	0.2	2	0.1	4	0.3	6	0.4
Unpaid family worker	8	17	3	6	6	9	6	6
Regular salaried work	19	8	22	9	22	7	29	9
Casual work in the public sector	0.4	1	0.2	1	1	1	0.04	0.2
Casual work in the private sector	16	5	27	8	15	4	8	1
Unemployment	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2
Attended educational institutions	18	16	16	13	17	13	16	14
Attended domestic duties only	0.4	19	1	36	1	41	1	45
Attended domestic duties with other household works	0.2	16	0.1	17.11	0.13	14.61	1	15

Source-Author's own calculations from PLFS 2022-23 data

## 1.6. Distribution by the level of education of the workers

Table 3 depicts the distribution of principal activities by gender across different levels of education during 2022-23. Human capital theory states that workers' education enhances labour productivity although at different rates in different activities, organizations, and situations (Becker 1964). It is quite obvious that illiterate or low level educated male and female workers were engaged in different self-employment and casual wage activities and as the level of education rises they were engaged in regular salaried activities. The discrimination was very much prevalent as the regular salaried

activities was mostly dominated by graduated males as the share of graduated females were comparatively lower here. The highlighting fact in this Table 3 is that the share of graduated females were much higher in performing domestic and household activities, which creates a social problem in the society as the higher educated females remain confined in home rather than contributing in economic activities. There are different theories behind this scenario. According to Das & Desai (2003), education is related to employment through both income and substitution effects. It must be considered that an educated women marry educated men, who have higher incomes. Since high income families have a lesser need of women's contribution to the household, this encourages the labour force withdrawal of women. Studies show that while higher income families may be less likely to need women's income; when employed, educated women have higher incomes, and it has been observed in other societies that in the absence of patriarchal controls, this income effect should dominate the substitution effect. Thus, the literature attributes women's declining labour force participation with education to two factors: (1) Structural effect due to lack of opportunities for educated women; and, (2) cultural effects whereby high socioeconomic status simultaneously encourages higher education and labour force withdrawal.

Table 3: Distribution (in percentage) of principal activities across different levels of education of male and female workers during 2022-23

Principal Activities	Not literate		Up to Upper Primary		Secondary/HS		Graduation & above	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Own account worker	43	11	24	8	24	6	19	5
Employer	2	0	2	0	4	0	6	0
Unpaid family worker	3	14	4	7	6	5	6	2
Regular salaried work	8	4	11	3	22	6	48	24
Casual work in the public sector	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Casual work in the private sector	24	8	14	3	9	1	2	0
Unemployment	0	0	1	0	4	2	11	10
Attended educational institutions	17	7	43	39	31	32	7	9
Attended domestic duties only	2	36	1	27	0	36	1	41
Attended domestic duties with other household works	1	19	0	11	0	11	0	7

Source-Author's own calculations from PLFS 2022-23 data

## 1.7 Conclusion

This study analyses the distribution of employment of male and female workers in India during 2022-23 along with their participation in household activities. The study

explores that the relative share of women in each of the economic activities was lower than their male counterparts as most of them were concentrated into household and domestic activities for which they receive no monetary return. In case of labour market, the participation of females mainly remains on own-account work or unpaid family work which are mainly considered as self-employment activities, whereas their male counterparts were distributed in different economic activities, with the highest concentration on own-account work followed by regular salaried work during the mentioned study period. The analysis of caste by different principal activities reveals that the share in household and domestic work was mostly observed among upper class females whereas ST females were mainly occupied in self-employment work and SC females dominated the casual work. The scenario was almost same for the male workers also. The analysis by the level of education reveals that low educated male and female workers were engaged in self-employment or casual employment activities which is quite obvious, but the interesting fact is that a large group of higher educated women were engaged in performing domestic and other household activities which is not socially acceptable. The disparity was also prevalent among the higher educated regular salaried male and female workers as the share of above graduated males were higher than above graduated females in the regular salaried work.

So the above analysis clearly depicts the various disparities faced by women inside and outside the households in Indian scenario. Different policy measures can be adopted to enhance female participation towards quality work as it is the only way by which they can establish themselves and increase their bargaining power in the society. Vocational trainings also must be implemented with the special motives to encourage their participation in the quality works. As it is depicted that low female participation of females in India is mainly due to their huge involvement in domestic work and child care activities, so the support should be given to reduce the time burden associated with unpaid household work through provision of child care and elderly care as well as sharing of care responsibilities with other family members. Along with this, to ensure the equal wages, the involvement of females is required in regular salaried jobs where they can get written job contracts, enjoy different security benefits to remove the occupation and wage disparity and enhance female labour force participation.

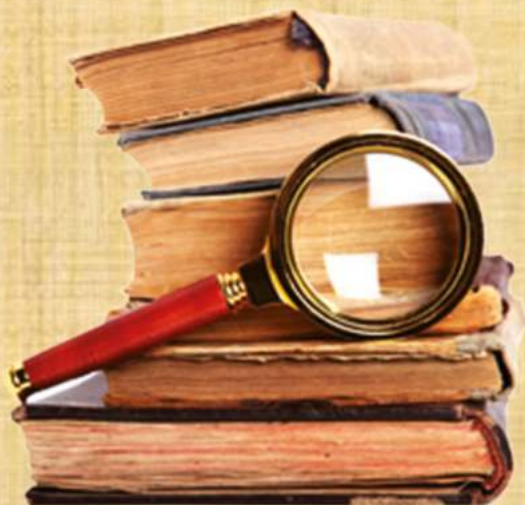
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