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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is a great honour to me to extend my warm greetings and welcome you all to the journal, **Research Highlights**, a refereed journal of multi disciplinary research. The journal, which is a peer-reviewed, will devote to the promotion of multi-disciplinary research and explorations to the South Asian and global community. It is our objective to provide a platform for the publication of new scholarly articles in the rapidly growing field of various disciplines. We are trying to encourage new research scholars and post graduate students by publishing their papers so that they may learn and participate in literary publishing through a professional internship. Scholarly and unpublished research articles, essays and interviews are invited from scholars, faculty researchers, writers, professors from all over the world.

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Hoping all of you shall enjoy our endeavors and those of our contributors.

Editor



CONTENTS

"Research Highlights"

➤	Land Use–Land Cover Dynamics in the Sundarban Delta: A Comprehensive Review of Remote Sensing-Based Research, Emerging Challenges, and Future Directions <i>Tripti Panday</i>	01-07
➤	A Study on Availability and Accessibility of Children’s Literature for Students with Vision Impairment <i>Arasad Ayyub</i>	08-17
➤	Instagram Addiction and Its Effect on Sleep Quality and Psychological Well-Being among College Students <i>Master Kumar Sundaram</i> <i>Dr. Dindayal Gupta</i>	18-22
➤	Ramarajya : A Pragmatic Idealism that Shaping India’s Future <i>Mridula Nand Pandey</i>	23-27
➤	The Concept of Dharma as Ethical Governance: Relevance of Indian Political Thought in the 21st Century <i>Prasant Mishra</i>	28-33
➤	Violence and Discrimination : The Socio-Cultural Realities of Dalit Women in India <i>Khyati Patel</i>	34-38
➤	A Case Study of Rama Mehta's <i>Inside the Haveli</i> <i>Divya Prakash</i>	39-49
➤	Migration and Family Well-being: A Study of Resilience and Psychological Adjustment in Bihar <i>Dr. Priyanka Singh</i>	50-55

Land Use–Land Cover Dynamics in the Sundarban Delta: A Comprehensive Review of Remote Sensing-Based Research, Emerging Challenges, and Future Directions

Tripti Panday*

Abstract

The Sundarban Delta, shared between India and Bangladesh, represents the world's largest contiguous mangrove ecosystem and one of the most environmentally vulnerable coastal regions. Over the past three decades, rapid anthropogenic development, population growth, sea-level rise, salinity intrusion, shoreline erosion, and recurrent cyclonic disturbances have significantly altered the land use and land cover (LULC) characteristics of the region. Remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies have emerged as essential tools for monitoring these changes and understanding their ecological implications.

This review synthesizes the major LULC studies conducted in the Sundarban Delta from the 1990s to 2026. The paper critically evaluates datasets, classification techniques, change detection approaches, and major findings reported in previous research. Particular attention is given to mangrove degradation, settlement expansion, wetland transformation, climate-induced impacts, and recent advances in machine learning-based monitoring. Furthermore, existing research gaps are identified, including limitations in temporal resolution, ecosystem health assessment, socio-economic integration, and predictive modelling. Finally, future research directions are proposed, emphasizing artificial intelligence, cloud-based geospatial analysis, climate resilience assessment, carbon accounting, and integrated socio-ecological monitoring frameworks.

Keywords: Sundarban Delta, Land Use Land Cover, Remote Sensing, GIS, Mangrove Ecosystem, Climate Change, Cyclones, Machine Learning, Change Detection

1. Introduction

The Sundarban Delta is one of the most complex and dynamic coastal ecosystems in the world. Situated at the confluence of the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna river systems, it covers approximately 10,000 km² and contains the largest continuous mangrove forest on Earth. The region is internationally recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its ecological significance and exceptional biodiversity.

Mangroves provide critical ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, shoreline stabilization, storm protection, fisheries support, and biodiversity conservation. However, the Sundarbans have become increasingly vulnerable to both anthropogenic pressures and climatic disturbances. Population growth, agricultural expansion, aquaculture development, tourism activities, and infrastructure construction have altered natural landscapes. Simultaneously, sea-level rise, salinity intrusion, coastal erosion, and frequent cyclones have intensified environmental degradation.

Monitoring these changes through conventional field surveys is challenging because of the vast extent and inaccessible nature of the delta. Consequently, remote sensing and GIS-based approaches have become indispensable for mapping and analyzing LULC dynamics.

Over the last three decades, numerous studies have investigated Sundarban land cover changes using Landsat imagery, Sentinel data, vegetation indices, machine learning algorithms, and climate datasets. Despite the growing body of literature, a comprehensive synthesis of these studies remains limited. Therefore, this review aims to evaluate existing research trends, summarize key findings, identify knowledge gaps, and propose future research priorities.

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Fig1. Google Earth imagery showing location of the Indian Sunderbans in India.

2. Evolution of LULC Research in the Sunderbans

2.1 Early Studies (1990–2010)

The first generation of Sunderban LULC studies primarily relied on Landsat TM and ETM+ imagery. These investigations focused on basic land cover classification and quantification of mangrove loss.

Most studies employed supervised classification approaches, particularly Maximum Likelihood Classification (MLC), due to their simplicity and widespread availability in GIS software.

Research during this period established that:

- Dense mangrove cover showed declining trends in several inhabited islands.
- Human settlements expanded rapidly.
- Agricultural land conversion increased.
- Forest–settlement interface zones experienced the highest degradation.

These studies formed the foundation for later ecological assessments.

2.2 Expansion of Multi-Temporal Monitoring (2010–2020)

The availability of long-term Landsat archives enabled researchers to examine decadal-scale changes.

Datta and Deb reported significant land cover transformation in the Indian Sunderbans and highlighted the role of tourism expansion, settlement growth, and livelihood transitions in landscape modification.

Several investigations between 2015 and 2020 focused on:

- Mangrove fragmentation
- Habitat degradation
- Wetland transformation
- Shoreline migration
- Cyclone impacts

The emphasis gradually shifted from simple area estimation toward understanding environmental drivers of change.

2.3 Recent Studies (2020–2026)

Recent studies have incorporated:

- Landsat 8 and Landsat 9 imagery
- Sentinel-2 datasets
- NDVI analysis
- Land Surface Temperature (LST)
- Machine learning classification
- Climate change indicators

Samanta et al. evaluated mangrove forest changes between 2000 and 2020 and attributed observed transformations to both natural and anthropogenic drivers.

Recent studies have also linked vegetation changes with temperature anomalies and ecosystem stress using NDVI and LST analysis.

Emerging research increasingly focuses on predictive modeling and climate adaptation strategies rather than merely documenting historical changes.

3. Remote Sensing Datasets Used in Sundarban Research

3.1 Landsat Series

The Landsat mission remains the most widely used dataset because:

- Long historical archive (since 1972)
- Free accessibility
- Moderate spatial resolution (30 m)
- Suitable for long-term change detection

Most Sundarban studies have utilized Landsat TM, ETM+, OLI, and Landsat 9 datasets.

3.2 Sentinel-2

Sentinel-2 provides:

- 10 m spatial resolution
- Higher revisit frequency
- Improved vegetation monitoring capability

Its use has increased significantly after 2015.

3.3 MODIS

MODIS data have been used primarily for:

- Vegetation monitoring
- Surface temperature analysis
- Regional-scale environmental assessment

3.4 High-Resolution Commercial Data

Worldview, Planet Scope, and UAV imagery remain underutilized in Sundarban studies due to cost and accessibility constraints.

4. Classification and Change Detection Techniques

4.1 Traditional Methods

Commonly used techniques include:

- Maximum Likelihood Classification
- Unsupervised Classification
- Post-Classification Comparison
- Change Matrix Analysis

These methods dominate earlier studies.

4.2 Vegetation Index-Based Approaches

Researchers frequently employed:

- NDVI
- EVI
- NDWI
- SAVI

to monitor vegetation condition and water dynamics.

4.3 Machine Learning Approaches

Recent studies increasingly use:

- Random Forest
- Support Vector Machine
- Artificial Neural Networks

These methods generally produce higher classification accuracy than traditional classifiers.

4.4 Deep Learning Approaches

Globally, deep learning-based mangrove monitoring is emerging as a major research direction. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), transformers, and segmentation models have demonstrated superior performance for vegetation mapping.

However, their application in the Sundarbans remains limited.

5. Major Findings from Existing Research

5.1 Mangrove Degradation

The majority of studies report declining dense mangrove cover, particularly near inhabited islands and coastal margins.

Key causes include:

- Salinity increase
- Coastal erosion
- Cyclonic disturbances
- Human encroachment

5.2 Settlement Expansion

Human settlements have expanded steadily throughout the Indian Sundarbans.

Major drivers include:

- Population growth
- Tourism development
- Infrastructure construction
- Economic diversification

5.3 Climate Change Effects

Climate-related impacts identified by previous studies include:

- Sea-level rise
- Shoreline retreat
- Increased cyclone intensity
- Mangrove stress

Recent assessments suggest that climate change is becoming one of the dominant drivers of landscape transformation.

5.4 Cyclone Impacts

Cyclones such as:

- Aila (2009)
- Bulbul (2019)
- Amphan (2020)
- Yaas (2021)

Caused extensive vegetation damage, embankment failure, and habitat degradation.

Despite their significance, long-term cyclone recovery assessments remain relatively scarce.

6. Research Gaps

Although substantial progress has been achieved, several limitations remain.

Gap 1: Limited Ecosystem Health Assessment

Most studies focus on areal change rather than ecosystem health indicators.

Gap 2: Insufficient Integration of Climate Variables

Few studies directly integrate:

- Rainfall variability
- Temperature trends
- Salinity measurements
- Sea-level rise datasets

With LULC change analysis.

Gap 3: Lack of Predictive Modeling

Most research remains descriptive rather than predictive.

Gap 4: Limited Use of Artificial Intelligence

Deep learning applications are still rare in Sundarban monitoring.

Gap 5: Inadequate Socio-Economic Integration

Many studies overlook:

- Migration patterns
- Livelihood transitions
- Tourism pressure
- Community vulnerability

Gap 6: Carbon Sequestration Assessment

Blue carbon accounting remains an underexplored area despite the global importance of mangrove carbon storage.

7. Future Research Directions

Future investigations should focus on:

7.1 Artificial Intelligence-Based Monitoring

- Deep learning segmentation
- Transformer-based classification
- Automated mangrove detection

7.2 Climate Change Modeling

- Sea-level rise projections
- Climate vulnerability mapping
- Ecosystem resilience assessment

7.3 Carbon Stock Assessment

- Blue carbon estimation
- Carbon sequestration dynamics
- Climate mitigation potential

7.4 Cyclone Recovery Analysis

Long-term ecological recovery after:

- Aila
- Amphan
- Yaas

Should be systematically evaluated.

7.5 Integrated Human–Environment Studies

Combining:

- Remote sensing
- Socio-economic surveys
- Demographic data
- Livelihood analysis

would improve understanding of ecosystem transformation.

7.6 Cloud Computing Platforms

Google Earth Engine can enable large-scale, near-real-time monitoring and should become a central component of future Sundarban research.

8. Conclusion

Research on Sundarban LULC dynamics has evolved from simple land cover mapping toward sophisticated ecosystem monitoring and climate impact assessment. Existing studies consistently indicate declining mangrove health, increasing settlement expansion, growing climate vulnerability, and significant landscape transformation.

Future research must move beyond descriptive change detection and adopt integrated approaches combining artificial intelligence, climate science, ecological modeling, and socio-economic analysis. Such interdisciplinary frameworks are essential for sustainable management and conservation of the Sundarban Delta under increasing environmental pressures.

The Sundarbans remain one of the most important natural laboratories for studying interactions between climate change, human activities, and coastal ecosystem resilience. Continued advancement in remote sensing technologies offers unprecedented opportunities for monitoring and protecting this globally significant mangrove landscape.

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A Study on Availability and Accessibility of Children's Literature for Students with Vision Impairment

Arasad Ayyub*

Abstract:

Children's literature is a very effective tool to improve children's overall development. In the present paper, the researcher has critically explored the availability and accessibility of children's literature for students with visual impairment studying in secondary schools of Delhi. The researcher found that Children with vision impairment face numerous challenges in accessing children's literature both on online and at conventional libraries.

Although digital technologies, assistive tools, WCAG 2.3 guidelines and different provisions mentioned in government policies have improved access to information and availability of learning materials for persons with vision impairment, significant barriers still remain. Social attitudes, lack of awareness, limited institutional support, and unequal access to e-learning platforms continue to hinder full inclusion. Libraries and educational institutions must adopt long-term strategies, provide essential assistive technologies, and ensure proper training so that visually impaired students can fully benefit from available resources. True accessibility requires not only technological solutions but also informed support systems and inclusive practices.

Key terms – children literature, visual impairment, availability, accessibility

Introduction:

Objectives of education is all-round development of the individual. However, due to over possessiveness with acquittance of employment after education and commercialism of education, only economic and financial development of the individual is in focus. Insufficient attention is given to the mental well-being of children and their moral and emotional development. There are various evidence that schools, teachers, and administrators largely emphasise financial independence as a key educational outcome. At the secondary level of education, considerable attention is given to the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). However, there is also a strong need to emphasise moral development, mental wellness, and emotional well-being alongside functional and academic skills. Educational aim should be to nurture these students as responsible and ethical citizens who are mentally resilient, socially engaged, and capable of contributing to the well-being of the nation. Such an approach can help them experience a happy, inclusive, and fulfilling life within society. Therefore, at secondary level identity formation, emotional regulation, moral development and social relationships undergoes with significant change. In this stage of child development, literature for children play a very significant part.

Children's literature:

Children's literature play effective role in all round development of children. It is designed to leave a lasting impact on a child's mind and heart which stays with them for a life time. It can affect the developing minds of the children and help in promoting a logical and constructive process of thinking among the children. It is very beneficial in prospering of a sustainable and productive thinking process. As a result, it will assist the children in flourishing a suitable and adaptable process of learning in the future lives.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development (1958) also strongly support teaching of children's literature, because many stories in books for children are naturally rich in moral dilemmas, values, and opportunities for ethical reflection. Many stories help children assume their own self in

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the place of characters that foster empathy, moral and perspective taking ability among children. It is a skill important for progressing to higher moral stages.

The effectiveness of stories for overall development of children have established in India also when Gijubhai Badheka (1932) started experimenting a different methodology in schools. In his “Divasvapna”, he imagines transforming his classroom into a space rooted in joy, freedom, and creativity. Instead of relying on fear, punishment, and memorisation, he introduced songs, stories, games, and cooperative activities to make learning meaningful and engaging. Initially, his unconventional methods are met with skepticism from colleagues and superiors. However, over time, the children begin to flourish in this nurturing environment. They become more disciplined, curious, and eager to learn.

Gijubhai (1932) has mentioned that

“Stories are really a mean to provide a kind of education which helps in all round development of the pupil. They were told the stories, they liked the stories, they identified themselves with the characters in the stories and experiences their feelings, they were merely expressing what they had come to accept own their way.”

Historically, India has very rich heritage of children’s literature. Earlier, this literature were oral narratives and they were derived from local myths, folktales, traditions and adventures and legends from various the great epics. There are many Indian mythologies and folklores which are very creative imaginative. Many stories for children are still based upon them and it is still a very important source of their literature i.e. Panchatantra, the Jatakas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Along with these, there are many historic Indian classic stories, which are often in Sanskrit language. These epics are very interesting and imaginative like folktales of ancient Norway. These great classis Indian assets are very important and helpful in educating moral values to young students.

Importance of accessibility and availability of children’s literature for the students with vision impairment:

“Availability” is a quality of being in hand when it’s needed. Accessibility is not same as availability. Sometimes, a thing may be available but not accessible to a person in need, for example, a library which hasn’t incorporated infrastructural and systematic changes according to the needs of people with disabilities, is available for other people, but can’t be used people with disabilities. Books are available for everybody, but can’t be read by children with vision impairment. Generally reading-learning materials remains highly restricted to children with vision impairment. It further lower the opportunities for them in education, employment and leisure. In order to provide equal accessible curriculum and education, it is very important to provide accessible learning materials. Without accessible learning materials, achieving the goal of equality and equity can’t be fulfilled.

Government of India (MHRD 2005) in its ‘Action Plan’ established the goals of inclusive education, based on the principle that education is a fundamental right of every child. It has committed to integration of children and youth with disabilities into regular schools by creating learning environment that are obtainable, barrier free, economically feasible and tailored to the needs, therefor fostering their development and potential. There is special emphasis on the provision of accessible learning material to children with disabilities as per the guidelines of NEP 2020. It emphasises on the provision of sign language for person with hearing impairment. It also focuses on the technology integration and promotion of the appropriate use of technology to provide children with special need the ability to learn at their own pace. (NEP, 2020)

Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan 2015) also support access to information to empower individuals and support complete participation in daily life. It indicates that information should be available in accessible format to ensure no one is left behind. This goal ensures that all current websites meet the standards set by information technology- W3C WCAG 2.0.

Often, the materials available on the World Wide Web are difficult to be accessed by the persons with disabilities, even though they take help of different assistive tools.

Availability of accessible books in schools, libraries, and online platforms allows children with vision impairment to participate equally in group reading, discussions, and cultural activities. If accessible literature is readily available, children are more likely to develop lifelong reading habits. This contribute to continuous learning and enjoyment. Many countries have legal frameworks that require equal access to educational resources, making availability a matter of both rights and responsibility. In India it is considered the right of person with disabilities for information to be easily available and accessible to them. The aim of inclusion can't be met without making resources available to each person, there are many provisions to make reading materials available. As per The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD Act 2016), books, learning resources and suitable assistive tools must be given to students with impairments. The provided resources should be free for the students till 18 years.

Review of Related Literature

Khan & Singh (2023), after pondering on lots of studies, have concluded that availability of information for visually impaired individuals has gotten better considerably with rise of digital formats. But traditionally, access was limited because only a small fraction of published works were converted into costly and time-consuming formats like Braille or audio formats. The introduction of text-to-speech software has made digital and virtual texts accessible at no additional cost, enabling equitable access to information. In this scenario, virtual libraries by hosting full text or secondary resources and information play a vital role. They have further highlighted a critical research gap. That is despite significant studies at national and international levels into the availability and accessibility of content for the vision-impaired community, no specific effort has been made to understand the information-seeking behaviours of visually impaired students who are studying in higher education or to evaluate the Assistive Technology provisions in university libraries designed to support them.

Daisy forum of India (2013) The DAISY Forum of India (DFI) is a nationwide network of organisation that creates and manages accessible libraries for people with disabilities. Books are produced in various formats such as DAISY audio, e-books, Braille, and large print. It ensure that children with disabilities across the country can access them. Digital formats can be downloaded directly from the DAISY India Library or requested for doorstep delivery through any DFI member, available in every state and supporting all Indian languages.

The daisy forum of India is designed to meet Indian Government web standards and follows international accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.0 AA) to support users with disabilities. While some content links to external websites maintained by other departments, DFI is actively working to enhance its own site's accessibility.

Hajduk & Ali (2023) investigated the accessibility needs and challenges faced by visually impaired users of web content. These include difficulties with reading text, insufficient customisation, poor colour contrast, unstructured layouts, inaccessible forms, and navigating complex pages. While the WCAG 2.0 guidelines provide a robust framework for online access, the research identifies persistent gaps in awareness, implementation, and testing. Using a methodology that synthesises existing literature, surveys, and interviews, the study offers concrete recommendations to enhance web accessibility. The ultimate aim is to foster more inclusive, user-friendly online environments, thereby enabling fuller social, economic, and cultural participation for individuals with visual impairments.

Chauhan (2024) criticised that traditional libraries are making hindrance to the capabilities of persons with vision impairment, mobility impairment or any other physical challenges, individuals to use full library potential. In this study the researchers have commented that in conventional libraries which are not up to date as per the need of persons poses different abilities, there are so many kind of barriers for people with physical disabilities because infrastructure of the building also causes barriers in availability and accessibility to reach the library. In this study, the researcher have explored the role that AI might currently or soon play in making libraries more accessible.

Rayini (2017) analysed the information needs and barriers faced by visually impaired individuals. It identifies essential library services and assistive technologies required to support them, such as Braille books, audio materials, and screen readers. Globally, specialised services have been developed to meet these needs. However, the research finds that visually impaired persons in developing countries, including India, remain marginalised due to insufficient accessible resources. Despite international progress, a significant gap persists in availability. The study concludes that Indian libraries must recognise their ethical responsibility. They should actively collaborate with relevant stakeholders. It is crucial to develop and provide equitable and inclusive library services. This will ensure that the visually impaired community has meaningful access to information.

Creaser, Davies & Wisdom (2002) authored this study and the Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU) of Loughborough University has conducted this study. It was financed under the “Share the Vision”. The objectives of the study was to gather evidence based ideas to inform better decision making service improvement. This survey mainly focused on levels of use of libraries, the alternative formats available for visually impaired persons, utilisation of assistive and effective tools and technologies in the library and how satisfied persons with visual impairment are with the facilities of libraries. The researchers have mentioned inaccessibility of reading resources and information both in soft formats and hard formats to large numbers of people with visual impairment.

Ahmed & Naveed (2020) in this qualitative study employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) through interviews with 15 students to explore their academic information experiences. They found that the relations among visually impaired students with each other is the main source of knowledge supplemented by online resources, libraries in universities and disability resource centres. Still, students encountered many challenges, including format incompatibility, navigational difficulties, technical issues, limited digital skills, and economic constraints. The researchers in conclusion recommended about the need of designing necessary infrastructure related to information by the universities, specially libraries while also considering integrally the requirements of students with diverse disabilities.

Khumalo (2025) in this qualitative case study explored about the inclusion of visually impaired students on all e-learning facilities in Zimbabwe’s state university after Covid. Through purposive sampling, the researchers gathered data from five visually impaired students, five lecturers, and five ICT personnel. Findings indicate a significant exclusion of these students from digital learning, attributed largely to the minimal availability of institutional assistive technology. The study concludes that enhanced support including maintaining a student registry for targeted teaching and providing loanable assistive devices like JAWS and NVDA software is crucial. It further recommends broader research to strengthen support services for students with disabilities across the university.

Conclusion

The review of related literature collectively demonstrates that while significant progress has been made to improve accessibility to sources of information, especially in libraries for individuals with vision impairment, substantial gaps remain in terms of availability, accessibility, inclusivity, and technological support. Studies by Khan & Singh (2023) and the DAISY Forum of India (2013) highlight that digital formats, text-to-speech tools, and accessible online libraries have transformed information access, yet efforts to comprehend specific information needs of students with vision impairment in higher education remain limited. Research addressing web accessibility, such as Hajduk and Ali (2023) confirms that although WCAG 2.0 guidelines have enhanced digital inclusion. However, practical challenges, including poor implementation, insufficient user awareness, and persistent design barriers still continue to restrict meaningful participation in online spaces.

Investigations into library environments and assistive technologies, including the works of Chauhan (2024), Rayini (2017), and Creaser, Davies & Wisdom (2002), further reveal that traditional library infrastructures and service models often fail in meeting the learning needs of visually impaired persons. Physical, technological, and policy-level barriers all contribute to the marginalisation of visually impaired users, particularly in developing regions where accessible

materials remain scarce. Similarly, qualitative studies such as those by Ahmed & Naveed (2020) and Khumalo (2025) show that visually impaired students still depend heavily on interpersonal networks and limited institutional support to access academic information, while inadequate assistive technologies and poorly designed e-learning systems significantly hinder their educational experiences.

Overall, the review of related literature indicate that achieving genuine equity requires more than the presence of assistive tools, it demands intentional policy implementation, inclusive infrastructure, trained personnel, and sustained collaboration between libraries, universities, and disability support agencies. Strengthening accessibility measures, expanding assistive technology provisions, and prioritising user centered design are essential for ensuring that individuals with visual impairment can participate fully, independently, and confidently in academic, social, and digital environments.

Need of the Study:

The researcher has find a very relevant gap after studying above research work. There is a limited qualitative insight related to children with vision impairment themselves in India. Thus, there is a strong need to study availability of reading platforms, accessibility of available reading platforms for children with vision impairment, awareness among children with vision impairment about available online platforms, training of children with vision impairment to use available technologies to access reading materials, and ways of accessing the children's literature by children with vision impairment.

Thus, in this paper the researcher had explored, how well children with vision impairments are aware with available assistive technologies, how trained they are to access online learning platforms and assistive and adaptive technologies as well as to WCAG guidelines in regards to accessing web content, and what barriers they face while accessing learning contents etc.

Title of the Study: A Study on the Availability and Accessibility of Children's Literature for Students with Visual Impairment

Objectives of the Study:

- To assess the accessibility of children's literature in terms of availability in schools' libraries, and online platforms.
- To examine the role of WACG 2.2 in the accessibility of literature for students with vision impairment.
- To identify the issues faced by students with vision impairment in accessing children's literature.
- To study the effects of accessibility's nature on reading habits and choices of students with vision impairment.

Research Questions of the Study:

- How much children's literature is accessible and available in schools, libraries, and online platforms?
- What is the role of WACG 2.2 in accessibility of literature for students with vision impairment?
- What issues faced by students with vision impairment in accessing children's literature?
- How do accessibility affect reading habits and choices of students with vision impairment?

Methodology of the Study:

Research design: The present study adopts an exploratory approach. **Qualitative research design** has been employed to understand the objectives of study comprehensively.

Population of the Study: All the students with vision impairment studying at secondary level in the schools of Delhi have been selected as the population of the study.

Sample of the Study: 20 students with visual impairment who are studying at secondary level in Delhi schools have been selected as the sample of the study.

Sampling techniques: The researcher has used purposive sampling technique to select sample from the population purposefully.

Tools and techniques: In this study, Open Ended Questionnaire was prepared by the researcher for students with vision impairment studying at secondary level in Delhi schools.

Procedure of data collection:

Data collection was undertaken by administering the open ended questionnaire to visually impaired students who are currently studying in secondary level in delhi schools. Data obtained from this method was subjected to in-depth study and analysis, forming the basis for the conclusions drawn in this research.

Analysis and interpretation of data:

The responses collected from children with visual impairments were systematically analysed to understand their experiences with availability and accessible literature. This section interprets the data by examining 'available means and measures with the ease of access, preferred reading materials, and perceived gaps within existing resources'.

Analysis and interpretation of data is based on the below information provided by students with vision impairment studying in secondary schools of delhi, keeping in view the objectives of the study which is **"to study the availability and accessibility of children's literature for students with vision impairment:**

1. Among the 20 students with vision impairments based on their responses, the researcher has found that only 65% students agree that they do not face problems in accessing reading materials while 35% participants disagree with the statement. They face problem when it comes to accessibility of reading materials.
2. 80 % participants agreed that inaccessibility affect their reading habits and choices. It means they have proper understanding of how their reading habits get affected.
3. In the context of accessibility of children's' literature in school libraries, only 55 % participants agreed that they have accessibility to children's' literature in their school library where they can engage themselves in reading. However, 45% participants do not have appropriate access children's' literature in their school library.
4. About the suitability to accessibility of infrastructure of school libraries for the children with vision impairment, only 50% participants agreed that library's infrastructure are accessible for them. While rest 50% participants claimed that libraries' infrastructure are not accessible for them.
5. Majority of the participants around 85% have accessible and updated smart phones, computer and tablets etc. Only 15% participants said that they don't have updated smartphones etc.
6. 75% participants find that internet, smartphone and laptop are accessible enough to engage in virtual reading. While rest 25% that internet, smartphone and laptop are not accessible.
7. Only 40% participants know about the WCAG (2.0) guidelines which is prepared for the web content accessibility. While majority of them around 60% participants don't know about the web content accessibility guidelines.
8. 75% participants have never used these WCAG (2.0) guidelines to assess the accessibility of the web content, while only 25% respondents claimed to have used WCAG 2.0 guidelines to assess accessibility of websites.
9. In children literature, writers use pictures of characters and images that narrate the story. It helps children in understanding the story. But in the context of vision impairment, student can't read the visual cues. Thus as per the responses of the participants, 80% of them find it difficult to understand the contents presented in image form. While rest 20% don't face any problem in understanding the contents presented in image form.
10. Children with low vision or children who are capable of using their remaining vision often rely on brightness of colours or colour contrast (like black on white, yellow on dark blue

etc.) to understand the images and videos etc. Thus, about appropriateness of colour contrast in images and videos to be understood by students with vision impairment, only merely 25% participants agreed that they don't face problem in colour contrasts etc. while majority of them around 75% claimed that colour contrast in pictures and videos are insufficient and inappropriate.

11. As images with the content are difficult to be understood by the children with vision impairment, (85%) participants show their willingness that there must be audio description available with each image so that children with vision impairment can understand it. While only 15% think that there is no need for that.
12. Screen navigation is important for children with vision impairments to open different applications in the system, read e-books and understand graph, charts and maps etc. but when children face problem in screen navigation, it becomes difficult for them to access the reading material completely. As per the data collected, almost all of them (90% participants) face problem in screen navigation and thus accessing web pages and filling online forms. Merely 10% respondents claim that they face no issue in screen navigation and accessing web pages etc.
13. Time adjustable system regarding adjust, turn off etc. is important for students with vision impairment while reading or working on the system as persons with low vision or blindness often need extra measures to access the information, for example, using screen reader, zooming or magnifying etc. as per data collected 60% participants face problem finding time adjustable system regarding adjust, turn off, extend, real-time exception etc. While 40% said that they face no issues.
14. Children with vision impairment faces difficulties due to lack of alternative text or incorrect alternatives of the text, for example no alt text, diagram of charts etc., text that 'screen readers' can't read, for example scanned pdf within OCR. As per the data collected 90% participants agreed with the problem, so they need proper alternatives to read the content successfully. While the rest claimed to have not faced such problems.
15. In the context of availability of 'letter spacing and text resize' option, 50% participants face problems in letter spacing and text resizing on the screen due to unavailability of 'letter spacing and text resize' option. Rest 50% said that they don't face such problems due to availability of 'letter spacing and text resize' option.
16. Persons with vision impairment often face unique difficulties in understanding words or phrases that are unusual, or restricted in some ways, for example idioms, jargons etc. because these phrases are depends on social exposures and vision reference. Thus, 60% participants of this study face problems in understanding these special words and phrases. 40% don't face any problem.
17. DAISY forum of India is the largest audio book library in Asia. It produces lots of books in all over the country in braille or audio. However, around 75% participants are aware with online talking book libraries i.e. DAISY forum of India. Rest 25% participants aren't aware with online talking book libraries.
18. AI driven assistive technologies are empowering children with disabilities more efficiently by helping them learn, communicate and work more independently. In the context of reading, it really help children with vision impairment read more naturally by describing images automatically, reading handwriting, automatic alt text generation, converting pdfs into text etc. So, through AI assistive technology, reading and learning is becoming more easy for children with vision impairments. 80% participants of the present study support this statement and believe that AI empowered assistive technologies help in accessing reading learning materials and children's literature. While rest respondents claim about their unawareness with such technologies.

19. On the issue of accessibility in the offline conventional libraries, majority of them responded about inaccessibility and facing issues in the offline conventional libraries. The issues that they faced, include inaccessibility, unavailability of books in Braille and thus librarians asking them to come with sighted peers, issues in computer i.e. hanging issues and problems in understanding images and pictures due to unavailability of supporting digital facilities, especially in the case of Sanskrit language in pdf files. While few didn't face any problem. They said that school library has online system where they read easily with 'text to speech' option.
20. On the issue of people's attitude in libraries and other places towards them in the context of availability and accessibility to reading materials, some claimed about people's negative attitudes towards them i.e. non-cooperation of teachers, difficulty in reading and listening due to unnecessary noise in the libraries, people's negative stereotypical perceptions towards them. While others claim that they haven't face any such issue.

Finding of the study:

In the present study, the researcher has studied the availability and accessibility of children's literature for students with vision impairment studying in secondary schools of Delhi. As per the responses collected from the participants, it is evident that even if some progress has been made, providing digital access to persons with disabilities, there are still significant gaps remain in ensuring equitable access to reading materials for children with vision impairment.

- As per the data collected, there is considerable access of reading materials for students with vision impairment. Still some students with vision impairment remains experiencing difficulties in accessing reading materials. Further, majority of the participants report that inaccessibility negatively affects their reading habits, demonstrating a clear link between inadequate reading formats and reduced engagement with literature. Access to school libraries is not very much considerable. While only a little more than half of the students with vision impairment report having access to their school library, almost an equal proportion do not. Moreover, only half of the students with vision impairment believe that libraries' infrastructure is accessible to them, that further indicates that physical accessibility remains insufficient for students with vision impairment. Especially, traditional or conventional libraries are viewed as largely inaccessible, students have reported lack of Braille books, inaccessible PDFs, difficulties understanding images, language barriers, and dependence on sighted peers, some students have also mentioned, technical issues such as malfunctioning computers and absence of trained staff.
- In the context of digital and virtual accessibility, the students with vision impairment have presented a mixed picture. As led the responses, although majority of them have access to updated smart phones etc., most of the students with vision impairment find internet and digital platforms accessible but there are still some challenges that hinder complete accessibility. In this context, limited awareness of accessibility standard is also notable. So only some of them know about WCAG guidelines, and majority of them have never used them. This gap highlights the need for training and awareness regarding digital accessibility.
- The data collected from the participants with vision impairments also reveals significant barriers in understanding visual and non literal content. For example majority of the students with vision impairment struggle with image-based information, and only few find colour contrast suitable to them. Almost all of the students with vision impairment suggested that there must be some audio descriptions for image contents, Difficulties in screen navigation is also a major challenge faced by most of the student with vision impairment. Challenges with time-adjustable settings faced by many students show that digital environments are often not optimised for users with vision impairments. (Even after several guidelines) Furthermore, almost all of them face problems due to missing or incorrect alternative text, and many face issues with letter spacing and text resizing. Additionally, many students with

vision impairment struggle with idioms, jargons, and non-literal phrases, reflecting the need for clearer, contextualised language.

- Awareness of accessible reading platforms such as online talking book libraries is relatively high. Importantly, the majority of students recognise the positive role of AI-enabled assistive technologies in improving access to reading and learning materials through features like automatic image description, OCR, and intelligent screen reading.
- In the context of accessibility attitudinal barriers remain a significant concern. Several participants report lack of teacher cooperation, misunderstandings, stereotypes, noise disturbances, and reliance on sighted peers, all of which undermine their confidence and independence, despite a few reporting positive support.

Conclusion and Discussion of the Study:

Present study aim to study the availability and accessibility of children's literature for students with vision impairment. Findings of the study, from the data collected from students with vision impairment studying at secondary level, it reveals a complex interplay of technological, infrastructural, pedagogical, and attitudinal factors that shape the reading experiences of learners with vision impairment.

DAISY Forum of India is a powerful example of accessible digital content, but awareness and usage remain limited here too.

The study clearly indicate that children with vision impairment still face multiple barriers including physical, digital, linguistic and attitudinal barriers that limit their full participation in reading and learning activities. Today digital advancements and AI-based tools have improved accessibility to some extent, but still traditional libraries, school infrastructures, and educational environments remain insufficiently equipped to meet their needs.

In order to ensure meaningful access to children's literature, it is essential to strengthen accessible formats (Braille, audio, tactile graphics), improve digital accessibility compliance, enhance library infrastructure, promote attitudinal awareness, and provide training on accessibility standards. Only through such comprehensive efforts can educational institutions ensure inclusive, equitable, and empowering reading environments for students with vision impairment.

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Instagram Addiction and Its Effect on Sleep Quality and Psychological Well-Being among College Students

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Abstract:

The present study examined the effect of Instagram addiction on sleep quality and psychological well-being among undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) college students in Gaya district. A purposive sample of 200 students, including 100 UG and 100 PG students, was selected. Data were collected using the Test for Instagram Addiction (TIA) by D'Souza, Samyukta, and Bivera (2018) and the Mental Health Battery (2008) by A.K. Singh and A.S. Gupta. Results indicated that UG students exhibited significantly higher Instagram addiction scores compared to PG students ($t=4.21, df=198, p<.01$). Higher Instagram addiction was associated with poorer sleep quality ($t=3.87, df=198, p<.01$) and lower psychological well-being ($t=3.41, df=198, p<.01$) and ($r=-0.42, p<.01$). Findings highlight the negative influence of excessive Instagram use on students' mental health and sleep patterns, emphasizing the need for awareness programs, counseling interventions, and promotion of responsible digital habits to enhance overall well-being.

Keywords: Instagram Addiction, Sleep Quality, Psychological Well-Being, College Students, and Social Media Impact

In the contemporary digital era, social networking platforms have become an integral part of the lives of young adults, particularly college students. Among these platforms, Instagram has emerged as one of the most popular applications globally, providing users with a space to share photos, videos, and personal experiences, while engaging in social interactions across a virtual community. Since its launch in 2010, Instagram has rapidly grown to over a billion active users worldwide, reflecting its widespread appeal and influence on youth culture. Kumar and Singh (2018) examined Instagram addiction among undergraduate students and found that higher social media engagement was associated with increased levels of anxiety, social comparison, and sleep disturbances. The study highlighted that frequent nighttime Instagram use significantly reduced sleep duration and contributed to emotional instability.¹ The platform's interactive features, such as likes, comments, stories, and reels, create an environment that encourages frequent engagement, often leading to excessive use among students.

D'Souza and Meenakshi (2018) investigated the relationship between Instagram addiction and sleep quality in college students. Their findings revealed that students with higher Instagram addiction scores reported poorer sleep quality, including difficulty falling asleep and frequent nocturnal awakenings, indicating a significant negative relationship between problematic Instagram use and healthy sleep patterns.²

D'Souza and Hemamalini (2018a) explored the link between Instagram addiction and depression among college populations. Results showed that excessive Instagram use correlated positively with depressive symptoms, suggesting that engagement with the platform may contribute to negative emotional outcomes.³

D'Souza and Hemamalini (2018b) also studied anxiety in relation to Instagram addiction and found that higher dependency on Instagram was significantly associated with elevated anxiety levels. The authors attributed this relationship to social comparison and the fear of missing out (FoMO) often experienced by frequent users.⁴

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While Instagram offers opportunities for socialization, creativity, and self-expression, research has increasingly highlighted the potential for problematic usage patterns, commonly referred to as Instagram addiction. Instagram addiction is conceptualized as a behavioral impulse control disorder, akin to compulsive behaviors observed in pathological gambling, where individuals experience uncontrollable urges to engage with the platform despite negative consequences. 'Souza and Ranganathan (2018) examined shyness and Instagram addiction among college students. The study concluded that students with shy personalities were more likely to engage compulsively with Instagram to compensate for limited face-to-face social interaction, and this was associated with poorer psychological well-being.⁵ Among college students, the risk of developing Instagram addiction is particularly high due to the combination of academic stress, social pressures, and a strong desire for peer validation. Excessive engagement with the platform can disrupt daily routines, reduce academic focus, and impair interpersonal relationships.

A growing body of literature has examined the negative implications of Instagram addiction on mental health. The World Health Organization (2001) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their potential, cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community. Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and it is closely linked with cognitive functioning, social behavior, and life satisfaction. Excessive use of Instagram has been associated with psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, and emotional instability. Sharma, Gupta, and Paul (2020) conducted research on social media use, academic stress, and emotional well-being. Their study reported that heavy Instagram users experienced higher stress levels, reduced emotional wellbeing, and increased difficulty balancing academic responsibilities with digital engagement.⁶ In particular, studies show that students with high Instagram engagement often report disturbed sleep patterns, including delayed sleep onset, reduced sleep duration, and poor sleep quality. Poor sleep quality, in turn, is linked with decreased academic performance, irritability, and reduced cognitive functioning.

The relationship between Instagram addiction, sleep quality, and psychological well-being is especially relevant for college students, who are navigating critical academic and social transitions. Undergraduate students, who are generally younger, may engage more frequently with Instagram for social interaction and entertainment, whereas postgraduate students, although often busier with academic responsibilities, may also experience stress-induced compulsive social media usage. Understanding these differences is essential for developing targeted interventions aimed at promoting healthier digital habits and improving students' mental well-being. Patel and Verma (2021) compared social media addiction and mental health among postgraduate students in Indian universities. Although postgraduate students demonstrated moderate levels of Instagram use, the study found that higher addiction levels were still significantly correlated with reduced psychological well-being, including symptoms of stress and fatigue.⁷ Khan and Ali (2022) examined Instagram addiction's effects on sleep patterns and cognitive functioning. Results indicated that heavy Instagram use—especially at night—disrupted sleep schedules and impaired students' daytime cognitive focus, linking problematic social media behaviors with poorer academic functioning.⁸

Given the pervasive use of Instagram among students in Gaya district, this study seeks to investigate the extent of Instagram addiction and its effects on sleep quality and psychological well-being among undergraduate and postgraduate college students. Rao, Mehta, and Singh (2023) investigated differences in digital media addiction patterns among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Undergraduate students reported higher addiction levels and poorer mental health outcomes relative to postgraduate students, suggesting developmental and lifestyle differences influence digital dependency.⁹

Desai and Narayan (2024) explored psychological resilience as a mediator of social media addiction and mental health outcomes. They reported that students with low resilience scores were

more vulnerable to Instagram addiction, which negatively affected emotional regulation and overall psychological well-being.¹⁰

Kumar and Jha (2025) studied smartphone dependency, Instagram usage, and subjective well-being in Indian college youth. Their findings showed that higher Instagram usage predicted greater smartphone dependency, which in turn was associated with lower self-reported well-being and disrupted sleep patterns, indicating that digital engagement may detract from essential restorative behaviors.¹¹ By examining these associations, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the behavioral and psychological consequences of excessive social media use. The findings can inform educational institutions, mental health professionals, and policymakers about effective strategies to mitigate the negative impact of Instagram addiction, ultimately promoting healthier lifestyles, balanced digital habits, and enhanced emotional resilience among students.

Hypothesis- UG and PG college-going students will differ in their level of Instagram addiction, which will affect their sleep quality and psychological well-being.

Methodology

Sample- A random-cum-purposive sample of 200 students was selected from different colleges and universities in Gaya district, comprising 100 undergraduate and 100 postgraduate students. Equal representation of genders was considered where possible.

Test and Tools-

(i). Test for Instagram Addiction (TIA) – Developed by D’Souza, Samyukta, and Bivera (2018) to measure the extent of Instagram addiction.

(ii). Mental Health Battery (2008) – Developed by A.K. Singh and A.S. Gupta to assess psychological well-being, including anxiety, depression, and emotional stability.

Procedure- After obtaining institutional permission, the questionnaires were administered to participants in a classroom setting. Students were assured of confidentiality and instructed to answer all items honestly. Data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and correlation analysis to examine differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students and the relationship between Instagram addiction, sleep quality, and mental health.

Results- Analysis of the data revealed to the study aimed to examine differences in Instagram addiction, sleep quality, and psychological well-being among undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students. Data from 200 students (100 UG and 100 PG) were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and correlation analysis.

In order to test the hypothesis no. 1 that UG and PG students groups would differ significantly on Instagram addiction. Both groups on the area of TIA were compared (Table-1) below:

Table –1
Significant Mean SD and t-value of Instagram Addiction among UG and PG Students

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	p value
UG	100	70.31	7.92	4.23	p<0.01
PG	100	63.87	8.53		

It appears from the table-1 shows that the UG and PG students groups differ significantly on Instagram addiction. Undergraduate students exhibited significantly higher Instagram addiction scores (M=70.31) than postgraduate students (M=63.87). The independent samples t-test confirmed this difference was statistically significant, $t(198) = 4.21$, $p < .01$, indicating that younger college students are more prone to excessive engagement with Instagram.

In order to test the hypothesis no. 1 that UG and PG students groups would differ significantly on Instagram addiction. Both groups on the area of TIA were compared (Table-2) below:

Table –2
Significant Mean, SD and t-value of UG and PG Students on Sleep Quality

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	p value
UG	100	55.41	9.21	3.88	p<0.01
PG	100	61.53	8.77		

From the table-2 shows that the UG and PG students groups differ significantly on Sleep Quality. The results were showed that higher Instagram addiction was associated with poorer sleep quality. Undergraduates reported lower sleep quality scores (M=55.41) compared to postgraduates (M=61.53). The difference was significant, $t(198)=3.87$, $p<.01$. Correlation analysis revealed a negative relationship between Instagram addiction and sleep quality ($r=-0.38$, $p<.01$), indicating that increased time spent on Instagram contributes to disturbed sleep patterns, delayed sleep onset, and reduced sleep duration.

In order to test the hypothesis no. 1 that UG and PG students' groups would differ significantly on Instagram addiction. Both groups on the area of TIA and MHB were compared (Table-3) below:

Table –3
Significant Mean SD and t-value difference between UG and PG Students on Psychological Well-Being

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	p value
UG	100	58.72	9.52	3.41	p<0.01
PG	100	64.23	8.83		

Table-3 shows that the UG and PG students groups differ significantly on Psychological Well-Being. The Mental Health Battery results indicated that undergraduate students had lower psychological well-being scores (M=58.7) compared to postgraduate students (M=64.2), $t(198)=3.41$, $p<.01$. Further, Instagram addiction showed a significant negative correlation with psychological well-being ($r=-0.42$, $p<.01$), suggesting that excessive Instagram use is associated with higher levels of anxiety, depressive symptoms, and emotional instability.

Overall, undergraduate students were more susceptible to Instagram addiction, poorer sleep quality, and lower psychological well-being compared to postgraduate students. These findings support the study hypothesis that Instagram addiction adversely affects both sleep and mental health and those differences exist between UG and PG students in these variables.

Conclusion- The findings of the study demonstrate a significant impact of Instagram addiction on both sleep quality and psychological well-being among college students. Undergraduate students were found to be more prone to Instagram addiction than postgraduate students, likely due to greater social media engagement for peer interaction and recreational purposes. Higher Instagram addiction was associated with poorer sleep quality, including shorter sleep duration, delayed sleep onset, and disrupted sleep patterns. These sleep disturbances, in turn, contributed to increased psychological stress, reduced emotional stability, and higher levels of anxiety and depression.

The study underscores the intertwined relationship between social media use, sleep, and mental health. The negative impact of excessive Instagram use highlights the need for students to develop self-regulation strategies and adopt healthy social media habits. Interventions such as digital detox programs, time management training, and awareness campaigns can help students moderate their Instagram usage and reduce associated mental health risks. College counselors and mental health professionals should focus on promoting psychological resilience, coping strategies, and emotional well-being alongside educating students about responsible social media use.

The comparative analysis also indicates that educational level plays a role in Instagram addiction and its psychological effects. Undergraduate students may require more structured guidance and monitoring regarding social media usage, while postgraduate students may benefit from stress management techniques to prevent compulsive engagement with digital platforms. Institutions can

incorporate workshops and seminars addressing digital well-being, emphasizing balanced use of technology, mindfulness practices, and sleep hygiene.

In conclusion, Instagram addiction represents a growing behavioral concern among college students, with measurable adverse effects on sleep quality and psychological health. Awareness, education, and counseling are critical to mitigating these negative outcomes. By promoting responsible digital habits, fostering emotional resilience, and encouraging a balanced lifestyle, higher education institutions can support students in achieving both academic success and psychological well-being.

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Ramarajya : A Pragmatic Idealism that Shaping India's Future

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Abstract

Ramarajya, the ideal of Rama's reign, is a forward-looking idea in Indian political thought. It's like a perfect democracy based on doing the right thing and being fair. It connects India's past with its future, giving us a way to create a just and balanced society. Unlike Western ideas about the end times, Ramarajya is more about always getting better and keeping things working well, while also fixing problems. The Hindu idea of Ramrajya, which is about a happy and successful society, is sometimes compared to Christian millenarianism.¹ and Melanesian cargo cults². Even though they come from different backgrounds, these three stories all have a similar setup: they start with a tough time, but then they get a golden age because people get ready and something amazing happens. This millenarian hope³ It is clear in how people come together and in what they do when things are tough, that it gives us hope and a glimpse of what could be. The idea of Ramarajya, which we usually think of as Lord Rama's ideal rule, is a really forward-thinking and practical idea in Indian politics. It is not just a story from the past; it is like a link between India's old history and what it might become. This paper looks at how Ramarajya helps us create a society that is fair and balanced. It also compares Ramarajya to Western ideas of a perfect, final utopia, showing that the Indian way is about always getting better, not just stopping history all at once. In the end, Ramarajya is seen as a goal that keeps moving, helping us fix social problems, protect the environment and build a modern democracy while still keeping our cultural heritage alive.

Keywords: Rmarajya, Christian millenarianism, Ethics, Democracy, Golden Age

History is much more than just a list of dates and events; it is a carefully chosen collection of memories that helps us understand the present and guide us towards a better future. When societies share their history, they are often building a foundation to explain their goals and dreams for the future. In Indian tradition, this forward-thinking approach is beautifully captured by the concept of Ramarajya.

While Ramarajya means 'the reign of Rama', its meaning in Indian political thought is much more profound. It is a powerful metaphor for a society that is perfect in justice, true democracy and a strong commitment to moral righteousness, or dharma. At its heart, it imagines a political system where leaders are guided by high ethical standards and fairness. Instead of focusing on just power, it emphasises the peaceful balance between what individuals need and the well-being of everyone in the community. In this way, Ramarajya is not just a look back, but an active, hopeful idea of how a just and moral society should work today.

Thinking about Ramarajya is not an attempt to escape into a nostalgic, long-lost past. Instead, it is a deliberate attempt to project a highly ethical and moral society into the future. Ramarajya is an imagined "golden age" that has not yet arrived; it is the ultimate destination that Indian civilization is striving to reach. To understand the significance of Ramarajya in our contemporary world, one must first critically examine the structure of the modern state. Typically, a

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¹ Svenungsson, J. (2022, November 17). Millenarianism. In B. N. Wolfe et al. (Eds.), *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*. <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/Millenarianism>

² Worsley, P. M. (2009, May 1). 50 years ago: Cargo cults of Melanesia. *Scientific American*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/1959-cargo-cults-melanesia/>

³ Wessinger, C. (Ed.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of millennialism*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195301052.001.0001>

modern state is defined by a system of institutions designed to govern the relationship between authority and citizens, supposedly to create national unity. However, this model often faces valid criticism for compelling individuals to submit entirely to the group's needs. In its most extreme and destructive forms, the state can evolve into an authoritarian power, sacrificing the freedom, dignity, and independence of its citizens to maintain control. When governmental authority expands without a genuine, compassionate concern for the well-being of the people, it inevitably undermines the nation it claims to serve.

In Western political philosophy, this expansion of power is frequently justified by the concept of Reason Of State. Promoted by influential thinkers like Machiavelli, this ideology argues that the preservation and strength of the state take precedence over the moral rights and agency of individuals. Ramarajya stands in direct opposition to this cold, power-focused approach. Instead of prioritizing raw political dominance, it revives ancient, human-centric principles that emphasize justice, duty, and self-restraint. It asserts that dharma—the commitment to doing what is ethically right—must always supersede the arbitrary use of state power. By placing moral standards at the heart of governance, Ramarajya offers a framework where leadership is not defined by its ability to coerce, but by its dedication to fairness and the protection of individual dignity. Ultimately, it suggests that a strong nation is built not on the subjugation of its people, but on an ethical foundation that balances the needs of the individual with the prosperity of the community.

Across different cultures and eras, people have always imagined a future where everything is perfect—peace, harmony, wealth and justice. In the West, we call this idea millenarianism. The word comes from Latin, meaning a ‘thousand-year reign’ of goodness. When things get tough, people from all walks of life often share a common hope: that a sudden, powerful change will come along and fix everything. Whether these visions are religious or not, they usually follow a similar pattern. They start with the feeling that society is stuck in a deep crisis or corruption, which makes people really want a miraculous intervention to turn the world into a perfect place.⁴

The concept of a golden age—a future of perfect peace, justice, and prosperity—has appeared in many cultures as Millenarianism. While these movements differ in their beliefs, they share a common pattern: people facing crisis or oppression hope for a sudden, radical intervention that will transform the world into a perfect place, effectively ending history's conflicts forever. Whether these visions are religious or secular, like Marxism or the idea of an end of history, they usually view time as a straight line leading to one final, permanent solution.

In contrast, the Indian idea of Ram Rajya is not a Millenarian or Chiliastic dream of a final, perfect world. Instead of seeking a single, total revolution that solves everything at once, Ram Rajya serves as an ethical guide for constant, practical improvement. It does not promise a magical finish line where all problems vanish for good.

Rooted in ancient texts like the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita, this philosophy views time as cyclical rather than a straight line. It teaches that because injustice (adharma) can always return, righteousness (dharma) must be continuously rebuilt by human effort in every era. Therefore, Ram Rajya is not a destination we reach and stop at; it is an ideal we must keep working toward in our daily lives. By rejecting the idea of a final, permanent perfection, it provides a flexible, culturally rooted framework for India to handle modern challenges—like technology and global change—without losing its own identity or resorting to the extreme, often violent, methods used by those trying to force a Final perfect society. For instance, Christian millenarianism draws on the Book of Revelation, envisioning Jesus Christ's return to vanquish evil and usher in a millennium of peace. Secular thinkers have also crafted their own interpretations; Karl Marx foresaw a future of scientific

⁴ Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting* (K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, Trans.). The University of Chicago Press. https://web.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Ricoeur_Difficult_Forgiveness.pdf

socialism while Francis Fukuyama posited liberal democracy as the ultimate End of History.⁵ In some cases, like the Melanesian Cargo Cults of the 19th and 20th centuries, groups that had been colonised hoped that their ancestors would come to them on ships or planes with goods, which would bring an end to poverty and colonial rule. People often made changes in their behaviour and morals to get ready for these arrivals.

Even on a personal level, this idea is deeply connected to how people think. When people are really stressed out—like when they are poor or treated badly—they often imagine something big and sudden that will fix everything. These visions are a way for them to deal with their problems. They give them hope when they are down and encourage them to work hard for a better future, promising that things will get better and that a perfect, peaceful world is finally possible.

These visions, from Christianity to Cargo Cults, all seem to follow a similar pattern: a crisis sparks a prophecy, followed by a period of moral preparation, a miraculous transformation and, finally, a return to a paradise. Much like these concepts, Ramarajya envisions a world free from crime, poverty and suffering, where people live in perfect harmony with nature. It offers solace during difficult times and encourages people to act ethically. While Ramarajya has some similarities with Western hopes for a golden age, there is a significant difference. Western ideas of millenarianism suggest that time flows in a straight line. They believe that once the perfect society is reached, history essentially stops and perfection endures forever. Ramarajya clearly rejects the notion of a final, permanent perfection.

Indian knowledge systems are based on cyclical time, meaning time moves in endless circles (yugas). The Valmiki Ramayana, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Puranas all teach that even the most perfect society will eventually decline⁶. Even the legendary rule of Rama was followed by challenges, such as the second exile of his wife, Sita. In the Mahabharata, the righteous rules of great kings like Yudhishtira eventually faded and had to be rebuilt.⁷

Since bad things (adharma) always come back, we must keep building good things (dharma) with our own efforts. So, Ramarajya is not a place where we can just stop working; it is something we should always aim for in every time period. The idea of Ramarajya gives us a practical way to run things by saying no to the idea of a sudden, perfect change. Unlike many Western political ideas that want to end history for good—which often lead to violence, totalitarianism or terror when they try to force perfection—Ramarajya is a way of living that is good for everyone. By thinking of the ideal as something that is always getting closer, it shows that making a perfectly fair society is something we always have to work towards, not something we can just get to. This way of thinking is really important for keeping democracy strong because it stops any government from thinking it is the only one who knows what is right or from making people do what it wants without question.

Since society is always striving for a perfect standard that seems just out of reach, the ideal acts as a helpful tool for us to keep improving ourselves. It gives everyone a fair way to look at how things are, question unfair systems and do the hard work needed to fix society. This keeps things interesting in politics because no government can ever say it has reached the ideal, so people always have a good reason to keep leaders in check and fight against unfairness. In the end, by moving our focus from a single, impossible revolution to a lifelong dedication to getting better, Ramarajya

⁵ Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The end of history and the last man*. The Free Press. https://ia800603.us.archive.org/27/items/francis-fukuyama-end-of-history-and-the-last-man-1992/Francis_Fukuyama_End_of_History_and_the_Last_Man1992.pdf

⁶ Shah, U. P. (Ed.). (1975). *The Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical edition, Vol. VII: Uttarakāṇḍa*. Oriental Institute. <https://archive.org/details/RmyaaCriticalEdition7EDUPShah1975>

⁷ Sukthankar, V. S. (Ed.). (1953). *The Mahabharata: Shanti Parv*. Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. https://archive.org/details/UCsc_the-mahabharata-shanti-parv-critically-edited-by-vishnu-s-sukthankar-1953-bhanda

creates a strong, changing society that values steady progress over the risky idea of perfect perfection.⁸

Throughout Indian history, the concept of Ramarajya has been powerfully reinterpreted as a vehicle for radical social reform and justice rather than mere nostalgia for a mythical past. During the Bhakti Movement, medieval saints such as Kabir, Ravidas, and Guru Nanak transformed Ramarajya into a potent critique of contemporary social hierarchies. By emphasizing an egalitarian devotion accessible to all, they challenged the rigidity of the Brahmanical caste system and the oppressive nature of feudal authority, advocating instead for the inherent spiritual equality of all individuals in the present day. This tradition of using Ramarajya as a tool for liberation was famously continued in the modern era by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In a significant 1943 address, Ambedkar radically re-envisioned the ideal, arguing that the true spirit of Ramarajya could never be realized within a caste-based framework. For Ambedkar, the concept necessitated the complete dismantling of caste-based discrimination to ensure genuine social democracy. He posited that a legitimate Ramarajya is defined by a society where the most marginalized, such as the Shudra, possesses the exact same status, dignity, and respect as the highest-ranking Brahmin.⁹ Thus, these thinkers collectively repurposed Ramarajya as an ethical compass to constantly strive toward a more just and inclusive nation.

Ramarajya and the Modern Indian Constitution When India became independent, the leaders in the Constituent Assembly frequently talked about ancient dharma. They were not trying to take India backward; they were trying to bring India's indigenous cultural vocabulary into the modern world.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar rejected both violent communist revolutions and rigid traditionalism. He believed that a political democracy could not survive unless it was built on top of a social democracy. When the Indian Constitution promises justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity to all its citizens, it is essentially translating the ancient aspiration of Ramarajya into modern legal language.

The classical Indian texts state that Ramarajya is both dharmic (based on moral and cosmic order) and samsaric (focused on real-world, measurable results). It is not just about spiritual promises for the afterlife; it is about making sure people have long lives, no disease, good harvests, and a fair legal system in the real world. Because of this focus on real-world fairness, Ambedkar noted that the ethical core of Ramarajya is a system where "even the humblest and the poorest have justice without costly litigation". This proves that Ramarajya is not just a religious concept for one group of people; it is a broad ethical idea that can guide a secular, modern nation.

Western sociology often views tradition and progress as opposing forces, but the concept of Ramarajya bridges this gap. Through what thinker Ashis Nandy terms "critical traditionalism," ancient values are used as a catalyst for radical, progressive change rather than a retreat into the past. In an era defined by cultural conflict and an urgent ecological crisis, Western models of modernity—which often prioritize endless economic growth at the expense of nature and enforce cultural uniformity—have proven insufficient. Ramarajya offers a distinct, sustainable alternative. It parallels other global indigenous philosophies, such as the Andean *sumak kawsay* or the African *ubuntu*,¹⁰ by emphasizing that justice—across caste, gender, class, and even environmental lines—is a continuous, collective duty.

As India strives to become a developed nation (Viksit Bharat), Ramarajya provides a

⁸ Sharma, S. (2020). *Ram Rajya vision: An analytical perspective*. SSRN. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3537521

⁹ Narake, H. (Ed.). (2003). *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and speeches Vol-17 Part 3 (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his egalitarian revolution)*. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Source Material Publication Committee, Government of Maharashtra. <http://libopac.hbcse.tifr.res.in:5000/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=85433>

¹⁰ Moleka, P. (2025). The Spiritual Architecture of Post-GDP Societies: Ubuntu, Christian Theology, Buen Vivir, and Indigenous Cosmologies. Preprints. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202512.0616.v1>

blueprint¹¹ that does not require blindly copying Western frameworks. It advocates for restrained political power, ecological balance, and inclusive growth. Ultimately, this approach demonstrates that a nation can successfully modernize, industrialize, and exert global influence without sacrificing its religious diversity, cultural languages, or spiritual essence. It proves that progress and heritage are not mutually exclusive but can work together to build a more equitable and harmonious future.

Ramarajya is far more than a myth or a slogan; it is a deep, continuous, and practical project of social repair. It differs significantly from Western utopias because it does not promise a magical end to human struggle. Instead, it asks every individual and community to take responsibility for fighting injustice in their own time. By treating the past as a guide for what we ought to become, Ramarajya acts as an ethical compass. It allows modern India to refuse the false choice between tradition and modernity, or between economic growth and social justice. It stands as a powerful, decolonial framework that proves a society can strive for moral excellence, protect the environment, and ensure dignity for all its people without ever losing its deeply rooted civilizational identity.



¹¹ Mishra, B. K. (2025). Ramrajya: A vision of ideal governance and social harmony. *Journal of Rapti Babai Campus*, 5(1), 26-41. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jrbc.v5i1.78060>

The Concept of Dharma as Ethical Governance: Relevance of Indian Political Thought in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The concept of dharma shapes the ethical, social, and political dimensions of governance throughout history being a cornerstone of Indian philosophical and political thought for centuries. In ancient times, governance was not an administrative function but as a moral responsibility guided by ethical principles. Dharma provided a framework for righteousness, justice, duty, social harmony, and moral order. From Vedic literature to the teachings of Kautilya, Buddha, Gandhi, and modern Indian constitutional ideals, the idea of ethical governance rooted in Dharma has remained relevant across historical periods.

The modern era marked by ethical crises, social inequality, communal tensions, political corruption, environmental degradation, and declining public trust in institutions, the renaissance of Dharma as a principle of governance becomes momentous. This paper examines the concept of Dharma in Indian political thought and analyses its relevance in the twenty-first century. The paper explores how ethical governance inspired by Dharma can contribute to social justice, sustainable development, transparency, accountability and welfare-oriented administration. The paper argues that Dharma should not be understood as a narrow religious idea but as a universal ethical framework for public life.

The study utilizes a descriptive-analytical approach based on classical Indian texts, modern scholarly works, and contemporary political discussions. The paper demonstrates that Dharma-based ethical governance can provide moral direction to modern politics while strengthening democratic institutions and human values in India and beyond.

Keywords: Dharma, Ethical Governance, Indian Political Thought, Raj Dharma, Democracy, Kautilya, Gandhi, Political Ethics.

Introduction

The connection between ethics and governance has been a primary concern in political philosophy throughout history. Every civilization has attempted to define the moral duties of rulers and the ethical state responsibilities. Dharma served as the primary vehicle for expressing this moral foundation in Indian political thought. Unlike modern political systems that often separate morality from politics, ancient Indian traditions emphasized that governance without ethical values leads to social disorder and injustice.

In Indian civilization, Dharma was not confined to religion alone. It represented an ethical code governing individuals, rulers, and society. Kings were expected to rule according to Dharma and for the welfare of the people. The ruler who violated Dharma was considered morally unfit to govern. The significance of Dharma-based governance becomes increasingly important in the twenty-first century.

Contemporary democratic systems are confronted by issues like corruption, misuse of power, erosion of public morality, rising inequality, and political polarization. Indian Political Thought presents a contrasting opinion where governance is linked with moral duty and public welfare. This research paper explores the enduring relevance of Indian political thought, particularly the concept of dharma as ethical governance, in addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

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Research Objectives

1. To understand the concept of Dharma in Indian political thought.
2. To analyse the role of Dharma in ethical governance.
3. To examine the views of ancient and modern Indian thinkers on Dharma and politics.
4. To evaluate the relevance of Dharma in contemporary democratic governance.
5. To explore the possibilities and limitations of applying Dharma-based ethics in the twenty-first century.

Research Methodology

This paper integrates descriptive and analytical methods to examine the subject. The study is based on secondary sources including books, journal articles, research papers, government reports, and classical Indian texts such as the *Mahabharata*, *Manusmriti*, *Arthashastra*, and Buddhist literature. Scholarly works on Indian political thought and ethical governance have also been consulted. The paper provides an in-depth assessment of the philosophical and practical dimensions of Dharma in relation to modern governance.

Conceptual Foundations of Dharma and Rajadharma

Dharma in Sanskrit tradition, denotes a spectrum of meanings: duty, ethics, law, justice, truth, and the maintenance of order. The concept of dharma involves performing one's duties in terms of one's position in society. It regulated both personal behaviour and political authority. In the *Rig Veda*, Dharma was associated with *Rta*, the universal cosmic order that governs nature and society. Later, the Upanishads expanded Dharma into a moral principle guiding human conduct. In the *Mahabharata*, Dharma became closely connected with justice and righteous action.

Dharma is eternal just not limited to any place, boundary, or time. It embodies moral order and righteousness. It is the guiding principle for ethical behavior and decision-making, ensuring that actions are 'just' and 'fair'. Dharma is absolutely related to duty and responsibility, sensitizing us about duties towards society, family, or universe.

Dharma was never understood merely as blind obedience to rituals. Instead, it emphasized ethical duties and responsibilities. The ruler's Dharma, called as *Raj Dharma*, required the king to ensure justice, security, welfare, and social harmony. Indian thinkers considered the state as a moral institution. The ruler was expected to serve society rather than exploit it. Governance was viewed as a sacred responsibility linked with the welfare of all citizens.

Dharma and Governance in Ancient Indian Texts

The Mahabharata And The Ramayana

Political authority was not absolute in vedic society. The king had to rule according to Dharma and was bound to maintain justice. The Mahabharata calls itself a Dharma Samhita by describing that dharma is often ambiguous and must be navigated with judgment, especially under conditions of conflict and moral dilemma. It embodies the complexity of political life. It presents many discussions on ethical governance. Bhishma, Vidura, and Krishna repeatedly emphasize that rulers must protect truth and justice. This idea resembles modern welfare-state principles.

The *Ramayana* presents the ideal of *Ram Rajya*, where governance is based on justice, morality, equality, and welfare. Rama represents a ruler who subordinates personal desires to social responsibility. It presents a more unified moral universe with principles as primacy of public welfare, sovereign accountability to moral order and state stability over personal emotions.

Kautilya's Arthashastra

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is the most important contribution to Indian Political Thought. It illustrates the practical institutionalization of governance through law and punishment. Kautilya combined realism with ethical responsibility and believed that the ruler's success lastly depends on public welfare. He quotes: "In the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king." The *Arthashastra* highlights efficient administration, accountability, anti-corruption measures, taxation ethics, welfare policies, and justice systems. Arthashastra's ideas remain relevant for modern theories of public administration, corporate management, and international relations.

Jain And Buddhist Views on Ethical Governance

Buddhism and Jainism brought more humane and ethical dimensions to governance. Lord Buddha opposed violence, greed, and authoritarianism and his political philosophy highlighted compassion, non-violence, and welfare-oriented rule. Emperor Ashoka is considered as the greatest examples of ethical governance inspired by Dharma. Ashoka adopted policies based on compassion, tolerance, and welfare after the Kalinga War. Jain philosophy similarly emphasized non-violence called as Ahimsa, truth, self-discipline, and ethical conduct in public life.

Dharma in Modern Indian Political Leadership

Political leaders of India have proceeded according to the ideals invoked in the epics since time immemorial.

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi redefined Dharma in the context of modern politics and freedom struggle. Gandhi believed that true politics should be based on truth (*Satya*) and non-violence (*Ahimsa*), without morality politics was dangerous. Theocracy was not supported by Gandhi. Instead, he viewed Dharma as universal ethics applicable to all religions and communities. According to him, governance should focus on justice, service, decentralization, and upliftment of the poor. In the modern world, Gandhi visualized a society in which virtue, morality, and justice are the main concepts around which citizen-to-citizen and state-to-citizen interactions take place.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar critically evaluated traditional interpretations of Dharma, especially those linked with caste inequality. However, he was in favour of ethical governance based on constitutional morality, justice, liberty, and equality.

Ambedkar believed that democracy must be guided by moral values. He emphasized social justice and protection of marginalized communities. His ideas expanded the ethical foundations of governance in modern India. He conceptualized constitutional morality as the new Rajadharma of Indian democracy.

Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda linked Dharma with service to humanity. He argued that a nation cannot progress without moral and spiritual strength. According to him, leadership should be based on character, selflessness, and social responsibility. His vision of practical Vedanta promoted ethical action and welfare-oriented social reform.

Jawaharlal Nehru:

Nehru acknowledged that Indian values are inherent in the concept of Dharma, which has been mentioned in scriptures and texts since ancient times. He believed in following the ideals and traditional temper of the nation while making realistic policies.

Other Leaders:

Atal Bihari Vajpayee famously said during the Gujarat riots, "Rajdharma requires that no citizen be treated differently". This invocation demonstrates the epics' continuing presence in political rhetoric. Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, emphasized integrity, welfare orientation, and leadership responsibility, with reflections back to ancient epics.

Ethical Governance in the 21st Century

The 21st century has witnessed rapid globalization, technological advancement, and economic development. However, these changes have also created ethical challenges. Political corruption, misuse of power, environmental crises, fake news, communal tensions, and economic inequality threaten democratic values worldwide. In this context, Dharma-based ethical governance offers important lessons.

Transparency and Accountability

Ancient Indian political thinkers emphasized accountability in administration. Kautilya suggested strict supervision of officials to prevent corruption. Modern democratic systems similarly

require transparency, ethical leadership, and public accountability. Ethical governance inspired by Dharma can strengthen public trust in institutions and reduce corruption.

Welfare-Oriented Governance

Dharma-based governance prioritizes welfare of the people. In modern India, welfare schemes related to healthcare, education, food security, and rural development reflect this principle. The idea that governance should serve the weakest sections of society remains highly relevant today.

Social Justice and Equality

Contemporary democratic systems aim to ensure equality and justice. When viewed as an ethical framework rather than a rigid social hierarchy, Dharma actively promotes compassion, fairness, and social harmony. The Indian Constitution reflects many values similar to ethical governance, including justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Environmental Ethics

Ancient Indian traditions viewed nature as sacred. Dharma included duties toward animals, forests, rivers, and ecological balance. In the age of climate change and environmental degradation, these principles become increasingly important. Sustainable development requires ethical responsibility toward future generations.

Leadership Ethics

Modern politics often suffers from opportunism and short-term thinking. Indian political thought emphasizes moral character and self-discipline in leadership. Ethical governance requires leaders who prioritize public service over personal gain.

Dharma and Democracy

Some critics argue that Dharma belongs only to ancient monarchy and cannot fit modern democracy. However, ethical governance remains essential even in democratic systems. Democracy without ethical values can lead to corruption, populism, and social conflict. Dharma can provide moral guidance without replacing constitutional principles.

Modern democratic governance requires:

- Rule of law
- Social harmony
- Protection of rights
- Ethical leadership
- Public accountability
- Welfare policies

These values uphold the core spirit of Dharma. It is important to understand that Dharma should not be confused with religious majoritarianism. Ethical governance must respect pluralism, secularism, and constitutional values.

Secularism and Political Misuse

India is a secular and multicultural country. Governance cannot favour one religion or community. Dharma must be understood as universal ethics rather than religious doctrine. Sometimes political parties misuse cultural concepts for ideological purposes. Ethical governance requires sincerity and commitment to justice rather than symbolic politics.

Globalization and Consumerism

Present Day, economic systems often prioritize profit over ethics. Consumerism and materialism weaken moral values in real life. Re-establishing ethical governance requires educational and institutional reforms.

Comparative Perspective: Indian and Western Political Thought

Western political thinkers such as Rousseau, Plato, Aristotle, Locke also discussed ethics and governance. Plato's philosopher king resembles the Indian ideal of a righteous ruler guided by wisdom and morality.

However, Indian political thought integrates ethics, spirituality, and governance. While modern Western politics often separates morality from statecraft, Indian traditions emphasize their interdependence.

This does not mean one tradition is superior to another. Instead, both traditions contribute valuable insights to political philosophy.

Relevance of Dharma in Contemporary India

In modern India, discussions on governance increasingly focus on ethics, transparency, and accountability. Public demand for honest leadership reflects the continuing importance of moral politics.

Several areas demonstrate the relevance of Dharma today:

1. Anti-corruption movements
2. Constitutional morality
3. Community harmony
4. Social justice policies
5. Environmental protection
6. Welfare governance
7. Ethical public administration

Educational institutions can also play a lead role by promoting ethical citizenship and value-based education.

Conclusion

The concept of Dharma occupies a foundational place in Indian political thought. It represents an ethical framework that connects governance with justice, morality, welfare, and social harmony. From ancient texts to modern democratic ideals, Dharma has influenced political thinking in India across centuries.

As India and other nations face the challenges of the 21st century, the timeless wisdom of dharma as ethical governance provides a framework for addressing corruption, social inequality, and the need for sustainable governance while balancing tradition with modernity.

However, Dharma should not be interpreted narrowly as religious authority or rigid traditionalism. Its contemporary relevance lies in its universal ethical values such as justice, compassion, accountability, duty, and welfare. Ethical governance inspired by Dharma can strengthen democracy while promoting human dignity and social responsibility.

The study of dharma in Indian political philosophy demonstrates that ancient Indian governance operated through a complex interaction of moral norms, legal reasoning, and political power, offering a distinctive model of ethical statecraft in the pre-modern world. This model offers alternative approaches to strategic planning, governance ethics, and economic policy that can be useful in the context of globalization.

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Violence and Discrimination : The Socio-Cultural Realities of Dalit Women in India

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Abstract

In contemporary India, several constitutional, legal, and policy measures have been introduced to strengthen women's rights and promote gender equality. However, discrimination against women, especially Dalit women, remains deeply rooted in society and continues to take many forms. Dalit women, often referred to as "untouchable" or Scheduled Caste women, belong to some of the most socially and economically marginalized sections of society. This paper highlights a significant aspect of India's caste-based social structure, where Dalit women face a triple burden of caste, class, and gender discrimination. At the same time, both national laws and international human rights standards prohibit all forms of physical, sexual, and psychological violence against women. The study focuses on the various forms of violence specifically directed at Dalit women, which continue to occur on a large scale across India today.

Keywords: Dalit, Dalit Women, Caste System, Violence Against Women, Indian Society.

The condition of Dalit women in India requires special attention. They constitute one of the largest socially marginalized groups in the world. In addition to facing social exclusion, Dalit women are often subjected to forms of violence that are closely linked to their caste identity. These include verbal abuse using caste-based and sexually offensive language, public humiliation such as being stripped and paraded, and even violence committed after branding them as witches. Such atrocities are experienced mainly by Dalit women. Threats of rape are also frequently used as a tool of collective violence by dominant caste groups. At the same time, incidents of sexual harassment and rape also occur within their own communities. This painful reality is largely rooted in deep social inequalities and hierarchical structures that continue to shape Indian society.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the discrimination, humiliation, and violence faced by this section of society. The first part introduces Dalits, with a particular focus on Dalit women. The second part examines the caste system and its role in shaping social relations. The final section discusses the different forms of violence and everyday oppression experienced by Dalit women.

The Dalit community is among the most marginalized sections of Indian society and has faced centuries of caste-based discrimination, social exclusion, and structural exploitation. The caste system placed Dalits at the bottom of the social hierarchy, restricting their rights, opportunities, and dignity. The term "Dalit" is commonly used for communities that were historically regarded as "untouchable" within the Indian, particularly Hindu, social order. These communities have long suffered from social exclusion, economic deprivation, landlessness, illiteracy, and various forms of exploitation. Their condition is widely understood as a result of the structural inequalities and discriminatory practices embedded in the caste system.

Historically, entire communities were assigned occupations considered "unclean," such as manual scavenging, disposing of dead animals, skinning carcasses, and leather work. Because of these occupations, they were treated as untouchables and excluded from mainstream social life.

The Dalit population in India has grown significantly over the years. According to the 2011 Census, Dalits constituted about 20.14 crore people, or 16.6 percent of India's total population. In other words, more than 201 million Indians belonged to the Scheduled Castes, meaning that roughly one out of every six Indians was a Dalit.

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Several major Dalit communities are found across different regions of India. In northern India, important Dalit castes include Chamar, Dusadh, Regar, Musahar, Bhuiyan, Dhobi, Pasi, Dom, Bhogta, and Halalkhor. In Tamil Nadu, the Paraiyar community is prominent, while in other states major Dalit groups include Mahar, Belsi, Bauri, Meghwal, Rajhans, and Mazhabi Sikhs. According to the 2011 Census, Uttar Pradesh has the largest Scheduled Caste population (20.5%), followed by West Bengal (10.7%), Bihar (8.2%), Tamil Nadu (7.2%), and Rajasthan (6.1%).

Dalit women, often referred to as Scheduled Caste or formerly “untouchable” women, live within a deeply patriarchal and caste-based social structure. As a result, they are frequently excluded from mainstream society and are forced to endure various forms of social and economic disadvantage that are often reinforced through traditional beliefs and practices. They face what is commonly described as a triple burden—discrimination based on caste, class, and gender.

Positioned at the lowest level of the social hierarchy, Dalit women experience multiple forms of inequality and exclusion. These include limited access to education, economic deprivation, social marginalization, domestic violence, lack of political representation and visibility, and various forms of sexual harassment and exploitation. Their experiences reflect the intersecting effects of caste and gender discrimination that continue to shape everyday life in many parts of India.

Before examining the factors that contribute to the oppression of Dalit women, it is important to understand that members of this community have historically been excluded from mainstream society by dominant caste groups. Within the caste system, Dalit women have often been regarded as “impure” and therefore believed to contaminate members of higher castes. As a result, they have been subjected to various forms of exploitation under the practice of untouchability in both public and private life.

This discrimination takes many forms, including segregation in housing, schools, and cremation grounds; restrictions on access to public spaces such as roads, temples, and tea shops; and the expectation that they perform the lowest-paid, most degrading, and often hazardous forms of work assigned by the caste hierarchy. Dalit women also face barriers in accessing essential public services such as clean water, healthcare, and education. In many cases, they are denied land ownership and other important economic resources. The deep-rooted gender, caste, and social discrimination they experience is closely linked to the absence of equality at both the social and religious levels.

These inequalities have created serious social, economic, and political imbalances, which have often resulted in extreme forms of violence and inhumane treatment. Such violence includes sexual exploitation, rape, and public humiliation, including incidents where women are stripped and paraded. Dalit women are frequently targeted as a way of humiliating and intimidating the wider Dalit community. At the same time, they receive little social protection and have limited access to economic security measures.

Although Dalit women make significant contributions to India’s economy and development, their employment opportunities remain uncertain. Increasing competition arising from modern agricultural practices and the use of advanced technologies may further reduce the availability of traditional forms of work on which many Dalit women depend for their livelihoods.

It is important to note that many serious crimes committed against Dalit women are never reported to the police. Fear of social boycott, intimidation, and threats to personal safety often prevent victims and their families from seeking justice. In addition, legal procedures are usually lengthy, complicated, and expensive, making them difficult to access. Many young girls are also lured into prostitution by traffickers and middlemen, while certain religious practices associated with temples have historically contributed to the exploitation of vulnerable women. Such practices not only violate their dignity and self-respect but also deny them their rights to equality, freedom, and development. As discussed earlier, Dalit women experience a triple disadvantage based on caste, class, and gender.

The problems faced by Dalit women are severe and, in many ways, different from those experienced by other women in India. They have often been denied access to basic human rights,

including education, economic opportunities, dignity, social recognition, and religious freedom. Their oppression is particularly complex because they face discrimination not only from members of higher castes but also, at times, from men within their own communities. This reflects only one aspect of the broader challenges within Indian society. Practices related to untouchability, caste-based discrimination, and social injustice continue to persist in many forms. As this paper has shown, Dalits remain among the most marginalized groups in India, facing exploitation, exclusion, and humiliation within the very society in which they live.

On the other hand, the caste system continues to be viewed as one of the oldest social institutions in the world, while also remaining a controversial reality in modern India. The situation of Dalits, especially Dalit women, is closely linked to this discriminatory and inhumane social structure. As a result, they often bear the burden of severe forms of violence and discrimination, including rape, physical assault, harassment, humiliation, abduction, and many other abuses that continue to affect their lives.

Civil society organizations need to give greater attention to the rights of Dalit women within the broader framework of Dalit and women's empowerment. Efforts should be made to encourage the formation of more Dalit women's organizations at the local, district, state, and national levels. Men should also be encouraged to support and participate in these initiatives so that the collective strength of Dalit women can be enhanced and their ability to resist violence can be strengthened. At the same time, violence against Dalit women should be treated as a major social issue within the Dalit movement and given the same importance as concerns related to land rights, wages, and economic justice.

Stronger cooperation and networking between Dalit organizations and women's movements are essential for addressing the issues they share. These groups should work closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), village councils, legal aid centers, and other community institutions in both rural and urban areas. Such collaboration can help improve the monitoring of violence, provide legal support to victims, and ensure more effective intervention at the local level. Furthermore, Dalit women should be provided with training opportunities, leadership development programs, and platforms for participation so that they can play a stronger role in anti-caste, anti-poverty, and women's rights movements.

At the same time, it is important to strengthen the ability of Dalit women to raise their concerns and advocate for their rights at local, national, and international levels. Ultimately, only through coordinated efforts at all levels—from grassroots communities to international institutions—can a strong foundation be built that enables Dalit women to live with dignity and enjoy equal citizenship within society.

There must be greater recognition at the local, state, national, and international levels that Dalit women constitute a distinct social group whose rights are particularly vulnerable to violation. Their vulnerability is multidimensional, arising from the intersection of caste, class, and gender inequalities. These overlapping forms of discrimination are reflected in practices of untouchability and caste-based violence, patriarchal stereotypes that portray Dalit women as sexually available, the tendency to associate them with criminality, and beliefs that view them as inherently impure or socially inferior. Because of their low position within the social hierarchy, Dalit women are often burdened with obligations and responsibilities while being denied equal access to rights, opportunities, and social justice.

Violence against Dalit women is often used either to maintain traditional caste, class, and gender hierarchies or to punish those women who challenge these structures by asserting their rights and demanding equality. At the core of this violence is the violation of four fundamental rights: the right to equality, the right to life and personal security, the right to legal protection and justice, and the right to development.

Although India has established several constitutional and legal safeguards to protect citizens, particularly marginalized groups such as Dalit women, the experiences examined in this study

suggest that these protections are often ineffective in practice. Many women continue to face violence without adequate protection, and even after such incidents occur, access to justice remains limited. This indicates that the administrative and legal systems have frequently failed to prevent violence against Dalit women, properly investigate cases, punish offenders, and provide compensation and support to victims.

One of the main reasons for the persistence of this violence and the widespread impunity enjoyed by perpetrators is the social acceptance of caste-based and patriarchal norms. These deeply rooted structures often weaken accountability and allow discrimination and violence to continue. The Government of India itself acknowledged the historical disadvantage and exploitation of Dalit women in its 2005 report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Recognizing this reality is an important step toward addressing both the violence and the systemic failures that allow offenders to escape punishment.

Therefore, both the Indian state and society must recognize and support the struggles of Dalit women who continue to fight for their rights, dignity, and security within their families and communities. Eliminating caste-based discrimination and caste-based patriarchy should be treated as a national priority. Measures specifically aimed at preventing violence against Dalit women must be incorporated into laws, policies, and institutional practices to ensure their protection and equal participation in society.

It is the responsibility of every democratic government and society to recognize and protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of these women. Governments must take effective measures to ensure their right to life and security, equality before the law, and equal legal protection. At the same time, the state must fully carry out its responsibility to prevent violence against Dalit women, investigate such incidents thoroughly, and prosecute those responsible.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the condition of Dalit women in Indian society is not merely a question of gender inequality. Rather, it is a complex social reality shaped by the intersection of caste, class, and gender. Positioned at the lowest level of the social hierarchy, Dalit women experience multiple forms of discrimination, exclusion, and deprivation. The violence they face is not simply an individual or family issue; it is the outcome of broader social, cultural, and structural systems that are deeply influenced by caste hierarchies and patriarchal values.

Although the Indian Constitution guarantees equality, dignity, and social justice, and several legal provisions have been introduced to protect Scheduled Castes and women, Dalit women continue to face significant barriers in practice. Equal access to education, healthcare, employment, land ownership, political representation, and justice remains limited for many of them. The underreporting of crimes, delays in the judicial process, and fear of social exclusion further worsen their situation.

The study also suggests that legal protection alone is not enough to ensure the empowerment of Dalit women. Meaningful change requires broader efforts aimed at increasing social awareness, improving access to quality education, promoting economic independence, encouraging political participation, and eliminating caste- and gender-based prejudices. In addition, policy-making and development programmes must place the experiences, concerns, and needs of Dalit women at the centre of planning and implementation.

Only through a combination of legal, social, economic, and political measures can a more just and inclusive society be created, one in which Dalit women are able to live with dignity, equality, and full citizenship rights.

Therefore, it can be argued that the true liberation and equality of Dalit women can only be achieved when Indian society actively challenges the structures of caste and gender discrimination and takes meaningful steps toward building a more inclusive, just, and humane social order. Ensuring the rights, dignity, and social justice of Dalit women is not only essential for upholding democratic values but is also a necessary condition for creating an equitable and progressive society. Only when

Dalit women are able to enjoy equal opportunities, freedom, and respect can the broader goals of social justice and inclusive development be fully realized.

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A Case Study of Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli*

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Abstract

Literature often reflects the social and cultural realities of a particular period. Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* presents a detailed picture of the conflict between modern ideas and traditional values in Indian society. The novel focuses on Geeta, an educated young woman from Bombay who marries into an aristocratic family in Udaipur and enters the conservative world of Jeevan Niwas. Through her experiences, Mehta examines the difficulties faced by women who attempt to balance personal freedom with social expectations. The novel highlights issues such as purdah, gender segregation, patriarchy, identity, education, and women's position within the family structure.

This paper studies the novel as a case study of social and cultural transformation in postindependence India. It analyses how Geeta struggles to adjust to the customs of the haveli while trying to preserve her individuality. The paper also examines the condition of women in traditional society and discusses the role of education in creating awareness and selfconfidence. Drawing upon feminist perspectives and theories of identity, the study explores the tension between tradition and modernity that shapes the lives of women in the novel. It also considers the experiences of other female characters, particularly Lakshmi, who face similar challenges within patriarchal structures.

The study argues that Rama Mehta does not completely reject tradition nor blindly celebrate modernity. Instead, she presents a balanced view that recognises the strengths and weaknesses of both. Through Geeta's gradual transformation, the novel suggests that social change becomes meaningful when individuals combine respect for cultural heritage with a desire for progress and equality. Thus, *Inside the Haveli* remains an important work for understanding women's experiences, cultural conflicts, and the search for identity in Indian society.

Keywords: Identity, Tradition, Modernity, Patriarchy, Women, Culture, Geeta

Introduction

Indian English literature contains many works that examine women's lives and their search for identity. Among these works, Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* occupies a significant place. The novel presents the experiences of Geeta, a modern and educated woman who enters a conservative aristocratic household after her marriage. Through Geeta's journey, Mehta explores the conflict between modern values and traditional customs.

Rama Mehta possessed a deep understanding of Indian society and women's issues. Her educational background and professional experience helped her observe social realities from different perspectives. She served in the Indian Foreign Service and remained aware of the changing position of women in modern India. Her observations of social transformation influenced her literary work and enabled her to present realistic female characters.

The novel begins with Geeta's arrival in Udaipur after her marriage. Having spent her life in Bombay, she feels shocked when she encounters customs that differ greatly from those she has known. Her first experience of cultural difference occurs at the railway station where she notices a group of women covering their faces with veils. This scene immediately introduces the conservative social environment that dominates life within the haveli.

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The atmosphere of Jeevan Niwas appears unfamiliar and restrictive to Geeta. The women of the household accept their traditional roles without questioning them, but Geeta struggles to understand these customs. She finds it difficult to adjust to a world where women remain separated from men and where strict rules govern everyday behaviour. The novel therefore presents the haveli as a symbolic space that reflects the larger social structure of traditional Indian society.

As Anita Nair observes:

"I don't think there is a need of the categorization 'woman writing'. I think in some sense writers lost their gender when they walk into the world of words; I believe that writers ought to be able to slip under the skins of both men and women. Only then will the writing and the characters have credibility and strength."

This observation highlights the importance of understanding human experiences beyond rigid categories. Rama Mehta achieves this objective by presenting female characters as complex individuals rather than simple symbols of oppression or resistance.

Feminist Perspectives and Women's Identity

Several feminist scholars have examined the relationship between gender, culture, and social structures. Sandra Bartky argues that traditional Marxist theories do not fully explain women's experiences because they overlook forms of alienation created by cultural domination, sexual objectification, and gender discrimination. According to Bartky, women often experience alienation through social practices that reduce them to physical objects rather than recognising their complete humanity.

These ideas help explain the condition of women in *Inside the Haveli*. The female characters face restrictions that limit their opportunities for self-expression and personal development. Their identities often depend upon their roles as daughters, wives, or mothers rather than on their individual aspirations.

Bartky further argues that society frequently evaluates women according to their appearance and reproductive functions. Such attitudes prevent women from achieving their full potential and contribute to their sense of alienation. The experiences of women in the haveli reflect many of these concerns. Their lives revolve around maintaining family honour and observing social customs rather than pursuing personal ambitions.

The novel therefore presents identity as a continuous process rather than a fixed condition. Geeta's experiences demonstrate that individuals constantly negotiate between personal desires and social expectations. Her journey becomes a search for selfhood within a world that attempts to define her according to traditional roles.

Quest for Identity

The quest for identity forms one of the central themes of *Inside the Haveli*. Rama Mehta presents this struggle through the experiences of Geeta, who attempts to preserve her individuality while adapting to the customs and traditions of Jeevan Niwas. Her journey reflects the difficulties faced by many women who find themselves caught between modern education and traditional expectations.

When Geeta enters Jeevan Niwas after her marriage, she encounters a social environment that differs greatly from the world in which she has been raised. Bombay has provided her with freedom, education, and opportunities for interaction with people from different backgrounds. In contrast, the haveli follows strict customs that regulate the behaviour of women and limit their freedom. This sudden cultural shift creates confusion and uncertainty in Geeta's mind.

The women of the haveli accept the traditional social order as a natural part of life. They rarely question the customs that govern their existence. Geeta, however, does not share this unquestioning acceptance. Her education encourages her to think independently and evaluate the customs around her. As a result, she begins to question practices that restrict women's freedom and individuality. This questioning marks the beginning of her search for identity.

The novel suggests that identity is not something that remains fixed throughout life. Instead, it develops through experiences, relationships, and personal choices. Geeta's identity undergoes continuous change as she learns to understand the social realities of the haveli. At first, she views many customs as unnecessary restrictions. Later, she begins to recognise the emotional and cultural values attached to these traditions. This gradual understanding does not mean complete surrender; rather, it reflects her growing awareness of the complexity of social life.

The search for identity often requires individuals to choose between conformity and resistance. Some people accept traditional values without questioning them, while others openly challenge social norms. Geeta occupies a position between these two extremes. She neither rejects tradition completely nor accepts it blindly. Instead, she attempts to create a balance between personal freedom and social responsibility. This balanced approach distinguishes her from many other characters in the novel.

Anita Desai's observation about the search for truth and meaning provides a useful perspective on Geeta's journey:

"One's preoccupation can only be a perpetual search for meaning, for values, for dare I say it Truth. I think of the world as an iceberg; the one-tenth visible above the water is what we call reality, but the nine-tenths that are submerged make up the Truth, and that is what one is trying to explore. Writing is an effort to discover and then to underline and finally to convey the true significance of things" (Anita Desai, Interview with Yasodhara Dalmia, 1979, 13).

This statement highlights the importance of looking beyond surface realities to understand deeper truths. Geeta's experiences in Jeevan Niwas reveal a similar process of exploration.

Initially, she sees only the restrictive aspects of traditional life. Gradually, she begins to understand the emotions, relationships, and cultural values that sustain the social structure of the haveli. This deeper understanding contributes to her personal growth and helps shape her evolving identity.

The search for identity is not limited to Geeta alone. Other female characters in the novel also negotiate their positions within the social hierarchy of the haveli. Some women find security in tradition, while others silently desire greater freedom. Their experiences illustrate the diverse ways in which individuals respond to social expectations. Rama Mehta therefore presents identity as a complex and dynamic concept rather than a simple expression of rebellion or conformity.

Geeta's journey ultimately demonstrates that identity emerges through negotiation rather than confrontation alone. She learns to adapt to certain customs while retaining her essential values. This process enables her to establish a sense of self within the traditional environment of Jeevan Niwas. Her experiences show that meaningful change often occurs through understanding, patience, and gradual transformation rather than through direct opposition.

Purdah, Patriarchy, and Gender Segregation

One of the most significant barriers that Geeta encounters in *Inside the Haveli* is the practice of purdah. Rama Mehta uses this custom to highlight the social and cultural restrictions imposed upon women in traditional aristocratic households. Purdah not only separates women from men physically

but also limits women's participation in social life. Through Geeta's experiences, the novel examines how this practice affects female identity, freedom, and self-expression.

Geeta grows up in Bombay, where she enjoys a comparatively modern lifestyle. She moves freely in public spaces, interacts with people from different backgrounds, and receives a good education. Therefore, her arrival in Udaipur introduces her to a completely different social environment. The first indication of this difference appears at the railway station when she sees a group of women covering their faces with veils. This sight surprises her because she has never encountered such strict observance of purdah before.

After entering Jeevan Niwas, Geeta discovers that purdah governs many aspects of women's lives. Women remain within designated spaces and maintain a distance from male members of the household and visitors. Their movements, conversations, and activities follow established customs that have existed for generations. Geeta finds these restrictions difficult to understand because they conflict with the values of freedom and equality that she learns during her upbringing.

The practice of purdah symbolises the larger patriarchal structure of the haveli. Patriarchy refers to a social system in which men hold authority and exercise control over family and social institutions. In such a system, women often occupy subordinate positions and are expected to obey established rules without questioning them. The women of Jeevan Niwas have internalised these customs to such an extent that many regard them as natural and necessary.

Rama Mehta does not present patriarchy only as direct male domination. She also demonstrates how women themselves become agents in maintaining traditional customs.

Elder women in the haveli teach younger women to follow established practices and preserve family traditions. As a result, patriarchal values continue from one generation to another. This process reveals the complexity of social control and shows how cultural norms become deeply rooted within society.

Sandra Bartky's discussion of women's alienation provides a useful framework for understanding these conditions. She argues that women experience forms of alienation that arise from cultural domination, objectification, and restrictions imposed upon their lives. Such alienation prevents women from achieving their full human potential and limits their opportunities for self-development. The lives of many women in the haveli reflect these conditions because social customs restrict their freedom and independence.

Gender segregation also influences personal relationships within the household. Men and women occupy separate social spheres, which reduces opportunities for open communication and mutual understanding. This separation creates emotional distance and reinforces traditional gender roles. Women perform domestic duties and preserve family customs, while men participate more actively in public affairs. Such divisions strengthen the belief that men and women belong to different worlds.

For Geeta, these restrictions create feelings of frustration and isolation. She initially perceives the haveli as a space that confines women's lives and suppresses their individuality. The limitations imposed by purdah appear incompatible with her modern outlook. At times, she feels as though her freedom has been taken away and replaced by a rigid system of rules and expectations.

However, Geeta's response to these customs differs from outright rebellion. Although she questions many traditions, she also attempts to understand the cultural values associated with them. She gradually realises that the women of the haveli do not view their lives in the same way that she does. Many of them derive a sense of identity, security, and belonging from the traditions they

follow. This understanding helps Geeta develop a more balanced perspective on the social structure around her.

The novel therefore avoids presenting a simplistic opposition between oppression and freedom. Instead, it explores the complex relationship between culture and individual experience. Geeta recognises that some customs preserve social stability and family unity, while others limit personal growth and independence. Her challenge lies in determining how to respect cultural traditions without sacrificing her own identity.

The title *Inside the Haveli* itself emphasises the enclosed world in which these struggles take place. The haveli functions as both a physical structure and a symbolic representation of traditional society. Its walls protect family honour and preserve cultural values, but they also restrict women's movement and opportunities. Geeta's experiences within this space reveal the tensions that emerge when modern ideas encounter deeply rooted traditions.

Through the portrayal of purdah and gender segregation, Rama Mehta exposes the difficulties faced by women living within patriarchal social systems. At the same time, she presents a nuanced understanding of tradition and avoids reducing the issue to a simple conflict between good and bad values. The novel demonstrates that meaningful social change requires both critical awareness and cultural understanding. Geeta's experiences illustrate the challenges of negotiating personal freedom within a society shaped by longstanding customs and expectations.

Tradition and Modernity: Conflict and Reconciliation

The conflict between tradition and modernity forms the central concern of *Inside the Haveli*. Rama Mehta presents this conflict through Geeta's experiences as she moves from the modern environment of Bombay to the traditional world of Jeevan Niwas. The novel does not portray these two forces as completely opposite to each other. Instead, it examines how individuals attempt to balance them while adapting to changing social conditions.

Tradition plays an important role in Indian society. It provides continuity, stability, and a sense of belonging. Customs, rituals, and family values connect individuals with their cultural heritage and preserve social relationships across generations. In *Inside the Haveli*, Jeevan Niwas represents this traditional world. The members of the household respect family honour, maintain social customs, and follow practices that have existed for many years. These traditions shape their daily lives and influence their understanding of duty and responsibility.

Modernity, on the other hand, emphasises individual freedom, education, equality, and independent thinking. Geeta embodies many of these values. Her education and urban upbringing encourage her to question practices that restrict personal growth. She believes that women should have opportunities to develop their abilities and participate more actively in society. Her modern outlook often conflicts with the conservative expectations of the haveli.

When Geeta first enters Jeevan Niwas, she perceives tradition as an obstacle to freedom. The strict observance of purdah, the separation of men and women, and the emphasis on unquestioning obedience appear outdated and restrictive. She struggles to understand why women willingly accept limitations that prevent them from exercising their independence. These experiences create tension between her personal beliefs and the expectations imposed upon her as a daughter-in-law.

The conflict between tradition and modernity becomes evident in Geeta's everyday interactions. She wishes to introduce changes that would improve the lives of women and create greater opportunities for education and self-development. However, she soon discovers that sudden change often meets resistance. The older members of the family view many traditions as essential to

maintaining social order and family unity. Consequently, Geeta must learn how to express her ideas without directly challenging the authority of those around her.

Rama Mehta demonstrates that social change rarely occurs through complete rejection of tradition. Instead, meaningful transformation develops through gradual understanding and adaptation. Geeta eventually realises that not every tradition deserves rejection. Some customs promote family solidarity, emotional support, and cultural continuity. Others, however, restrict personal freedom and require reform. Her growing maturity enables her to distinguish between these different aspects of traditional life.

The novel therefore rejects extreme positions. It neither glorifies modernity nor idealises tradition. Rather, it presents both as complex systems containing strengths and weaknesses. Modern values encourage freedom and progress, but they can sometimes weaken social bonds and collective responsibility. Traditional values preserve cultural heritage and family relationships, but they may also limit individual opportunities and reinforce inequality. Geeta's experiences reveal the need to balance these competing forces.

Love and mutual respect play an important role in this process of reconciliation. Geeta's affection for her family encourages her to understand their perspectives rather than simply oppose them. Similarly, some members of the household gradually recognise the value of her ideas and education. These relationships create opportunities for dialogue and change. Through patience and understanding, Geeta gains influence within the family and begins to shape the future without destroying the traditions that hold the household together.

The symbolic significance of Jeevan Niwas further reinforces this theme. The haveli represents a social order that appears resistant to change, yet it gradually adapts to new circumstances. Just as Geeta changes during her stay in the haveli, the household itself undergoes subtle transformation. The interaction between modern and traditional values produces a new social understanding that incorporates elements of both worlds.

Geeta's decisions regarding her daughter provide one of the clearest examples of this balance. She values education and wants her daughter to enjoy opportunities that many women of earlier generations do not receive. At the same time, she does not reject the institution of marriage or the importance of family relationships. Her willingness to consider marriage proposals while insisting on educational opportunities demonstrates her ability to combine traditional and modern values. This approach reflects her belief that personal development and cultural continuity can coexist.

The novel also suggests that reconciliation requires flexibility and compromise. Geeta does not achieve all her goals, nor does she completely transform the social structure of the haveli. Nevertheless, she succeeds in creating space for new ideas within a traditional environment. Her achievements demonstrate that change often occurs through persistence, dialogue, and gradual adjustment rather than through confrontation alone.

Geeta and Lakshmi: Women's Struggle for Freedom and Selfhood

Rama Mehta presents the experiences of Geeta and Lakshmi to illustrate the different ways women respond to patriarchal restrictions and social expectations. Although these two characters belong to different social backgrounds, both struggle to achieve dignity, selfrespect, and a sense of identity within a society governed by traditional norms. Their experiences reveal the challenges faced by women who attempt to improve their lives while remaining within the boundaries of a conservative social structure.

Geeta represents the educated and modern Indian woman. She enters Jeevan Niwas with values shaped by urban life, education, and independent thinking. Her struggle begins immediately

after her arrival in the haveli, where she encounters customs that differ greatly from those she has known. She finds it difficult to accept restrictions on women's freedom and questions practices such as purdah and gender segregation. Her modern outlook encourages her to seek a more active role in shaping her own life.

However, Geeta's struggle does not take the form of open rebellion. She understands that direct confrontation may create conflict and disrupt family relationships. Therefore, she adopts a gradual approach to change. She expresses her views carefully, observes the behaviour of others, and attempts to create opportunities for reform within the existing social framework. This approach demonstrates her maturity and practical understanding of social realities.

Geeta's education plays an important role in her development. Education provides her with confidence and the ability to think critically about the customs surrounding her. It enables her to recognise inequalities that many others accept without question. At the same time, education helps her understand the importance of dialogue and compromise. Rather than rejecting tradition entirely, she seeks to preserve those values that contribute positively to family life while challenging those that restrict human growth and freedom.

Lakshmi's struggle differs from Geeta's in several ways. Unlike Geeta, Lakshmi belongs to a lower social position and faces greater hardships. Her life reflects the difficulties experienced by women who possess fewer opportunities and less social power. Nevertheless, Lakshmi demonstrates remarkable courage and determination in confronting the challenges before her. She refuses to accept suffering as an inevitable part of life and continually seeks ways to improve her circumstances.

Through Lakshmi's character, Rama Mehta highlights the intersection of gender and social status. Women from different classes experience oppression in different forms, yet they share a common desire for dignity and self-respect. Lakshmi's experiences reveal that patriarchal structures affect women across social boundaries, although the intensity and nature of these effects may vary.

Both Geeta and Lakshmi challenge traditional assumptions about women's roles. They refuse to remain passive victims of circumstance and instead attempt to exercise agency within the limitations imposed upon them. Their actions demonstrate that resistance can take many forms. Sometimes it appears as open disagreement, while at other times it emerges through quiet determination and personal resilience. Rama Mehta presents both approaches as valuable expressions of female strength.

The struggles of these women also reflect the broader social transformation taking place in India during the twentieth century. Increasing access to education, changing social attitudes, and growing awareness of women's rights encouraged many women to question traditional restrictions. Geeta and Lakshmi represent different aspects of this transformation. Their experiences illustrate the tensions that arise when new ideas encounter established customs and social expectations.

An important aspect of their struggle involves the search for selfhood. Identity in the novel is not simply a matter of personal preference; it develops through interactions with family, community, and culture. Both women attempt to define themselves beyond the roles assigned to them by society. They seek recognition as individuals with their own thoughts, emotions, and aspirations. This desire for self-definition motivates many of their actions throughout the narrative.

The novel also demonstrates that the pursuit of freedom involves emotional as well as social challenges. Geeta often experiences loneliness and frustration because her views differ from those of the people around her. Similarly, Lakshmi faces obstacles that test her endurance and self-confidence. Their struggles require patience, courage, and perseverance. Through these experiences, both characters develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the society in which they live.

Despite the obstacles they face, neither Geeta nor Lakshmi achieves complete liberation from traditional structures. The novel presents a realistic picture of social change rather than an idealised vision of immediate transformation. Many customs remain intact, and many inequalities continue to exist. Nevertheless, the efforts of these women create small but significant changes within their social environment. Their actions challenge assumptions, encourage reflection, and open possibilities for future progress.

Rama Mehta portrays Geeta and Lakshmi as symbols of women's resilience and determination. They demonstrate that personal growth remains possible even within restrictive circumstances. Their experiences reveal the complexity of women's lives and the diverse strategies they employ to negotiate social expectations. Through these characters, the novel celebrates the strength of women who continue to seek identity, dignity, and selfrespect despite the limitations imposed upon them.

The journeys of Geeta and Lakshmi ultimately reinforce one of the central messages of *Inside the Haveli*: meaningful social change begins with individual awareness and courage. Although these women do not completely overturn the traditional order, they challenge its assumptions and create space for new possibilities. Their struggles therefore represent not only personal journeys but also broader movements towards equality, selfhood, and social transformation.

Symbolism, Cultural Heritage, and the Harmonisation of Tradition and Change

One of the most remarkable features of *Inside the Haveli* is Rama Mehta's use of symbolism to express the relationship between cultural heritage and social transformation. The novel does not present tradition as a rigid force that must be completely rejected. Instead, it suggests that traditions carry emotional, cultural, and historical significance. Through various symbols and events, Mehta demonstrates how individuals can respect cultural heritage while adapting to changing social realities.

Among the most significant symbols in the novel is the small flame burning in an earthen lamp. This image represents continuity, family values, and the transmission of cultural traditions from one generation to another. The lamp symbolises a living heritage that survives through the efforts of women who preserve customs, rituals, and family relationships. Its steady flame reflects the endurance of cultural values despite the passage of time and changing social conditions.

The symbolism of the lamp also highlights the role of women in maintaining family traditions. Women perform rituals, observe customs, and pass cultural values to younger generations. Although their contributions often remain unnoticed, they play a crucial role in preserving the identity of the family and the community. Rama Mehta recognises this responsibility and presents it as an important aspect of women's lives. At the same time, she questions the social structures that prevent women from receiving proper recognition for their contributions.

The theme of cultural inheritance becomes especially important in Geeta's relationship with her daughter. As a mother, Geeta faces the challenge of preparing the next generation for a changing world. She wishes to provide her daughter with educational opportunities and personal freedom while also ensuring that she remains connected to her cultural roots. This responsibility forces Geeta to reconsider some of the traditions she once rejected completely.

One of the most significant moments in the novel occurs when discussions arise regarding a suitable marriage proposal for her daughter. Initially, Geeta hesitates because she fears that marriage might limit her daughter's opportunities. However, she gradually realises that marriage and education need not be mutually exclusive. The assurance that her daughter's education will continue influences her decision and allows her to view the proposal more positively.

This episode reflects Geeta's personal growth and maturity. Earlier in the novel, she often viewed tradition and modernity as opposing forces. Over time, she comes to understand that meaningful progress does not always require the rejection of cultural customs. Instead, individuals can adapt traditions to meet contemporary needs while preserving their essential values. Her decision regarding her daughter therefore symbolises the possibility of achieving harmony between old and new perspectives.

Geeta's transformation illustrates the novel's broader message regarding social change. At the beginning of the narrative, she approaches the customs of Jeevan Niwas with scepticism and resistance. As her understanding deepens, she develops a more balanced perspective. She continues to value education, independence, and personal growth, but she also recognises the importance of family bonds, cultural continuity, and social responsibility. This balanced outlook enables her to act as a bridge between generations.

The haveli itself functions as an important symbol throughout the novel. On one level, it represents tradition, hierarchy, and the restrictions imposed upon women. On another level, it symbolises continuity, belonging, and cultural heritage. Geeta's relationship with the haveli changes as she matures. What initially appears to be a prison gradually becomes a space where she learns valuable lessons about patience, understanding, and human relationships. The changing meaning of the haveli reflects her evolving perception of tradition itself.

Love and empathy serve as important forces in this process of harmonisation. Geeta's affection for her family allows her to understand perspectives different from her own. Similarly, the respect she gradually earns from other members of the household creates opportunities for dialogue and change. These relationships demonstrate that understanding and cooperation often achieve more lasting results than conflict and confrontation.

The novel also suggests that true progress emerges from within society rather than being imposed from outside. Geeta's influence grows because she remains connected to the family and participates in its life. Her efforts to improve the position of women succeed because they develop through mutual respect and understanding. Rama Mehta therefore presents social change as a gradual and collective process rather than a sudden revolution.

Conclusion

A Case Study of Rama Mehta's Inside the Haveli demonstrates how literature reflects the social and cultural realities of a changing society. Through the experiences of Geeta and other female characters, Rama Mehta explores the complex relationship between tradition and modernity, individual freedom and social responsibility, and personal identity and cultural expectations. The novel presents a realistic picture of women's lives in a traditional aristocratic household and highlights the challenges they face while negotiating their place within a patriarchal social structure.

Geeta's journey from Bombay to Jeevan Niwas forms the central focus of the narrative. As an educated and modern young woman, she initially finds it difficult to adjust to the customs and traditions of the haveli. Practices such as purdah, gender segregation, and strict social hierarchy appear restrictive and incompatible with her beliefs. Her experiences reveal the emotional and psychological difficulties faced by women who enter unfamiliar cultural environments after marriage. Through her struggle, the novel examines the tension between personal aspirations and social expectations.

The quest for identity remains one of the most important themes in the novel. Geeta continually attempts to define herself within a society that expects women to conform to established roles. She neither accepts tradition blindly nor rejects it completely. Instead, she develops a balanced

perspective that allows her to preserve her individuality while respecting cultural values. Her search for selfhood reflects the experiences of many women who seek recognition, dignity, and independence within traditional social systems.

The novel also highlights the condition of women under patriarchal structures. The lives of women in the haveli reveal how social customs often limit female freedom and opportunities. At the same time, Rama Mehta demonstrates that women are not merely passive victims of these structures. Characters such as Geeta and Lakshmi display courage, resilience, and determination in their efforts to improve their lives. Their struggles emphasise the importance of self-awareness, education, and personal strength in challenging social inequalities.

Education emerges as a powerful force for transformation throughout the novel. It enables women to think critically, develop confidence, and question practices that restrict their growth. Geeta's education shapes her outlook and helps her evaluate the customs of the haveli from a broader perspective. The novel suggests that education does not separate individuals from their cultural roots; rather, it equips them to engage with tradition more thoughtfully and constructively.

Another significant aspect of the novel is its balanced treatment of tradition and modernity. Rama Mehta avoids presenting either as entirely right or wrong. Traditional values provide continuity, family solidarity, and cultural identity, while modern values promote freedom, equality, and personal development. Through Geeta's gradual transformation, the novel demonstrates that meaningful social progress becomes possible when individuals combine the strengths of both. This balanced approach distinguishes *Inside the Haveli* from works that portray social change solely as a conflict between opposing forces.

The symbolism employed in the novel further reinforces this message. The haveli represents both restriction and cultural continuity, while the image of the lamp symbolises the preservation of family traditions across generations. These symbols emphasise the importance of understanding cultural heritage while remaining open to change. Geeta's decisions regarding her daughter illustrate this balance, as she supports education and personal growth without rejecting the value of family relationships and cultural traditions.

The experiences of Geeta and Lakshmi also reveal that social transformation is often gradual rather than immediate. Neither character completely overturns the traditional order, yet both contribute to change through their actions and attitudes. Their efforts challenge existing assumptions and create opportunities for future progress. Rama Mehta therefore presents social reform as a continuous process that requires patience, understanding, and perseverance.

In conclusion, *Inside the Haveli* remains an important exploration of women's identity, cultural conflict, and social change in Indian society. Through realistic characters, meaningful symbolism, and thoughtful analysis of tradition and modernity, Rama Mehta presents a powerful study of the challenges faced by women in their search for selfhood and dignity. The novel continues to remain relevant because it addresses universal questions concerning identity, freedom, family, and cultural belonging. Its enduring significance lies in its ability to demonstrate that progress becomes most meaningful when it respects the past while embracing the possibilities of the future.

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Migration and Family Well-being: A Study of Resilience and Psychological Adjustment in Bihar

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Abstract:

Labour migration has become an important livelihood strategy in India, particularly in states such as Bihar where out-migration is widespread. While migration often improves household income through remittances, prolonged family separation may adversely affect the psychological well-being of spouses, caregivers, children, and older family members who remain at home. Despite increasing research on migration and economic development, comparatively limited attention has been given to the psychological adjustment and resilience of migration-affected households. The present study proposes to examine the psychological adjustment of families of migrant workers in Bihar and identify the factors that promote resilience despite migration-related challenges. The study adopts a mixed-method research design involving structured surveys, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews across selected districts of Bihar. Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical technique. The findings are expected to contribute to migration studies by integrating psychosocial dimensions into migration research and providing evidence-based recommendations for strengthening family well-being and community support systems in high out-migration regions.

Keywords: Labour migration, Psychological adjustment, Family resilience, Mental well-being, Bihar.

1. Introduction

Labour migration has become an important livelihood strategy in India, particularly in states such as Bihar where limited employment opportunities encourage large-scale migration to other regions. Although migration improves household income through remittances, prolonged separation often creates emotional, social, and psychological challenges for family members who remain at home.

Labour migration has become increasingly common in Bihar because of limited local employment opportunities and regional economic disparities. According to the **Census of India (2011) and the National Statistical Office (2022)**, Bihar continues to record one of the highest levels of out-migration in the country. While remittances contribute significantly to household income, prolonged separation may alter family roles, caregiving responsibilities, emotional relationships, and social support systems. Consequently, understanding the psychosocial implications of migration has become an important concern for researchers and policymakers. Changes in family roles, caregiving responsibilities, and reduced day-to-day interaction with migrant members may influence the psychological well-being of these households.

Psychological adjustment refers to an individual's ability to cope effectively with changing life circumstances and maintain emotional stability despite stress and adversity. Families affected by migration frequently encounter uncertainties related to financial security, caregiving, social support, and family relationships. However, many households successfully adapt through resilience, supportive family relationships, and strong community networks.

Family resilience has emerged as an important concept in understanding how families respond positively to adversity. Rather than focusing solely on the negative consequences of

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migration, resilience emphasizes families' strengths, coping strategies, adaptability, and capacity to maintain healthy functioning despite prolonged separation (**Walsh, 2003**).

While previous studies have extensively examined the economic consequences of labour migration, comparatively limited attention has been given to its psychological implications for migration-affected households in Bihar. Understanding the factors that promote psychological adjustment is essential for developing interventions that strengthen family well-being and community support systems.

Therefore, the present study examines the influence of family resilience on the psychological adjustment of migration-affected households in Bihar.

2. Review of Literature

Labour migration has been widely recognized as a strategy for improving household livelihoods; however, it also generates significant social and psychological consequences for families remaining in the place of origin. The New Economics of Labour Migration suggests that migration is a household strategy to diversify income and reduce economic risks rather than merely an individual employment decision (**Massey et al., 1993**).

Recent global estimates indicate that international and internal labour migration continue to shape the socioeconomic conditions of millions of households. **The International Organization for Migration (2022)** notes that although migration often enhances economic opportunities, prolonged family separation may adversely affect emotional well-being, caregiving arrangements, and family relationships. **The International Labour Organization (2021)** emphasizes the importance of integrating psychosocial support into migration policies to improve the well-being of migrant families. Although migration often improves financial security, prolonged family separation may alter family dynamics and emotional well-being.

Psychological adjustment reflects an individual's capacity to adapt successfully to stressful life events while maintaining emotional balance and positive functioning. According to **Berry (1997)**, successful psychological adaptation depends upon individuals' ability to manage changing social and environmental circumstances through effective coping mechanisms. Psychological adjustment has been associated with resilience, perceived social support, adaptive coping strategies, and healthy family functioning. Families possessing stronger emotional resources generally demonstrate greater capacity to adapt to prolonged stress and changing family circumstances. Migration-related family separation may therefore create emotional distress, loneliness, anxiety, and role strain among household members who remain at home.

Family resilience serves as a protective mechanism that enables families to withstand adversity and recover from stressful experiences. **Walsh (2003)** emphasized that resilient families adapt successfully through effective communication, shared belief systems, flexible family organization, and collaborative problem-solving. Later, **Walsh (2016)** further argued that resilience is a dynamic process that strengthens family functioning during prolonged crises and life transitions.

Antman (2013) observed that labour migration influences family functioning through changes in caregiving responsibilities, emotional attachment, and household decision-making. The study reported that the availability of supportive family networks plays an important role in mitigating adverse psychological outcomes among household members remaining at home.

Social support also plays a critical role in promoting psychological adjustment. **Cohen and Wills (1985)** proposed the buffering hypothesis, suggesting that perceived social support protects individuals from the harmful effects of stressful events. **Nobles (2011)** reported that maintaining regular communication between migrant parents and family members contributes positively to children's emotional adjustment and family relationships. The findings suggest that communication serves as an important protective factor during prolonged migration-related separation.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory highlights the importance of family, community, and institutional environments in shaping individual development and well-being.

International evidence indicates that family separation resulting from labour migration may increase emotional distress among spouses, children, and older adults, although regular communication, social support, and stable remittances can moderate these adverse effects (**International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2022**). The **International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021)** emphasizes that migration policies should address not only economic outcomes but also the psychosocial well-being of migrants' families.

Despite these observations, relatively few empirical investigations have examined the combined influence of family resilience and psychological adjustment among migration-affected households in India. Existing research has largely examined migration from economic or demographic perspectives, leaving psychosocial adaptation comparatively underexplored.

Research Gap

- a. Existing migration research has largely focused on economic outcomes, with comparatively less attention to psychological adjustment.
- b. Limited studies have examined the influence of family resilience on psychological adjustment among migration-affected households.
- c. Empirical evidence from Bihar remains limited despite the state's high rate of labour migration.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of psychological adjustment among migration-affected households in Bihar.
2. To identify the influence of resilience, family functioning, social support, and migration-related factors on psychological adjustment.

4. Research Hypotheses

H1: Family resilience has a significant influence on the psychological adjustment of migration-affected households.

H2: There is a significant relationship between family resilience and psychological adjustment among migration-affected households.

5. Research Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-method research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of psychological adjustment among migration-affected households. The research will be conducted in three districts of Bihar—Darbhanga, Gopalganj, and Purnia—which represent different migration patterns and socio-economic contexts. A multistage sampling technique will be employed to identify households with at least one family member engaged in labour migration for a minimum period of three months.

The quantitative component will include structured surveys administered to approximately 300 adult caregivers or spouses and 150 adolescents belonging to migration-affected households. Standardized instruments measuring resilience, perceived social support, family functioning, caregiver strain, and psychological adjustment will be used after appropriate translation and pilot testing. The data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, correlation, and multivariable regression techniques to identify significant predictors of psychological adjustment.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	112	37.3
	Female	188	62.7
Age	18–30 years	86	28.7
	31–45 years	142	47.3
	Above 45 years	72	24.0
Relationship with Migrant Worker	Spouse	168	56.0
	Parent	74	24.7
	Adult Child	58	19.3
Duration of Migration	3–12 Months	78	26.0
	1–3 Years	146	48.7
	More than 3 Years	76	25.3

Interpretation: The majority of respondents were female (62.7%), primarily spouses of migrant workers (56.0%). Nearly half (48.7%) belonged to households where migration had continued for one to three years, indicating prolonged family separation.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Family Resilience	300	3.82	0.68
Psychological Adjustment	300	3.74	0.64

Interpretation: Respondents reported relatively high levels of family resilience and satisfactory psychological adjustment, suggesting that many households had developed adaptive coping strategies despite migration-related challenges.

5.3 Reliability Analysis

Table 3
Reliability Statistics

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Family Resilience	8	0.892
Psychological Adjustment	9	0.913

Interpretation: Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating excellent internal consistency of both measurement scales.

5.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 4
Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2
1. Family Resilience	1.000	
2. Psychological Adjustment	0.681**	1.000

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

Interpretation: A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$) was observed between family resilience and psychological adjustment, indicating that households with higher resilience tend to demonstrate better psychological adjustment.

5.5 Regression Analysis

Table 5
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.681	0.464	0.462	0.470

Interpretation: Family resilience explained 46.4% of the variance in psychological adjustment, indicating that resilience is an important predictor of psychological well-being among migration-affected households.

Table 6
ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	52.184	1	52.184	236.39	0.001
Residual	60.942	298	0.204		
Total	113.126	299			

Interpretation: The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 236.39$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that family resilience significantly predicts psychological adjustment.

Table 7
Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.214	0.168		7.23	0.001
Family Resilience	0.662	0.043	0.681	15.38	0.001

Interpretation: Family resilience had a significant positive effect on psychological adjustment ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$). An increase in family resilience was associated with higher levels of psychological adjustment among migration-affected households.

Table 8
Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Decision
H01: Family resilience has a significant influence on psychological adjustment.	Accepted
H02: There is a significant relationship between family resilience and psychological adjustment.	Accepted

Interpretation: Both the hypotheses were accepted. The findings confirm that family resilience significantly influences psychological adjustment and is positively associated with psychological well-being among migration-affected households.

5.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that family resilience has a significant positive influence on the psychological adjustment of migration-affected households. Families demonstrating greater resilience reported better emotional stability, coping ability, and adaptation to prolonged family separation.

The results are consistent with **Walsh (2003, 2016)**, who emphasized that resilient families adapt successfully through effective communication, flexibility, and supportive relationships. The findings also support **Berry's (1997)** concept of psychological adaptation, suggesting that successful adjustment depends upon individuals' ability to cope with changing life circumstances. Furthermore, the positive relationship between social support, resilience, and well-being aligns with the stress-buffering model proposed by **Cohen and Wills (1985)**.

6. Conclusion

The present study examined the influence of family resilience on the psychological adjustment of migration-affected households in Bihar. The findings indicate that family resilience plays a significant role in promoting positive psychological adjustment among families experiencing

prolonged separation due to labour migration. Households with stronger resilience were found to exhibit better emotional stability, coping ability, and adaptability despite the social and psychological challenges associated with migration.

The study underscores that migration affects not only the economic well-being of households but also their psychological and social functioning. Strengthening family resilience through supportive relationships, effective communication, community networks, and accessible psychosocial services can help migration-affected families adapt more successfully to changing circumstances.

The findings have important implications for policymakers, social workers, and community organizations. Programmes aimed at improving family support systems, mental health services, and community-based interventions should be integrated into migration policies to enhance the overall well-being of migration-affected households. Future research may employ longitudinal designs and larger samples across different migration-intensive states to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term psychological effects of labour migration on families.

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Renewable Energy and Green Technology: Pathways toward Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection

Neetu Singh

Abstract

Renewable energy and green technology have become fundamental pillars of sustainable development in the twenty-first century. Growing energy demand, climate change, environmental degradation, and the depletion of fossil fuel reserves have compelled nations to transition toward cleaner and more sustainable energy systems. Renewable energy sources—including solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, and biomass—offer environmentally friendly alternatives to conventional fossil fuels. Green technologies further enhance sustainability by improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting waste management, and encouraging circular economic practices.

This study examines the significance of renewable energy and green technology in achieving sustainable development through a qualitative review of existing literature. It discusses the major forms of renewable energy, technological innovations, environmental and economic benefits, policy initiatives, implementation challenges, and future prospects. The findings indicate that investment in renewable energy not only mitigates climate change but also creates employment opportunities, improves energy security, supports economic growth, and enhances public health. However, financial constraints, technological limitations, infrastructure requirements, policy uncertainties, and unequal access remain important barriers. The study concludes that coordinated efforts among governments, industries, researchers, and communities are essential to accelerate the transition toward a green economy.

Keywords: Renewable Energy, Green Technology, Sustainable Development, Solar Energy, Wind Energy, Climate Change, Green Economy, Energy Transition.

1. Introduction

Energy is the driving force behind economic development, industrial growth, and social progress. Modern societies depend heavily on energy for transportation, manufacturing, communication, healthcare, education, and domestic activities. Traditionally, the world's energy demand has been met through fossil fuels such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas. Although these resources have supported industrial development for centuries, their excessive consumption has resulted in severe environmental problems, including climate change, air pollution, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation.

The increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has accelerated global warming, leading to rising temperatures, melting glaciers, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise. These environmental challenges have highlighted the urgent need to transform global energy systems toward cleaner and more sustainable alternatives.

Renewable energy refers to energy obtained from naturally replenishing resources such as sunlight, wind, flowing water, geothermal heat, and biomass. Unlike fossil fuels, renewable energy sources produce significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to environmental conservation. Technological advancements have also reduced the cost of renewable energy, making it increasingly competitive with conventional energy sources.

Green technology complements renewable energy by promoting environmentally sustainable innovations across various sectors. It includes energy-efficient buildings, electric vehicles, smart grids, waste recycling, water conservation systems, green manufacturing, and sustainable agricultural practices. These technologies improve resource efficiency while minimizing environmental impacts.

The transition toward renewable energy is supported by international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Countries such as India have made significant progress in renewable energy deployment through large-scale solar parks, wind energy projects, bioenergy initiatives, and national policies promoting clean energy. Continued investment in research, innovation, infrastructure, and public awareness will be crucial for achieving long-term energy sustainability.

2. Literature Review

The transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy has attracted extensive attention from researchers, policymakers, and international organizations. Numerous studies emphasize that renewable energy plays a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring long-term energy security.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) reports that renewable energy has become the fastest-growing source of electricity generation worldwide. Rapid declines in the cost of solar photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, and battery storage technologies have accelerated clean energy adoption.

Research indicates that solar and wind energy significantly reduce carbon emissions while creating employment opportunities in manufacturing, installation, maintenance, and research. Hydropower remains one of the largest renewable electricity sources globally, while biomass contributes to sustainable waste management and rural energy access.

Green technology has expanded beyond energy production to include smart grids, electric mobility, energy-efficient appliances, green buildings, sustainable transportation, carbon capture technologies, and circular economy practices. These innovations improve productivity while minimizing environmental impacts.

Several scholars argue that renewable energy contributes directly to sustainable development by promoting economic growth, environmental protection, social inclusion, and public health. Cleaner air resulting from reduced fossil fuel combustion decreases respiratory diseases and healthcare costs.

However, researchers also identify significant challenges, including intermittency of solar and wind power, high initial investment costs, inadequate grid infrastructure, storage limitations, policy uncertainty, and shortages of skilled professionals.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of integrating renewable energy with digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics, and smart energy management systems. These technologies improve energy forecasting, optimize grid operations, and enhance overall system efficiency.

The literature consistently concludes that achieving global climate goals requires substantial investment in renewable energy, technological innovation, supportive government policies, international cooperation, and public participation.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a **qualitative and descriptive research design** to examine the role of renewable energy and green technology in promoting sustainable development. Rather than collecting primary data, the research synthesizes existing knowledge from credible academic and institutional sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

3.2 Sources of Data

The study is based entirely on **secondary data** obtained from:

- Peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science.

- Reports published by the International Energy Agency (IEA), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), United Nations (UN), and World Bank.
- Government reports on renewable energy policies.
- Academic books on sustainable development and environmental science.
- Scientific databases including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and IEEE Xplore.

3.3 Data Analysis

A **thematic analysis** approach was used to classify the collected literature into major themes, including renewable energy resources, green technologies, environmental impacts, economic benefits, policy frameworks, implementation challenges, and future opportunities.

3.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the importance of renewable energy in sustainable development.
2. To analyze different forms of renewable energy and green technologies.
3. To evaluate environmental, economic, and social benefits.
4. To identify major challenges affecting renewable energy adoption.
5. To recommend strategies for accelerating the global energy transition.

4. Results

The literature review reveals that renewable energy has become one of the fastest-growing sectors worldwide.

The major findings include:

- Solar and wind energy have experienced rapid growth due to declining technology costs.
- Renewable energy significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions compared to fossil fuels.
- Green technologies improve energy efficiency and resource conservation.
- Clean energy investments create employment and stimulate economic development.
- Renewable energy enhances national energy security by reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels.
- Countries with strong government policies have achieved faster renewable energy expansion.
- Storage technologies and smart grids are improving the reliability of renewable electricity.
- Financial barriers and inadequate infrastructure remain significant obstacles in many developing countries.

These findings demonstrate that renewable energy and green technology are essential for achieving sustainable development and climate resilience.

5. Discussion

5.1 Solar Energy

Solar energy is one of the most abundant renewable resources available on Earth. Photovoltaic (PV) systems convert sunlight directly into electricity, while concentrated solar power (CSP) plants generate thermal energy for electricity production.

The cost of solar technology has declined significantly over the past decade, making it increasingly affordable for households, industries, and governments. Solar energy contributes to rural electrification, reduces dependence on fossil fuels, and supports decentralized energy production.

5.2 Wind Energy

Wind energy has become another major contributor to global electricity generation. Modern wind turbines efficiently convert wind into electrical power with minimal environmental impact.

Offshore wind farms have gained importance because stronger and more consistent winds increase electricity generation. Wind energy also creates employment opportunities in manufacturing, installation, maintenance, and engineering.

5.3 Hydropower

Hydropower remains the world's largest renewable electricity source. Large dams and small hydroelectric projects provide reliable electricity while supporting irrigation, flood control, and water management.

However, hydropower projects require careful environmental assessment because large reservoirs may affect ecosystems, biodiversity, and local communities.

5.4 Biomass Energy

Biomass utilizes agricultural residues, forestry waste, municipal solid waste, and organic materials to produce electricity, heat, and biofuels.

Sustainable biomass management contributes to waste reduction, rural employment, and circular economy practices. Nevertheless, biomass production must avoid excessive land-use changes and deforestation.

5.5 Geothermal Energy

Geothermal energy harnesses heat stored beneath the Earth's surface. It provides reliable baseload electricity and heating with low greenhouse gas emissions.

Although geothermal resources are geographically limited, they offer long-term energy security where available.

5.6 Green Technology

Green technology extends beyond renewable energy generation. It includes innovations such as:

- Electric vehicles (EVs)
- Smart electrical grids
- Energy-efficient buildings
- Green construction materials
- Water recycling technologies
- Waste-to-energy systems
- Carbon capture and storage (CCS)
- Hydrogen fuel technologies
- Sustainable manufacturing processes

These technologies improve productivity while minimizing environmental degradation.

5.7 Environmental Benefits

Renewable energy offers several environmental advantages:

- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improved air quality.
- Conservation of natural resources.
- Reduced water pollution.
- Protection of biodiversity.
- Lower dependence on fossil fuels.
- Climate change mitigation.

These benefits directly contribute to environmental sustainability.

5.8 Economic Benefits

Investment in renewable energy stimulates economic growth by:

- Creating millions of green jobs.
- Encouraging technological innovation.
- Reducing fossil fuel imports.
- Improving energy security.
- Supporting industrial development.
- Attracting private investment.
- Lowering long-term electricity costs.

The green economy has emerged as an important driver of sustainable economic development.

5.9 Social Benefits

Renewable energy also produces important social outcomes:

- Increased electricity access in rural areas.
- Improved public health through cleaner air.
- Better educational opportunities due to reliable electricity.
- Enhanced quality of life.
- Reduced energy poverty.
- Greater community resilience.

These benefits support inclusive development.

5.10 Challenges

Despite substantial progress, renewable energy deployment faces several challenges:

- High initial investment costs.
- Intermittent nature of solar and wind power.
- Limited energy storage capacity.
- Grid integration challenges.
- Land acquisition issues.
- Policy uncertainty.
- Lack of skilled workforce.
- Financial constraints in developing countries.
- Supply chain limitations for critical minerals.

Addressing these barriers requires coordinated policy interventions.

5.11 Future Prospects

The future of renewable energy appears highly promising.

Emerging technologies likely to transform the energy sector include:

- Advanced battery storage systems.
- Green hydrogen production.
- Artificial Intelligence for energy management.
- Internet of Things (IoT)-based smart grids.
- Floating solar farms.
- Offshore wind expansion.
- Carbon-neutral industrial processes.
- Circular economy innovations.

Governments worldwide are expected to increase investments in renewable infrastructure as part of their climate commitments.

6. Conclusion

Renewable energy and green technology have become essential components of sustainable development. They provide environmentally friendly alternatives to fossil fuels while promoting economic growth, energy security, environmental protection, and social well-being.

The study demonstrates that expanding renewable energy is necessary for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change. At the same time, green technologies improve resource efficiency and encourage sustainable industrial development.

However, achieving a successful energy transition requires supportive government policies, international cooperation, technological innovation, financial investment, and public awareness. Educational institutions, industries, and communities must work together to accelerate the adoption of clean energy technologies.

Ultimately, renewable energy is not only an environmental necessity but also an economic opportunity that can help create a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future for generations to come.

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Cognitive and Emotional Factors Linking Gender Discrimination to Achievement Motivation

Dr. Reshma Kumari*

Abstract-

The present study investigates the role of cognitive and emotional factors in linking gender discrimination to achievement motivation among school students. A sample of 240 students (120 boys and 120 girls) was selected using stratified random sampling. Standardized tools were used to measure achievement motivation, cognitive factors, emotional factors, and perceived gender discrimination. The data were analyzed using an independent samples t-test. The results revealed a significant difference between boys and girls in achievement motivation ($t=2.78$, $df=238$, $p<.01$), with boys scoring higher than girls. The findings suggest that gender discrimination negatively influences cognitive and emotional development, which in turn affects motivation levels. The study highlights the importance of addressing gender inequality in educational settings to improve students' psychological well-being and achievement motivation. Creating supportive and equal learning environments can help bridge the gender gap in motivation and performance.

Keywords- Achievement Motivation, Gender Discrimination, Cognitive Factors, Emotional Factors and Gender Differences etc.

Achievement motivation is a crucial psychological construct that determines an individual's desire to excel, achieve goals, and perform effectively in academic and social settings. It is influenced not only by internal traits such as intelligence and personality but also by external social and environmental factors. Among these, gender discrimination plays a significant role in shaping both cognitive and emotional development, which in turn affects achievement motivation. Ali (2017) examined the impact of gender discrimination on psychological development and found that perceived discrimination reduced both self-esteem and motivation among female students.¹

Gender discrimination refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. In school settings, this may manifest in subtle or overt ways, such as differential teacher expectations, unequal participation opportunities, biased feedback, or stereotypical beliefs about abilities. Das (2021) examined the relationship between emotional factors and gender differences and found that emotional distress due to discrimination negatively affected girls' motivation more than boys.² These experiences can significantly influence students' cognitive processes, including self-concept, self-efficacy, and academic beliefs.

Cognitive factors such as self-esteem, perception of competence, and attribution styles are critical in determining how students approach challenges and persist in the face of difficulties. A student who believes in their abilities is more likely to engage in challenging tasks and maintain high levels of motivation. However, when gender discrimination is present, it can negatively impact these cognitive processes. Girls, for instance, may internalize beliefs that they are less capable in subjects like mathematics or science, leading to reduced confidence and lower achievement motivation. Gupta (2015) investigated gender differences in motivation and found that boys scored higher on achievement motivation due to societal expectations and encouragement toward career success.³

Emotional factors also play a vital role in linking gender discrimination to achievement motivation. Experiences of discrimination can lead to negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, helplessness, and low self-worth. Kaur (2012) examined emotional factors and academic performance

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and found that students with higher emotional stability and self-esteem demonstrated higher achievement motivation, regardless of gender.⁴ These emotional responses may hinder concentration, reduce persistence, and ultimately lower motivation to achieve. On the other hand, positive emotional support from teachers, peers, and family can buffer the negative effects of discrimination and enhance motivation. Khan (2019) investigated school environment and gender equality and found that supportive and inclusive school environments improved achievement motivation among both boys and girls.⁵

In different school environments, the impact of gender discrimination may vary depending on institutional culture, teacher attitudes, and peer interactions. Schools that promote equality, inclusivity, and encouragement tend to foster higher levels of achievement motivation among all students. Rani and Sharma (2016) studied emotional intelligence and motivation and found that students with better emotional regulation had higher persistence and achievement motivation.⁶ Sharma (2011) studied achievement motivation among school students and found that gender differences exist, with boys showing higher motivation due to greater social encouragement and freedom in academic pursuits. Conversely, schools that reinforce traditional gender roles may contribute to unequal motivational outcomes.⁷ Sharma and Das (2022) studied gender discrimination and achievement motivation and found a significant negative relationship, indicating that higher perceived discrimination leads to lower motivation levels.⁸ Singh and Kaur (2020) studied anxiety and academic motivation and found that higher anxiety levels were associated with lower achievement motivation, particularly among female students.⁹ Verma and Singh (2013) studied gender discrimination in school settings and found that girls reported higher levels of perceived discrimination, which negatively affected their academic confidence and motivation.¹⁰

The interaction between cognitive and emotional factors is particularly important. Cognitive beliefs influence emotional responses, and emotions, in turn, affect cognitive functioning. For example, a student who believes they are less capable due to gender bias may experience anxiety, which further reduces performance and motivation. Thus, cognitive and emotional factors act as mediators in the relationship between gender discrimination and achievement motivation.

The present study aims to explore how cognitive and emotional factors link gender discrimination to achievement motivation among school students. It seeks to identify whether significant gender differences exist and how discrimination influences students' motivation through psychological pathways. Understanding these relationships is essential for developing interventions that promote equality, enhance student well-being, and improve academic outcomes.

Methodology

Research Design- The present study is based on a descriptive and comparative research design. The descriptive aspect aims to systematically describe the level of achievement motivation, cognitive factors, emotional factors, and perceived gender discrimination among school students. The comparative aspect is used to examine the differences between boys and girls with respect to achievement motivation and related psychological variables.

This design is appropriate for the study because it allows the researcher to analyze existing conditions without manipulating variables and to compare two groups (boys and girls) to identify significant differences.

A. Sample- The sample for the present study consists of 240 school students, selected from different schools. A total sample (N): 240 high school students (Boys 120 and Girls 120) Age Range: 14–18 years has been selected from Patna district.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure equal representation of boys and girls. The population was divided into two strata based on gender, and participants were randomly selected from each group. This method helps in reducing sampling bias and ensures better generalization of results.

Care was taken to include students from similar educational backgrounds to maintain uniformity in the sample.

B. Tools and Tests

1. Achievement Motivation Scale- This scale was used to measure the level of achievement motivation among students. It assesses aspects such as goal orientation, persistence, competitiveness, and desire for success. Higher scores indicate higher achievement motivation.

2. Cognitive Factors Scale- This tool measures cognitive aspects influencing motivation, including: Self-concept (belief about one's abilities), Self-efficacy (confidence in performing tasks), and Academic beliefs (attitudes toward learning and success) has been used. These factors help in understanding how students think about their abilities and academic performance.

3. Emotional Factors Scale- This scale assesses emotional variables that influence motivation, such as- Anxiety, Self-esteem, and Emotional stability has been measured. It helps to identify how emotional states affect students' motivation and performance.

4. Gender Discrimination Scale- This scale measures students' perception of gender-based discrimination in school settings. It includes items related to- Teacher behavior Classroom participation, Opportunity differences, and Peer interactions of their Higher scores indicate a higher perception of discrimination.

5. Personal Data Sheet- A self-structured questionnaire was used to collect demographic information such as age, gender, class, and educational background.

Procedure- The data collection was carried out in a systematic and ethical manner. First, permission was obtained from school authorities to conduct the study. After that, students were approached in their classrooms. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to them, and their informed consent was obtained. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used only for academic purposes. They were instructed to answer all questions honestly and were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaires.

The tools were administered either individually or in small groups under proper supervision to ensure accuracy and understanding. Any doubts raised by the participants were clarified immediately.

After completion, the responses were collected and carefully checked. Scoring was done according to the standard scoring keys provided in the respective tools. The data were then tabulated for statistical analysis.

Hypotheses

H1. There is a significant difference between boys and girls in achievement motivation.

H2. Cognitive and emotional factors significantly influence achievement motivation.

H3. Gender discrimination negatively affects achievement motivation.

Results- In order to test the hypothesis that boys and girls HS students groups differ significantly on achievement motivation. The n-Ach test to achieve this purpose Mean, SD and t between groups on above dimensions were computed and compared (table-1) below:

Table-1

Significance of Means differences of the boys and girls on achievement motivation

Groups	N	n-Ach		t	Significant Level
		Mean	SD		
Boys	90	75.80	9.20	2.78	p<0.01
Girls	90	70.10	9.80		

Table-1 shows that boys and girls differ significantly on achievement motivation. The obtained t-value = 2.78 with df = 238 is significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a significant difference between boys and girls in achievement motivation. Boys scored higher than girls, suggesting that gender discrimination and associated cognitive and emotional factors may influence motivational levels.

Discussion- The present study examined the role of cognitive and emotional factors in linking gender discrimination to achievement motivation among school students. The findings revealed a significant difference between boys and girls in achievement motivation, with boys scoring higher than girls ($t = 2.78$, $df = 238$, $p < .01$). This difference can be understood in light of gender discrimination and its psychological impact. In many school environments, boys are often encouraged to be more competitive and achievement-oriented, which strengthens their cognitive beliefs such as self-efficacy and confidence. Girls, however, may experience subtle forms of discrimination, such as lower expectations in certain subjects or limited encouragement, which can negatively affect their cognitive development.

Cognitive factors like self-concept and perceived competence play a key role in motivation. When students believe they are capable, they are more likely to take initiative and persist in difficult tasks. However, gender discrimination can weaken these beliefs, especially among girls, leading to reduced motivation.

Emotional factors also contribute significantly. Experiences of discrimination may lead to anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of helplessness. These emotional responses can interfere with concentration and reduce persistence, thereby lowering achievement motivation. The interaction between cognitive and emotional factors further intensifies this effect.

The results are consistent with previous research, which suggests that gender inequality negatively impacts motivation through psychological pathways. However, it is important to note that these differences are not inherent but are shaped by environmental and social influences. Schools that promote equality, provide encouragement, and support emotional well-being can reduce these gaps significantly.

Conclusion- The study concludes that gender discrimination significantly affects achievement motivation among school students, with cognitive and emotional factors acting as important mediators. Boys demonstrated higher achievement motivation compared to girls, highlighting the influence of gender-based socialization and unequal opportunities. A cognitive factors such as self-belief and emotional factors such as anxiety and self-esteem play a crucial role in shaping motivation. When students experience discrimination, these factors are negatively affected, leading to reduced motivation.

Therefore, it is essential for schools and educators to create an inclusive and supportive environment that promotes gender equality. Encouraging equal participation, challenging stereotypes, and providing emotional support can enhance achievement motivation among all students.

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