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Editorial

Message from Patna

Through the JP Movement and more recently by hosting a meeting of over 15 non-BJP Opposition parties to create a united front against the incumbent BJP for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Bihar is renowned for paving the way for the nation to escape crises. On June 23, when the top leaders of over 15 non-BJP Opposition parties gathered in Patna to discuss the future course of action to forge a strong alliance against the Modi-led BJP government at the Centre in the wake of the subsequent 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Nitish Kumar, the chief minister of Bihar, saw the results of his tireless efforts.

The Patna meeting was attended by top leaders of various opposition parties, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, party leader Rahul Gandhi, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav, Maharashtra's former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, NCP president Sharad Pawar, RJD supremo Lalu Yadav and Bihar deputy CM, Tejasawi Yadav, former J&K CM and National Conference president Oamar Abdullah, former J&K CM and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary D Raja, CPI (ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, RSP leader N K Premachandran, and Forward Bloc leader G Devarajan.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a fundamental framework and action plan for opposition unity without immediately addressing the divisive issues of leadership and seat distribution.

After the meeting, Nitish Kumar said that all the leaders had agreed to work together to oppose the current government at the Centre. Kharge added that the front's modalities would be finalized at the following meeting in Shimla. AAP and Congress had some disagreements during the meeting, and Kejriwal urged Congress to publicly condemn the Delhi ordinance that he claimed was an assault on democracy. He claimed that until then, it would be extremely difficult for AAP to join any coalition that includes Congress.

Following the meeting, Nitish Kumar stated at a press conference that all the leaders had agreed to work together to oppose the current regime at the Centre. Kharge added that the front's modalities would be finalized at the subsequent meeting, which would be held in Shimla. Kejriwal demanded that Congress publicly condemn the Center's ordinance in Delhi, which he described as an attack on democracy, during the meeting, which also saw some disagreements between the AAP and Congress. According to him, it would be extremely challenging for the AAP to join any coalition that includes Congress before that time.

Unaffected by the BJP's tirade, the leaders gathered in Patna decided to collaborate in order to create an opposition party for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. They also decided to hold their next meeting in Bengaluru on July 13-14 in order to finalize the details of the opposition party, which some media reports claim will be called the Patriotic Democratic Alliance (PDA). The economic situation, the Covid-19 pandemic, the farmers' strike, the increase in fuel prices, and the deterioration of democratic institutions were among the issues brought up by the opposition leaders. The opposition leaders disagreed on the Delhi ordinance issue and the place of Congress in the front, particularly between AAP and Congress.

The opposition parties' future is currently unclear because they are attempting to unite despite numerous obstacles and uncertainties. In terms of national presence and vote share, the Congress party continues to be the largest opposition party, but it has been losing ground to the BJP and local parties in many states. It also has conflicts in its leadership and internal divisions. The Congress must decide how it will accommodate the aspirations and demands of other parties, as well as whether it wants to lead or be a partner in the opposition front.

Strong regional parties have established their effective electoral dominance in their respective states, including the AAP in Delhi and Punjab, the TMC in West Bengal, the BJD in Odisha, the JD (U) and RLD in Bihar, and the DMK in Tamil Nadu. They might not be ready to give up their territory or compromise their interests in favour of a national alliance. Additionally, they might have opposing ideologies and agendas with Congress or one another. However, participants in the Patna meeting realize that it is a question of now or never and it is with this approach they are expected to meet at Bengaluru and those who miss the bus will have to blame themselves. The concerted efforts of all will bear fruitful results.

—— BK

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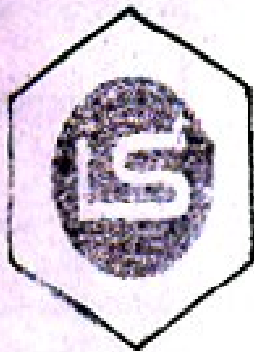
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Reinforcing India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Nachiketa Singh*

[*The world is witnessing an unprecedented era of uncertainties today that has been compounded by the already existing global challenges being faced by mankind since the end of the Second World War. These challenges are emanating from a wide range of issues that nation-states are confronting in general and human beings are exposed to, in particular. They are manifested in the form of national security issues of nation-states as well as human security concerns of individual citizens across the world. States are concerned with their national interest, such as territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and economic interest and to defend themselves against predatory attempts of belligerent expansionist powers. On the other hand, individuals at large are concerned about more substantive issues of human security such as social security, food security, job security, health security, and above all environmental security, which have been substantially compromised by centuries of industrial growth and expansion of unbridled capitalism.*]

The much talked about UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) seem to be far away from reality today. Hence, the international community is left with no choice but to revisit the terms of engagement with each other as nation-states, to collectively fight against all odds that have been stacked against them. The way forward is a combination of liberal pluralism and multilateral institutionalism, through which a new synergy is required to be created amongst the nation-states to resolve the issues and challenges of global politics, international trade, commerce, and above all global peace and security.

A new approach to bring the developed and the developing world together on a common global platform is the need of the hour. Collectively the global issues need to be addressed in the spirit of shared destiny and shared prosperity. Earlier, because of the North-South divide, much of the global issues, such as poverty, illiteracy, underdevelopment, trade imbalances between rich and poor nations plagued the growth of the post-colonial states. Hence, it is imperative to reverse this trend and convince the rich and affluent countries to become partners of the global south for collective growth and prosperity.

Global South is much more capable and assertive today than ever before and is being led by countries like India, which has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. India's historical links with the developed world date back to the colonial era, when Europe in general and Britain in particular were at the helm of world affairs. However, much has changed since then in the international arena. The shifting of focus from transatlantic to the Indo-Pacific, as far as geostrategic interests of major powers are concerned, brings India and the United Kingdom to the lime light today.

The bilateral relationship between India and Britain in the twenty-first century has assumed a new dimension. Ever since India became independent in 1947, despite joining the British Commonwealth, she maintained its strategic autonomy and pursued its independent foreign policy in the form of nonalignment. The onset of cold war between the erstwhile ideological rivals could not deter India from charting its own course in global politics. Notwithstanding its membership in the British Commonwealth, India maintained its principled stand against the cold war, in which the United Kingdom was participating due to its ideological affinity with the American led coalition against erstwhile Soviet Communism.

This paper intends to explore the potential of the India-UK relationship in contemporary times to become a major catalyst for building bridges between the developed world and the underdeveloped global south and to mitigate the myriad challenges, which the international community is facing today. The paper also examines the changing contours of India's growing stature amongst the countries of global south and its attempt to leverage its position as the current President of G-20. Engaging with one of the major developed countries of Europe such as the UK in a strategic partnership gives India the much needed advantage to not only build bridges with the west but also to enable itself to push its G-20 agenda for the benefit of the rest of the world.

India and G-20: Building Synergy between North and South India today has emerged on the global stage as an

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emerging economy, a vibrant democracy, a strong military power and also as a responsible nuclear power state. India is viewed by the west, including the United Kingdom, as a credible leader of the developing world, which can act as a bridge between the north and the south. India's Presidency is a watershed moment in the annals of its post-colonial journey as a sovereign independent nation. India seeks to play an important role to unify the global community to find pragmatic global solutions for the wellbeing of all, while showcasing the true spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or the 'World is One Family'. A nation deeply committed to democracy and multilateralism, today stands at the crossroads of history, where the entire international community is looking at it with hopes and expectations.

India's G-20 Presidency comes at a very critical juncture of global politics due to a host of complex phenomena characterizing the present volatile international environment, in which mankind finds itself challenged today. In the midst of emerging issues like Corona pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war and other such critical challenges, India holds a lot of promise for the world to unite the international community and act as a bridge between the developed world and the underdeveloped global south (Baru:2023). The purpose is to bring both worlds to a common platform to engage and resolve issues, which are assuming alarming proportions and are appearing to be insurmountable, if not addressed immediately.

India's time-tested moral and ethical stand on global issues is well known since the time of nonalignment. Today, when India is well poised to take the mantle of global leadership by virtue of its well-ingrained democratic ethos and hard-earned status as the fastest-growing economy, apart from being a strong and responsible nuclear power state, the world is justifiably expecting her to lead and deliver. As President of G-20, India will focus on international trade and investment as key drivers of growth in a world grappling with the devastation brought on by COVID-19 and Ukraine (Shringla: 2023).

The major challenge before the comity of nations today is to bring about consensus and work in unison on a broad spectrum of issues that need collective action. India's G-20 agenda enshrined in its futuristic vision for the entire world has a lot of traction amongst many developed nations, who acknowledge and accept India's ascendance to the global power hierarchy in the twenty-first century. The United Kingdom is one such nation that accords top priority to forge a strategic alliance with India to explore common grounds for mutual interest.

India and United Kingdom: Partners in Peace, Progress and Prosperity

India and the United Kingdom share a long history, the trajectory of which can be traced from the pre-independence era to contemporary times. The bilateral relationship between the two countries has remained stable since India's independence from British Rule in 1947 and its eventual entry into the British Commonwealth. Democracy has been a strong thread that has stitched together a wide range of bilateral relations between the two countries in diverse fields of engagement from time to time.

The deep and vibrant people-to-people contact between the two countries, fostered by the presence of a strong Indian Diaspora in the UK, further strengthened the special bond that holds a lot of promise for the bilateral ties between the two counties to grow in the future. The cold war period, though witnessed a divergent approach in the respective foreign policies of these two countries, yet they stood committed to democracy, liberalism, and a world that is free from the scourge of authoritarianism and dictatorship.

The Road Ahead: 2030 Vision

The year 2023 ushered in a new era of bilateral relations between India and the UK. Having a young and dynamic new Prime Minister of Indian origin in office, the United Kingdom today looks at India with renewed optimism and hope. India being the largest functioning democracy in the world, finds the United Kingdom, the oldest democracy as a critical partner to complement its agenda. There seems to be an ideal situation emerging now, where both the countries are able to find a common ground to advance their mutually inclusive agenda to be accomplished by the year 2030.

The UK government's 'Integrated Review' of security, defence, development, and foreign policy in 2021 set out a strategic framework for achieving the country's national security and international policy objectives (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/india-uk-virtual-summit: March 2021) This integrated review unfolds UK's vision of a strong relationship with India as one that encompasses trade, investment, defence and security cooperation and one, which addresses challenges such as global warming, climate change and other such issues linked to human security. It described India, the world's largest democracy, as "an international actor of growing importance", which further reiterated that the UK wanted to transform cooperation "across the full range of shared interests".

The United Kingdom after Brexit, is increasingly looking for a robust and re-energized relationship with India in

the sphere of trade and investment. Such partnership is expected to be rooted in scientific and technological collaborations to tackle global challenges like climate change, clean energy, and global health, apart from enhanced defence cooperation that ensures a more stable Indian Ocean region. These areas of bilateral and multilateral cooperation converge with India's comprehensive global agenda too.

The Bali summit of G-20 underlined the shifting balance of global power toward China and India. It underscored a new balance of power equation in world politics that is highly Asia-centric and to be more specific, Indo-Pacific-centric. This perception is primarily focused on a rising China and an aspirational India. It is contingent upon the United Kingdom to accurately understand and respond to this new reality, which will prove to be critical for the foreign policy of the UK in the coming decades.

It also holds significance for the UK's Integrated Review, which in 2021 focused on the country's three fundamental national interests – sovereignty, security, and prosperity, defined in terms of values of democracy and a commitment to universal human rights, the rule of law, freedom of speech, faith, and equality (Ogden:2022). While decoding India's larger objectives of democratization (of international relations) and institutionalization of global politics and economy, which also find resonance in its G-20 agenda, one understands the raison d'être of the United Kingdom's desire to collaborate and cooperate with India to create a roadmap for the future, which will converge in a mutually beneficial bilateral relationship between the largest and the oldest democracy.

The United Kingdom and India relations today are framed by a mutually agreed road map to deepen their bilateral ties by 2030, with the aim to develop a comprehensive strategic partnership. The year 2021 was the precursor to this endeavour, when the then UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took a significant step for the future of India-UK relations by signing the ambitious '2030 Road Map', which was drawn to focus on five core areas of the UK-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership by 2030 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/india-uk-virtual-summit: May-2021) such as:

a. Leveraging the old historical ties between the two nations, India and the UK strive to connect the two countries and people to achieve strategic goals in all areas of engagement and strengthen avenues for people-to-people contacts (Lords Library: 2023) These areas of cooperation can be identified in the soft power elements of both the countries such as education, research, innovation, capacity building, employment and culture;

b. Improving bilateral trade and commerce for mutual growth and prosperity by creating synergy between the public and the private sector in both countries and by launching an Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP), which includes the intent to negotiate a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (Policy Paper: 2021). The two countries stand to benefit from playing the leadership role in global economic governance by fostering a more equitable and democratic institutional framework for the inclusive participation of nation-states in global economic activities.

c. Defence and security are the areas of potential engagement for the UK and India. In these vital spheres of bilateral cooperation, the United Kingdom and India have pledged to work together through a strategic partnership to tackle cyber-crime, and terrorist threats and guarantee a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region. Enhanced UK-India Defence cooperation will be critical for the UK's success in the Indo-Pacific region, and the faltering relations between India and China present a new opportunity to take this forward (Koumoundouros: 2021).

India as a member of the QUAD and the UK as a member of AUKUS have a common agenda to realize their mutual Defence and security objectives. Both countries today see a common interest in the volatile geo-strategic region of the Indo-Pacific to establish a 'Rules Based' international order and defeat attempts of expansionist and belligerent powers from achieving their predatory objectives.

d. On the global climate and environment front, both the United Kingdom and India have exhibited a willingness to cooperate and resolve the vexed issues to safeguard the planet and build a more environment-friendly sustainable future. Achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and generating funds for climate financing are the major challenges, which both countries have to resolve by building consensus. Other joint endeavours of the two countries include co-leading on global climate action, outlining plans to launch the Global Green Grids Initiative at COP26 to help achieve India's vision of 'One Sun, One World, One Grid', aiming to implement a transnational electricity grid to supply solar power across the world (ISA: 2018).

The two nations will also work together and share best practices on the development of offshore wind energy and electric vehicles and will co-chair the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (Print: 2021).

e. Post-global pandemic, a health emergency has struck the world like never before. India not only played a significant role in successfully combating the

pandemic in a country of more than one billion population but also set a new benchmark for other nations to follow its example to help the global community when the country itself was fighting an unprecedented health emergency. India's G-20 Presidency promises to bring global South and North together to provide the best in healthcare services to the world (Bhushan: 2023).

The India-UK roadmap for the future also describes the two countries as global leaders to provide quality healthcare to the global community. The two countries have pledged to use their combined research and innovation strength along with the common pool of other resources to address the future global health challenges, save lives and improve the health and well-being of all people.

Conclusion

Ascertaining the prospects and challenges of a vibrant strategic partnership between the United Kingdom and India requires an understanding of India's focus on multilateralism in a multipolar world, which the United Kingdom appreciates. As the President of G-20, India seeks to bring a host of issues on the global high table, which is crucial to ensure inclusive growth, equitable distribution of wealth and global justice for all. India and UK can work together to create greater synergy to foster constructive strategic partnership by 2030, which will prove to be a critical game changer for the entire international community. India views the United Kingdom's approach to its agenda as complimentary and expects the UK to facilitate an enabling environment in Europe to give a fillip to their constructive agenda to fructify.

It calls for the UK's concerted effort and critical role to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict through mediation, negotiation and dialogue. The declining liberal world order under American hegemonic dominance has conceded ample space to the rising powers of the contemporary times to reassert themselves on the global platforms. The UK understands the new balance of power equations and the emerging new strategic reality to recognize and embrace the multi-faceted bilateral ties with India. This in turn will enhance India's diplomatic and strategic value on the global stage, making it a highly pivotal strategic partner.

India's G-20 Presidency comes as a huge opportunity for the United Kingdom to accomplish these cherished goals as enshrined in its vision of shared interest in a variety of fields including global climate and international peace and security. The success of such joint endeavours hinges on the two countries' shared interests that underpin increased cooperation in different multilateral fora and the commitment to create a 'rules based' international order.

The words of wisdom of Indian Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi, who said, "this is not an era for war", resonate across the world today and have a lot of traction amongst the people in both India and the UK too. India and the United Kingdom thus can help create a better world order by pushing the positive agenda of India under the Indian Presidency of G-20, which will bring international peace, economic prosperity, global order and stability by 2030. However, it is yet to be seen whether the ambitious roadmap drawn in this strategic plan will be achieved in practice amid complex geopolitical and geo-economic compulsions of both the countries.

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The Diplomacy of Denuclearization: A Case of North Korea

Muzaffar A. Ganaie* & Reyaz A. Ganaie**

[Among the varied foreign policy challenges that US President Joe Biden has inherited from his predecessor denuclearization of North Korea remains the most formidable one. Pyongyang has made impressive progress in developing a credible nuclear deterrent through a series of nuclear and missile tests and continues to make quantitative and qualitative improvements in its nuclear forces. The diplomatic initiatives taken in the past to dissuade North Korea's nuclear ambitions have failed to produce the desired outcome and experts are skeptical about finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis. However, with its key allies, Japan and South Korea, the Biden administration has reaffirmed its commitment to denuclearization of North Korea through "concerted trilateral cooperation," but denuclearization of North Korea is highly unlikely without offering North Korea diplomatic engagement and addressing her security concerns.]

North Korea's nuclear program continues to pose an unprecedented challenge to the global non-proliferation regime in general and US (United States) nuclear diplomacy in particular. The program has now occupied the past five US administrations and remains a key foreign policy challenge for the present administration as well. The years of diplomacy and sanctions to dissuade North Korea's nuclear ambitions have not yielded any tangible outcome so far, as Pyongyang has not only developed a credible nuclear deterrent but continues to expand and strengthen it.

Despite many setbacks, the negotiation process has produced some key agreements like the Agreed Framework of 1994, 'Statement of Principles' of 2005, the Leap Day Agreement of 2012, and a joint statement in Singapore in 2018 to freeze North Korea's nuclear program and the present administration also sees the prospect of resolving the issue through diplomatic means. The June 2018 summit between former US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore was a remarkable step in this direction.

The Singapore summit, which ended with a joint communiqué underlying certain important commitments, including denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, offered a glimmer of hope to resolve the crises, but the collapse of the Hanoi Summit again sharpened pessimism over the future of denuclearisation and experts are skeptical about finding a diplomatic solution to the crises and many strategists advocate exploring other alternatives — limited surgical strike, regime change, treating North Korea as de-facto nuclear-weapon state — to end the crises.

This paper, however, argues that sustained diplomatic engagement is the most preferred course to end the crisis, but instead of targeting 'Big One-Shot Deal" (Lee 2021), the Biden administration should follow an incremental approach to achieve the goal of denuclearization.

Three Approaches to Resolve the Crises

The failure of the past diplomatic initiatives to resolve the crises with North Korea has created pessimism among experts regarding future negotiations and for many denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is a distant dream now. In a recently held People's Congress, Kim termed the US as North Korea's primary enemy and pledged to make quantitative and qualitative improvements in the country's nuclear arsenal. The regime has broken its moratorium on nuclear and missile tests and has threatened to conduct more tests if the US does not ease sanctions. So, the new administration in the US needs a comprehensive strategy to deal with more belligerent North Korea. As the Biden administration is mapping out its strategy to deal with North Korea, it becomes imperative for it to explore all the options to resolve the crisis. Three kinds of alternatives have been advocated by experts to deal with North Korea:

1. Limited military strike.

2. Regime Change.

3. Accepting North Korea as a de-facto nuclear-weapon state.

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Limited military strike

The option of a limited military strike against North Korea's nuclear installations and key weapon sites to eliminate the threat has been on the cards of past US administrations for a longer time, including the Trump administration. Former National Security Advisor John Bolton was one of the strong advocates of such a strike. Former US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo also did not rule out the possibility of such a strike and even Donald Trump himself once said that "all options are on the table." The advocates of the limited strike theory contend that it is the only way to eliminate the North Korean nuclear threat, and the fear of a US nuclear strike will deter North Korea from retaliation.

But this is a shaky assumption and suffers from a number of limitations. First, North Korea's nuclear program is now much extended, and there may be nuclear sites or weapons that are unknown to US intelligence agencies. So, a pre-emptive strike cannot eliminate all its nuclear facilities and weapon sites. To achieve the desired results, a ground invasion is needed, which can escalate into a full-fledged war. Second, there are chances of massive retaliation from North Korea, and even the use of nuclear weapons cannot be downplayed. In the event of a pre-emptive strike, Kim would weigh all his options, and if he concludes that the US had started a full-fledged war against North Korea, then the use of nuclear weapons becomes obvious on his part.

Even if Kim recognizes the 'limited strike' from the US as 'limited,' it is still hard to imagine that he would not retaliate. In fact, research has shown that "weaker states often feel the need to attack stronger states in order to demonstrate strength and resolve and to deter possible future attacks" (Denamark 2018). Third, the US cannot take such a step without consulting its key allies, South Korea and Japan, and it is difficult to convince them that North Korea will not retaliate in the event of a 'bloody nose strike.' So, the idea of a limited military strike is a risky business that could "unleash a series of events that could lead to devastation and massive casualties as well as undermine Washington's 'maximum pressure' and 'engagement' policy. (Ung H. Pak 2018).

Regime Change

Another alternative that is being advocated to eliminate the North Korean nuclear threat is changing the regime in North Korea. The idea of regime change was also on the agenda of the previous administration, which was confirmed by former CIA Director that: "he and other senior officials were ordered by President Trump to find a way to 'separate the North Korean regime from its missiles and nuclear weapons" (Miller 2017). However, the idea of regime change raises a number of questions—how regime change will take place? Who will be the successor? And what will happen to North Korea's nuclear assets?—without plausible answers. The prospects of two popular ways—the 'bottom-up' process and the 'top-down' process— to enforce a regime change are very slim in the North Korean case.

In the 'bottom-up' process, the regime change occurs because of growing dissatisfaction and mobilization among the masses. In the 'top-down' process, leadership is assassinated or removed through a coup (Stares 2016). In the case of North Korea, it is highly unlikely that it will take place either through a 'bottom-up' or 'top-down' process. North Korea is the most resilient and closed country in the world, with no civil society organizations and restricted internet and social networking platforms that serve as driving forces for mass mobilization. Moreover, the country has witnessed generations of dynasty rule but has not shown vital signs of rivalry or factionalization among the elite, which highly reduces the potential of a 'top-down' process (Stares 2016).

This leaves the third option open, i.e., armed intervention. However, toppling the Kim regime through armed intervention is risky and can turn an already bad situation into a worse one. The risks associated with this idea are grave: First, military intervention in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya has shown that regime changes through external intervention is a risky business and can unleash "a host of problems, including continued conflict, state collapse, and newly empowered hostile groups" (Miller 2017).

Second, regime change propelled by the US and its allies can evoke sharp resistance from the North Korean people, as has been the case with most of the cases of regime change, and can trigger a guerrilla type of warfare between the US and North Korean military, which has specialized units for this purpose (Miller 2017). Lastly, the chances of external intervention cannot be downplayed. The US intervention is likely to invite

Russian and Chinese response, triggering a large-scale and prolonged conflict engulfing the entire peninsula.

Accepting North Korea as a de-facto nuclear weapon state

As the past diplomatic initiatives have failed to produce desired results, a strong feeling is growing among the experts that it is highly unlikely that Kim will dismantle its nuclear arsenal and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is only a dream to have. Kim cannot ignore the lessons learned from the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the killing of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi—that giving up nuclear weapons invites military intervention. Kim views nuclear weapons as central to his security and knows that the US cannot take the risk of attacking a nuclear weapon state.

Those who subscribe to this idea see nuclear North Korea as a reality that cannot be changed, and argue that North Korea should be seen as a nuclear-weapon state like Pakistan and not "one seen as particularly threatening," and policymakers in the US, instead of denuclearization should focus on deterrence and arms control initiatives (Kazianis 2018). But the effects of such a policy on the nuclear non-proliferation regime in general and two key allies of the US, Japan, and South Korea in particular, cannot be ignored.

Given the aggressive nature of the North Korean regime, Japan and South Korea will never accept the idea of a nuclear-armed North Korea, and it can force them to consider their own nuclear options, and such voices are already coming from Seoul. To quote Lee Hoi-Chang, previously a conservative candidate for President: "If North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons becomes a fact, the US- Korea alliance deteriorates, and surrounding nations such as Japan show signs of nuclear armament, we need to consider a nuclear armament in the long run" (Tobby Dalton 2017). Giving a de-facto nuclear weapon state status to North Korea would also undermine the cause of the nuclear non-proliferation regime as a number of nuclear threshold states could pursue the nuclear option, thus posing an unprecedented regional and global security threat.

Against this backdrop, diplomatic outreach remains the most preferred course to deal with the North Korean nuclear threat. However, while embarking upon such a course, the policymakers in the US should avoid an "all-or-nothing" approach because asking for more demands more in return (Hass 2018). But that does not mean that the US should give up the goal of complete denuclearization. Complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization (CVID) should be a long-term goal approached through a 'step-by-step process.' The starting point of such a process could be a freeze on nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

The next step should be to make such a freeze legally binding on North Korea by asking it to sign the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) (Acton 2018). The freezing agreement should be followed by a 'capping agreement,' covering the entire nuclear supply chain—from mines to reprocessing facilities. To ensure that North Korea does not develop a covert weapons programme, the capping agreement should be comprehensive and verifiable. Another goal should be to seek a declaration of North Korea's nuclear inventory. In return, the US should take the following steps:

● Easing of sanctions and providing economic assistance to North Korea.

● Suspension of US-South Korea military exercises which are a source of irritation for North Korea.

● Withdrawal of US forces from South Korea.

Successful diplomacy needs patience and, more importantly, trust between the parties, which is missing in this case, as the two sides view each other with suspicion and malign intentions. To end this trust deficit and to build a relationship based on mutual trust and confidence to move forward, the two sides need to take a number of CBMs (Confidence Building Measures) which may include:

● A formal declaration involving the US, North Korea, and South Korea to end the 1950s Korean War.

● A formal commitment not to use or threaten to use force against one another.

● An agreement on establishing a hotline system between the two sides to avoid miscommunication during a crisis.

● Opening of diplomatic missions in Washington and Pyongyang.

● Reduction of military force deployments on both sides of the demilitarized zone (Kimbal 2018).

The net result of these efforts would be a gradual transformation of relations between the two sides, which in turn would make Kim to change his perception vis-a-vis the US that the US is no more a threat to his regime. There are recorded cases where states have given up nuclear weapons once their strategic vulnerability diminished. If Kim receives tangible security assurances from the US coupled with economic assistance, why would he need nuclear weapons?

Conclusion

North Korea's nuclear threat is an unprecedented security challenge that the Biden administration faces. Dealing with the threat through the tools of military force or regime change is highly unattractive and ignoring the threat is distinctly undesirable. The most preferred alternative is diplomatic outreach. However, given the complexity of the issue at hand, the two sides have to make hard choices and compromises to give diplomacy a chance to succeed. The US should give up on its maximalist goals and should follow an incremental approach designed to cap, roll back, and ultimately eliminate North Korea's nuclear program.

As Kim considers nuclear weapons central to his security, the success of such a process would largely depend on addressing the security concerns of North Korea through a series of security assurances ensuring Kim that the US is not after regime change and his security would be better off by relinquishing nuclear weapons. Kim, on his part, should make a pledge that he is committed to denuclearisation and should take concrete steps toward CVID.

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THIRD CONCEPT *welcomes your valuable comments on articles published in each issue. Suggestion to further improve quality and get-up of your favourite journal, which has a record of uninterrupted publication since 1987, are also solicited.*

Women Empowerment and Human Development: An Analysis

Dr. Sangeeta Yellappa*

[The role of women is vital in the prosperity and progress of a nation. Although United Nations recognized the equality of women, yet there is a lot of discrimination on the basis of sex. These discriminations threaten the well-being of women and their development. Women were denied education, freedom, and access to administration. They are often kept away from the political and economic spheres. The main reason for their plight has been male domination, ignorance, and lack of education.]

Long back, efforts were being made to stop the discrimination and injustice against women. Significant changes took place in the social, economic, and political fields during the 19th Century. There were three main reasons for social change in our society – the first one was the impact of the liberal philosophy of the West, the second one was the social reform movement and the third one was the belief in Gandhian Philosophy.

As a result of the social reform movement, some legislative actions were taken to eradicate the social evil i.e., gender discrimination, injustice, and exploitation of women on the basis of sex. Women were suppressed limiting their role to the kitchen. Women were forbidden to enter and take part in family matters. All decisions were taken by male members of the family. The male predominant society of ours did not allow women to take part in political, economic, and spiritual life. Thus the empowerment of women is very essential in a society like India where women are still subjugated to exploitation and degradation.

Conceptual Issues of Empowerment

Women empowerment refers to increasing their participation in the spiritual, social, political, educational, and economic fields. Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform them into desired actions and outcomes. It is very important to understand the process of empowerment, the concept, and dimensions of empowerment and evolve strategies that can lead to strong interface and alliance.

The dictionary meaning of empowerment (Oxford 1962: 265) is to enable thus empowerment means enabling the process of marginalized, disadvantaged groups, classes, and categories. The implicit meaning of empowerment is to transform the society from hierarchical to egalitarian and from Aristocratic to Democratic Society. Thus empowerment means the process of gaining or accessing control over the self, over the various resources available in one's environment, and over the ideology that determines the power relationship.

According to Blanchard, woman empowerment "is a process to encourage people to gain the skills and knowledge that will lead them to overcome obstacles of life or workplace and ultimately help them to develop within themselves or in the society". The achievement of empowerment of women is possible by the expansion of civic, political, social and economic rights for women folk in society. According to Battliwala (1993), "power itself can be simply defined as control over the resources and control over the ideology"

Discussion and analysis

Some of the important resources are discussed and analysed below and further the resources are categorized as follows:

1. Physical resources
2. Human resources
3. Intellectual resources
4. Financial resources
5. Self–containing a unique combination of intelligence, creativity confidence, etc.

Forms of Empowerment

There are four forms of empowerment through which the empowerment of women is achieved. They are:

Social Empowerment

Social empowerment refers to raising the status and position of women in the society. Raising the social status of women in the field of education is a means of awareness. Education gives knowledge about the world. Enhancing the knowledge about health, nutrition, drinking water, housing and shelter, environment, science, and technology is necessary for women's upliftment.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment can be achieved by providing employment opportunities to women. Land and credit facilities are to be extended for productive purposes. Then only women will become independent. They can take decisions independently and freely; women folk have to be given opportunities in agriculture and industry.

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Political Empowerment

To bring drastic changes in women's lives we have to provide political access to them to take part in political parties. Women should have reservation facilities to enter into the political field. The constitutional 73rd and 74th Amendments aim at empowering women. The political parties have to make women's empowerment an agenda. The reservation policies have to be followed at assembly and local government elections. Thus it will lead to the active participation of women in politics and contribute to national development.

Legal Empowerment

As an individual, a woman should have the knowledge of laws enacted for her upliftment, such as the Marriage Act, Adoption Act, and Property Act, and laws on Educational Rights. The woman should be aware of the laws for her development. Then only no one will dare to exploit her in any way or in any form. Legal safeguards, Lok Adalats, Family Courts, NGOs and SHGs can prevent the exploitation of women. The legislation from enacted time to time should aim at the empowerment of women, so as to reduce injustice that has been perpetuating for a long time.

Obstacles to Women's Empowerment

Achievement of women empowerment is a very difficult task. There are many obstacles in this field. The women in the HKE region are illiterate, and controlled by blind beliefs and ignorance. Therefore, the task of empowering women becomes very difficult. Women living in this area basically follow the rural norms. The obstacles to women's empowerment in this region are as follows:

1. Lower economic status
2. Declining moral values
3. Prevalence of poverty
4. Unemployment
5. Widespread corruption
6. Disinterest in political participation
7. Prevalence of rural norms
8. Non-cooperation from the male leaders.

These are obstacles to attaining women's empowerment.

Suggestions

To overcome the difficulties we are facing in achieving women's empowerment following suggestions have to be adopted.

1. Need for status up-gradation
2. Need of creating a positive attitude of men
3. Independence from an early age
4. Change of attitude toward women
5. Need to taking independent decision
6. Need for enthusiasm
7. Need for a women's forum for the exchange of ideas

8. Need to strengthen the struggle for empowerment
9. Need of action.

Human Development

Through women's empowerment, women will become competent to solve the difficulties previously faced well-educated, independent, skilful, financially sound, self-reliant women can take their own decision suitable for their family and the nation and assist in Human Development also.

Conclusions

The status of women changed tremendously after independence. The central and state governments have put their best efforts to uplift women. Therefore, the status of women is raised, and general discrimination is minimized. But still, most of the women in our society have not benefited. There is an acute need of education and greater awareness so that women will be united and solve their problems. No one ever in history has achieved the rights without struggle. So, women should be courageous to fight unitedly against caste, class, and religious discrimination to achieve their goal. It seems appropriate to quote a few lines from great poet Rabindranath Tagore.

O Lord why you have not given, Woman the right to conquer her destiny. Why she has to wait head bowed. By the road side. Waiting with tired patience, I hope for the miracle in the morrow.

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Awareness of E-Consumers of Their Rights and Responsibilities

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[*Consumer protection act has been considered the most significant and adequate act in order to maintain consumer satisfaction effectively. In this research, there are mainly two different types of consumer protection acts that have been discussed and also critically analysed how consumers are being satisfied with these acts. The e-commerce industry has been chosen in this research in order to highlight how this industry holds the attention of numerous consumers through effectively applying acts over consumer satisfaction. In order to analyse these two acts several literature concepts are analysed and also Real-time data has been collected through the primary data collection process. Customers also tend to face data hacking or data scam during online transactions that cause loss of money. This is why it has been found from the data analysis chapter, that increasing customer awareness is really important to prevent challenges that consumers can face like irregular supply, no return or compensation, poor trade policies of e-commerce companies, and others.*]

E-commerce activities in the potential marketplace of India are one of the crucial aspects in recent days. For this reason, it is required to understand the importance of e-commerce activities in a good manner. The rights of e-consumer need to be evaluated in this regard by focusing on the legislation of India. It can be denoted from the point of view of Dahiya (2017) that consumer protection rules are important in this context to be followed. It has been found that the Consumer Protection Act 1986 in India states 'Deficiency in Service' under Section 2(1) (g) is the critical aspect that should be followed by the e-commerce owner (rajyasabha.nic.in, 2021). It can be described that consumer rights require to be protected while managing business functions in a country like India.

In the potential marketplace of a country like India, an online data breach is one of the key issues during the time of online purchase. For this reason, data privacy should be considered in this regard. This is an issue because it has been found that many e-commerce businesses do not follow the guidelines of the legislation of this country. For this reason, it can be stated from the point of view of Alcúdia & Delgado (2019) that consumer behaviour needs to be managed by protecting their rights in the market. The company is required to provide quality goods by using e-commerce properly. This is an issue now because due to a lack of awareness, consumers cannot protest against the violation of the guidelines of the Consumer Protection Act 2019 and Consumer Protection Act 2020.

It affects their purchasing behaviour also. As a result, they cannot get quality service from the e-commerce

trade activities in the potential marketplace. It is also needed to have an awareness regarding consumer rights before purchasing any goods online or offline (Gupta, 2017). It has been described that the legislation of India is quite strict in this regard. As for this cause, it is needed to focus on the responsibilities of the consumers in the target marketplace of this country.

The current research sheds light on the rights as well as accountabilities of e-consumer that are stated in the Consumer Protection Act 2019 and Consumer Protection Act 2020 of India. It can be stated that there are certain challenges that occur in the management of e-commerce activities. It is evaluated that the issues in e-commerce related to consumer rights can affect the business functions in the market.

Strategies for increasing awareness of rights and responsibilities

It can be evaluated that the government of the country may use public service advertising or informative advertising for creating awareness among consumers in this context. It helps to analyse the purchasing behaviour of the customers in India. It is also required to focus on the behaviour management of the customers by focusing on their buying patterns (Joshi, 2019).

It can be said that a PR campaign or Public Relations campaign is also helpful in this regard for the purpose of awareness creation in the market regarding consumer rights. Data security should also be managed by using a strong password. This aspect needs to be clarified to the e-consumers in India.

Literature Review

E-commerce helps consumers to purchase online anytime and anywhere. It can be evaluated that data transmission is one of the key factors in e-commerce (Mahipal & Shankaraiah, 2018). In addition to this, it

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has been found that e-commerce activities ought to emphasize consumer management. E-consumers are those who use the online service of the business organisation. From the study of Kalia, Kaur & Singh (2018), it can be observed that the online behaviour of e-consumers in the market is required in this context. It is needed to focus on the importance of consumer behaviour management.

The following act has replaced the previous consumer protection act 1986 with an intention to overhaul the administration and settlement of consumer rights hindrance disputes (Ballur, 2020). In regards, the following law ensures to eradicate of the brisk of unfair trading practices by e-commerce businesses along with imposing legal obligations to avoid misleading advertisements. Therefore, the following act ensures to safeguard of consumer rights in an effective way through which the fear of falsified business advertisements has been eliminated effectively. In addition, Venkatesan & Leelavathi (2020) have also commented that the Consumer Act 2020 also facilitates the right to consumers to share their information with e-commerce businesses with their positive consent.

Settlement of consumer disputes is observed and mentioned in the Consumer Protection Act 2019 of India (egazette.nic.in, 2021). For this reason, it is needed to focus on the importance of the rights of the customers while purchasing anything online as well as offline. It can be stated that the penalties are also measured in this aspect by considering this legislation. It is possible for the organisation to focus on consumer rights in order to manage e-commerce activities in a country like India.

In addition to this, it has been identified that Consumer Protection Act 2020 describes misleading advertising in a collective way (consumeraffairs.nic.in, 2021). It can be stated that with the help of the Consumer Protection Act ought to be considered on a collective note. It is needed to put an emphasis on the responsibilities of the customers in a good manner for managing purchasing-related decisions.

It can be possible to elucidate that customer loyalty is possible to be managed in this aspect.

Objectives of Study

This research has some objectives that are useful to get an expected outcome of the study at the end. The objectives are listed below on a specific note:

● To understand the e-commerce functions in the potential marketplace

● To analyse the rights as well as responsibilities of e-consumer

● To evaluate the Consumer Protection Act 2019 and Consumer Protection Act 2020

● To provide some recommendations for creating awareness of rights of e-consumer in the marketplace

The above objectives are met with the help of data analysis.

Hypothesis of Study

Based on this research, two hypotheses can be developed, which are:

H0: E-consumers have knowledge about their rights and duties as stated in the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 and 2020.

H1: E-consumers lack awareness of their rights and responsibilities as stated in the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 and 2020.

The findings of this research will determine whether H0 or H1 is the primary outcome of the study.

Research Methodology

There are different types of data collection methods occur including qualitative, qualitative and mixed methods. However, in this research, the selection of only a qualitative data collection approach to gather authentic and real-time information has been found to be useful. For gathering qualitative data, thematic analysis is carried out that is cost-effective and easy to access and analyse. As this entire study is dependent on quantitative data, close-ended survey questionnaires for collecting adequate primary quantitative databases rigidity the topic has been regarded as a significant choice.

Total 50 participants were engaged in the survey questionnaire session. Additionally, the consideration of governmental sites related to E-consumer: awareness of their rights and responsibilities mentioned in the consumer protection act 2019 and 2020 act is also helpful to explore adequate study findings.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Consumer Actively Participate in E-commerce Services?

Response	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responde-nts	% of Respond-ents
Very rare	7	50	14
Rare	8	50	16
Sometimes	10	50	20
On regular intervals	13	50	26
Very Regularly	12	50	24

The above question regarding Consumers' participation in various e-commerce websites and online purchasing activities asked the

engaged group to explain their respective purchasing behaviours on e-commerce websites for recognising their behaviour about e-commerce services. Based on the survey questionnaire, 7 people have claimed that they very rarely purchase products from e-commerce websites due to personal reasons. Moreover, 8 people have mentioned they purchase online goods occasionally and 10 participants have agreed that they buy online products based on needs.

In addition, it has also been found that 13 participants actively participate in online purchasing activities for its extensive portfolios and top-notch performance. In addition, 12 people have claimed that they extensively rely on online services and purchase from e-commerce websites very frequently.

Table 2

Purchase Products from E-commerce Websites

Response	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responde-nts	% of Respond-ents
Quarterly	7	50	14
Monthly	8	50	16
Weekly	10	50	20
Daily Basis	13	50	26
Very Frequently	12	50	24

Table 2, shows that only 7 people have engaged in e-commerce services on a quarterly basis and 8 people participate on a monthly basis. In regards, it has also been identified that 10 respondents purchase online goods on a weekly basis. 13 participants have mentioned that they buy products on a daily basis from various e-commerce websites. 12 people claimed that they significantly rely on e-commerce solutions and purchase products whenever they need them.

Table: 3

Knowledge about Consumer Protection Act 2019 and Consumer Protection Act 2020

Response	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responde-nts	% of Respond-ents
Very little	4	50	8
Little	7	50	14
Somewhat Clear	10	50	20
Adequately	12	50	24
Very adequately	17	50	34

Table 3, depicts that 4 people have very limited knowledge about the government imposed regulatory compliances regarding consumer rights. 7 people mentioned they have

heard about the act and uphold limited access and knowledge about consumer obligations and legal privileges. 10 participants have said that they have minimum knowledge on consumer protection laws and regulations. However, 12 people have gained adequate knowledge regarding consumer rights and reserved obligations in e-commerce services. It has also been identified that 17 people have gathered enormous knowledge on the topic and proactively emphasize knowledge-oriented decision-making processes during e-commerce purchases.

Table: 4

How safe do you feel while sharing sensitive information?

Response	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responde-nts	% of Respond-ents
Very unsafe	8	50	16
Unsafe	5	50	10
Neutral	3	50	6
Safe	15	50	30
Very safe	19	50	38

Table 4 reveals that, 8 people feel very unsafe to share confidential information on e-commerce websites and 5 people strongly feel unsafe for registering on websites due to unusual involvements, growing cybercrimes and data breaches. However, 3 people remained neutral about the topic. In addition, 15 people have found to feel adequately safe as government interventions and regulations are efficient to protect privacy and confidentiality. In regards, it has also been found that 19 people feel significantly safe due to growing popularity of e-commerce and ethical corporate governance principles of service providers.

Table 5

Satisfactions with the Data privacy and confidentiality policies of e-commerce service providers

Response	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responde-nts	% of Respond-ents
Very dissatisfied	4	50	8
Not satisfied	4	50	8
Neutral	3	50	6
Satisfied	15	50	30
Very Satisfied	24	50	48

Table 5, shows that 4 participants are significantly discouraged by currently taken security settings and 4 people are not satisfied with privacy and confidentiality

policies taken by e-commerce websites. Moreover, 3 people remained neutral regarding the effectiveness of security obligations due to limited knowledge. However, 15 people mentioned they are satisfied with imposed protocols and encryption algorithms. 24 people also claimed that they are totally convinced with current legislation and security protocols.

Table 6

Satisfactions with Consumer Rights Protection Practices of E-commerce Websites

Response	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Very dissatisfied	3	50	6
Not satisfied	4	50	8
Neutral	4	50	8
Satisfied	18	50	36
Very Satisfied	21	50	42

Table 6, shows that only 3 people are very dissatisfied with the following measures and encryption algorithms. It also revealed that 4 people are not happy with Consumer Protection Practices due to poorly maintained measures and 4 people remained neutral on the topic. Moreover, 18 people have been found to be adequately satisfied with the current measurement and control circulations regarding consumer rights and 21 people are very satisfied with policies undertaken by e-commerce solutions.

Findings and Conclusion

After analysing the data, it was discovered that the Indian government established the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 and the 2020 rules to safeguard the rights and duties of consumers. The survey results indicate that the respondents possess a general awareness of consumer protection, as evidenced by their familiarity with phrases such as 'Jago Grahak Jago' and quality standards like ISI, ISO, and Agmarks. However, it was noted that although the government spends a significant amount of money on raising awareness, the procedural aspect is not emphasized enough in advertisements.

To address this knowledge gap, campaigns have been launched to enhance consumer awareness and educate them on their rights and responsibilities under the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 and the Consumer Protection Rules of 2020. Special advertisements should be created to explain the complaint filing process, where and when to file complaints and other related matters. Lastly, consumers should educate themselves about their rights and the availability of redressal mechanisms.

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Towards the Safely Managed Drinking Water in Tamil Nadu

Vishnu.I. Raj* Dr. P. Periyasami** & Dr. N. Prasanna***

[*Jal Jeevan Mission has been a game changer for India and Tamil Nadu in terms of universal access to safe drinking water. The mission has resulted in commendable improvements in drinking water access and quality in Tamil Nadu, a state that has recently experienced a severe water crisis. But the relatively below-par performance of the state in meeting JJM targets in comparison with other Indian states, even those with lesser developmental achievements, is a matter of concern.*]

Access to safe drinking water on a regular, affordable, and easy-to-find basis is a basic need for a healthy and dignified life, but unfortunately, a large part of the world's population does not have access to clean water. The UN has acknowledged the achievement of "access to safe drinking water for all", as it is Sustainable Development Goal 6.1, to be achieved by 2030 (UN, 2021). There exist great inter-state and intra-state disparities in the access to drinking water in India due to various geographical, social, economic, environmental, and administrative factors. In spite of abundant water resource capacity and the country struggles to meet the drinking water requirements of its population (Cronin 2016).

It is predicted that India's water demand will be twice the available supply by 2030, implying severe water scarcity (NITI Aayog, 2019). In light of this grave situation, the Government of India launched the Jal Jeevan Mission(JJM), its largest initiative towards the provision of safe drinking water in 2019 to provide safe drinking water to all rural households through Functional Household Tapwater Connections (FHTCs) by 2024 (Jal Jeevan Mission, 2019). The achievement of the universal provision of safe drinking water (Sustainable Development Goal 6.1) in the country is largely dependent upon the success of the mission.

Tamil Nadu, one of the largest, most populous, and most developed states in the country, has been gripped by a drinking water crisis for a long time. The present study shall help in the identification of various issues associated with the drinking water situation in Tamil Nadu and the efficacy of the JJM in the provision of safely managed drinking water in the various districts of Tamil Nadu.

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Objectives

- To explore the drinking water situation in Tamil Nadu in recent years and the state's performance in the provision of safely managed drinking water.
- To divulge the major objectives, strategies, achievements, and limitations of the JJM.
- To compare the performance of Tamil Nadu and its districts in realizing the objectives of the JJM.

Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data. The drinking water situation in Tamil Nadu and changes in the recent years were analysed using the data from Composite Water Management Index reports published by NITI Aayog. The performances of Tamil Nadu and its districts with respect to the JJM were studied from the date of launch of the mission (15 August 2019) until 23 March 2022, subjecting it to comparative analysis. The study plans to analyse the changes in the absolute number of households with tap connections and the percentage of households with individual tap connections in each district during the period studied.

The performances of all districts of Tamil Nadu except Chennai with regard to JJM during the study period were analysed. The performance of the Chennai district in JJM could not be analysed as the data pertaining to the district was unavailable in the JJM dashboard.

On December 28, 2020, the erstwhile Nagapattinam district was bifurcated into two districts, Nagappattinam and Myladuthurai. In the JJM dashboard, the data for Nagapattinam district for the period from the inception of the mission until the bifurcation is given under the heading Nagapattinam district, while the data for the rest of the period is available under the separate headings Nagapattinam and Myladuthurai districts. The current study has cumulated the JJM data of both the districts under the head Nagapattinam district so that an effective comparison of the situation of the erstwhile Nagapattinam district at the starting and ending points of the study period is made possible.

Jal Jeevan Mission

Jal Jeevan Mission is an initiative launched by the Government of India on August 15, 2019, to provide adequate, safe drinking water through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) to all rural households in India by 2024, with the theme "Har Ghar Jal". Based on a community approach, the mission also aims to focus on source sustainability measures such as recharge and reuse through gray water management, water conservation, and rainwater harvesting (Ministry of Jal Sakthi, 2021).

The basic idea of JJM is to provide 'safely managed' drinking water to all rural households. Safely managed drinking water services represent a new paradigm in drinking water availability, accessibility, and contamination. A safely managed drinking water source is one that is accessible on premises, available when needed, and free of contamination (UNICEF, 2022). JJM ensures a tap water connection to every rural household, also ensuring water quality and a regular supply following the paradigm of safely managed drinking water.

The mission also ensures the quality of drinking water provided through the mission by conducting periodic testing of water quality at laboratories as well as in villages (using field testing kits). While earlier water supply programmes operated at the habitation level, JJM operates at the household level, focusing on the provision of safely managed drinking water to each household. The long-term sustainability of water supply schemes is ensured through a decentralized, demand-driven, and community-managed method of operation.

According to the Reforms in Rural Drinking Water Supply report, household tap connection coverage in the country increased from 16.75 percent on August 15, 2022, to 47.53 percent by March 12, 2022, showing an increase of 30.78 percentage points post the mission's launch. Within the said period, three states and four union territories had achieved the "Har Ghar Jal" target. 101 districts, 1162 blocks, 67963 panchayats, and 1,40,795 villages have also achieved the target of 'Har Ghar Jal' during the same period (Ministry of Jal Sakthi, 2021).

Drinking Water Situation in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu meets 90% of its irrigation needs through surface and ground water sources. The quantum of water available in Tamil Nadu is getting limited due to the depletion of perennial rivers and a rapid decline of the groundwater table, which has induced a water crisis (Krishnaswamy et al., 2019). One-third of the revenue blocks in the state have been declared exploited, and 277 blocks have been classified as being in critical or semi-critical stages by the Tamil Nadu state PWD (Angappillai and Muthuraman, 2012). The poor people of the state have been disproportionately affected by water scarcity extracting a human cost, necessitating the urgent

provision of universal access to safely managed drinking water in the state.

The Composite Water Management Index (CWMI), was developed by NITI Aayog to enable effective water management in the face of the growing water crisis in the country. CWMI, the first comprehensive collection of country-wide data on water in India, is calculated considering and combining parameters such as the restoration of water bodies, the status of groundwater, supply side and demand side management of irrigation, rural and urban drinking water supply, and sanitation (NITI Aayog, 2018).

According to the CWMI Report 2018, Tamil Nadu had a CWMI score of 51, making it a "medium performing state'. Tamil Nadu was ranked 7th among the non-Himalayan Indian states and 9th among the 24 Indian states studied. In the CWMI Report 2019, Tamil Nadu was ranked 6th among the non-Himalayan Indian states and 7th among the 24 Indian states studied in the report. The state had a CWMI score of 58, again placing it as one of the medium-performing states among the 24 Indian states studied (NITI Aayog, 2019).

Between the financial years 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18, Tamil Nadu showed a net increase of 3.97 in its CWMI score, indicating an improvement in water management. Tamil Nadu was ranked 13th among the 24 Indian states studied with respect to the improvement in the CWMI scores.

The CWMI reports also discussed the issues of drinking water access and quality. The 'Theme 7' of the CWMI dealt with rural drinking water, while 'Theme 8' of the CWMI dealt with urban water supply and sanitation. According to CWMI 2019, the performance index of Tamil Nadu with regard to the theme 'Rural drinking water' has improved over the three years studied in CMWI reports. The proportion of rural habitations fully covered with drinking water as of the last day of the financial year had also increased over the three years.

In the case of the urban water supply and sanitation index, there was a net decline in Tamil Nadu's performance between FY 2017–18 and FY 2015–16.

A similar pattern was observed in the state's performance regarding the proportion of the urban population of the state provided with drinking water supply at the end of each financial year.

Jal Jeevan Mission and Drinking Water Access in Tamil Nadu

Provision of safely managed drinking water to its people has been one of the top priorities of the Tamil Nadu state government over the years. JJM has furthered the initiatives in this regard. The mission was launched in the state on August 15, 2019, the same day it was launched nationally. At the time of the mission's launch, the level of provision of safely managed drinking water

in the state was relatively dismal, with only 17.15% of the total number of households having tap water connections. By 23 March 2022, within 30 months of the mission's launch, 41.39% of the households in the state had household tap water connections, showing a growth of 24.21 percentage points during the period.

On a comparative note, Tamil Nadu has been one of the better-performing Indian states with regard to the increase in the proportion of households provided with FHTCs as part of the JJM. But Tamil Nadu has been a relatively poor performer in the proportion of households with FHTCs both before and after the implementation of the mission, with the state occupying the 18th position among Indian states in the proportion of households having tap water connections both at the beginning and end of the period studied.

Tamil Nadu has consistently been a better performer in human development over the years (Raj and Prasanna, 2021). It is therefore a matter of concern that Tamil Nadu has not been able to make commendable progress in the provision of FHTCs, with the state's FHTC coverage still below 50% while a number of Indian states have achieved 100% FHTC coverage.

This part of the study tries to analyse the performance of the various districts of Tamil Nadu in JJM from the date of its launch on August 15, 2022, until March 20, 2022 using data gathered from The JJM dashboard (Jal Jeevan Mission, 2022).

The district-wise number of new individual household tap connections showed that the JJM was working very well in Tamil Nadu with the number of connections growing in all of the districts of the state that were looked at. Thiruvannamalai, with 1,85,076 new FHTCs, was the best-performing district in Tamil Nadu in the provision of new FHTCs during the study period, followed by Erode (1,59,405 new FHTCs), Kanchipuram (1,56,866), Namakkal (1,56,333), and Thoothukudi (1,30,233). The lowest number of FHTCs were provided by Sivaganga (22,319), while Nagapattinam (25,480), Ramanathapuram (27,847), Perambalur (30,114), and Dharmapuri (32,020) provided the second, third, fourth, and fifth lowest numbers of new FHTCs during the period studied.

Even though JJM has been in place, there was a huge disparity between the districts of Tamil Nadu in how much of the households were given FHTCs. Most districts made commendable progress when it came to giving out FHTCs, but a few districts did very poorly. Districts such as Dharmapuri, Nagapattinam, and Krishnagiri have only 11.58%, 13.38%, and 17.85% of the households provided with FHTCs, respectively. When it comes to the growth in FHTC coverage, districts such as Kanchipuram, Namakkal, and Ranipet have made impressive progress, while districts such as Shivaganga, Nagapattinam, Coimbatore, and Ramanathapuram performed poorly with only single-digit growth in the same during the period studied.

On average, 43.75% of the households in every district of Tamil Nadu had FHTCs as of March 23, 2022, while only 18.73% of the households in each district of Tamil Nadu had FHTCs on August 15, 2019, the day of the launch of the mission. The average household tap connectivity in the districts of Tamil Nadu saw a growth of 25.43% points as per the given data.

In terms of JJM goals, the performance and results of Tamil Nadu's districts have been satisfactory, with some districts doing very well and others doing poorly. The fact that Tamil Nadu isn't doing as well as it usually does when it comes to human development and ensuring universal access to safe drinking water should be a cause for concern.

Conclusion

JJM has helped in the provision of safely managed drinking water to the people of Tamil Nadu, initiating an increase of 24.1% percentage points in the number of households provided with FHTCs within the first 31 months of its launch. Though there has been growth in absolute and proportional FHTC coverage in most districts of the state during the period, the disparity in the growth rate of FHTC coverage among the districts, along with the dismal rate of growth of the same in many districts of Tamil Nadu, is a matter of concern.

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Sologamy: Empowering Self-Love or a Rebellion against Patriarchy?

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[This article explores the concept of 'sologamy,' which refers to the act of marrying oneself. It is argued that sologamy is a form of newfangled feminism that challenges societal norms and patriarchy. In contrast, others view it as a self-indulgent and narcissistic trend focusing on individualism in today's culture. Through an analysis of the cultural and historical contexts of sologamy, this article delves into the ways in which the practice can be seen as both a rebellion against traditional gender roles and a reinforcement of oppressive societal structures in which it intersects with issues of gender, power, and identity.]

Sologamy, also known as self-marriage or self-union, is a relatively new phenomenon where a person marries oneself, without the involvement of another person. This practice has gained attention in recent years, particularly among women, as a way to challenge traditional gender roles and to reject societal pressures to conform to norms of romantic relationships and marriage. Sologamy can be seen as a form of protest against patriarchal institutions, which have historically placed women in subservient roles and valued them primarily as wives and mothers.

Kumar (2020), defines sologamy as "the practice of marrying oneself, where an individual creates a symbolic or ritualistic celebration of unity with themselves" (p. 1). However, Kumar also noted that sologamy can be criticized for its potential narcissism, lack of commitment, and disregard for the relational aspect of love. Kumar further explains that "sologamy is seen as a way of celebrating oneself and the love towards oneself" (p. 3). Thus, Kumar reasoned out that sologamy deserves further scholarly attention as a form of alternative marriage that reflects changing social values and individualistic aspirations.

As explained by Aggarwal (2019), "Sologamy, which means self-marriage or self-union, is a new trend that is gaining popularity among young women, and it can be considered as a form of feminism that represents independence, autonomy, and self-love" (p. 330).

As discussed in the article by Klein (2018), "Sologamy, or self-marriage, is growing. Partly because it's popping up in pop culture, like when an episode of 'Sex and the City' floated the idea" (para. 2). Sologamy refers to the act of marrying oneself, often in a symbolic ceremony to celebrate self-love and independence.

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Sologamy has its roots in ancient Greece, where women were not allowed to marry without the consent of their father or guardian. In response, some women decided to marry themselves, as a form of rebellion against the patriarchal system. In modern times, sologamy gained popularity in the United States, with a woman named Linda Baker being the first to marry herself in 1993.

As mentioned by Klein (2018), "Sologamy is hardly the first community to plant a flag in the sandy shores of self-marriage" (para. 8). As per the view of Mohan (2019), "Sologamy, as the name suggests, is marriage to oneself…It's not legally recognised but it's increasingly being marketed as a way to celebrate self-care, boost self-love, or simply to thumb one's nose at society's expectations" (para. 2).

Sologamy: A Worldwide Phenomenon

The origins of sologamy can be traced back to the 1990s, when it was popularized by feminist performance artist Linda Montano. Montano, who had been married and divorced several times, decided to marry herself as a way to "heal her relationship with herself" (Montano, 2021, para. 2). Since then, the practice has gained popularity in certain circles, particularly among women who are tired of waiting for a partner to validate their existence or who wish to challenge patriarchal norms that prioritize marriage and romantic relationships.

One of the key arguments in favour of sologamy is that it challenges the traditional patriarchal institution of marriage, which has historically been used to control and subjugate women. In many cultures, women were expected to marry young, and their value was often measured by their ability to bear children and fulfil traditional gender roles as wives and mothers. By contrast, men were allowed to remain single and pursue their own interests and careers without facing the same societal pressure to marry and have children. Sologamy, therefore, can be seen as a way to reclaim agency over

one's life and reject the notion that a woman's worth is determined by her relationship status.

Montano (1994) proposed a self-marriage ceremony to symbolize self-acceptance and love (as cited in Berger, 1997, p. 246). Montano described the self-marriage ceremony as follows:

The essence of the self-wedding is an unconditional vow, a divine commitment to honour and cherish oneself as a free, worthy, and valuable person. The purpose of this ceremony is to celebrate the incredible self that we are, flaws and all, and to deepen the love and commitment that we have with ourselves. (p. 248)

In addition, sologamy can be seen as a form of self-care, where individuals prioritize their own happiness and well-being over societal expectations or pressure to conform. By marrying themselves, individuals are able to celebrate their own achievements and strengths, and to commit to loving and caring for themselves in a way that is often neglected in traditional romantic relationships.

As Lagrou (2018) points out, "self-marriage challenges the heteronormative model of marriage by emphasizing the importance of personal fulfilment and autonomy" (p. 679).

Lagrou describes the trend of self-marriage as follows:

The rise of self-marriage is indicative of a cultural shift in which people are increasingly questioning traditional frameworks for human relationships and exploring alternative paths to personal fulfilment. By making a public and legally binding commitment to oneself, individuals are able to prioritize their own needs and desires without the compromises that are traditionally required in a partnership. (p. 678)

Despite its growing popularity, sologamy is still a relatively controversial practice, with critics arguing that it is narcissistic and selfish, and that it reinforces individualism at the expense of community and social connections. Others argue that sologamy is simply a form of performance art or a personal ritual that has no wider implications for society as a whole.

Paasonen (2017) argues that the rise of sologamy reflects a "culture of narcissism" in contemporary society (p. 224). According to her "Sologamy may be seen as an ultimate form of self-care and self-love that turns the wedding from a heteronormative ritual of normative personal transformation into a celebration of individualism and self-sufficiency" (p. 224). She further suggests that this trend reflects a cultural shift towards narcissism, which promotes a focus on individualism and self-aggrandizement over traditional social ties and responsibilities (p. 226).

Nevertheless, the practice of sologamy has gained a significant following in recent years, particularly among women who are seeking to challenge traditional gender roles and to reclaim agency over their own lives.

Sologamy Cases in India

The emergence of sologamy in India can be traced back to the growing trend of self-love and empowerment. In recent years, there has been an increase in self-care practices such as mindfulness, meditation, and yoga, which have encouraged individuals to focus on their personal growth and well-being. This trend has also led to a growing acceptance of non-traditional forms of relationships, including sologamy.

One of the earliest examples of sologamy in India is that of Nadine D'Souza, a Mumbai-based artist who married herself in 2017. Nadine decided to marry herself after a series of failed relationships left her feeling unfulfilled and unhappy. She decided to take matters into her own hands and celebrate her independence and self-love by marrying herself in a small ceremony attended by her family and close friends.

In India, there have been a few examples of sologamy in recent times. In 2018, a woman named Nadiya Sheikh from Gujarat married herself in a ceremony that was attended by her family and friends.

Another example of sologamy in India is that of Erika Anderson, a yoga teacher based in Goa, who married herself in 2019. Erika chose to marry herself as a way to heal from a painful breakup and to celebrate her journey of self-discovery and self-love. She invited her close friends and family to a beach ceremony, where she exchanged vows with herself and even gave herself a ring.

Sologamy is not just limited to women in India. In 2018, a man named Naveen Kumar from Bengaluru made headlines when he married himself in a grand ceremony. Naveen, who had been through a difficult divorce and was struggling with depression, decided to marry himself as a way to regain his self-confidence and self-worth. He invited over 100 guests to his wedding, which included a traditional Hindu ceremony, a reception, and a honeymoon in Bali. Similarly, in 2020, a woman named Nandini Sharma from Hyderabad also married herself in a private ceremony.

One more instance of sologamy in India was in the limelight for a few days. The event happened on 8th June 2022, during the wedding season in India. It was quite astonishing that someone married neither a man nor a woman but to own self. The idea of sologamy, as Kshama Bindu spoke to a media person, came to her mind through a Netflix show, *Anne With An E* which depicts the story

of an orphan girl who goes through various sorts of psychological and cerebral trauma and remains in spinsterhood in her whole life.

On the 20th of August 2022, Kanishka Soni, an actress from the television show *Diya Aur Baati Hum*, revealed on her Instagram that she had married herself and declared she would never need a man in her life.

Sologamy is quite different from remaining sinister or unmarried, living in a relationship either with a male or female, it is an iconoclastic step that startled the people of conservative outlook and conventional mindset.

While sologamy is still considered unconventional in India, it is slowly gaining acceptance, especially among the younger generation. Many people are choosing to marry themselves as a way to celebrate their independence, self-love, and self-worth.

However, sologamy is not without its critics. Some argue that it is a selfish and narcissistic act that promotes individualism over community and family values. Others argue that it trivializes the institution of marriage and undermines the sanctity of the union between two people.

According to a study by Garg et al. (2021), the acceptance of sologamy in India is still in its nascent stages, with many people viewing it as a form of narcissism or a publicity stunt. However, the study found that there is a growing interest in the practice, particularly among women who feel empowered by the idea of taking control of their own lives and rejecting societal expectations.

Patriarchy versus Sologamy

The origins of patriarchy can be traced back to the ancient world. In ancient Greece, for example, women were not allowed to participate in politics or public life. They were confined to the home and their primary role was to bear and raise children. Similarly, in ancient Rome, women were not allowed to hold public office or participate in politics.

Throughout history, women have fought for their rights and challenged the patriarchal system. The suffrage movement, which began in the late 19th century, was a major milestone in the fight for women's rights. It resulted in the granting of voting rights to women in many countries. However, patriarchy persists in many societies around the world, and women continue to face discrimination and oppression.

Sologamy can be seen as a response to the patriarchal system. It is a way for individuals, particularly women, to assert their independence and challenge societal expectations. In a patriarchal system, women are often defined by their relationships with men. Sologamy allows women to define themselves on their own terms, and to celebrate their own worth and value.

In a patriarchal system, marriage is often seen as the ultimate goal for women. Women are socialized to believe that they need a man in their lives in order to be happy and fulfilled. Sologamy challenges this notion by emphasizing self-love and self-acceptance. It is a way for women to declare that they are enough on their own, and that they do not need a man to complete them. At the same time, sologamy can also be seen as a product of patriarchy. In a patriarchal system, women are often excluded from positions of power

Sologamy can be seen as a form of feminism, as it promotes the idea of self-love and self-acceptance. It challenges the traditional notion of marriage, where a woman is expected to find a partner and settle down. Sologamy allows women to celebrate their independence and embrace their individuality. As Scheffler (2019) points out, "The rise of sologamy has thus become a particularly poignant site for the ways in which feminist politics may intersect with precarity and insecurity in neoliberal capitalist societies" (p. 97).

Sologamy can also be seen as a slap on the patriarchal mindset, which has historically deprived women of their agency and autonomy. By choosing to marry themselves, women are taking control of their lives and rejecting the idea that their happiness and fulfilment are dependent on a man.

In conclusion, sologamy is a relatively new concept that has gained attention in recent years. It is a form of self-love and self-acceptance that empowers individuals to celebrate their independence and make a commitment to themselves. However, it is also controversial, with some arguing that it promotes narcissism and is unnecessary. Ultimately, the choice to engage in sologamy is a personal decision that should be respected. As our society continues to evolve, it will be interesting to see if sologamy becomes more widely accepted or remains a niche practice.

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Recent Trends in China-Iran Ties

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[China has been able to carve out a diplomatic niche for itself in the Middle East where a vacuum of great power presence already exists by brokering a deal to reestablish diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran after years of engaging in proxy conflicts throughout the region.]

The agreement was made public on March 11, 2023, following four days of closed-door negotiations in Beijing. President Xi Jinping's leadership was credited with the agreement's success. The agreement was seen as a victory for China, which has sought to expand its influence and economic interests in the area while offering an alternative vision to the U.S.-led global order (NYT, 11 March 2023).

Iran, which has been dealing with domestic unrest and economic sanctions due to its human rights record, nuclear program, and support for Russia's war in Ukraine, has also welcomed the deal. The Houthis are a rebel group in Yemen that has been fighting a Saudi-led coalition since 2015. Iran reportedly agreed to stop arming them, and Iran's mission to the UN suggested that the warming of relations with Saudi Arabia could result in a more long-lasting solution in Yemen. (Gallagher et al., 2023). As Saudi Arabia and Iran have taken opposing positions in conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, and other places, the deal could have significant effects on the Middle East and beyond. It also has the potential to have an impact on the United States' role and interests in the region, as Washington has been attempting to resurrect the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and to recalibrate its relationship with Saudi Arabia

due to concerns about human rights. (Burton, 29 May 2023).

China is a significant buyer of oil from both Saudi Arabia and Iran and enjoys cordial relations with both nations. Additionally, China and Iran have agreed to a 25-year strategic partnership that calls for collaboration in the areas of trade, energy, infrastructure, and security. Since the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 and reimposed sanctions on Tehran, China and Iran have been steadily strengthening their ties. China and Iran's relations have grown in a variety of ways over the past few years, from the strengthening of their political ties to their bilateral trade to their cooperation in the energy sector and on security issues.

Due to some fundamental differences between China and Iran, including their political systems and attitudes toward human rights, the two nations' expanding relations are not without their difficulties. Additionally, the larger geopolitical context affects this relationship in a sensitive way. For instance, China's close ties to Iran's regional rivals have occasionally caused tension in the relationship. It is possible to identify new trends in the pattern of bilateral relations between China and Iran by taking a quick look at relations between Beijing and Teheran in the areas of politics, economy, energy, and security in recent years.

Political Relations

Political ties between China and Iran have existed for a while and have changed over time. Both nations have

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recently improved their relations by finding common ground on a number of geopolitical issues. Interaction between China and Iran has existed for many years, mainly through the old Silk Road trade routes. Diplomatic ties between the two nations were established in modern times in 1971. China has generally backed Iran politically and has frequently pushed for negotiations and diplomatic solutions to regional disputes. Both nations have stated that they oppose unilateral actions and outside meddling in the region. China and Iran have sought closer cooperation and coordination on regional security issues because both nations are concerned about regional stability, particularly with regard to issues like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Syrian civil war, and the role of the United States in the Middle East (Hamrah and Eliasen, 2021).

China and Iran have worked together in a number of multilateral forums, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and these venues offer chances for diplomatic engagements and coordination on global issues.. The first state visit to China by an Iranian president in 20 years was made by Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran, in February 2023. Twenty agreements worth billions of dollars were signed between the two nations, including ones on trade, transportation, information technology, tourism, agriculture, and crisis management (Tiezzi, 2023). Political relationships can be complicated and influenced by a variety of factors, it's important to remember that. Challenges to China's engagement with Iran include managing the potential effects of international sanctions against Iran and striking a balance between its interests and those of other regional players.

Economic Relations

Over the years, China and Iran have established significant economic ties. These relationships, which cut across many different industries, were motivated by shared economic and strategic objectives. Iran's top trading partner now is China, and bilateral trade between the two nations has significantly increased. Iran imports a sizeable quantity of Chinese goods, including machinery, electronics, textiles, and consumer goods, while China imports a sizeable quantity of Iranian oil. Iran has seen China take part in a number of infrastructure development projects. Chinese businesses have taken part in building highways and railroads as well as other transportation infrastructure.

Furthermore, Iranian power plants, oil refineries, and telecommunications infrastructure are all being built by Chinese companies. Chinese companies have invested in a variety of industries, including oil and gas, petrochemicals, mining, manufacturing, and telecommunications, and these investments have helped Iran create jobs and transfer technology. China has emerged as a significant source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Iran (USIP, 15 March 2023).

Iran plays a significant role in China's expansive Belt and Road Initiative. Through the BRI, China and other nations in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East will be more connected and have access to each other's markets. Iran is an important partner for China in extending its trade routes and economic influence because of its advantageous geographic location, which may provide access to the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Additionally, agreements have been signed between China and Iran to advance financial cooperation, including currency swaps and the facilitation of banking operations. These steps are intended to make trade and investment between the two nations easier, especially in light of recent international sanctions.

Companies from China and Iran have collaborated on projects in a variety of industries. For instance, in the automotive sector, Chinese companies have partnered with Iranian counterparts to produce cars and componentry for both the domestic and export markets. China has contributed equipment and technologies for infrastructure development and network expansion in Iran's telecommunications industry. Chinese businesses have contributed to the modernization of Iran's telecom networks and the introduction of 5G technology (USIP, 15 March 2023). The pattern of Trade between China and Iran from 2015 to 2022 is shown in Table-A below.

Table-A Pattern of Trade between China and Iran, 2015 to 2022 (in $ billions).

Year	China's exports to Iran	China's imports from Iran	Total Trade
2015	17.6	16.1	33.7
2016	14.9	13.8	28.7
2017	18.6	18.4	37
2018	19.7	20.1	39.8
2019	13.4	23	36.4
2020	9	12	22
2021	8.3	6	14.3
2022	9.4	5.9	15.3

Source: Compiled from: 1. Chris Devonshire-Ellis. (2023). China's 2023 Trade and Investment with China: Development Trends. Silk Road Briefing. Available online at https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2023/02/08/chinas-2023-trade-and-investment-with-iran-development-trends/.

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Table-A shows that between 2015 and 2019, trade between China and Iran exhibited an upward trend. The total volume of trade between China and Iran, which was 33.7 billion in 2015, decreased slightly to 28.7 billion in 2016. In spite of this, it grew from 2017 to 2019 before gradually declining, reaching a total of 15.3 billion in trade between Beijing and Iran by 2022. Perhaps the global COVID-19 pandemic-related disruptions to global supply chains were the cause of this decline in bilateral trade.

It's important to remember that factors like geopolitical considerations and international sanctions on Iran have an impact on China and Iran's economic relations. The extent and dynamics of economic cooperation between the two nations may be impacted by these factors.

China-Iran Strategic Partnership

China and Iran have established a strategic partnership that spans a number of areas, including cooperation in the political, economic, and security spheres. This relationship has developed over time and is founded on common goals and advantages for both parties. The main components of China and Iran's strategic partnership are political alignment, economic cooperation, energy security, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), concerns for regional security, and reciprocal military and defense cooperation. China and Iran have similar views on a number of regional and global issues, frequently adopt similar stances in multilateral fora, and support a multipolar world order. Both nations reject what they see as meddling and unilateral actions in their respective regions by other nations (Hamrah and Eliasen, 2021).

A key tenet of the strategic partnership between China and Iran is economic cooperation. Iran's largest trading partner now is China, and bilateral trade between the two nations has increased significantly. Chinese investments in Iran's energy, infrastructure, and other sectors have improved trade relations and benefited both countries.

China has been a significant importer of Iranian oil and gas, helping to meet its energy needs. Even in the wake of international sanctions on Iran, China has maintained energy ties, ensuring a stable supply of resources. Energy cooperation has also played a significant role in the strategic partnership between China and Iran.

In China's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to improve connectivity and promote trade between China and other nations in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, Iran holds a strategic position. Iran is a crucial ally for China in extending its trade routes and influences due to its strategic location and potential as a gateway to the Middle East and Europe. China and Iran have pushed for a peaceful solution to conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Syria while working together on regional security issues, particularly in the context of the Middle East. They have also called for increased regional stability and lowered tensions. Although the degree of military cooperation between China and Iran is not as prominent as other aspects of the partnership, it nonetheless represents a field of potential growth and shared interest and this cooperation includes joint military exercises and arms sales (Aljazeera, 23 March 2021).

In the strategic cooperation agreement between China and Iran, topics like joint military drills, intelligence sharing, counterterrorism, and cyberwarfare are covered. China has assisted Iran in modernizing its military hardware and doctrine by selling tactical ballistic and anti-ship cruise missiles, small arms, and military technology. Since the 1980s, China has also assisted Iran in building its nuclear program. The most recent drill, which China, Iran, and Russia participated in in December 2021, served to highlight their naval prowess and signal their shared regional interests in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. (Rezael, 2021).

It is important to note that due to political sensitivities and global dynamics, the scope and nature of China-Iran's defense cooperation may change over time, and specifics of their cooperation are frequently withheld. China's broader foreign policy goals, regional dynamics, and considerations of balancing relationships with other Middle Eastern nations all have an impact on its defense ties with Iran. It's important to remember that the strategic alliance between China and Iran has its limitations and challenges. Numerous elements, such as

global sanctions, regional dynamics, and maintaining balance in relations with other nations, can affect the dynamics of this partnership.

The Way Ahead

China and Iran's relations in the areas of economy, politics, and defense are governed by a 25-year strategic cooperation agreement between Beijing and Teheran. The March 2021 signing of the agreement covers a wide range of topics, including energy, trade, infrastructure, security, culture, and regional cooperation. China, Iran's top trading partner, opposes US sanctions against that country. China concurs with Iran's nuclear policy, which is being discussed in Vienna. In particular for its energy security, China views Iran as a reliable partner in the Gulf and West Asia region. Iranian development projects are another potential location for Chinese investments under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). By challenging US hegemony, the partnership also advances the interests of China and Iran. Although some Iranians are wary or critical of the agreement, they worry that it will hurt small businesses and benefit China more than Iran.

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Effect of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model of Teaching on Achievement Motivation of Students

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[The present study aimed to analyse the effect of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model of teaching on Achievement Motivation among elementary students. The present study employed True experimental pre-test post-test control group design. In the present study, a sample of 200 students of sixth-grade was taken from rural and urban schools of Himachal Pradesh affiliated with the Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education. The study showed a significant improvement in students' Achievement Motivation when taught through SIOP Model-based instructions. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model based teaching strategy resulted in significant difference in mean gain Achievement Motivation scores.]

Humans have an innate tendency to converse. Language has an immense influence on the communication process. Language gives us the ability to communicate our thoughts, concepts, and points of view to others. Although each country has its own native language, English has emerged as the "Global Language" in the 21st century. English is extremely important in India's legal system, commercial industry, and educational sector. In a country like India, which is appreciated for its variety of cultures and languages, English's standing is determined by political, cultural, and social factors (Kachru, 1986).

Researchers have determined that no single teaching strategy is appropriate for all types of educational settings. Effective teaching necessitates a plethora of teaching strategies in order to accomplish numerous teaching objectives (Eggen & Kauchack, 2001). Successful instruction is limited and imperfect in the absence of teaching models. Teaching models provide instructors with a theoretical framework through which they can guide pupils in their learning. These instructional models are founded on various philosophical and psychological concepts (Joyce & Weil, 1996).

The SIOP Model is an instructional approach that assists teachers in effectively preparing lessons to make the content understandable while also fostering the development of language abilities such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. (Short, Fidelman & Louguit 2012). Each SIOP lesson includes both content and language goals, allowing students to understand the material while also improving their language skills. (improving academic vocabulary). (Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994). There are 30 characteristics in the

model, which are arranged into eight components: Lesson Preparation, Background Building, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice and Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review and Assessment.

The eight SIOP Model components and their thirty features are implemented in three stages in the SIOP classroom. The first stage "focuses" on constructing a lesson plan, background information, or "Schema," and presenting the subject in a way that English language learners can understand. The second phase aims to aid students in acquiring various learning strategies, communicating with one another to better comprehension of the content, and finally "practicing" and applying the new knowledge in relevant situations. The third section includes instruction delivery, followed by "closure" with review and assessment. These stages are all interconnected and flow into one another.

Achievement motivation can be described as an individual's inherent willpower to attain the already set goals. It is a multifaceted terminology that can also be stated as an individual's capacity to figure out the most challenging yet accomplishing goal among all the prospects. The urge to attain the goal is at the helm of the parameter deciding the probability of accomplishment of that selected goal. It also includes how challenging a goal one decides to attain as people chose their goal according to their necessity of achievement.

Various psychologists have described achievement motivation in diverse manners. "Achievement Motivation is an aspiration to achieve and a commitment to excellence," (Parson et al., 2001). Hockenbury & Hockenbury (2003) define motivation as "behaviour geared at excelling, prospering, or outperforming others at some endeavour." According to Fernald and Fernald (2005), achievement motivation is "the drive to complete

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various objectives and overcome barriers." Tella (2007) defines accomplishment motivation as "self-determination to succeed in whatever activity one engages in, whether academic work or sporting competitions, among others."

According to Urdan & Kaplan (2020), Learning outcomes, sentiments and tactics are all intrinsically linked to achievement motivation. According to studies, achievement motivation can determine academic competence and task success.

The SIOP model gives students ample opportunities for interaction. This stimulates their brain, motivates them and help them to develop interest and higher attention level. The SIOP teacher asks questions and gives sufficient time to students to respond. Students get motivated either because of interest or in the lieu of praise or reward. This develops a higher level of achievement motivation among students. Students grasp the content concepts through guided practice. Students are motivated to participate in tasks, they become active, handle challenging situations and gain confidence. They try to relate what they learn to their real-life experiences.

Objectives of the Study

- To compare the Achievement Motivation of students taught through SIOP Model based instructional strategy and conventional teaching strategy in English.

- To assess the interaction effect of the instructional strategies and type of school on Achievement Motivation of the students.

Hypotheses of the Study

- Ho.1- There is no significant difference in mean gain scores of Achievement Motivation of the treatment and control group students.

- Ho.2- There is no significant interaction effect of the instructional strategies and type of school on Achievement Motivation of the students.

Method and Procedure of the Study

- Sample: The current study included a sample of 200 sixth-grade pupils from Himachal Pradesh's rural and urban schools affiliated with the Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education. The sample was chosen using a multistage sampling process. The first phase was selecting two schools (one urban and one rural) at random from a list obtained from the Office of the Director of School Education (District- Solan, Himachal Pradesh). In addition, four intact portions from each of the two institutions were selected at random. In order to test their language originality, the students were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups.

- Design- The research study was conducted on two distinct groups, the treatment and control groups. A real experimental design was adopted because the sample subjects were chosen at random. There were two groups in the study design. These two groups were designated as the treatment and control groups, respectively. The dependent variables had average gain scores on students' performance, Academic Achievement, and accomplishment motivation, which were measured using a 2x2 factorial design. The independent variable was the SIOP Model-based instructional approach.

- Tools: For the present research, the following tools and procedures were employed:

i. Instructional material based on the SIOP Model for teaching English was developed by the investigator.

ii. Achievement Motivation Scale by Prof. Pratibha Deo and Dr. Asha Mohan, 2018.

- Procedure: After selecting a sample and dividing the students into two instructional approaches, the experiment was carried out in three phases. First, the Achievement Motivation Test was given to both experimental and control group pupils as a pre-test. The instructional intervention was then modulated in the form of a conventional teaching strategy and a SIOP Model-based teaching strategy to test the efficacy of treatment variables. The investigator used the SIOP Model-based instructional strategy with the treatment group, while the school instructor used the traditional teaching strategy with the control group.

The subjects were assessed on criterion measures immediately following the completion of the instructional therapy to determine the impact of the treatment. The Achievement Motivation Scale by Prof. Pratibha Deo and Dr. Asha Mohan, 2018 was administered as post-test again on both treatment and control group students.

- Analysis and Interpretation of the Results: The mean gain scores of students from two groups were analysed to determine the impact of the instructional strategies. After calculations the mean gain scores of Achievement motivation of the control group was 9.79 and of the treatment group was 18.71 respectively. The values of SD of the control group and treatment group were 20.63 and 15.07 respectively. It is also suggested that the acquired t ratio of achievement motivation test scores is 3.491 and p- value is .001. The t ratio is less than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. It is evident that the t-ratio and p-value for the difference in the mean gain scores of achievement motivation of the two

groups i.e., the treatment and control group was found to be significant at a 0.01 level of significance.

Therefore, null hypothesis Ho.1 that there is no significant difference in mean gain scores of Achievement motivation of the treatment and control group students is rejected. It may be concluded that Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model based teaching strategy resulted in significant difference in mean gain Achievement motivation scores as significant difference was found between treatment and control group students' mean gain scores of Achievement Motivation.

Analysis of variance of mean gain scores of Achievement Motivation, interaction effect of the instructional strategies and type of school on scores of Achievement Motivation of the students has been computed. The sum of squares for the control and treatment group is 3978.320, mean square is 3978.320, F-value is 12.160, p value is .001. the p value is significant at .01 level. The sum of squares for the urban and rural area school is 392, mean square is 392, F-value is 1.198, p value is .275. the p value is not significant at .05 level. The interaction effect of the instructional strategies on group and type of school is 106.580, mean square is 106.580, F-value is .326 and p value is .569, which is not significant at .05 level.

Hence it can be concluded that there was no significant interaction effect of the instructional strategies and students of urban and rural type of school on Achievement Motivation. Thus, the Hypothesis Ho. 2 there is no significant interaction effect of the instructional strategies and type of school on Achievement motivation of the students is accepted.

Discussion of Results: The present study found that the SIOP Model-based instructional strategy was more effective for Achievement Motivation than the traditional teaching approach. When students were taught using SIOP Model-based instructions, their Achievement Motivation improved significantly, according to the research. The findings of the current study are in agreement with the study conducted by Robinson (2010) who researched the achievement motivation of English language learners to engage in reading. The results of the study highlighted the need higher level of motivation among the students that are required to engage them in reading. Sikhwari (2014) investigated the relationship between students' motivation, self-concept and academic accomplishment at a Limpopo Province university.

The study discovered that there were substantial relationships between students' self-concept, motivation and academic accomplishment. It was also shown that female pupils were much more motivated than their male counterparts. Amita (2020) who conducted a study to determine the influence of a constructivist approach on pupils' progress in terms of achievement motivation and creative thinking. A strong interaction was discovered between instructional strategies, achievement motivation and creative thinking.

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Nature in Coleridge's Poetry

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[*Samuel Taylor Coleridge is regarded as one of the most important poets of the Romantic period, which roughly corresponded to the late 18th to the early 19th century. He made important contributions to poetry and literary criticism and is frequently regarded as one of the leading figures of the Romantic movement. The Romantic Movement in English literature is credited to Coleridge and his close friend William Wordsworth. They collaborated on the poem collection "Lyrical Ballads," which was published in 1798. It represented a break from the then-dominant poetic conventions and placed a new emphasis on the beauty of nature, individual expression, and imaginative play.]*

Coleridge used Gothic and supernatural themes in his writings, which were typical of the Romantic period. He explored eerie and mysterious themes in poems like "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel," fusing them with his vivid imagination and evocative language. The exploration of the subconscious and the more sinister facets of human existence that characterized Romantic literature was made possible by these works. Coleridge made a significant impact as a literary critic and philosopher in addition to his poetry. His literary lectures, especially those on Shakespeare, had a significant influence on how people understood and valued literature. Coleridge's critical works, like "Biographia Literaria," had a lasting impact on later poets and critics as well as on the development of the Romantic literary theory.

Coleridge's close association with William Wordsworth, a prominent Romantic poet, enhances his standing during the Romantic period. Together, they created the groundbreaking "Lyrical Ballads" and had discussions that contributed to the definition of the Romantic Movement's poetic principles and ideals. Overall, Samuel Taylor Coleridge ranks among the most well-known poets of the Romantic era due to his emphasis on the imagination, nature, and the paranormal, as well as his significant contributions as a poet, critic, and philosopher.

Nature in Coleridge's Poetry

The poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge is renowned for its imaginative exploration and its vivid descriptions of the natural world. He admired and drew inspiration from nature, often using it to express more intense feelings and spiritual experiences. Coleridge's emphasis on the imagination's strength and capacity to transcend reality is consistent with the fundamental ideas of Romanticism.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry had nature as a major theme. He valued nature as a source of inspiration, enlightenment, and beauty. He explored the connection between the individual and the natural world in his poems, frequently using nature as a metaphor for the human soul.

In his poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Coleridge makes one of the most well-known uses of nature. The mariner's voyage across the ocean in this poem serves as a metaphor for his own spiritual voyage. The mariner eventually gains a deeper understanding of himself and the world around him as a result of the natural world's beauty and danger. He describes the paranormal occurrences that befall the mariner and his crew after they kill an albatross in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

"And every tongue, through utter drought,

 Was withered at the root;

We could not speak, no more than if,

We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks,

Had I from old and young!

Instead of the cross, the Albatross

About my neck was hung." (lines 155-162). (Coleridge, Major Works, 2009).

The mariner refers to the ocean as a "wide sea of glass" and a "crystal sea" in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The epic poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge contains detailed descriptions of nature. Throughout their journey, the mariner and his crew experience a variety of natural phenomena. For instance, the ship enters a calm, motionless sea in Part II when it says, "Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion; As idle as a painted ship Upon a painted ocean." In this case, the lifeless sea represents the mariner's isolation and the dearth of life.

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The poem "Frost at Midnight" by Coleridge is another instance of how he incorporated nature. In this poem, the speaker contemplates the connection between nature and the human soul while describing the beauty of a winter night. The poem makes the case that being in nature can help us connect with our inner selves and find calm and peace. Coleridge used vivid imagery to describe nature in his poetry. He captured the wonder and beauty of the natural world by using his keen observational skills. His poems frequently make use of synesthesia, or the blending of various senses, to give the reader a more immersive and sensory experience. In "Frost at Midnight", he reflects on his childhood memories and hopes for his son:

"Therefore, all seasons shall be sweet to thee,

Whether the summer clothe the general earth,

With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing,

Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch,

Of mossy apple-tree" (lines 54-58) (Coleridge, Selected Poms, 2005).

"The frost performs its silent work,

And clothes the meadows with silence" (lines 1-2)

"The stars are out;

the moon above The clouds is bright:

her beams divine Strike through the windows,

and light up The silent room" (lines 13-16). (Coleridge, Selected Poms, 2005)

The speaker of "Frost at Midnight" calls the sound of the frost "a silent sea." Snow at Midnight Coleridge muses in this poem about reflection on the impact of nature on the mind. He emphasizes the peace and beauty of nature as he describes the winter scene outside his cottage: "The frost performs its secret ministry, Unaided by any wind." Coleridge makes a connection between the opportunity for reflection and self-discovery and the stillness of the natural world.

In "Kubla Khan", he describes the exotic and sublime landscape of Xanadu, where Kubla Khan builds his pleasure dome:

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan /

A stately pleasure-dome decree: /

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran /

Through caverns measureless to man /

Down to a sunless sea." (lines 1-5).

"A savage place! as holy and enchanted,

As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted,

By woman wailing for her demon-lover!" (lines 11-13). (Coleridge, Major Works, 2009).

Fragments of the poem "Kubla Khan" depict an enchantingly beautiful otherworldly setting. Coleridge paints a picture of a utopian landscape complete with its own rivers, forests, and gardens. The poem's natural elements transport the reader to a surreal world by inspiring awe and the sublime.

In "The Eolian Harp", he muses on the metaphysical implications of the harp's music:

"And what if all of animated nature/

Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,/

That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps/

Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze/

At once the Soul of each, and God of all?" (lines 44-48). (Coleridge, Selected Poms, 2005)

In "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison", he imagines joining his friends on a walk-through nature:

"A delight /

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad /

As I myself were there! Nor in this bower/

This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd/

Much that has sooth'd me." (lines 46-50). (Coleridge, Selected Poms, 2005)

In "The Nightingale", he rejects the association of the bird's song with sadness:

"No melancholy bird! a different choice/

Of notes is thine. The invisible moon seems still/

To hang where thou hast left her beams behind;/

And I have found beneath thy minstrelsy/

A shelter from my sorrow." (lines 21-25) . (Coleridge, An Anthology, 1992).

Coleridge uses the nightingale as a representation of the harmony and beauty of nature in his poem "The Nightingale." He contrasts the narrator's depressed mood with the nightingale's joyful song: "Ah! then, what lovely warbling! "The rush, the vow, the enchantment that calms the air, the carol that enchants the air!" The nightingale's song serves as a reminder of how nature has the ability to inspire people.

Coleridge's poetry is evidence of his admiration for nature and his faith in the inspiration and enlightenment it can bring. His poems capture the wonder and beauty of the natural world with their poetic language and vivid imagery. The poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge is a great place to start if you're looking for poetry that will help you feel connected to your inner self and the natural world. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry frequently draws inspiration from nature, illustrating his ability to

capture the essence of the natural world and its profound influence on the human experience. Coleridge had a deep appreciation for the natural world. He frequently examines in his poetry how the natural world interacts with people's inner emotional and spiritual landscapes.

One of Coleridge's poetry's most recurrent themes is nature. The Romantic movement, which praised nature as a source of beauty, inspiration, and spirituality, had a significant impact on him. Coleridge used nature to investigate different facets of his creativity, philosophy, and religiosity. In works like "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," where he conjures up fantastical landscapes and scenes that transcend time and space, he used nature as the backdrop for his imaginative journeys. In "The Eolian Harp," for example, he compares the natural phenomenon of the wind playing on a harp's strings to the divine spirit that gives life to all living things. He frequently used nature as a metaphor for his philosophical ideas (Tilak, 2018).

In "Frost at Midnight," he contrasts the stillness and silence of nature with the sound of the church bells that serve as a reminder of his religious obligations. He also used nature to contrast his piety in other writings. In "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," where he finds wonder and beauty in his garden's leaves, trees, and shadows despite being imprisoned there due to an accident, he uses nature as a source of delight and joy. In "The Nightingale," for example, he learns from the bird's song that nature is not depressing or sorrowful but rather joyful and unchanging. He used nature as a teacher and a guide (Rogers, 2021).

Conclusion

English poetry has benefited greatly from several important contributions made by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, many of which are still revered and influential today. "Lyrical Ballads," a groundbreaking collection of poems, was co-written by William Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798. This collection introduced a new poetic style and signaled a departure from the then-dominant poetic norms. The collection of poems by Coleridge included works like "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan," which displayed his creative force, use of paranormal elements, and exploration of psychological depths. Coleridge is known for his poetry's elaborate symbolism and striking imagery. He expertly incorporated symbolism and made use of vivid descriptions to arouse the reader's emotions and senses. In poems like "The Eolian Harp" and "Frost at Midnight," Coleridge expertly combines natural imagery with more in-depth philosophical and psychological themes (Tilak, 2018).

In his poetry, Coleridge explored the sublime and the paranormal, embracing the enigmatic, spooky, and mystical elements. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," which combines vivid imagery, unexplainable events, and moral allegory to create a haunting and potent narrative, he explores the supernatural in great detail. Coleridge made a contribution to the use of conversational language and style in poetry. He wanted to develop a poetic style that was more approachable and natural. The poet and the reader were able to connect on a more personal level as a result of this departure from the formal and elevated language of the time. Coleridge's poetry heavily emphasized the natural world. Themes of solitude, beauty, harmony, and the interaction between people and the environment were often explored in his contemplation of the natural world, which also served as a reflection of the human condition. His profound interest in nature and how it affects human emotions and experiences can be seen in the poems "The Nightingale" and "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison." (Paul, 2003).

Coleridge made contributions in addition to poetry. His 1817 work "Biographia Literaria," in particular, made a significant impact as a literary critic. He addressed the nature and purpose of poetry as well as his theory of imagination in this influential essay, which had an impact on later poets and critics. Overall, Coleridge's contributions to English poetry include his distinctive aesthetic, potent symbolism, the study of the paranormal, meditation on the natural world and the human condition, and critical insights. His writings are still praised for their profundity, lyricism, and enduring impact on the evolution of English poetry.

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Global Initiatives towards Inclusive and Sustainable Sanitation

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[The objective of the paper is to outline the sanitation for all initiatives taken at the global level. After elaborating upon the meaning and definitions of sanitation, the paper intends to highlight the significant role played by global institutions so as to achieve inclusive sustainable sanitation. It will also look into how sanitation has been understood by these organizations/ institutions and what are the modalities/ Plan of Action designed, formulated and implemented at the grassroots level by them so that the negative impacts of poor sanitation in terms of health and disease induced mortality rate is minimised and the practice of Open Defecation (OD) becomes a 'relic of the past'.]

At this juncture, a brief on what sanitation is meant is warranted. Sanitation as an intrinsic need and requirement for the overall physical bodily and mental health & well-being of people cutting across age, sex and ethnicity is broadly understood as accessibility and availability of a functional, safe, and hygienic toilet. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 'Sanitation generally refers to the provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and faeces. The word 'sanitation' also refers to the maintenance of hygienic conditions, through services such as garbage collection and wastewater disposal.'

According to *Towards Better Programming: A Sanitation Handbook* (1997: 2) by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 'sanitation refers to a process whereby people demand, effect, and sustain a hygienic and healthy environment for themselves.' *Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment 2000* Report by WHO and UNICEF understands sanitation in a way to include connection to a sewer or septic tank system, pour-flush latrine, simple pit or ventilated improved pit latrine, with allowance for acceptable local technologies.

Sanitation is not only vital for the long and healthy life but if one takes into the account the sanitation needs of adolescent girls and women, it intrinsically gets interlinked with their safety, dignity, and privacy issues. Lack of safely managed sanitation services and facilities results in the practice of Open Defecation (OD) resulting in a gamut of issues like vulnerability towards infection and disease (high possibility of cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery) which if left un-addressed leads to a high mortality rate. Across the countries around the globe, the issue of basic sanitation is more than often has been taken as for granted.

Yet, it is a matter of urgency and deep concern that WHO notes that as on 21 March 2022 '1.7 billion people still do not have basic sanitation facilities such as toilets or latrines. Of these, 494 million still defecate in the open, for example in street gutters, behind bushes or into open bodies of water' (WHO 2022). Crowley in *Out of order: the state of the world's toilets 2017* (2017) has noted that at the global level '12 percent use an 'unimproved' toilet. This means 881 million people use a toilet that does not hygienically separate human waste from human contact, such as a latrine over an open pit or water and 12 percent practice 'Open Defecation'. This means 892 million people relieve themselves in open fields, near railway tracks, or in secluded areas.'

Furthermore, as of 16 November 2017 United Nations with regards to the Sustainable Goals noted that 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation services, such as toilets or latrines, more than 80 percent of wastewater resulting from human activities is discharged into rivers or sea without any pollution removal and each day, nearly 1,000 children die due to preventable water and sanitation-related diarrhoeal diseases.[1] The World Bank notes that as of September 14 2020, 'Globally 2.3 billion people live without access to a basic sanitation service: almost 892 million of these people practice open defecation. Today, only 68% of the world's population has access to basic sanitation, and only 39% of people have access to safely managed sanitation.'[2] Cumming has rightly pointed out that 'Sanitation is the single most cost-effective or public health intervention to reduce child mortality' (2008: 14).

Global Initiatives for Inclusive Sanitation

The rationale and locale of the paper stem from such a grim scenario in relation to the availability, accessibility, and affordability of safe and basic sanitation services by the poor and marginalised sections of society across the world. It is here in this context that the role and

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significance of sanitation initiatives taken at the global level becomes important, the analysis and description of the same is now being attempted. The Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS) is a UN-Water initiative implemented by World Health Organization (WHO). The objective of GLAAS is to provide policy and decision-makers at all levels with a reliable, easily accessible, comprehensive, and global analysis of the investments and enable the environment to make informed decisions for sanitation, drinking water and hygiene.[3]

The aim of UN-Habitat's Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) programme is to assist the UN member states to attain the water and sanitation targets set by the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) which is ' to halve by 2015 the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.' The water and Sanitation Trust Fund (WSTF) was established in 2003 by UN-Habitat to support its WATSAN initiatives.

Beginning in the year 1978, WSP (Water and Sanitation Program, formerly known as the UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Program) aims to support poor people in obtaining affordable, safe, and sustainable access to water and sanitation services.[4] The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) was founded in 1990 and it aims to sustainable sanitation, better hygiene, and safe drinking water for all, with a focus on the poorest and most marginalized members of society.

The Global Sanitation Fund is a pooled global fund established by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) for this purpose. The Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) established at the Second World Water Forum (WWF) in March 2000 aims to promote women's and men's equitable access to and management of safe and adequate water, for domestic supply, sanitation, food security and environmental sustainability.[5] The Global Hand Washing Partnership (GHP) is a coalition of national and international organizations committed to promoting hand washing with soap in academic institutions.[6]

The key issues of IRC (International Water and Sanitation Centre) is an independent non-profit organisation are hand washing with soap, safe latrine and managing household water. The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) was formed in 2007 with the aim of promoting and advocating sustainability in sanitation in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and subsequently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, SDG 6.[7]

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene programme focuses on developing innovative approaches and technologies that can lead to radical and sustainable improvements in sanitation in the developing world.[8] Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is a global partnership of country governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations among others working in the fields of sanitation, hygiene, and water for all, always and everywhere.[9]

Along with the above institutional arrangements at the global level, there have been major steps taken by the global sanitation community involving not only the nation-stats but also the members and associations of civil society (also evident is the public-private cooperation in this regard). Some of these are now briefly looked into.

a. International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade 1981-1990: The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade 1981-1990 was launched by the UN General Assembly in November 1980. Its root can be traced back to the World Water Conference in Mar del Plata (1977) Argentina. Maggie Black has aptly underscored the significance of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade 1981-1990 (1998: 13). Subsequently, a Cooperative Action plan was set up among seven UN agencies. The Decade focused on the appropriate and affordable technology so as to achieve its sanitation-related goals.

b. Sanitation in Agenda 21: Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is associated with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or 'Earth Summit', held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992. It exclusively focussed on the sustainable use of water and its crucial role in sanitation activities. It stated that poor water quality adversely affects the overall health of the individual concerned.

c. Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 and Sanitation (2000): Adopted in September 2000, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - a series of eight time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 is another milestone towards achieving the safe and inclusive sanitation. Recognizing the fundamental importance of sanitation for sustainable development, a specific sanitation target was formulated in the Millennium Development

Goals (Target C of Goal 7) to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015.

World Health Organization Document *Looking Back: Looking Ahead* (2003) noted that 'Access to safe water and sanitation is fundamental for better health, poverty alleviation and development; and improving water and sanitation services has been recognized as a crucially important strategy towards meeting the MDGs.' Despite considerable progress on the front of sanitation, it was noted by *Progress on sanitation and drinking water – 2015 update and MDG assessment* (2015) by UNICEF and World Health Organization that 'the global MDG target for sanitation has been missed by almost 700 million people'[10]

d. UN International Year of Sanitation (IYS) 2008: The General Assembly of the United Nations in 2006 declared 2008 as an International Year of Sanitation (IYS). The main IYS goals were to raise awareness and accelerate progress towards the MDG target on sanitation.[11] UN Water document titled *Tackling a Global Crisis: International Year of Sanitation 2008* outlined five key messages underlining the importance of sanitation which included sanitation is vital for health; sanitation contributes to social development; sanitation is a good economic investment; sanitation helps the environment and sanitation is achievable.

e. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and Sanitation (2015): At the Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 aims to 'Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all'. Giné-Garriga et al. (2017) have noted the significant progress made during the transition from the MDG target 7C to the SDG target 6.2. These include 'the focus on universal access instead of halving the proportion of people with no access to basic sanitation and the inclusion of hygiene, specifically the issues of handwashing and menstrual hygiene management' among others (1117-1118).

f. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) by UNICEF: UNICEF in 1995 conceived the idea of WASH. Sweetman and Medland have noted that 'The W of WASH stands for Water; the S stands for Sanitation, specifically access to a toilet (latrine); and the H stands for Hygiene' (2017: 153). The Global WASH Cluster (GWC), with UNICEF as the lead agency was formed in 2006. The Reinvent the toilet challenge was initiated in 2011 by the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program to bring sustainable sanitation solutions.

Call to Action for WASH in Schools has outlined the Six Action Points which include setting up of minimum standards for WASH in schools and its continuous monitoring and improvement among others.[12] Subsequently, JMP (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation) in WASH in the *2030 Agenda: New global indicators for drinking water, sanitation and Hygiene* (2017) devised 'Ladders' for monitoring drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in the 2030 Agenda. The structural elements of the ladder are in relation to three variables i.e. Drinking water, Sanitation, and Hand Washing.

Then the quality/ level of the same is placed hierarchal in the order wherein from top to bottom is subsequently Safely Managed, Basic, Limited, Unimproved, Surface and Water. The JMP Ladder also takes into consideration the practice of Open Defecation (OD). Mahon and Fernandes have underlined the gender dimension of WASH spelling out its importance for women and adolescent girls (2010: 111; also see Crowley 2017).

Conclusion

Sanitation in terms of accessibility and availability of safe, inclusive and hygienic toilets is central to human lives across the countries overriding socio-economic differences among men and women. It is seen as the cornerstone to long and healthy life devoid of any diseases which arise due to lack of and/ or poorly managed sanitation services. Women and adolescent girls are more vulnerable to the same as many a times they are prone to instances of sexual harassment and abuses while attending to the Open Defecation (OD).

Furthermore, as WHO and similar concerned global bodies have pointed out that even after decades of economic growth and progress, the basic sanitation facilities elude millions of people who are poor and are at the margins of society. Such an exclusion from the sanitation services has disastrous effects on their physical health as they are susceptible to and consequently are infected with various diseases related to poor sanitation. It is in this regard, that various initiatives have been taken at the global level to address the issue of inclusive sanitation. As a corollary to the same, over a period of time, sanitation has taken centre stage in development (Human Development) as is evident in its inclusion in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The paper discussed UN GLASS, JMP jointly initiated by WHO & UNICEF, WASH initiative taken by UNICEF with an emphasis on school children in general and girl students in particular among others. In continuation to this, the paper also briefly discussed International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade 1981-1990, Sanitation in Agenda 21; Millennium Development Goal (MDG) # 7; UN International Year of Sanitation (IYS) 2008 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) # 6 with regards to sanitation for all. The paper concludes by arguing that though the world order has covered a lot of ground, still one needs to keep on striving towards the humane goal of sanitation for all.

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Exploring Factors Affecting Women Entrepreneurs' Businesses via Online Social Media Applications

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[Gone are the days when the term 'entrepreneurship' used to be coined specifically for a gender and women were seen in stereotyped roles that were far from being ambitious and career-focused professionals. The global economy has seen rapid change with the extensive use of these social media tools in business growth and development. Not only mainstream corporate houses but also small start-ups have accepted social media tools to create new markets and customers for their businesses. Considering this, the present study will be an addition to the existing literature on identifying impeding and promoting factors influencing women entrepreneurs while operating their businesses through the online social media app WhatsApp.]

The realisation among women that they are business entrepreneurs is not very old. It took a long time for women to realise their self-potential, and despite several hindrances, they tried to shed their conventional trends and excel as affluent entrepreneurs.

Although, this journey of moving against the traditional pattern of working women was never easy, because business and entrepreneurship have always been perceived as men-dominated fields (Raghuvanshi et al., 2017). Even several studies have been carried out on the challenges being faced by women entrepreneurs and how this gender gap in entrepreneurship is hampering the economic growth of developing countries (Chiplunkar, 2021).

According to a report by the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2019, India has made very little progress in the sector of female entrepreneurship, with only seven female business owners out of a hundred. In a country known for its high rate of innovative entrepreneurs, the existence of a wide gender gap with a negative decline of 21.9% during the last two years in women's entrepreneurial activity is indeed questionable. No wonder, India holds the 52nd position among 57 countries, in the 2018 Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (*Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2019*, 2019).

The global economy has seen rapid change with the extensive use of these social media tools in business growth and development. Not only mainstream corporate houses but also small start-ups have accepted social media tools to create new markets and customers for their businesses.

The realisation among women that they are business entrepreneurs is not very old. It took a long time for women to realise their self-potential, and despite several hindrances, they tried to shed their conventional trends and excel as affluent entrepreneurs.

According to the 2011 Sixth Economic Census, the majority of womenpreneur establishments have been observed in the states that also topped the literacy rate. Here, it is needed to be mentioned that Indian women entrepreneurs belonging to an educated and elite class are not discriminated against (Mathew, 2019). In the year 2019, Niti Aayog, the think tank of the Government of India, joined hands with 'WhatsApp' under the banner of 'Women Entrepreneurship Platform' to create a robust environment for women entrepreneurs to support them in achieving their long-term business goals. This common platform was launched to promote more womenpreneurs in the country with a technology-enabled business ecosystem (*WhatsApp and NITI Aayog Partner to Promote Women Entrepreneurs in India*, 2019).

In a country like India, where the GDP can be boosted by 27 percent just by involving a greater number of female workforce participation, data says females hold a mere twenty-four per cent of the country's labour force (*Female Labour-Force Participation in India Declined from 34 Pc in 2006 to 24.8 Pc in 2020*, 2020; *Inclusive Future of Work Republic of India*, 2019). Studies support the existence of the 'Glass Ceiling' phenomenon in Indian organisations, but according to research, this barrier has led the competent and experienced women of the societies to move forward with their start-ups (Agrawal, 2013; Jain & Mukherji, 2010; Ribes-Giner et al., 2018).

In this context, several studies explored the positive influence of online business through smartphone applications, which promote the growth and development of businesses. Ibrahim et al., (2014) performed their study on a specific group of smartphone users by asking

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them about their online shopping experience and their satisfaction level while doing the shopping. The research concluded that in this smartphone era, it is quite easy to access product information through websites and social media tools like WhatsApp and Facebook.

The globally known and widely accepted chat app – WhatsApp - turned more than a decade old in the year 2021 (*WhatsApp Turns 12*, 2021). So far, this real-time messenger has changed from time to time for the better, of course. With every add-on feature, it has impressed its users and increased the number of people using it. In 2018, WhatsApp launched another special feature named WhatsApp Business for start-ups and small business ventures to connect with customers and market more effectively and efficiently (Thuy, 2018).

Objective of the study

The present study reviewed the extant literature to get an insight into the role played by this tech-driven tool in uplifting women's empowerment through the establishment of female entrepreneurship. The study is an attempt to point out the various impeding and promoting factors that influence women entrepreneurs while operating their businesses through online social media applications.

Review of Literature

In the last few years, many small and medium business organisations, especially those with women entrepreneurs, have adopted the platform of online applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, etc. as their prime source of market expansion and searching for potential customers (Jose, 2018).

Enabling & promoting factors

In recent years, social media and online applications have provided a platform for women entrepreneurs to venture into their businesses in their own feasible way. Smartphone apps like WhatsApp have provided enormous prospects for budding female entrepreneurs, which creates an impetus for new businesses & start-ups. The ventures that are operated through online apps have been considered more convenient in terms of time and place, as well as disrupting the location barriers for new markets (Mulkowe & Korir, 2016; Pai, 2018; Thasneem, 2020).

Even the sense of pride in financial independence and entrepreneurial exposure has helped these women make decisions not only for their businesses but also in their personal lives (Beninger et al., 2016; Melissa et al., 2015). Research states that women entrepreneurs are more comfortable handling their online businesses due to lower capital requirements and no establishment costs (Morah & Omojola, 2018; Ukpere et al., 2014).

Moreover, it becomes easy and encouraging for them to build direct communication with their online customers through social media platforms and applications (Mutairi & Fayez, 2015).

Since the structure of work does not demand a very high involvement of time, women operating their businesses through online apps get ample time to take care of their families, maintaining a balance between their personal and professional workload (Thasneem, 2020).

Challenging or impeding factors

Despite several promoting and facilitating factors, there are many hindrances to women entrepreneurs in venturing their businesses through online platforms. Women entrepreneurs have opined that online platforms and e-markets are tough to crack in terms of customers. It has been found in previous studies that e-commerce markets are not that easy to deal with as they demand effective market exposure, and tacit customer deals as they are in virtual mode and even the clients may belong to faraway places (Yuvraj, 2018). Another strong concern of online businesses is their high dependency on internet connections, and even security and privacy issues are major threats to these small business houses (Hafiz Abubakar et al., 2017; Mulkowe & Korir, 2016; Pai, 2018).

Discussion and Conclusion

It is proven through literature that gender bias exists in entrepreneurship (Dutt & Kaplan, 2018; Marlow & McAdam, 2013; Vossenberg, 2013), but past studies have also indicated the significance of using ICT-enabled platforms by women entrepreneurs, which helps them not only in exploring diverse aspects of the business venture but also in generating revenues and contributing to the country's economy (Goodwin et al., 2014; Jalan & Gupta, 2019; Jose, 2018; Morah & Omojola, 2018; Pai, 2018).

But opportunities and growth come with a wide number of challenges. In a country like India, where people still prefer cash transactions over wallets and internet banking, data and payment security issues are the major barriers for women entrepreneurs operating their businesses online (Deshpande & Sethi, 2009; Jalan & Gupta, 2019; Kumbhar, 2013; Raut & Singh, 2019; Shastri et al., 2019). Generally, online shopping through applications comes with online payments and a cash-on-delivery option. Moreover, customers are not available for in-person communication, but in virtual mode (Mutairi & Fayez, 2015).

Managerial implications & future scope of study

The present study has attempted to contribute largely to the existing set of literature on the issues, challenges,

and enabling components influencing women entrepreneurs who operate their businesses through online or social media apps like WhatsApp. Further study with appropriate data and analysis is recommended. Qualitative analysis may be carried out by interviewing successful women entrepreneurs to identify the challenges they came across and their recommendations for new start-ups. More research on identifying factors influencing women entrepreneurs operating their businesses through social media or online apps may draw the attention of policymakers, investors, promoters, and other stakeholders to support these small-scale businesses turning into big profit-making companies.

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Empowerment of female characters in Contemporary Hindi Cinema: Analysis of Lipstick under My Burkha

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[By analysing the movies through the perspectives of feminist and empowerment theory, focusing on women's ways of surviving patriarchy, the reality of womanhood has been unfolded. In the journey of the film, female characters break social, economic, and cultural boundaries. Cinema has the power to initiate discussions on sensitive and essential topics. The film 'Lipstick under my Burkha' has been studied. The analysis of important female characters is done to understand the concept of women's empowerment in the films. The film is analysed to understand empowerment on seven variables: economic independence, decision-making power for the future, knowledge, and usage of technology, control over one's own body, reaction to violence and humiliation, sexual awakening, and women supporting women.]

In Bollywood, roles are approved or disapproved of by society. Due to this, a monotonous pattern is present in the depiction of Indian women. Roles that are ideal for the definition of Indian women are approved by society, hence, female roles lack diversity. This is because women in Indian cinema have been exhibited by three specific stereotypes, as defined by 'Shushila Rathore' in her study 'Portrayal of Females in Indian English Feminist Fiction and Hindi Parallel Cinema (1975–2005).'

In her paper, she talks about the limited depiction of women in Bollywood. One of her categorizations is of the 'elite wife' who is royal and loyal. Later on, she talks about her self-sacrificing mother. The third classification is for women who are highly influenced by Western culture and often shown in a bad light. She argues that the female characters who don't follow the Sita model turn out to be "westernised" and sexually violent, leading the men toward ruin'.

Films targeting women's ambition are appreciated, but when it comes to something sensual, it is not considered very ideal. Males are effortlessly found showing dominance, threatening women, and openly expressing their sexual desires, whereas finding females in similar roles is obscure. Films that portray sexually empowered women have always been controversial, be it 'Fire' in 1996 or 'Lipstick under my Burkha' in 2017.

Sukanya Gupta (2015), in her study 'Kahaani, Gulaab Gang, and Queen: Remaking the Queens of Bollywood' contends about the new trend in Bollywood post-2010. Considering the movie studied, she puts forth how Bollywood has changed in three ways in the portrayal of

women in the post-liberalised twenty-first century. She has termed the women of the twenty-first century as 'sexually awakened'.

This study discusses the powerful representation of female protagonists in contemporary Bollywood cinema and, in addition, analyses the actions of empowerment, taken by the protagonists in the movie.

Concept of Empowerment

There are various definitions of women's empowerment. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines empowerment as the process of gaining freedom and power to do what you want or to control what happens to you. "The geneses of empowerment approach are originated from the emergent feminist writings and practice-based understandings of grassroots organisations of many Third World women" (Moser 1989). Though the empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities and the subservient status of women in the family, it also emphasises that women's experiences of oppression are also related to oppressive structures and situations at different levels, such as race, class, colonial history, and current position in the international economic order (Moser, 1993).

The literature proposes a variety of definitions of empowerment, including control over decision-making and the ability to control resources required to achieve a desired outcome (Kabeer, 1999). Anita Vaidyanathan (2013) defines empowerment as "women's ability to negotiate strategies, manipulate, and rebel against events and situations." Empowerment is also seen as the ability, based on education and skill development, to advocate for an improved quality of life (Sen 1990).

The empowerment approach that many feminist theorists and practitioners embraced is seen by some as the 'restoration of individuals to a sense of their own value and strength and their own capacity to handle life's

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obstacles' (Handy & Kassam, 2006). Moser (1989) says that empowerment defines power "as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change through the ability to gain control over crucial material and nonmaterial resources."

Based on various discourses on women's empowerment for the purpose of the current study, researchers have divided the concept of empowerment into three categories: economic independence, decision-making power for the future, control over their own bodies, reaction to violence and humiliation, Sexually awakened, Women supporting women

Methodology

This paper uses qualitative content analysis to study the latent meanings and actions of empowerment. Babbie (2007) describes the purpose of qualitative research as discovering the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. These patterns and the underlying meaning of social phenomena are analysed through language. An analysis of media texts is then, by definition, grounded within the interpretive paradigm, as Crotty (1998) states that a characteristic of interpretivism is the study of texts, in order to gain an understanding of the meaning within texts.

Texts, in the form of films, are analysed within this study by making notes of the characteristics of the female leading characters. Therefore, this study is using "language" not only as a tool to read and make sense of the text but also to gather the data so as to interpret the text.

The content analysis of film plots is done on the basis of narrative analysis and semiotic analysis. Narrative analysis is an examination of the story elements, including narrative structure, character, and plot. This type of analysis considers the entirety of the film and the story it seeks to tell. Semiotic analysis

Semiotic analysis is the interpretation of signs and symbols, typically involving metaphors and analogies to both inanimate objects and characters within a film. Because symbols have several meanings, writers often need to determine what a particular symbol means in the film and in a broader cultural or historical context.

Analysis

The study analyses the film from two viewpoints, first, on the basis of the plot, and second, on the characterisation of female characters to underline the elements of empowerment in them.

Female characters in Lipstick under my Burkha

Usha Parmar (Ratna Pathak) oversees a sweet shop and appears to co-own the shop and an old, crumbling building with her nephews. She is referred to as Bua Ji by everyone around her. Unknown to all, she reads romantic novels and harbours sexual desires.

Shireen Aslam (Konkona Sen Sharma) works as a door-to-door salesperson, unknown to her dominating husband. She is determined and finds her rescue by excelling in the job she does.

Leela (Aahana Kumra), a beautician, plans on building a bigger business for herself and living a life of independence. Unknown to her fiancé and her widowed mother, she is having an affair with a photographer.

Rehana (Plabita Borthakur) is a college student. She helps at her parents' tailoring shop. Unknown to them, she rebels against the restrictions imposed on her.

Economic independence

Usha Parmar, aka Bua Ji, is the senior protagonist of both films. She runs a large Halwa company in Bhopal and owns several houses around the neighbourhoods and a building 'Hawai Manzil'. She lost her family due to a tragedy, and the only thing left with her is the 'Hawai Manzil'. She is economically empowered because she is the landlady and collects the rent. She is also the owner of the sweetshop, which is famous for its Limca record samosa. She has the autonomy to use money, which is significant when some builders visit for a deal that she refuses.

Shireen Aslam secretly works as a salesperson. She is one of the top employees at her company. Her empowerment lies in her negotiation skills, which are remarkable. Her skills led her to a promotion from a salesperson to a sales personnel trainer. Her empowerment is reflected in her courageous and bold attitude. She shuns her husband for imposing his authoritarian and patriarchal shackles on her. Towards the end of the film, she asserts her righteousness and confronts him for cheating on her. She tells him, "*You are the one who is shameless, seeing another woman, no job, no salary.*"

Leela owns a beauty parlour. She dreams of owning a successful business one day. Her economic empowerment is evident in small instances within the film. She has business plans ready and is confident in them.

Rehana is the youngest of the characters in Lipstick under my Burkha. She chipped in to help her parents in their tailoring shop. She negotiates her way to freedom through small feats like wearing clothes of her choice, which even means stealing clothes from a mall once to attend a party.

Decision-making power for the future

Usha is an authoritarian figure in the film. She is the matriarch of the house. She holds the power to make decisions for herself as well as others. Her family seeks

her advice. She is on a higher pedestal and empowered enough to make the decision to read erotica novels because she likes them. She also decides to learn to swim. She keeps such things away from the eyes of her family and society. Despite pressure from external factors, she makes the decision not to sell off an old building she owns.

Shireen is doing a job secretly because she knows her husband would never approve of it. She is not in a position to make her own decisions; she has to seek permission from her husband. She is not even free to go buy a condom herself. She is often told to stay away from financial matters. She finds her reclusiveness in her job as a successful salesperson. She chooses to continue working without telling her husband, as the job gives her a platform to showcase and hone her skills.

Leela is empowered to make her own choices. She follows her heart and does not need to seek permission from others. When it comes to marriage, she is pressured to marry a guy chosen by her financially constrained mother. She is trying to build a business for herself but is often rebuked by her mother. In one such instance, her mother asks her, "No matter how much she earns, would she be able to afford a house?" She is often made to believe that she has failed to decide for herself. She chooses to continue her affair with Arshad, her boyfriend, even after her marriage to the man of her mother's choice, and eventually runs away with him.

Rehana is not allowed to make decisions for herself. Her parents chose her. She has been admitted to a college on the condition of concentrating on her studies and going to college clad in a burkha. However, she takes risks and allows herself the liberty of living life according to her own desires. Instances in the film show her taking off her burkha when she is away from her neighbourhood, going to parties, mingling with her peers, and choosing to be free from societal bondage. She chooses to smoke, drink, kiss, and even steal. She is aware that if she gets caught, it could halt her education. She may be barred from going out and marrying anyone her parents choose. Despite all this, she dares to do what she wants and finds a recluse in life by choosing to engage in small acts of disobedience to strict norms.

Control over own body

Usha Parmar, aka Bua ji, has been an ideal woman throughout her life, everyone looks up to her. She does not have any discussions about the future. She does not plan much, however, there is some small planning taking place in her life. She plans to go swimming and meet Jaswinder as his secret caller.

Shireen has no right over her body, unlike other protagonists. Her husband, Rahim, finds pleasure in her body, whereas she is unhappy in marriage. Rahim forces her to have unprotected sex and to avoid pregnancy, she is shown taking birth control pills.

Leela exerts control over her own body. She decides whom to share physical relations with. She asserts herself and breaks the vows of her marriage since she was forced to marry someone her mother chose for her. She acts on her plans to run away with Arshad and build a business of her own.

Rehana, though bound by traditions, claims control over her body. She rebels against the conformities of society by following her heart. Doing all the things a college student is attracted to, such as dressing up the way she wants, applying makeup, attending parties, and liking Miley Cyrus. In a scene, she is shown dancing in front of a poster of her favourite pop star in her room, with music playing only in her head, juxtaposed with her family moving on with mundane activities.

Reaction to violence and humiliation

Usha is not subjected to any such violence. In the end when she is caught, her family who used to look forward to her, now disowns her. She doesn't justify or resist it; however she firmly asks them not to throw her stuff. She is shown going, collecting her stuff. She does not bluff or shout at anyone. Her reaction speaks of one's acceptance of breaking the regulations that one's family and society frames.

Shireen is a victim of marital rape. Initially she does not respond to it, thinking of it as her duty. But towards the end she confronts her husband, resists and says that she knows about him cheating on her. She finally tells him that he doesn't even have a job and he is useless.

Leela did face violence by her boyfriend Arshad but she resists it. She has constantly been under mental pressure because she aspires to build a business for herself but her mother is pressuring her to marry. She is a victim of mental violence. She is constantly forced to do things despite her will. Her father slaps her for the theft she has done.

Sexually awakened

Usha reads the story of Rosy and her longing for the imaginary prince. To explore her sexual desires, she indulges in secret phone sex with a young, good-looking swimming coach. She develops a secret love for Jaspal and starts to converse with him by the name of Rosy over the phone. Their conversation gradually transforms into sexual talk. Usha's character highlights her desire for love, irrespective of her age. Her assertiveness is shown by exploring her sexual freedom. The patriarchal society compels women to veil their desires and dreams. The story of Rosy moves in an unruly and erotic edifice,

linking all four women's characters and their lives. Daring the societal expectation of living a chaste life, Usha reads erotica hidden between the covers of her religious books and longs to be able to live as a sexual being again.

Shireen is struggling to gain control over her sex life in her marriage. She has to give in to the needs of her husband, leading to multiple pregnancies and abortions. When she tells her husband about her reproductive health issues, he simply ignores them. Her doctor advised her to use a condom, but her husband is not willing to wear one. To him, she is just an object to satisfy his sexual needs. During a bikini wax, Sheeren accepts that she has never been kissed by her husband. Her husband refuses to use a condom, and she constantly has to take birth control tablets.

Leela is very authoritative when it comes to her sexual desires. She is sexually active. She does it whenever she wants to. This can be proven by plenty of shots. On the day of her engagement, she dares to fall in love with her boyfriend and even records it. When caught by her mother, she confronts her and says, "It is because you are marrying that stranger." She also visited her boyfriend at night to be with him. She is the one who initiates, in the car, but her fiancée stops her, saying the first time should be special. Leela laughs, as it might be his first time but not hers.

Rehana chooses to exercise the freedom of her sexual needs by making a boyfriend and sharing a kiss. In the conservative family, she hails from, there are numerous shackles, and allowing a girl to follow her heart by choosing to date a man or wearing clothes other than traditional is considered breaking norms.

Women supporting women

The climax of the film shows the four women, who share a neighbourhood, coming together. Making many uncomfortable with their assertiveness, the film is indicative of women supporting each other, as seen in the last scene when all four of them, having their share of constant struggles for identity and choices, share a cigarette and a laugh. The narrative weaves women supporting each other as well as creating and guarding boundaries for each other.

Conclusion

After analysing contemporary Indian Hindi films, it is found that all the films are that are directed by female directors and have very sensitively and minutely dealt with the empowerment of each female character. It depicted how the women are subjugated by their own families. The storyline and the journey of female characters clearly depict that they are not submissive, they deserve their freedom of expression, their desires, and their needs.

By analysing the movies through the perspectives of feminist and empowerment theory, focusing on women's ways of surviving patriarchy, the reality of womanhood has been unfolded. In the journey of the film, female characters break social, economic, and cultural boundaries.

Cinema has the power to initiate discussions on sensitive and essential topics. This study will allow readers to have a second thought on the standpoint of women in a patriarchal setting and look at the empowerment of women from a larger perspective. Further research can be conducted to study how empowerment is shown in mainstream cinema.

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India's Economic Diplomacy in South Asia:
A Contemporary Analysis

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[This paper endeavours to argue for the necessity of a strong economic diplomacy strategy to be demonstrated by India within the South Asian region. The need for enhanced economic diplomacy is justified, given that India has yet to fully leverage this instrument to its fullest capacity. The utilisation of diverse instruments of economic diplomacy can facilitate the attainment of India's wider national objectives in the region. The article highlights the potential for reconsideration of India's investments in the region, given the current circumstances. It suggests that the strategic allocation of these investments could enable India to establish a favourable position in South Asia and the global political economy. The article also emphasizes the importance of India's engagement with its neighbours in order to promote regional stability and economic growth. By prioritizing these objectives, India can strengthen its position as a key player in the region and enhance its overall influence on the global stage.]

In the contemporary era, nations have revised their approaches to engaging with the global community, adopting a more receptive perspective toward domestic policy-making and international negotiations. Prior to the conclusion of the cold war, a select few nations held sway over the global landscape by virtue of their economic standing. However, the advent of globalisation and the emergence of a multi-polar global order has facilitated the empowerment of numerous actors, allowing for a more diverse range of voices to assert their influence and authority within regional collectives. In this context, the utilisation of economic diplomacy holds substantial potential for India. Economic diplomacy refers to the strategic use of a state's diverse economic instruments to attain a holistic objective of advancing its national interests. The scope of economic diplomacy encompasses a range of policy decisions aimed at promoting imports, exports, aid provision, investment, free trade agreements, and other related measures.[2] India's diplomatic prowess is widely recognised globally. However, despite its diplomatic achievements, India occasionally encounters challenges in fulfilling its economic commitments, even within the realm of diplomacy.

The Indian diplomatic approach has been noted to exhibit a tendency to overpromise and underdeliver in the realm of economic matters. India's commitments to trade and infrastructure development partnerships in South Asia are indeed valid. India's potential as a regional leader has not been fully realised despite its status as the largest economy in the region, owing to its inability to fulfil its commitments. The absence of action on the part of India

has led to other nations, including China and Japan, assuming responsibility and occupying the space. To reclaim its status as a dominant force in the region, India must undertake tangible measures to deliver on its commitments and allocate resources towards infrastructure initiatives that will yield dividends not only for its own interests but also for those of its neighbouring nations. The aforementioned task necessitates a change in perspective from merely articulating lofty commitments to effectively executing them, a feat that is less straightforward than it may seem. If India can effectively manage this obstacle, it possesses the capability to emerge as a genuine economic force in South Asia and other regions.

Historical Overview

The concept of economic diplomacy in India has a historical precedent, as evidenced by Kaumilya's Arthaúâstra, a scholarly work on the principles of economics. The importance of the principles of sama, dama, danda, and bheda was recognised by Kaumilya.[3] The design of this work was aimed at exerting influence over the decision-making processes of foreign governments and international institutions. India has considerable unexplored potential to engage in economic diplomacy, which can help build trust with other nations and position itself as a key player in the international community. The importance of economic diplomacy lies in its capacity to prioritise a nation's economic security and strategic interests by leveraging the state's economic tools to manage its relationships. Although trade and investment are significant issues, the wider scope of the agenda may involve addressing various underlying factors and global conflicts. To attain this objective, it is imperative for the state to formulate a well-defined and

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consistent approach that considers both its own economic concerns and those of its collaborators. The implementation of tariffs, subsidies, and other financial incentives may be employed to promote specific actions or deter others. Furthermore, it is within the purview of the state to utilise diplomatic channels to advance its own values and principles, utilising its economic influence to garner backing for matters of global significance such as human rights and environmental preservation. The efficacy of this approach hinges on the state's capacity to reconcile immediate economic benefits with enduring strategic goals, while adeptly managing intricate geopolitical forces and preserving robust alliances with pivotal global actors.

The economic diplomacy of India may encompass various goals, including but not limited to projecting India as a significant global power, engaging in multilateral trade and economic negotiations, ensuring energy security, establishing regional and bilateral trade agreements, facilitating access to foreign resources such as promoting foreign investments in India, achieving foreign policy objectives through economic means, and promoting exports and Indian businesses overseas. The aforementioned objectives are aimed at enhancing India's global reputation and ensuring its sustained economic progress. In addition to promoting the interests of Indian businesses and entrepreneurs in the global arena, the objective is to foster increased cooperation and collaboration with other nations.

Economic diplomacy encompasses various dimensions, including but not limited to unilateralism, bilateralism, regionalism, plurilateralism, and multilateralism. In the context of India's standing in South Asia, there is a need for increased focus on economic diplomacy at the regional level. Regional economic agreements possess significant potential to confer countries with a robust political footing and expedite market access. From an economic perspective, having easy access to a stable regional market could be viewed as a viable option to the ongoing pursuit of larger markets.[4] India has the potential to assume a more significant role in the South Asian region, a prospect that has yet to be fully realised. India's shared cultural heritage within the South Asian subcontinent provides an impetus for the country to seek enhanced economic ties with neighbouring markets.[5] India's emergence as a global economic power positions it favourably as an investor in the region.

Issues and Potentialities

At first, it is imperative to scrutinise India's dedication to infrastructure. India is dedicated to fulfilling its obligation of assisting its neighbouring nations in realising their potential by facilitating their development into unified, sovereign, democratic, peaceful, stable, prosperous, and inclusive entities. Illustrative instances of infrastructure development as symbols of diplomatic relations between nations include the establishment of Salma dam to signify the amicable ties between Afghanistan and India, the Zaranj-Delram road that facilitates entry to the Garland Highway in Afghanistan, and the construction of the 900 MW Arun III hydropower project in Nepal, a neighbouring country. Each of these projects indicates India's dedication to facilitating the realisation of maximum potential among its neighbouring countries, in addition to India itself. In light of India's aspirations to become a global player in a multipolar world, it is crucial for the nation to implement an economically liberal approach towards its neighbouring countries with regard to developmental and investment initiatives. The developmental projects pertaining to infrastructure are of significant importance, as India has consistently prioritised its 'neighbourhood first' policy.[6] The policy endeavours to establish regional peace and promote economic integration, taking into account India's strategic geographic location. Additionally, it seeks to showcase and embrace the diverse cultural heritage of South Asian nations. The cultural diplomatic aspects are intrinsically linked to the economic assistance that India can provide to its neighbouring countries.

Economic diplomacy represents a potential strategy for India to counteract the increasing assertiveness of China in the region. Given China's strategic initiatives such as the "String of Pearls" and the "Belt and Road" programme, it is imperative for India to undertake measures to establish trust and credibility with its neighbouring countries. One potential approach to achieve this objective is by directing investments towards nations that are currently undergoing significant developmental progress. China's diplomatic economic model relies on a continuous injection of capital into investments and expansion. In contrast, India should strategically seize opportunities to establish its own unique position.[7] It is noteworthy that India has demonstrated exceptional leadership by creating a Covid-19 emergency fund for the nations within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The energy sector is a crucial component of investment funds, particularly in the context of South Asia Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC), where energy plays a significant role. India has demonstrated commendable investment in the energy sector, as evidenced by its recent approval of plans to invest $1.69 billion in the construction and development of transmission and distribution lines for the purpose of transmitting electricity to its neighbouring country,

Nepal. The Ruppur nuclear power project is an additional collaborative effort between Russia and India to undertake nuclear energy projects in Bangladesh. In order to establish its position in the South Asian region, India must explore additional investment opportunities.

India should also strive to tap into the extensive cultural attractions it possesses as a potential sector for development. The tourism industry presents a favourable prospect for India to not only receive visitors from neighbouring nations but also to foster positive cultural interactions. The fact that approximately one-third of the total number of tourists visiting India from around the world hail from the South Asian region is a predictable outcome. According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2019 by the World Economic Forum, South Asia has been identified as the region that has exhibited the highest degree of improvement since 2017. India has demonstrated significant progress in its ranking among the top 25% of countries, having moved from the 40th position in 2017 to the 34th position in 2019, reflecting the country's embrace of technological advancements. The scope of tourism in India extends beyond the cultural domain, as the emergence of medical tourism presents significant prospects. Despite the challenging circumstances posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative for India to prioritise the development of its medical infrastructure to effectively cater to the healthcare needs of its citizens as well as those from neighbouring South Asian countries.

Nevertheless, India's approach to formulating its economic diplomacy is beset by several challenges. The primary concern is the imbalance of trade. The trade disparity between India and South Asian nations is manifested in various forms. India cannot be solely held accountable for this issue, as the figures pertaining to intra-regional trade within South Asia do not exhibit a particularly promising trend. The South Asian region exhibits the lowest intra-regional trade globally, accounting for a mere 5% of the total trade within the region. The current rate of integration is only 33% of its maximum potential, which is estimated to have an annual capacity of $67 billion.[8] The level of trade between the mentioned regions is significantly disparate, with the trade volume being notably lower in comparison to that of European and African countries. An intriguing aspect of trade pertains to the escalating trend of protectionism observed across the globe. The analysis of global trade data may provide a more comprehensive viewpoint on the matter. Based on global trade data, it has been observed that the trade restrictiveness index for imports originating from South Asia is 2 to 9 times greater than that of imports from other regions,

specifically in the cases of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India. The cost of trade appears to be imbalanced, as the regional trading cost in South Asia is 20% higher compared to ASEAN, which operates on the principle of amity, security, and resolution among its member countries.[9]

India also encounters an economic obstacle in its trade relations with South Asia, specifically in terms of connectivity, which impedes its efforts to establish sustainable and uninterrupted economic diplomacy. The establishment of integrated check posts at the borders has frequently entailed a cumbersome protocol of procedures, such as supplementary inspections of cargos and documentation delays, which lead to unwarranted expenditure of time and profits. At times, India makes commitments that exceed its actual performance. The TAPI gas pipeline project involving Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, as well as the motor vehicles agreement BBIN-MVA involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal, have yet to make significant advancements.[10] An additional example of scrutinising the expeditiousness of India's implementation is the execution of its commitments pertaining to infrastructure development. India has undertaken various projects such as hydropower projects, railway line development, and integrated border checkpoints in several South Asian countries. However, it is noteworthy that these projects have experienced a delivery deficit on India's part. A well-known instance that is frequently discussed in diplomatic circles pertains to the Nepal Police Academy, which has remained unresolved for over three decades. The Maitri Power Project, which involves collaboration with Bangladesh, was scheduled to be finalised by the year 2016.

However, India has demonstrated significant magnanimity towards nations such as Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan, and Afghanistan in terms of economic assistance. Upon closer examination, it appears that the distribution of financial aid provided by India to these nations within the region is more compared to other SAARC nations, leading to disproportionate distribution, and thus insecurity among some neighbours. For example, Bhutan was allocated Rupees 2025.37 crore in the 2020-21 budget, the Maldives received 300 crore Rupees, Nepal received 800 crore Rupees, but Sri Lanka was left with only 200 crore Rupees.[11] Sri Lanka has articulated its grievances regarding India's aid distribution, alleging that it is provided selectively to those who hold greater strategic importance for India. The policies and regulations, such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and National Register of Citizens, reflect a protectionist approach that seems to be insensitive and contrary to the complexities of identities and migration in the

subcontinent. This is particularly evident when individuals from these countries seek employment in India, exacerbating their insecurities. Thus, it is imperative for India to address the aforementioned concerns that contribute to regional instability and provide its neighbouring countries with economic reassurance.

Another issue, institutional hurdle, poses a significant challenge to the seamless economic operation of India's diplomacy in the region. The current state of SAARC is indicative of its dysfunctionality, primarily attributed to myopic economic policies and strained inter-member relations, particularly between India and Pakistan, leading to a significant increase in distrust. Only the narrow-minded policies that these nations have implemented are to blame for this lack of trust. It is imperative to conduct an assessment as the region currently lacks a shared threat, however, the potential for such a threat loom in light of the presence of the China factor. China has been actively expanding its presence in the South Asian region through its Belt and Road programme, which has become a significant component of its soft power diplomacy in the area. This has allowed China to break away from traditional approaches and establish a stronger foothold in the region. In terms of investment, the organisation has been able to increase its investments in the region primarily as a result of India's lack of attention in recent times. China has made significant investments in the construction of the East-West highway that traverses Nepal, as well as the development of a railway line connecting Tibet to Lhasa. Furthermore, China is currently engaged in various ongoing initiatives in nations such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Hence, it is imperative for India to prioritise the concerns in its economic diplomacy in order to establish a robust presence in the South Asian region. Enhancing connectivity could facilitate the establishment of a robust energy trade mechanism among the nations in the South Asian region. Enhancing collaboration with these nations may serve as a viable strategy to address the regional energy shortfall and bolster energy security within the area. India ought to prioritise the advancement of regional infrastructure initiatives with greater expediency and efficacy. Robust connectivity enhances both intra and inter-regional trade, while also creating favourable conditions for increased income and prosperity among populations in regions that adopt a liberal approach to the international political economy.[12] For the purpose of augmenting the efficacy of its dealings with South Asian countries, India should undertake a comprehensive overhaul of its institutional procedures.

It is recommended that endeavours be undertaken to diminish trade barriers and non-tariff barriers, with a concurrent emphasis on the fulfilment of extant initiatives in adjacent nations. The implementation of this strategy may facilitate the cultivation of confidence and augment the competitive edge in relation to China, which has been actively extending its economic influence in the area.[13]

Furthermore, it is imperative for India to prioritise the enhancement of its infrastructure and connectivity with neighbouring South Asian nations by means of constructing transportation systems and energy grids. The aforementioned measure is expected to not only streamline commercial transactions and financial ventures, but also foster interpersonal interactions and strengthen cultural connections. Moreover, India ought to investigate prospects for collaborative ventures and technological exchanges with South Asian countries in order to augment their industrial capacities and generate job prospects. The proposed initiative is expected to yield benefits not only for the local region but also for India's overarching objective of establishing itself as a prominent global manufacturing centre. Ultimately, it is imperative for India to initiate discussions with neighbouring South Asian countries in order to effectively tackle shared obstacles, including but not limited to climate change, terrorism, and regional security concerns. India can potentially establish itself as a significant stakeholder in the South Asian region and facilitate the advancement and economic growth of the area by adopting a proactive stance towards its neighbouring countries. In the context of investments, it is advisable for India to promote trade and investments with South Asian countries, in order to capitalise on the benefits of enhanced regional and economic integration, thereby fostering greater openness in the South Asian economy.[14]

India's capacity to assume a regional leadership role has yet to be fully actualized owing to its failure to fulfil its obligations. In order to restore its position, India must undertake concrete actions to fulfil its obligations and apportion resources towards infrastructure endeavours. The practice of economic diplomacy is crucial for India to assert its position as a dominant global force.

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Education's Role in Promoting Gender Parity and Gender Sensitization

Dr. Shobhna Jeet* & Ms. Mahima Sharma**

[One of the areas affected by this women's issue is education, which is now acknowledged by multiple international conventions as a human right and a necessity for progress. According to UNESCO (2012), preference for men over women in education has been a notable characteristic since the time of ancient societies, a practice that has formed the gender gaps that exist now in this field in almost every nation.]

According to UNESCO (2012), education is a fundamental human right that all people are entitled to regardless of their living situation and that has significant positive effects on human society as a whole (p. 8). According to De McPherson (1999), equal engagement by men and women is important for these benefits to be realised more quickly. In that regard, the author emphasises, excluding women from all facets of the development process solely on the basis of gender is a waste of precious resources, made even worse given that they make up half the population.

UNESCO (1998a) takes the stance that because women have a right to equal opportunity with men, they must also be considered an integral part of a country's human resource base. Both boys' and girls' education is acknowledged as a fundamental "human right" and as a base for developmental progress.

The fact that both boys and girls receive fundamental education lasting at least eight years and of acceptable quality should be universally acknowledged. Even now, there is a significant gender gap in enrollment and academic accomplishment, and it can only be closed with the help of the government. Human rights are severely denied when this education is not provided. In a same vein, it is crucial that women participate in education (UNESCO, 1998c). According to Dundar and Haworth (1993), "educating women is important not only from the perspective of equal educational opportunity between the sexes, but also for the substantial social and economic returns that can be achieved by raising women's productivity and income level, producing better educated women."

According to Vanderslice and Litsch (1998), women with higher levels of education are more conscious of their own opportunities. According to the authors, they are also more competitive, open-minded, and self-assured. In addition, according to Kelly and Slaughther (1991),

"women would ready themselves for all manner of professional roles, entering the market and political arena with the same advantages as men, through degrees and credentials obtained through the higher learning" (p. 3). In light of these viewpoints and the surrounding circumstances, Bonilla et al. (2005) came to the conclusion that women are acting as change agents by participating in education.

Gender parity is a concept measured in numbers. It speaks about the same percentage of boys and girls entering the education system and participating in both the primary and secondary cycles as compared to their respective age groups. The "Gender Parity Index" calculates gender parity. Gender equality is a complicated idea that is challenging to quantify. When boys and girls are given equal opportunities, approaches, and curriculum that are free of stereotypes, this is referred to as full gender equality. Additionally, it is assumed in this scenario that gender bias has no impact on academic advising and orientation. In order to achieve gender parity and spur national growth, education is a crucial weapon.

This is concisely stated by a UNICEF panel: "Promoting girls' education should be done for no other purpose than to give women the opportunity for a healthier and happier life. But there are also substantial advantages for society as a whole. A well-educated woman has the abilities, knowledge, and confidence necessary to be a better mom, employee, and citizen. Generally speaking, Bosco (2009) affirms that the development of human rights and the democratisation of societies are to blame for the advancements made.

According to UNESCO, this is due to several factors, including the higher levels of education that women need to achieve social mobility, the shifting beliefs and attitudes regarding the place and aspirations of women in society, and their The need for increased earnings and the continued international dissemination of ideas on gender equality (UISUNESCO, 2010).

The research project also highlights the role played by international gender agendas from organisations like the

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United Nations and UNESCO, which have been particularly successful in areas of advocacy and have created normative instruments, resolutions, declarations, and recommendations to ensure and advance, among other things, the gender equality in education. Given India's history of discrimination against women, the gender gap in employment and education, and the country's current need for rapid economic growth, women's education is given a special focus in India.

It is true that there has been a rise in the proportion of female students enrolled in primary schools, which is now 48% girls to 52% boys. Unfortunately, the state does not enforce obligatory education until the secondary level, where there is a very high dropout rate of over 30% for girls, which significantly lowers their participation in further education. Even more concerning is the fact that female labour force participation has decreased, from 34% in 1999 to a low of 27% in 2015. This recent fall in female workforce participation shows that in order to eradicate centuries-old bias against women, we not only need access to education, but access to quality education.

Many Indian women, particularly those in low-income groups, rural areas, or isolated locations, lack access to education, one of the most effective tools for empowerment. Access is restricted by a number of factors. Girls are typically kept at home to assist with domestic duties or to care for younger siblings, according to traditional gender stereotypes. Older girls are discouraged from attending school by subpar facilities, particularly the absence of functional restrooms. Dropout rates frequently rise as a result of worries about the safety of teenage girls travelling long distances to attend (secondary) school. Other concerns include underage marriage and girls' poor educational expectations.

From Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, to Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, the government has recently implemented a number of enabling, affirmative measures. Initiatives include giving girls bicycles to address safety concerns and upgrading the infrastructure by installing usable restrooms to increase the retention of girls in schools. In order to ensure that women in India have access to education, digital platforms can be used to enhance access to education and can be offered through our already-existing gramme panchayat and rural development systems.

By June 2018, there will be 500 million internet users in the nation, with 87% of those users located in rural areas. Women's organisations can use e-learning as a technology tool to address concerns related to health, cleanliness, childbirth, and other information they rarely have access to. The improvement of educational quality is the other challenge. Women's employment is hampered by ingrained gender preconceptions, such as the idea that women should stay at home and are less intelligent than their male contemporaries. Women may even need to perform twice as well as their male contemporaries in order to be hired and overcome the gender stereotypes that bar them from employment.

On the one hand, this demands raising the calibre of educators, educating them about gender issues, and preparing them to embrace cutting-edge pedagogical methods that engage pupils. On the other hand, it is essential that education instil critical thinking abilities in students—boys and girls—to prepare them to meet the difficulties of the 21st century's rapidly changing world. India's educational system needs to shift away from the old method of teaching, which soon becomes out of date, and instead concentrate on teaching students "how to think" and how to solve problems under pressure.

By removing the barriers to employment currently faced by women, quality education will encourage the creation of successful role models. The emergence of these leaders and role models is essential for transforming how people view women in the community, especially in places where gender stereotypes are most deeply ingrained. It follows that when girls' self-esteem rises, they will be better equipped to actively combat gender biases and bring about societal change. We cannot afford to fail our daughters if we want to develop skilled, globally aware, and productive human capital based on a revitalised educational system.

Determinants of Gender Discrimination

The globalised world has several variables that are entirely to blame for gender inequality. These elements are listed below:

Social Elements

Patriarchal Society: The majority of the nation is characterised by strong patriarchal traditions, which place males in positions of control over women in the household and provide for their succession from father to son.

In terms of decision-making

women are less empowered than men in terms of access to public knowledge and information, legal recognition, and protection, and both inside and outside the house. This is another factor contributing to gender disparity.

Education

While ranking positions for developing and underdeveloped countries are not excellent, developed country female literacy rates are satisfied.

Gender-based violence

Women are victims of all forms of gender-based violence, including rape, sexual assault, insults to modesty, kidnapping, abduction, cruelty from a spouse or relative, trafficking of girls, dowry persecution, indecency, and other crimes.

Dowry

The dowry system in our society reinforces the idea that girls are a financial burden on their families, which furthers gender discrimination.

Cultural Aspects

Religious practise: Only males are allowed to execute religious rites for their parents' afterlife. Sons are frequently the only ones allowed to carry out their parents' funeral rites.

Support for seniors

The preference for sons, as they are thought to be more helpful than girls, is another factor that contributes to gender inequity. They are expected to fund their parents' retirement plans.

Religious practises

Another factor is that only men are allowed to execute religious rituals for the afterlife of their parents. Sons are frequently the only ones allowed to carry out their parents' funeral rites.

Son Preference

Boys are granted the only right to inherit the family name and properties in our male-dominated culture, and they are seen as adding extra status to their family.

Economic variables:

Participation in the labour force

Women and men earn differently at employment. After finishing their reproductive tasks of childbirth and raising children, a sizable portion of women enter the workforce in their mid-thirties.

Access to credit

Men and women are treated very differently in terms of status and employment opportunities.

Property Rights

Even though women are afforded the same legal rights as males to own property and inherit it, they nonetheless face discrimination in everyday life.

Employment inequality

The gender disparities of those in positions of authority and command over the management of the organisation are some of the prevalent inequities that also exist in the workplace. Compared to men, women find it more difficult to advance into professions with higher salaries. These are common causes of gender discrimination, but there are many other factors that contribute to it as well. Additionally, it varies from society to society depending on the social climate.

Gender Sensitivity and the Role of Teachers

To abolish gender discrimination or inequality, we must work to establish a society that is gender sensitive. The goal should be to build a peaceful society while developing measures for the prevention and management of violence against women. Gender sensitization is the process of challenging a stereotype to cause a change in behaviour by bringing up issues related to gender equality. Gender sensitization is the process of changing behaviour through increasing awareness of issues related to gender equality. Gender sensitization entails respecting the fundamental rights connected to gender equality for all people, but not discriminating against women and men.

Respect for people regardless of sex is aided by gender sensitivity. By promoting gender sensitivity, you may create a friendly, welcoming setting free of sexual innuendos and oppressive chauvinism that might otherwise detract from the atmosphere. In a child's early development, teachers are immensely important. Their ideas and beliefs have the power to alter young children's mental processes. When they are young, children effortlessly adopt the morals and virtues that are instilled in them. Teachers need to receive gender sensitivity training as a requirement. Through the instruction, they will be able to spread the ideal attitude of trust and respect between girls and men.

Gender equality is required in the classroom. The following roles are available for teachers

- Encourage both male and female students to take on the role of class leaders (perhaps one of each gender). Each classroom should have two monitors, a boy and a girl.

- Speak to and summon both girls and guys equally. Boys and girls should not be separated in the classroom in primary classes.

- For group activities and games, create mixed groups with both boys and girls.

- In order to dismantle gender stereotypes and barriers, try to "swap roles."

- During a lesson, have boys and girls work together on tasks like cleaning, moving furniture, and using the chalkboard.

- Create and implement activities that allow kids to accept one another on an equal footing.

Conclusion

According to the World Economic Forum (2010), we still require a genuine gender equality revolution, even though the voices of all women have been acknowledged today, human rights have been developed in their favour, societies have undergone democratic transformations, and international gender egalitarianism agendas have been established. This revolution means, in the eyes of UNESCO—another international agency that has excelled in the fields of advocacy and seeks to promote a gender-inclusive culture—that numerous difficulties and challenges are present and must be overcome (UNESCO, 1998c). Finally, it may be concluded that in order to eliminate gender gaps, the following factors need to be taken into account:

● A fervent political commitment to aiding women's growth and education.

● In connection with this, the demands of powerful women's networks and other significant stakeholders, including teachers and parents, have informed and affected policy development.

● Comprehensive initiatives that address the root cause of gender inequality in education are put into place in addition to essential and universal access for all groups. Education can help promote gender sensitization. Education alters a person's mindset by instructing and preparing them in the following ways:

1. Increasing self-confidence through taking part in diverse social, political, and economic activities.

2. Education raises one's social and familial position.

3. Reducing dependency by engaging in numerous self-activities.

4. Education helps women build their leadership skills by boosting their self-worth and confidence.

5. With the aid of higher education, social, political, and health awareness can be better comprehended at a higher level.

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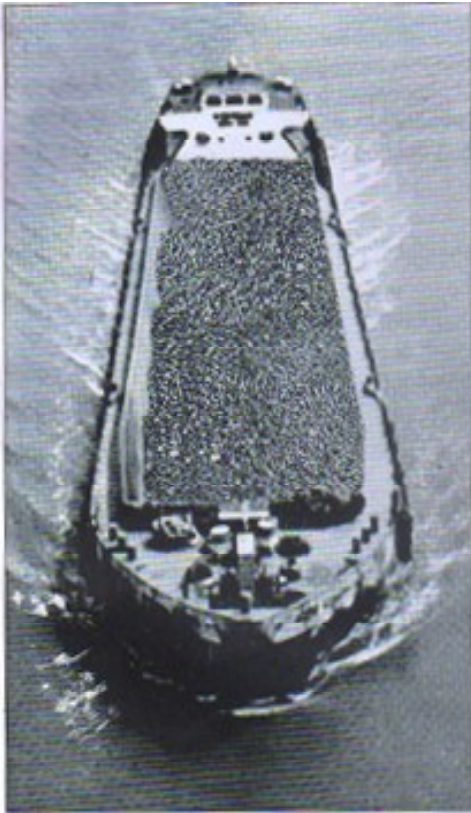
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