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**Prof. Dr. Pijus Kanti Khatua**

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## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

**Pijus Kanti Khatua**

Principal Bhatler College, Dantan and Editor-in-Chief

The latest issue, Volume 12, Number 1, 2024. The Bhatler College Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies has always been at the forefront of publishing research works in emerging areas. The multidisciplinary nature of the journal provides us with scope to approach the significant areas in a holistic manner resulting in antidisiplinary prismatic perspective. In the new century when disciplinary boundaries of the disciplines are getting effectively blurred, we insist on the principle of interdisciplinary cooperation among researchers from various fields to approach the problems from varied angles.

This issue was planned to bring out research on “General Area” following the deconstructive approach of reaching out to the centre from the margin. We are also committed to our professed mission of open-access dissemination of knowledge without any barrier. Open Access enabled by the institution helps the global scholarly community and thus helps us in reaching the SDGs.

The issue is also significant in the context of the ambitious National Educational Policy 2020 as it explores new pedagogies from the local and general contexts and follows the five pillars of NEP: Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability. The issue will excite interest among both the students and teachers. I appreciate the academic contribution of all authors who kindly responded to our invitation and contributed their articles.

I express my gratitude to our Chief Patron, Shri Bikram Chandra Pradhan for his guidance and inspiration. For the entire plan and guidance, I am thankful to the RAC, Bhatler College. I am thankful to the journal team for their untiring collective initiative to bring multidisciplinary research under one umbrella. Thanks to Dr. Prafulla Kumar Das, the Managing Editor, Dr. Pranab Barman, Dr. Kriti Ranjan Sahu and Professor Mir Ahammad Ali, Associate Editors of the journal. I convey my heartiest gratitude to the honoured Advisory and Editorial board members and peer reviewers for their valuable suggestions, criticism and continuous support in bringing this issue to our readers. Special thanks go to Prof. Thakurdas Jana for managing the technical and aesthetic aspects of the journal. I am also thankful to others who work behind the curtain for the publication of this issue. Finally, the help of the office staff and members of Bhatler College, Dantan and the press are thankfully acknowledged. Despite our best efforts, there may be some unintended errors, which we promise to rectify in our next edition.

We believe that the present issue will be warmly accepted by both scholarly and general readers. We look forward to receiving suggestions and feedback from the readers for future improvement.



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# **‘On the Pinnacle of the Paddy Flower there Rests a Drop of Dew’: Travels to Tripura in the Life and Writings of Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore**

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## **Abstract**

Even today Rabindranath Tagore’s writings, his philosophy, and his vision touch one and all shattering the geographical, cultural and psychological barriers. The poet’s life brings before us a person who ignored mapped boundaries and journeyed within his country and abroad. He was a spirit which was receptive to all cultures; he was a man who encouraged the intermingling of cultures which led to innovations in the artistic world. It is no surprise that even Tripura had left a lasting effect on the mind of the poet. Not only did the poet return to this ‘homely’ terrain time and again, but celebrated works like ‘Mukut’ (1885), *Rajashri* (1887) or *Bisorjon* (1890), and a few songs in *Raktakarabi* (1926) etc. have popularised the place among people living poles apart. Mention of it is also found in his Letters. The paper will attempt to analyse the significance of Tripura, its culture and heritage, in the life and writings of Tagore.

**Keywords** : Tagore, Travel, Tripura, Culture, Writings

## **‘On the Pinnacle of the Paddy Flower there Rests a Drop of Dew’: Travels to Tripura in the Life and Writings of Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore**

Rabindranath Tagore had travelled to many places within India and abroad. They had led to the expansion of his imagination and had influenced his writing as well. Tripura is one of the places among them. The beauty of the land, its culture and the cordial reception that he had received from the royal family had left a lasting impression on his mind. A fine spring day in the year 1890, sometimes claimed to be 1900, had brought Tagore to Tripura; the visit was but the beginning of the six more journeys that he would make braving the tedious route, the last of which was on 26 February 1926.<sup>1</sup> His experience remained encoded in his letters and literature, such as in his short story such as ‘Mukut’ (1885), the novel *Rajashri* (1887), later published as the drama *Bisorjon* (1890), and a handful of songs in the drama *Raktakarabi* (1926). The paper will analyse the history, culture, and natural geography of Tripura as they are imaged in the writings of the poet.

This paper is an inquiry into Tagore’s reason for multiple travels to Tripura. Along with this the secondary objective of this paper is that while staying in Tripura or with the culture, heritage and history of Tripura in what way Tagore succeeded to immortalize the princely state through his writings. The third objective of this paper is to study the series of letters between Tagore and the Manikyas as his extended travel writings and in what way the letters signify the immortal relationship between Tagore and Tripura. Apart from these if we treat Tagore’s travels as a part of pilgrimage then what are the things which he was assembling back with him while returning from his ‘Tirtha’ for the benevolence of his own culture.

The Tagore family bonded with the royal household of Tripura in 1836, when Maharaja Krishna Kishore sought the intervention of Prince Dwarakanath Tagore, an influential and powerful figure, to resolve a political dispute that the king was having with the British Government. Tagore's first visit furthered the relation; he had felt at home amidst the peaceful woodlands on his way to Agartala, finding himself among the Madhavi and Palash groves, the favourite of the poet. In fact, it was a strange co-incidence that when in 1881 Tagore's *Bhagno Hriday* or *The Broken Heart* reached the people, Maharaja Birchandra Manikya lost his queen Bhanumati; the king felt that the poems were the echoes of his personal grief. And the king felicitated Tagore with the title 'Kabi' or 'the poet', a recognition which he accepted with all humility. It also proved to be prophetic, because in 1926 the University of Rome honoured him with the title of 'Kabir Raja' or 'The King of the Poets.'

Tagore's newly established Ashram Vidyalaya at Santiniketan had always interested the Manikyas. Radha Kishore had called it Vedvidyalaya. Students were sent to be tutored and grants were provided from time to time to give momentum to Tagore's dreams. In fact, when Tagore had expressed his interest in introducing Manipuri dance in Santiniketan and had approached Birendra Kishore Manikya, he had responded by sending Buddhimanta Singh, who was an expert in dance; he had also requested that Singh is accompanied by his wife, who was expert in handicrafts. Tagore, too, had reciprocated by taking interest in imbibing knowledge to the students from Tripura which would prove beneficial to the land of the Manikyas, hence promoting the welfare of the State. For instance, in his letter to the king on 14 June 1912, he advises that the initiation of the pupil Soumen Chandra Debbarma, sent to Santiniketan, in forestry and ceramics would be helpful to Tripura because the land is rich in forest resources and has a Karoline soil. Later, he had requested Debbarma to send down twelve bamboo flutes for Sangeet Bhavan; they were to be provided without the air-holes and Tagore had intended them to be crafted according to the scale which the player desired to play.

Tagore's intellectual capacity had made the Manikyas request the poet's presence in forums and discussions. In 1926, on the invitation of Brajendra Kishore Manikya, he gave special talks on the editing of the *Rajmala* and the *Gita Chandrodaya*, the preservation of antiquities such as historic temples, edifices and archaeological relics etc. The monthly magazine, *Rabipatrika*, devoted the entire section 'BhaberJhuli' to Tagore. Interestingly, the first published edition opens with a dedication to him; it was, 'Rabimangol', a small poem composed by Narendra Kishore Debbarma –

জয় জয় জয় আমল উজ্জ্বল  
উদয়াচল-এর রবি।  
তোমার আলোকে, লুপ্ত আধারে  
দেখালে বিচিত্র ছবি ... (in Sengupta 150)

Hail, O Hail, Hail to the serene bright star  
The rising Sun of ours.  
In thy light, in the fleeting of the dark  
You have shown the images myriad .... (Translation mine)

The blissful moments in the Kunjaban Palace are immortalised in the five songs included in 'Raktakarabi' (1926)– 'Dole PremerDolanchampa' or 'Thus Swings the Lily of Love', 'FagunerNabinoAnande' or 'In the First Flush of Joy in Spring', 'Eso Amar Ghare Eso' or 'Come unto my Home', 'Bane Jodi Futlo Kusum' or 'If the Flower Blooms in the Woods', and 'Apon Hara Matoara' or 'Rapt in a reverie I dream of you'. The joyful

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colours of spring 1926 in Agartala had affected the poet – the *bonobithi* or the woods, the meandering pathways, the clamour of the cuckoo, the blossoming *Bokul*, *Madhavi* and *Palash*, the tender west wind on the darkening nights seem to beckon the poet time and again. ‘Raktakarobi’ upholds the splendour of spring; ‘Mukut’ and *Bisarjon* give a glimpse into the history and culture of Tripura.

The fictionalised history of Tripura pivoting around the royal household was Tagore’s short story, ‘Mukut’ or ‘The Crown’. It was first published in *Balok* Magazine in the year 1885 for the young readers. Later, in 1908, it was converted into a full-fledged prose drama and was performed by the students. The story centres on Maharaja Amar Manikya and the dispute among his four sons to ascend the throne – Rajdurlabh, Rajadhar, Amardurlabh, Jujha Singha and their warriorteacher Isha Khan. The king had ruled in 1577 and in 1581 he annexed Shrihatta (Bangladesh) with his empire. Facts and fiction merge as Tagore blends the real personalities with characters which were a part of his imagination. Isha Khan, for instance, was a chivalrous king of Bangladesh. However, Tagore, a faithful companion of the kings of Tripura, celebrates Maharaja Amar Manikya’s extension of his rule to Srihatta by subordinating the former. Thus, Amar Manikya is the Maharaj, Chandra Manikya is the Jubaraj, Indra Kumar is the Madham Rajkumar, Rajadhar is the Kanistha Rajkumar, Dhurandhar is a maternal brother, and Isha Khan is the army general. From the beginning of the play in Act I, scene 3, Tagore reminds the audience that constant reminder that the location of the story is the princely state Tripura. Practise, like that of hunting, was a feat for the young princes even in those days. References to places like Bramhadash and river Karnaphuli, which were then under the Tripura kings, are also found. For instance, Arakan promises to give ‘five hundred horses and three hundred elephants from Bramhadash’ (32) to Rajdhar. In Act II, scene iv, Isha Khan to solve the dispute over the princely crown, throws it into the Karnaphuli river (41). The last scene takes place on the bank of Karnaphuli which was originally in Chattagram, in present day Bangladesh. A glimpse into the domestic feuds which were then a part of the royal household is vivified in the other Acts. History recalls the frustration of Maharaja Amar Manikya with his sons for the rivalry over the crown; conspiracy had led to the untimely death of the eldest prince. However, Tagore gives the plot his artistic touches; he does not linger long on the crime committed or the lust for power which resulted in the snapping of the sacred familial bond.

The novel *Rajashri* (1887) was also published in *Balok*; for performance, the same was transformed into the play *Bisorjon* (1890). Kailash Chandra Singha, the editor of *Tattobodhini* Magazine, and his teacher Jadu Bhatto had once recapitulated the story as a real incident which had occurred in Tripura. It had impressed the poet to such an extent that one day as he travelled in a train from Calcutta to Deoghar, he fell asleep and dreamt of a little girl who with her father stands on the stone steps of an unidentified temple. Blood seeped down the stairs. She asked the father in a pleading voice, ‘Aetorokto keno?’ or ‘Why is blood spilled to such an extent?’ (Chakraborty 20; translation mine); she tries hard to clean the red tinge with the loose end of her saree. The perplexed father remains silent. The history of Tripura had such a fascination for Tagore that he had decided to merge the dream with a story which was set against the backdrop of Tripura. However, Tagore was meticulous about recreating the atmosphere and he wrote to Maharaja Birchandra Manikya in 1886 requesting for photographs of the ‘ancient city of Udaipur and other heritage sites in Tripura’ (Sengupta 195).

The story centres on Maharaja Gobindo Manikya and the disputes which took place among his brothers; it was a battle to procure both the religious and the political power. He had ruled in 1660 and, even today, he is fondly recalled as a noble hearted king. However, Chatra Manikya, his step brother, greedy for the throne and power, had always conspired against the king. To restore peace and to avoid conflict, the king had abandoned his kingdom; he lived as an anonymous traveller in the villages of the Reangs and in the regions of Rasang (Arakan) for seven years. The conduct of the king is a reminder of the god Mwtai Kotor taking on

a disguise and living among the Kukis (*Rajmala* 62). Probably, Tagore emphasises on the benevolence and compassion of his patron and upholds his ancestors connecting them to the fabled predecessor, Kumar, who had parlance with a god living among the men. Moreover, Tagore's Govinda Manikya evolves more than a historical persona; he is portrayed as a king and an ascetic as well. Only after the death of Chatra Manikya does Gobinda Manikya return to his kingdom to rule thereafter. Facts and fiction merge once again and in his work, Chatra Manikya becomes Nakhatra Ray, Joy Singha is introduced as the foster son of the priest Raghupati and Aparna, too, figures as a beggar girl. The readers of *Rajashri* and the audience of *Bisorjon* are aware of the tranquil waters of the river Gomoti lapping the stone stepladders of the Bhubaneswari temple which stands on its bank. Here, on an early summer morning, the king Gobinda Manikya arrives to perform his ablution accompanied by his younger brother Nakhatra Ray (5).

*Bisorjon* opens with queen Gunabati praying to the goddess in the Bhubaneswari temple so that she is blessed with a child (15). The episode is a reminder of the seven-day sacrificial rite, mentioned in the Sanskrit version of the *Rajmala*, which was performed by king Tripura to have an heir to the Tripura throne. Goats and other animals are killed to appease the god Mwtai Kotor and the barren queen, Hirabati, delivers the child after the king dies (Debnath 56). Supremacy of the Brahmin priests and their association with sacrificial rituals is spoken by the *Rajmala* in the episode of Michiliraj, the elder son of king Rajeswar, who lost his sight for attacking Mwtai Kotor for the inability to bless him with a child. The priest performs human sacrifice and appeals to the god (Debnath 63). The inhuman practise of animal sacrifice and the heartlessness of the priest is questioned in *Bisorjon* when the innocent child Hansi is perplexed seeing the blood streaming down the temple steps and disappearing into the riverbed turning its water red. Aparna cries for her little goat which she reared up like her own child; it is forcibly snatched away and sacrificed in the name of the goddess. A queen too is swayed by superstitions and is easily beguiled by the priest. Although she is a part of the royal household, she is no less ignorant than her uneducated subjects. Gunabati promises the Raghupati a sacrifice of hundred buffaloes and three hundred goats in the temple each year if she begets a child (16). Act V, scene iv takes place inside the temple premises. In the present-day Udaipur, besides the river Gomati stands the remnant of the Bhubaneswari Temple which had been immortalized by Tagore in *Rajashri* and *Bisorjon*. However, the Tipperas had become Hindus around the 15<sup>th</sup> century ('Tui-vai' 129). Oblations were paid to their ancestral deities such as Mwtai Kotor, Lampra, Mulaima, songrama, Twima, etc. By the nineteenth century other Hindu deities also came to be worshipped. So, it is not surprising that the kings offered homage to the forms of Sakti – Uma, Kali, Chatarbhuj or Shyama. It is to the goddess Shyama that the Bhubaneshwari or Tripureshwari temple is dedicated. The character of Raghupati makes one aware about the power of a Brahminical priest, his lust for political authority and his sly motivations which could affect a kingdom's well-being. *Rajashri* and *Bisorjan* also romanticise a significant aspect of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Tripura; it was a time when the state capital was shifted from Kailashsahar to Udaipur and the kings of Tripura were graced with the title of 'Manikya' by a powerful king, Goureshwar.

Although Tagore had come to Tripura only seven<sup>2</sup> times, the constant interchange of letters between the Manikyas and him are evidence of a cultural dialogue between Tripura and Santiniketan. Influenced by the Manipuri Raas Nritya, which was performed to welcome Tagore in the spring, he had introduced the colourful 'Basant Utsob' or 'The Spring Festival' in Santiniketan in 1923. The monetary support aided Tagore to expand the facilities in Santiniketan. For instance, apart from the annual grant that the Manikyas donated for the development of the school, Birendra Kishore Manikya gave a liberal sum to establish a hospital in Santiniketan to facilitate medical support to the students. The bulk of archival materials consisting of letters, written records and photographs displayed in the State Museum of Tripura (Ujantya Palace) are evidence of the high esteem in which Tagore was held by the royal family. Often his intervention was requested in the stately manners. For

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instance, Ramani Mohan Chatterjee (a relative of Tagore family) was appointed as a minister on the recommendation of Tagore. On the birth anniversary of the poet in 1941, Bir Bikram Manikya conferred him with the title of ‘Bharat Bhaskar’ or ‘The Sun of India’. Tagore was a friend, philosopher and guide to the four generation of the Manikyas.<sup>3</sup> He has brought before the world the tale of a place, insignificant and fragile as a drop of dew precariously clinging on to a paddy flower to fall or to turn into a vapour, and immortalised its culture in spite of the changing scenario at present.

Lastly, we can think about what is the importance of Tagore’s travel to Tripura in the 21st century? As an answer to our question, we can state that Tagore successfully immortalized Tripura so well that even today Tripura is remaining famous through his writings. Along with, being a friend philosopher and guide Tagore represented the Tripuri culture as a part of the wider Indian culture also. Because of these reasons the travels of Tagore to Tripura Travelled all the century long and remain as the same even much more discussed in the present-day world.

Therefore, to conclude we can state that it is not possible within a short span of article to discuss about Tagore and his travels to Tripura. There are many scopes for further research work based on Tagore’s relationship with this region. So, we can state that may be Tagore had travelled there for seven times but his writings, letters and thoughts were traveling there frequently. Ultimately the travels prove as a perfect cultural dialogue where the two cultures take part simultaneously. Ultimately, we can draw the conclusion that unlike the other travels by Tagore his travel to this princely state Tripura was a two-way travel along with the cultural exchange.

## End Notes

1. The route which Tagore undertook was Kolkata to Goalandaby a train, Goaland to Chandpur by a streamer; thereafter he by train to Gangasagar. Akhaura railway station was not there. It was ten kilometres from Gangasagar to Agartala, a route which was to be travelled via palki or an elephant (Chakraborty, Puranjan Prasad. *Rabindra Smriti Dhonno Tripura*: 36).
2. Seven times Travel -Tagore first came to Tripura in 1900, 27<sup>th</sup> March, second visit was 28<sup>th</sup> October 1901, third visit was 1st July 1905, fourth visit was 8th November 1905, fifth visit was in 4th April 1906, sixth visit was 9th November 1919 and the last visit was in 1926, 22<sup>th</sup> February. (*Rabindranath Onanno Tripura* 21,22)
3. He himself stated in his speech that “when the woodlands of Tripura have sent out invitations to their floral feast through their courier of the south wind, I have come as a friend” and “Gone, too are those days, I had the good fortune to receive great honour; it has been my privilege to receive honour even at the hands of the kings of the west... I am now in a position to assert with pride that the royal family of Tripura had earned a distinction by offering to treat as a friend ...” (Chaudhuri, Bikach. *Rabindranath in the perspective of Tripura*, P 22,23)

## Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

I, Indrani Bandyopadhyay hereby declare that this present article doesnot carry any conflit of interest.

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# Non-specific singular genitives in Bangla : Insights into the prosody-driven process of glide formation

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## Abstract

*The paper is a critical analysis of Bangla genitives chiefly in the framework of moraic theory (Hayes 1987, 1995). The insights provided by the previous studies being scanty and insufficient, it proposes to point out a definite pattern of alternations induced by the case marker /er/ 'of sth/sb'. When affixed to Bangla open stems (mono- or disyllabic), the genitive marker for non-specific singular nouns triggers glide formation, onset-formation, merger and vowel syncope. Interestingly these strategies can affect the phonological structure of either the stem coming under inflection or the case-marker itself, but never both simultaneously. The study, concentrating on the monosyllabic and disyllabic stems, postulates that, never affecting the stem-structure, glide epenthesis is purely slot-specific in the sense that it necessarily forms the onset of the trailing syllable, and in genitivizing a diphthong-final stem shares the leading syllable coda slot as well through merger. Even as a coda that functions like a geminate, it dominates a mora<sup>1</sup>. The left-edge dominant trochaic pattern of Bangla is at stake owing to glide formation, but eventually the problem is solved with either an anacrusis or hypermetrical trochee.*

**Key Words:** Bangla case, non-specific genitive, case-marker, mora, glide.

Case is 'a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads' (Blake 1994). With a very few exceptions, world languages mostly prefer suffixes as positive case markers for both nouns and pronouns that undergo such affixation. Even in exceptional cases, a prefixal possessive marker is attested either as an additional element to occur along with the dominant suffix or permissible on many other conditions restricting its frequency (Lichtenberk 2009: 254). Complying with the general phenomenon observed in possessive affixation, Bangla allows only suffixes but bans prefixes consistently across all the varieties. The pattern for singular non-specific noun undergoing case inflection is uniform—/er/ 'of sth/sb' ('of something/somebody') being the only case marker. Unlike the plural forms, it never depends on the noun's degree of animacy. It means, of the singular non-specific nouns, the

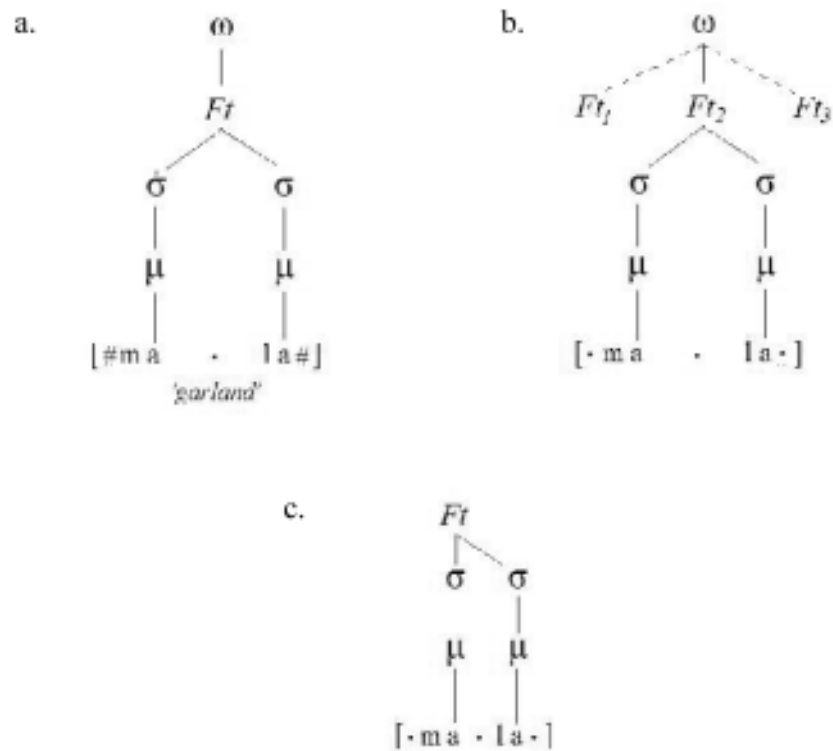


marker does not distinguish between the human and non-human (whereas it's often distinguished in plural *e.g.* /c<sup>h</sup>eleder/ 'of the boys' versus \*/rastader/ 'of the roads').

Case inflections are potential sources of acoustic or phonological alternations of vowels in many languages. In its genitivization process Bangla displays different vowel alternations like glide formation, epenthesis, phonological reduction (even syncope as an extreme form of this), triggered by the singular case-marking inflection /er/ 'of sth/sb' for non-specific nouns. Interestingly these processes can affect the phonological structure of either the stem coming under inflection or the case-marker itself, but never both simultaneously. Previous studies on Bangla case inflections and consequent vowel alternations are mainly a corpus-based cataloguing of pre- and post-alternation forms of vowels. The present study, limited to the scope of genitivized disyllables (non-specific and singular), posits to explain the prosodic motivations behind. As in Standard Colloquial Bangla (SCB) genitivization and glide formation have not been investigated for the prosodic motivations so far, this study is going to be a pioneering one.

Couched in the framework of stress and moraic theory (Hayes 1987, 1995), it aims at finding out a definite pattern of such phonological alternation, if any. Here prosodic motivations have been searched for in terms for moraic weight of syllables and the inherent requirement in Bangla of trochaic parsing, lexical or moraic, that genitivization and glide formation often fulfils. SCB displays, following the common Germanic stress system, chiefly a system of left-dominant trochaic parsing invariably with final stresslessness in the word domain, as Hung (1993) argued. In spite of a sharp preference for lexical trochees, for maintaining its rhythmic pattern Bangla can hardly depend on its weak lexical stress system that is too much mora-centric. That's why, apart from the 'lexical trochee' (Figure 1a.) and 'syllabic trochee' (Figure 1b.) that are independent of mora count, Bangla phonology frequently resorts to the other resources like 'moracic trochee' (Hayes 1995) :

Figure 1: Lexical Trochee, Syllabic Trochee and Moraic Trochee



Both these trochees (Figure 1) are assigned two syllables at the minimum (stress on the first), but the lexical trochee, unlike the syllabic one, is ideally bracketed by word boundaries. Keeping the same leftward stress pattern, the third kind of trochee is assigned (rather than two syllables necessarily) two moras, borne by segments except onset. The concept of ‘moraic trochee’ is founded upon the light-heavy contrast in syllable structures that typically characterizes the rhythmic character of Bangla. Therefore, few linguists like Faenhdrich (2005) called it a mora-timed language to some extent.

A syllabic trochee (involving two syllables) may be called a moraic trochee also, provided both the syllables are light with one mora each (compare Figures 1b. and 1c.). By impacting the syllable count or mora count, suffixation or vowel syncope in Bangla is often a potential threat to the inherent trochaic rhythm. Bangla case inflection and the resultant vowel alternation pattern can be best understood through an analysis of the problem in the framework of moraic theory, because it explains as to how the language maintains its rhythm employing different strategies.

In disyllabic contexts, Bangla phonotactics bans a /C.V/ sequence across syllables. In genitivization (as in a disyllable #ma.taɪ# ‘drunkard’+/er/), it entails consonant shifting from the

coda slot to that of the following onset (/ma.ta.l/+/er/→/ma.ta.ler/). A hiatus possibility, though prevented by the stem-final coda here, posits a real problem when the stem to be genitivized ends with a vowel (monophthong or diphthong), and produces hypothetical V.V or V.V sequences—

- i. \*V.er/ (in case of a stem having a final open syllable);
- ii. \*/VY.er/ (in case of a stem having a diphthong stem-finally).

Bangla phonotactics attests neither hiatus nor a full vowel as the second member here. The following table can give a fair idea as to how this hiatus problem is sorted out.

Table 1: Open Stem contexts triggering alternations in Genitivization

	Stem Template	Stem		Dative Marker		Surface Form	Gloss
(a)	/CVCV/	/ni.fɪ/	+	/er/	→	[#ni.fɪr#]	'of night'
		/se.tu/	+	/er/	→	[#se.tur#]	'of bridge'
		/ca.la/	+	/er/	→	[#ma.t <sup>h</sup> ar#]	'of hut'
	/CVYCV/	/coy.ki/	+	/er/	→	[#coy.kir#]	'of vigilance'
		/noy.ka/	+	/er/	→	[#noy.kor#]	'of boat'
(b)	/CVCVY/	/selaj/	+	/er/	→	[#se.la.jer#]	'of sewing'
		/polaq/	+	/er/	→	[#po.la.wer#]	'of sweet rice'

In order to remove the \*V.V (/V.er/) sequence, the concatenated context (i.e. stem-final V + suffix-initial /e/) necessitates segmental alternation. In order to avoid hiatus this inter-vocalic adjacency needs be averted by

- (i) separating the adjacent full vowels through insertion of some non-vocalic element in between, or
- (ii) reducing/omitting a vowel.

On most occasions the first strategy takes the form of glide formation and its intervocalic insertion. In case of genitivization of open-ended monoyllables glide-formation is mandatory<sup>2</sup>. But it is not possible in open disyllables, where as the second strategy some vocalic reduction or vowel syncope is often deployed instead to avoid hiatus.

Through the underlying stems (open with a monophthong or a diphthong) and post-genitivization surface representations, it shows both glide-formation and vowel alternation as highly context-dependent:

- Stem-final consonant blocks any glide formation or syncope;
- Only the stem-final vowel can lead to phonological alternations;

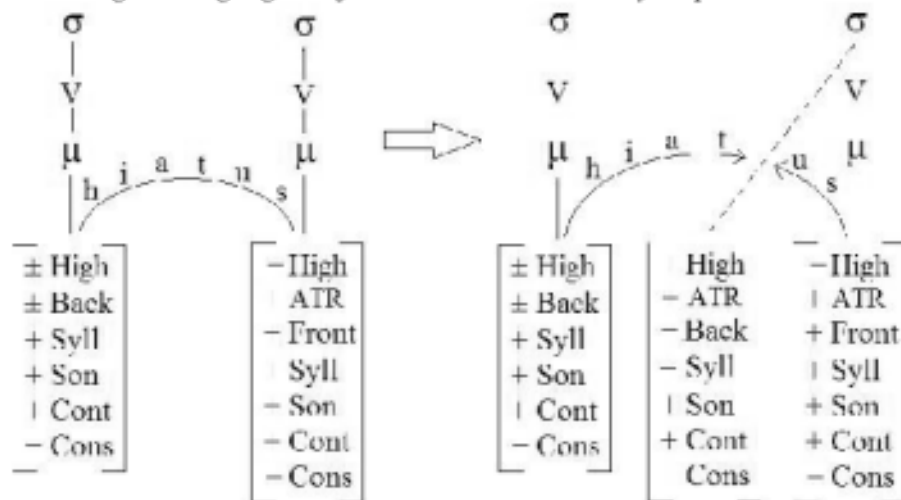
- Glide follows a stem open with a monophthong or heavy with a diphthong;
- The alternation can take place only in the non-initial (non-prominent) syllables;

Additionally, in the genitivized monophthongs, Bangla never attests vowel reduction. While undergoing genitive affixation, all monosyllabic stems—open with a monophthong or a diphthong—very consistently allow the glide-formation (*cf.* Table 1,(a)-(b)) but not in a uniform manner. To undergo genitive inflection process, the monosyllables with an open monophthongal peak (as in (1)) always receive a glide-onsetted trailing syllable (*cf.* Figures 5-7):

(1)	Stem	Genitive Surface Form	Gloss
i.	/j <sup>h</sup> i/	→ /j <sup>h</sup> i.jer/	'of maid servant'
ii.	/jɛ/	→ /jɛ.jer/	'of chord'
iii.	/lu/	→ /lu.jer/	'of heatwave'
iv.	/gõ/	→ /gõ.jer/	'of obstinacy'
v.	/ʃɔ/	→ /ʃɔ.jer/	'of hundred'
vi.	/pa/	→ /pa.jer/	'of foot'

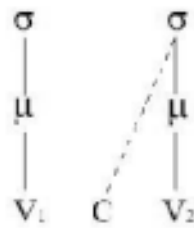
Such a glide is fully a new element inserted rather than anything compensatory or derived through any phonological alternation any way. Significantly with a monosyllabic stem the glide is always /j/ but never /w/. The following (Figure 2) shows it in the alternation, /V.e/→/V.je/:

Figure 2: Hiatus blocking through glide formation: Featurally captured



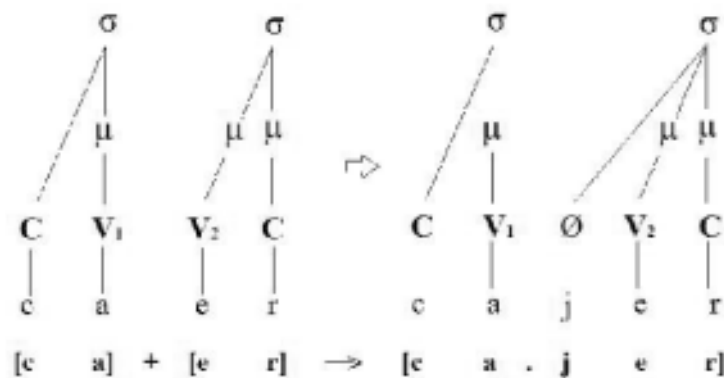
As an anti-hiatus agent, it surfaces even without any underlying input through the process called epenthesis, when it is required to satisfy a phonotactic constraint like hiatus prevention:

Figure 3: Glide-Epenthesis in Genitivization of Bangla monosyllable



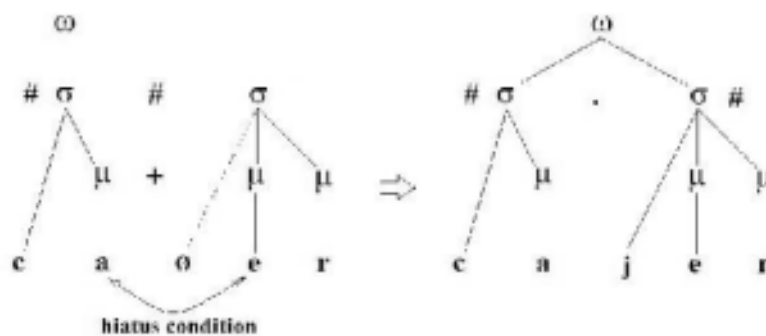
Now let us consider the figure 4 below :

Figure 4: Glide-Epenthesis in /ca/+/er/ Context



But in Bangla this epenthetic element is licensed necessarily on condition that the insertion never tampers with the moraic equation of the syllables (Figures 5-7):

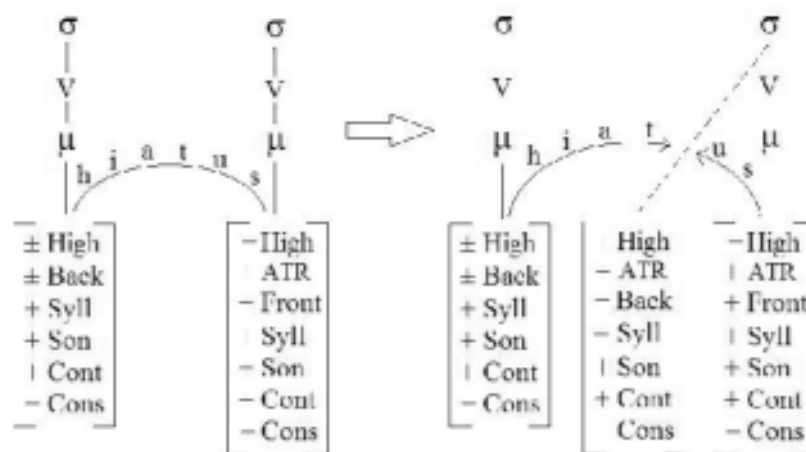
Figure 5: Mora Count preservation in Glide-formation and Hiatus prevention



Chatterji (1921) also found this kind of intervocalic glide insertion being very commonly and effectively used as a strategy to avoid hiatus in a single breath-group. The syllable boundary remains well-defined, since no common output element is shared by two prosodic slots, as it's typical of a Bangla intervocalic geminate (Lahiri & Hankamer 1988, Bera 2012).

Moraic phonology, as described by Hayes (1989), Hyman (1986) and Prince & McCarthy (1996), shows as to how in a non-diphthongal /V+glide/ sequence the V-element is always moraic to constitute the nucleus, but the glide bearing no mora is directly linked to the subsequent syllable as its onset. Thus, in Bangla genitivization the glide, whenever formed, leads to the process of onset formation as well. In general, in Bangla genitives the glide-onsetted syllable can never be the prominent head of a lexical trochee [σ.σ] or of a word. Rather, these glides mostly follow a prominent syllable and onset the non-head trailing syllable to complete the lexical trochee (with very few exceptions showing glide formation and merger like /jɔl.paj/ ‘olive’ → /jɔl.paj.jer/ or /nɔn.daj/ ‘husband of a bride’s sister-in-law’ → /nɔn.daj.jer/, where the glide onsetted syllable comes as a hypermetrical element added to the lexical trochee [σ.σ/σ].

Figure 6: Hiatus blocking through glide formation: Featurally captured



Now let us look at some of the motivations behind such alternations to find answers to the questions:

- [a] when is glide/vowel syncope to come into effect to avoid hiatus?
- [b] why there is no glide formation after a monophthong-final disyllable /σ.CV/, whereas it's formed always after a monosyllable, open with a monophthong, *i.e.* /CV/? How such a monophthong negotiates with the suffix-initial /e/?
- [c] why is glide formation to follow always any open monosyllabic stem, monophthong-final or diphthong-final? and
- [d] Why is there glide+ merger simultaneity in the diphthong-final stems always?

Primarily it can be said, while in case of genitivization of open-ended monosyllables glide-formation is mandatory, but not so in open disyllables that often deploy vowel syncope to avoid hiatus. The following (Table 2) summarizes the different ways the strategies of hiatus blocking in Bangla genitive case inflection:

Table 2: General pattern of Bangla Genitivization-induced alternations

Domain (Open Stem)	Concatenated Context: V/VV# + /er/ (Suffix)	Alternation Strategy	Specification
Monosyllabic	/V.e/	Glide Formation	Direct Onset Formation
Mono-/Di-syllabic	/VV.e/		Coupled with Merger
Disyllabic	/V.e/	Vowel Reduction	Syncope (in the Stem) Syncope (in the Suffix)

It is evident that, any open monosyllabic stem (dominated by primary prominence) is resistant to vowel reduction that affects only the non-prominent slots. As in Bangla primary prominence is mostly on the first syllable (Chatterji 1926, 1970, 1993, Hayes & Lahiri 1991, Das Mandal *et al.* 2002, 2007), a disyllable (closed or open with a diphthong) constitutes a lexical trochee [ $\sigma$ . $\sigma$ ] with the non-prominent syllable to trail. But still this weak trailing syllable also can block reduction through moraic heaviness. Only a disyllable open with a monophthong can lead to vowel reduction (mostly syncope), while undergoing genitivization. Through the analysis of more data on open disyllabic stems my paper aims at finding out a definite pattern, if any, of any vocalic change at the phonological level induced by genitivization.

Bangla monosyllable attracts prominence by default—through moraic heaviness when closed, through an allophonic vowel lengthening when open (Ghosh 1996, Mitra 2002), that turns the codaless monophthong bimoraic (Figure 2a.). Chiefly because of quantity sensitive prominence system in Bangla and the trochaic rhythm, the vocalic behavior (especially of the mid vowels) is highly prosody-regulated. As an exception to the trochaic pattern, primary prominence can shift from the first syllable to the second when the first is open and the second closed (Chatterji 1928, Vijayakrishnan 2002). But in disyllabic domain this shift is not possible, since it can take place on conditions that the second syllable—

- (a) follows a light one;
- (b) is heavy itself; and
- (c) is never the word-final.

(Alber 2002: 43)

The secondary prominence, though like the primary accent sensitive to the moraic weight of syllables, falls in an alternative fashion on the odd syllables thereon (but the study being on only disyllables, secondary prominence is redundant here). Thus, the prominence pattern, conversant with the of lexical trochee template [σ.σ], makes all the even-numbered syllables prosodically weak, e.g. [σ.σ/σ.σ/σ.σ/], as in /pòr.ɔ.bèk.k<sup>h</sup>on.rò.to/ ‘busy with observation’. Corresponding to the even syllable weakening, the locality of this phonological change under discussion is always confined to the weaker prosodic slot, i.e. the second syllable. As such, it testifies well to the initial-stress theory and trochaic parsing in Bangla.

As all the monosyllabic stems like those in (3) and (5) are prominent, they should ideally resist any alternation as per the universal rule of ‘hyper-articulation’ in prominent syllable (Lindblom 1990). While undergoing affixation, in order to avoid vowel alternation stem-finally, any vowel adjacency (potential source of hiatus) is to be averted. It is fulfilled by the formation of glide and its assignment to the onset slot of the non-head weak syllable (Figures 4-7) that is word-final and consequently non-prominent (Alber 2002). That means, this anti-hiatus glide is necessarily assigned to a syllable (as its onset) that is prosodically weak in spite of being bimoric. Monosyllabic stems in (1) and (2) testify to this rule, but those ending with a diphthong, as in (2), offer more complications than mere glide-formation:

(2)	Stem	Genitive Surface Form	Gloss
	i. /b <sup>h</sup> aj̣/	→ /b <sup>h</sup> aj̣er/	‘of brother’
	ii. /boj̣/	→ /boj̣er/	‘of book’
	iii. /daç̣/	→ /daj̣er/	‘of responsibility’
	iv. /b <sup>h</sup> əç̣/	→ /b <sup>h</sup> əj̣er/	‘of fear’
	v. /laʊ̣/	→ /laẉer/	‘of gourd’
	vi. /ɟ <sup>h</sup> aʊ̣/	→ /ɟ <sup>h</sup> aẉer/	‘of casuarina’
	vii. /dãʊ̣/	→ /dãẉer/	‘of prey’
	viii. /mẽʊ̣/	→ /mẽẉer/	‘of cat mewing’

The complication arises from the omission of the stem-final half-vowel in the diphthongal peak /ṾṾ/ in the surface representation.



Figure 7: Representation of Diphthong

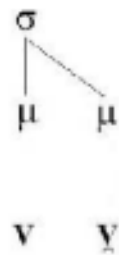


Figure 8: Glide-Formation & Merger in Bangla Genitivization

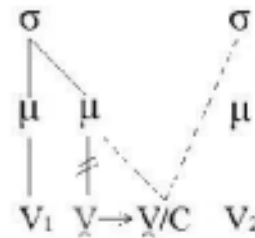
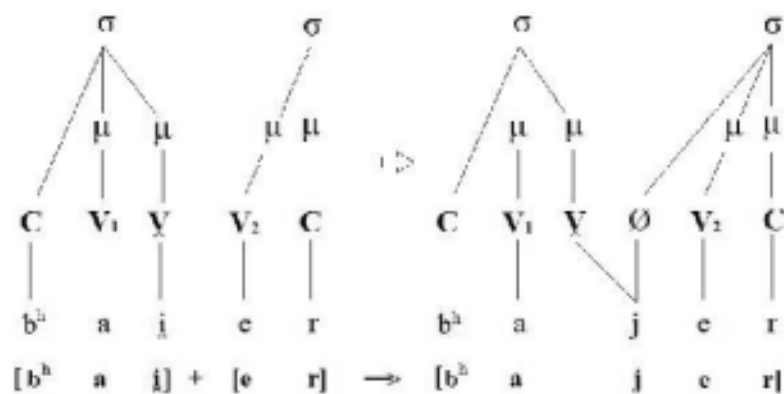


Figure 9: Genitivization of a Monosyllabic Stem: Glide-Formation and Merger in /N $\bar{Y}$ /+/er/ Context



As per the general assumption, the nucleus of a prominent syllable must have ‘hyper-articulation’ and consequently be resistant to any vocalic alternation (Lindblom 1990). If, as he claimed, vowel reduction is a product of non-prominence and resultant ‘hypo-articulation’, we have to search elsewhere for the motivation behind such post-affixation omission of the stem-final / $\bar{Y}$ / despite prominence, as mentioned in (3).

Thus, with the monosyllabic stems, it’s observed, while undergoing genitivization, the stem-final vowel behavior and the process of glide formation vary significantly depending upon syllable structure of the stem. If the monosyllabic stem is open but light, then the glide is formed to occupy the trailing syllable onset slot only. But when the stem is heavy with a diphthong, beside that glide-formation, the stem final diphthong is split into a full vowel and half vowel, the latter being merged with the gliding onset of the following syllable. As such, the syllable boundary is not very well-defined because of the bipositional representation of the output element, that is the glide /j/ shared by two prosodic slots (Figures 10-12). Consequently, the head syllable has maintained its moraic heaviness even after the loss of the stem-final half-vowel at

the surface level. Thus, the pattern of alternations taking place in the genitivization of all the monosyllabic stems is as the following:

Table 3: Alternation schema for monosyllabic stem genitivization

Pattern of Alternation ►	Prosodic		Segmental			
	Syllabic Gain	Prominence Shifting	Glide Formation	Merger	V-Syncope	
					In Suffix	In Stem
Stem Structure ▼						
Closed: /VC/ or /CVC/	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Open: /CV/ (monophthong-final)	✓	×	✓	×	×	×
Open: /CVY/ (diphthong-final)	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×

Bangla stems, disyllabic or monosyllabic, always receive the primary prominence word-initially. But in genitive-induced glide formation, prominence shift is attested by disyllabic stems but not by the other, since prominence can never dominate any final syllable in Bangla. In the post-inflection form of an open monosyllabic stem the intersyllabic glide becomes the onset for the newly-formed second syllable (*cf.* Table 4 below). On one hand, after genitivization it fulfills the trochaic requirement at the lexical level ensuring the disyllabic word minimum, as Vijaykrishnan (2002) talked about.

Table 4: Comparative alternation pattern in genitivization: monosyllabic stems (a) versus disyllabic stems (b)

(a)	Monosyllabic stem		
	Bi-moraic		Mono-moraic
UF	/cál/	/c <sup>h</sup> áj/	/cá/
Glide-formation	—	/aj#e/ → /aj.je/	/a#e/ → /a.je/
Vowel syncope	—	—	—
SF	[cá.ler]	[c <sup>h</sup> áj.jer]	[cá.jer]

(b)	Disyllabic stem			
		With 2 <sup>nd</sup> Syllable Bimoraic	With 2 <sup>nd</sup> Syllable Monomoraic	
UF	/cálak/	/cò.laj/	/cá.la/	/sottɔ/

Glide-formation	—	/σ.laj#er/ →/σ.laj.jer/	—	—
Vowel syncope	—	—	/σ.la#er/ →/σ.lar/	/σ.to#er/ →/σ.ter/
SF	[c̣a.la.ker]	[co.laj.jer]	[c̣a.lar]	[ṣot.ter]

But on the other hand, it leads to another pertinent question as to why a diphthong-peaked monosyllable like /boj/ 'book' or /c<sup>h</sup>aj/ 'ash' is also followed by glide formation while undergoing genitivization (e.g. /boj/+er/→/bojer/ or /c<sup>h</sup>aj/+er/→/c<sup>h</sup>ajer/) in spite of that the word with its longer vowel sequence already meets the trochaic need at the moraic level. Here the simple answer is: Bangla phonotactics call for a possible trochee, but prioritizing a lexical one over the moraic or syllabic. A monosyllable like /ca/ 'tea' or like /boj/ 'book' that somehow fulfills the trochaic need at the moraic level—the first by creating a virtual disyllable through monosyllabic vowel lengthening (Ghosh 1996, Mitra 2002), but the second by maintaining the inherent bimoraic structure of a diphthong. But the vowels in either of /ca/ or /boj/ undergo quantitative reduction (temporally shortened in the first instance, and in the latter the last member in the diphthong made a half-vowel) after affixation and syllable-augmentation, because Bangla prefers a lexical trochee [#σ.σ#] to syllabic trochee [σ.σ.] or moraic trochee [σ<sub>μ</sub>].

In Bangla, compared to the monosyllabic stem, the disyllabic stem domain offers, even in pre-affixation state, a variety of phonological contrasts across syllables: prominent-nonprominent, strong-weak, light-heavy. As a result, the alternation strategies involved in genitivization of Bangla disyllabic stem is even more complex, more context- and position-sensitive. When a disyllabic stem undergoes genitivization, Bangla employs both the alternation strategies, glide-insertion and deletion (cf. Table 2), but highly depending upon the context. Two points categorically made already are pivotal to our concern— first, genitivization-induced vowel alternation never affects the word-initial (leftmost) syllable that is always prominent, and secondly, mid-vowels are relatively less stable than the corner vowels that stem-finally never undergo syncope. Keeping this in mind, the following is going to throw some more light on the effect of quantity-sensitive prominence on Bangla vowels, prosodic effect on licensing restrictions especially on the mid-vowels occurring in the alternation-prone weak prosodic slot.

In a disyllable the first vocalic slot is least marked in the sense that all monophthongs can surface there freely. Dan (1992) and Sanyal (2010) confirmed the markedness of the non-prominent second slot, where there is a complete ban on /ɛ/ and partial ban on /ɔ/ word-finally in

disyllables. The ban on the low-mid /ɔ/ is partial because it often surfaces as /o/ in even (prosodically weak) syllables and word-finally. Contradicting the observation of Sanyal (2010) that /ɔ/ can occur in such contexts provided it's preceded by [+High] vowel (e.g. /big<sup>h</sup>no/ 'interruption', /c<sup>h</sup>iddrɔ/ 'hole', /judd<sup>h</sup>ɔ/ 'war'), I argue that, SCB fully bans /ɔ/ also in that given context and position, unless the low-mid vowel forms the peak of a closed second syllable preceded by a [+High] peak, e.g. /bipɔd/ 'danger', /fik<sup>h</sup>ɔr/ 'apex', /fuk<sup>h</sup>ɔr/ 'pig', /kufɔl/ 'well-being' etc. (whereas, \*/big<sup>h</sup>no/→[big<sup>h</sup>no], \*/c<sup>h</sup>iddrɔ/→[c<sup>h</sup>iddro], \*/judd<sup>h</sup>ɔ/→[judd<sup>h</sup>o]).

As regards the behaviour of the four Bangla the mid-vowels in the non-prominent word-final slot of disyllabic nouns where the alternation is to take place, it can be summarized as:

- the front high-mid /e/ is very limited lexically but favoured when harmonized  
(e.g. Lexical: [c<sup>h</sup>ele] 'boy', [kaste] 'scythe',  
Harmonic: [p<sup>h</sup>ite] 'tape', [hire] 'diamond', [fike] 'rope hanger' etc.);
- the front low-mid /ɛ/ is fully banned (\*#CV<sub>1</sub>C<sub>n</sub>ɛ#);
- the back high-mid /o/ occurs much less lexically than phonologically  
(e.g. Lexical: [kalo] 'black', [b<sup>h</sup>alo] 'good' etc.  
Prosodic: [netro] 'eye', [sotto] 'truth', [rɔkto] 'blood', [sammo] 'equality' etc.  
Harmonized: [mukto] 'pearl', [cuɔo] 'peak', [d<sup>h</sup>ulo] 'dust', etc.); and
- the back low-mid /ɔ/ is also fully banned even though it follows any V<sub>[+High]</sub> peak  
(e.g. \*/c<sup>h</sup>iddrɔ/ 'hole', \*/judd<sup>h</sup>ɔ/ 'war' etc.).

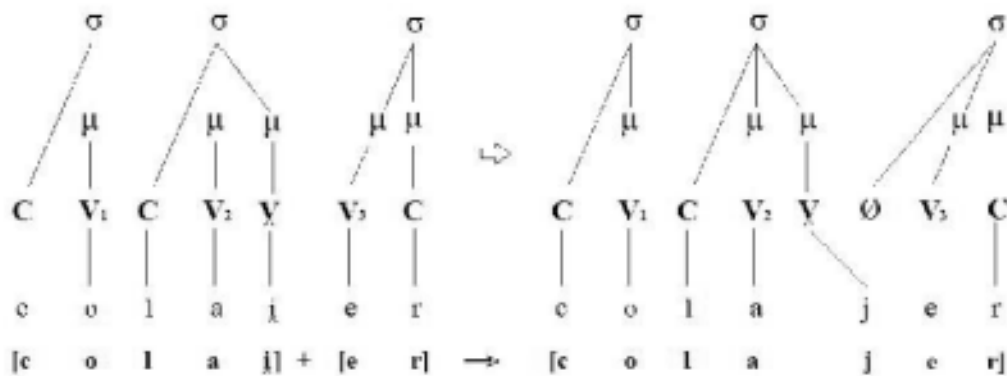
As regards V-to-V interaction across syllables, beside the prosody-regulated system of Bangla mid-vowel licensing (Dan 1992, Sanyal 2010), the domain also imposes restrictions on some intervocalic combinations. Thus, in the inter-syllabic positional syntagm of Bangla disyllables, vowel combinations ending with a quantal vowel are always unmarked; but some others are marked (e.g. /iCa/ and /uCa/ because of the progressive VH effect; /VCɔ/ and /VCɛ/ because of the word-boundary effect).

Only the diphthong-final disyllables allow a subsequent glide as the onset of the final syllable (cf. Table 1, (b) and (1) below), whereas those ending with a monophthong receive a syncopated case marker (cf. Table 1, (a)). On one hand, glide-formation is here necessarily accompanied by the merger and the glide occupies two consecutive prosodic slots inherently presenting a moraic contrast (exactly as the Figure 4 shows). Examples follow :

(3)	<b>Stem</b>	<b>Genitivized Surface Form</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
	i. /colaj/	→ [colajer]	'of country liquor'
	ii. /sanaj/	→ [sanajer]	'of clarinet'
	iii. /bidaɛ/	→ [bidajer]	'of exit'
	iv. /sɔmɔɛ/	→ [sɔmɔjer]	'of time'
	v. /polaɔ/	→ [polawer]	'sweet rice'
	vi. /g <sup>h</sup> eraɔ/	→ [g <sup>h</sup> erawer]	'surrounding'

Thus, glide and onset-formation can happen in genitivizing a disyllabic stem provided diphthong makes the stem-final syllable heavy and the heaviness is retained through sharing the merger-induced glide as the mora-dominated coda of that syllable (cf. Figures 9, 10):

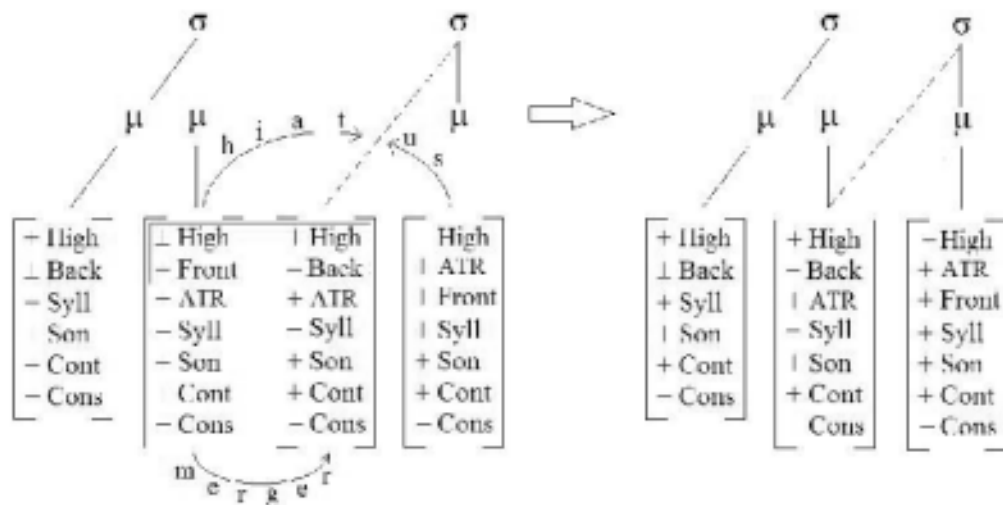
Figure 10: Genitivization of Disyllable: Glide-Formation/Merger in /NV/+/er/ Context



The concatenated /V+V/ sequence (i.e. /V+e/ in my study) and the glide insertion might have produced a redundant /NV.je/ or /NV.we/ sequence, as underlyingly it's so. But at the surface level they are truncated respectively into /N.je/ or /N.we/ without the stem-final /V/ fulfilling the requirement of gestural simplification or motor control on the speech kinetics. All the diphthong ended stems necessarily allow glides as well as merger. The following figures (Figures 11, 12) show it in the alternations /V<sub>1</sub>+e/ or /V<sub>ɛ</sub>+e/ → /Vje/ and

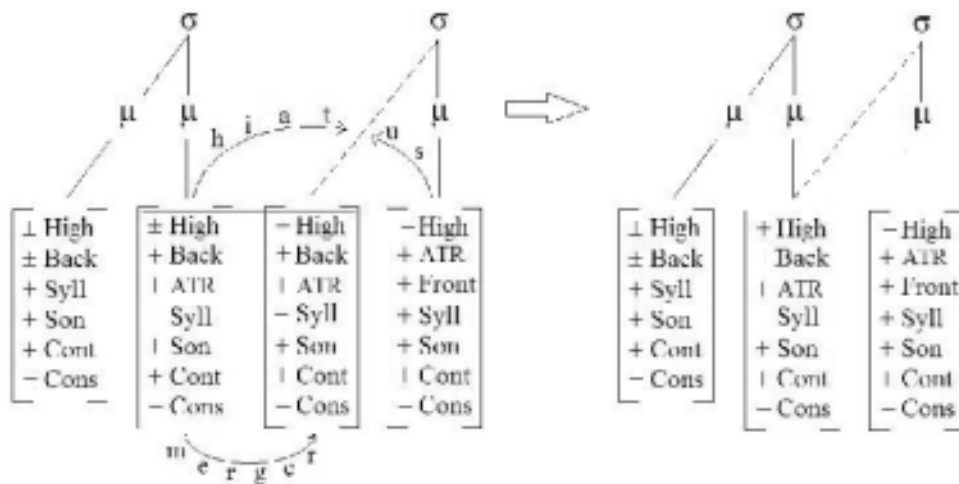
/V<sub>ɔ</sub>+e/ or /V<sub>ɔ</sub>+e/ → [Vwe] respectively (the red bracketed area indicates the minimum segmental contrast between the diphthong-final non-syllabic and the following glide, the contrast to be neutralized through the merger) :

Figure 11: Hiatus Blocking through Glide-Formation and Merger  
in /N<sub>1</sub>+e/ or /N<sub>2</sub>+e/Context- Featurally captured



Unlike monosyllables, disyllabic nouns hardly end with the diphthongal cluster /V<sub>u</sub>/, except in proper nouns. Therefore, the glide formation /V<sub>u</sub>+e/→/V<sub>u</sub>.we/ mandated by the concatenated sequence /V<sub>u</sub>+e/ is very restricted. But the one leading to /V<sub>o</sub>+e/→/V<sub>o</sub>.we/ is very frequent:

Figure 12: Hiatus Blocking through Glide-Formation and Merger  
in /N<sub>o</sub>+e/ Context- Featurally captured



Thus, at the first step, glide insertion (say, rule A) and onset formation (say, rule B) are in a ‘feeding’ relationship (Kiparsky 1968); the first rule paves way for the second rule to apply.

Feeding Rule : A feeds B if the application of A creates additional inputs to B.

Here, as soon as the glide is inserted in the intervocalic position, only then it makes it possible for the onset formation rule to apply in the second syllable. Next, at the second step, this rule B

again feeds the vowel merger rule (say, rule C). Thus, it can be said, B feeds C because the application of B creates additional inputs to C.

A diphthong-final disyllabic stem in Bangla has hardly a ‘heavy’ leading syllable, as in (3) above. Though not a moraic trochee [ $\sigma_\mu\sigma_\mu$ ], such a disyllable is always a lexical trochee [ $\sigma\sigma$ ] with prominence on the first syllable consistently. Therefore, as soon as genitivization turns the disyllable into a trisyllable, this glide attracts the prominence and make it move progressively to the preceding slot. Consequently a perfect lexical trochee (*i.e.* stem) becomes an anacrustic trochee (*e.g.* /**kó**.nuj/ ‘elbow’ → /ko.**núj**-jer/ [ $\sigma$ .[ $\sigma$ . $\sigma$ ])).

With a few exceptions, in glide formation, mandatorily the primary prominence (originally on the first syllable) has a shift to the second syllable (syllables in bold letters are accented), *e.g.*

- (4)            /**kó**ʔaj/ ‘scoudron’        + /er/ → \*/**kó**ʔajjer/ → [kɔʔájer];  
                  /**sána**j/ ‘clarinet’        + /er/ → \*/**sána**jjer/ → [sanájer];  
                  /**já**ma:j/ ‘son-in-law’    + /er/ → \*/**já**ma:jjer/ → [jamájer];  
                  /**có**la:j/ ‘country liquor’ + /er/ → \*/**có**la:jjer/ → [colájer].

Glide-formation is blocked by any disyllable when the stem-final vowel is a monophthong and thereby makes the second syllable monomoraic. Glide formation and tri-syllabification is not allowed, since only a prominent peak can precede a glide, but the stem-final syllable being monomoraic cannot draw the prominence. In that case, vowel syncope in the non-prominent syllable is left as the sole option to maintain the required lexical trochee template [ $\sigma\sigma$ ] even after inflection.

That glide-formation is slot-specific and prosodically motivated is evident when the same root forms the monosyllabic stem and the trailing syllable of a disyllable:

(5)	UR	Gloss	SR	Genitivized	Process
	/fɔ/	‘hundred’	[fɔ]	→ [fɔjer]	Glide epenthesis
	/ékʃɔ/	‘one’	[ékʃɔ]	→ [ékʃɔr]	Vowel Syncope (in suffix)
	/c <sup>h</sup> á/	‘offspring’	[c <sup>h</sup> á]	→ [c <sup>h</sup> ájjer]	Glide epenthesis
	/bác <sup>h</sup> a/	‘baby’	[bác <sup>h</sup> a]	→ [bác <sup>h</sup> ar]	Vowel Syncope (in suffix)
	/j <sup>h</sup> i/	‘maid’	[j <sup>h</sup> i]	→ [j <sup>h</sup> ijjer]	Glide epenthesis
	/bónj <sup>h</sup> i/	‘sister’s daughter’	[bónj <sup>h</sup> i]	→ [bónj <sup>h</sup> ir]	Vowel Syncope (in suffix)
	/pò/	‘son’	[pò]	→ [pòjer]	Glide epenthesis
	/b <sup>h</sup> ájpò/	‘nephew’	[b <sup>h</sup> ájpò]	→ [b <sup>h</sup> ájpor]	Vowel Syncope (in suffix)

As the peak of the trailing syllable, the monophthong never leads to the glide formation since the suffix vowel syncope would maintain the lexical trochaic pattern. But on the contrary the same monophthong as the monosyllabic prominent peak attests glide formation in the following onset slot to convert the moraic trochee [ $\sigma_{\mu i}$ ] into a lexical one [ $\sigma.\sigma$ ].

Thus, in genitivization of non-specific singular nouns, an open (without a coda) monosyllabic stem necessarily allows a glide for the sake of fulfillment of prosodic constraints. The paper has made an attempt to offer some insights into where, how and why the glide is formed as an element sharing both the coda and onset positions in order to avoid hiatus on one hand and to comply with the syllabic or prosodic constraints fulfilling the requirements of phonotactic agendum in Bangla.

### Word notes:

- 1 Moras are the units of weight that characterize the syllable nucleus itself and any segment following the nucleus in the syllable.
- 2 Mandatory glide formation in genitivization of the open monosyllabic stems:

Stem Template	Stem		Dative Marker		Surface Form
/CV/	/g <sup>h</sup> i/ 'ghee'	+	/er/	→	[#g <sup>h</sup> i.jer#]
	/ca/ 'tea'	+	/er/	→	[#ca.jer#]
/CVY/	/boj/ 'book'	+	/er/	→	[#bo.jer#]
	/lau/ 'gourd'	+	/er/	→	[#la.wer#]

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# Leadership Importance in Organizational Behavior

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## ABSTRACT

Organizational behavior is the study of humans and organizations and the relationships that exist between them. In the past years, various institutions followed different structures and cultures of monetary benefits to encourage their employees to work hard, but with the passage of time, these traditional methods are now not sufficient. To study this change, research is conducted. The study analyzes the various non monetary factors, organizational structure, and cultural relations, and it defines how leadership leads to equality and diversity.

**Key Words :** Leadership Organization Culture Politics

## INTRODUCTION

Analyzing, predicting, and managing individual interactions that take place inside organizations, whether it be individually or as a group, is known as organizational behavior (OB). A good company requires clearly defined leadership. When an organization's behavior and culture change or move, the leadership also does. A company needs strong leadership because it encourages staff to perform better, boosts employee morale, and makes it easier to adapt to change. By developing accountability and obligation among the organization's employees, leadership supports organizational success. In essence, it raises the worth of organizations.

**A) Motivation** is an important factor that forces human beings to achieve their goals by giving their best. Various positive factors urge employees to work hard. (Jain et al, 2019, p. 65(2) )Motivating people using methods beyond payment and salary increases is becoming increasingly important in organizations, such as:

1)**Respect and acknowledgment:** Two crucial elements of motivation in a workplace are respect and acknowledgment. Giving compliments and commendations to workers not only inspires them to feel satisfied and valued but also promotes good work and motivates them to keep doing the things that lead to success. The motivation of employees to continue these activities increases when positive employee behavior is more frequently acknowledged.

2)**favorable corporate environment:** Corporate success can have a big impact on employee motivation in the workplace. When a company has a strong business environment that encourages people and regularly brings them together, many people feel more appreciated and like their jobs more.

3)**Avenues for professional growth:** When there are multiple options for self-improvement, employees frequently feel more engaged at work. Paying employees the chance to develop their abilities and become more effective in their jobs creates a sense of satisfaction and success that serves as a potential determinant for workers. Additionally, giving staff members the opportunity to grow their abilities can eventually affect a company's effectiveness as a whole, creating a win-win scenario for everyone.

4)**Set work schedules:** Another excellent strategy to motivate your workforce is to provide workers with the option of setting their respective schedules or working schedule flexibility. Employees can effectively meet family requirements, holidays, and other daily obligations with more workplace flexibility than they can with more rigid ones.

5)**Free and open conversation:** Employee motivation at work generally increases when they feel comfortable speaking up with the administration and their coworkers. Feeling cut off from others might cause feelings of loneliness and make workers wonder if management is aware of their progress. Free and open conversation allows learners to actively participate and communicate with other fellows and superiors. (Ayman Daif-Allah et al, 2016, p. 110(2))

6)**Keeping informed on organizational problems:** Workers who are informed on current business issues feel like they are a part of something bigger than just their full-time job. Making the effort to update teammates on recent company news once a week or once a month is a fantastic way to keep employees informed and assure job satisfaction.

**B)** Organizational culture and structure are inextricably tied and have a major impact on a company's productivity. It is crucial to comprehend organizational culture, structure, and performance outcomes in order to understand the complementary influence of organizational culture and structure on business success.

**Organizational structure** is defined as a formal framework of job duties and authority relationships that govern how employees and supervisors communicate. It also contributes to a control and command structure that guides managers in organizing, planning, regulating, and directing organizational operations. Every organization operates differently. Organizations have different timelines, cultures, and policies, among other things. This facilitates the foundation of the organizational structure. A company's organizational structure is based on a variety of factors.

**Functional structure:** Groups are formed in organizations that adhere to the functional structure based on the individual talents required to carry out a certain function. Organizational structure provides a framework that defines the relationship between different jobs and how people and groups work together to achieve targets. (Ahmady et al., 2016, p. 455(2))

**Product-based:** In these organizations, the groups are formed in accordance with a certain product. Organizations with a wide range of products use such a framework.

**Geographically based:** Each sector is represented in such organizations under several regional organizational units. The organizations have autonomous units organized by region. They were established to cater to a particular market or area.

**Organizational culture:** The beliefs, values, and behaviors rationed by the organization's employees and executives are referred to as organizational culture. (Bamidele,Rasak, 2022,p6(1)) The lifestyle of a company affects how the organizational structure works. A positive culture can work as a competitive advantage for the company (Mohelska and Sokolova, 2015, p. 1012(1)). Both are thought to be connected. The corporate culture encourages employees to collaborate and work well as a team to accomplish the organization's goals.

**Normative Culture:** It is a type of culture in which the firm's norms and processes are predetermined and guidelines are established as per the company policy.

**Pragmatic culture:** consumers and other stakeholders are prioritized in a pragmatic culture. In a pragmatic culture, the primary goal of employees is customer fulfillment.

**Academy Culture:** Companies that adhere to this culture employ qualified personnel. The accountabilities are assigned in accordance with the employees' backgrounds, educational backgrounds, and job experiences.

How an institution's structure and its culture affect each other The institutional design of a firm is in some ways defined by its organizational culture, but the culture is also somewhat defined by the structure. The association between institutional structure and culture is mutually dependent. The administrative structure of a body in the corporate world affects the ideas, aptitude, and values that form the job culture. A company's lifestyle will probably show a dearth of flexibility and mastery at the bottom levels if the institutional structure is rigidly hierarchical and decision-making power is concentrated at the top. A company's culture is likely to be more autonomous, adaptable, and responsible if the command structure is decentralized, with shared responsibility and authority at all levels. Although the employees are receptive to their organizational structure, corporations with strong organizational cultures are able to successfully modify their cultures. For instance, coworkers can support the team if they are really devoted to the organizational structure, and if the team wants to change the culture, they place more emphasis on new goods or services. To succeed, they will need to adapt to new organizational and positioning strategies used by the business.

### **C) leader contribution to the effectiveness of equality, diversity, and inclusion policies.**

The development and promotion of workplace culture is a key responsibility of organizational leaders. Leaders are expected to provide the framework within which subordinates will operate within a company. Leaders must demonstrate these principles through their behavior and actions to create an atmosphere that represents the organization's objective norms. It is the responsibility of the leader to recognize that equality, diversity, and inclusion policies must be taken into account regardless of the size of the business because they impact everyone. With the shift to hybrid working, maintaining a diverse workplace will be essential for employee retention. Leaders are much more willing to support diversity in the workplace when they understand its advantages. In light of this, it's crucial to highlight the benefits of having a diverse workforce on both a personal and professional level. To ensure that being inclusive doesn't feel like simply another burden, leaders should also have a plan for creating a friendly workplace with resources that are easily accessible. It will help to build trust within the employees (Muteswa, 2016, p. 138(2))

### **Here we are taking an example of the IBERDROLA COMPANY**

IBERDROLA, which has a more than 170-year history, is one of the greatest electricity businesses in the world in terms of stock market capitalization, the world's top generator of wind energy, and a leader in the energy industry. The IBERDROLA, S.A. Trustees have the authority to create, evaluate, and constantly revise the Leadership and Sustainability System, and more specifically, to authorize and modify the organizational policies, which include the rules regulating the conduct of the company included in the group over which the company has legal control. The Board of Directors hereby approves this Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy to carry out its duties, in recognition of its contribution to its workforce as its primary strategic asset and the foundation of its company goals, and by the requirements of the Resources and Human Capital Framework Policy.

**Purpose:** By adopting a management and leadership model devoted entirely to professional growth and standard of living, all in compliance with the applicable standards in each country, and continuing to follow best international practices, including the provisions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this policy aims to foster an environment that enhances equal opportunity, non-discrimination, diversity, and inclusion of the professionals of the companies belonging to the group.

1. Equal opportunity is one of the critical elements of career progression, and the promotion therein involves equitable rights to encourage the personal and professional success of the group's employees.
2. Diversity refers to the collection of qualities that distinguish individuals from one another; it also refers to the diversity of attributes, both visible and hidden, that each individual brings to this platform.
3. Contrarily, inclusion refers to how alternatives are created and individual differences are recognized for everyone to reach their full potential. In other words, a deliberate approach that prioritizes creating the organizational structures, procedures, processes, and culture that foster respect for each individual's unique qualities while simultaneously encouraging a sense of belonging that makes individuals feel valued and a part of a group or organization

#### **Contribution of leader in equality, diversity, and inclusion policies**

1. **The leader should be a good listener.** The best leaders are those who genuinely contribute to company culture by questioning the status quo. They aren't scared to lead change and ask challenging questions about what is and isn't working. Listening from the bottom up is the finest thing that leaders can do.
2. **Setting a good example:** Leadership is essential if a business is to successfully implement diversity and inclusion efforts. This includes acknowledging the diversity of the allocation of funds and resources, utilizing inclusive language, and participating in internal activities. As a leader, you have a responsibility to make your organization more inclusive, so understanding more about your viewpoint and advantages may be a useful starting step. Often, this starts with assessing your existing privilege and being willing to admit and appreciate it.
3. **Prevent hierarchy.** Decisions made by a variety of individuals inside your organization will be the most inclusive. By being transparent about forthcoming business choices, you not only show your workers that you respect their input, but you also provide the opportunity to gain from their advice on how to make such decisions, embrace diversity, and promote inclusion.
4. **Maintain formal and casual communication with subordinates.** Engage in important gatherings like lunch or work breaks to create close connections. Be present every day, and encourage team members to have a conversation about your personal interests and areas for cooperation. a) As communication helps to build coordination within the organization (Wikaningrum and Yuniawan, 2018, p. 139(7)),

**Scope of Application:** Within the constraints set by law, this policy applies to all group businesses as well as to any investors around the world who are not group members but over whom the corporation has effective authority.

Without limiting the regulations of the previous example, the listed country, sub-holding companies, and their affiliated companies may create a comparable policy based on their unique framework of strengthened autonomy. However, this policy and all other environmental, social, governance practices, and compliance requirements policies of the Governance and Sustainability System must adhere to the same core principles.

### **Principles of behavior about equal opportunity**

The Group accepts and supports the basic standards of behavior to fulfill the planned approach and obligations in the field of equal opportunity

1. control over the quality of employment is a crucial way to advance equality of opportunity and the absence of discrimination, supporting the maintenance of stable, high-quality jobs with fair pay rates and work-related content that ensure professionals' abilities and skill levels are continuously improved;
2. Apply the concept of equality and fairness in the workplace, which comprises a dedication to providing and demonstrating equitable treatment that fosters the workers' personal and professional advancement in the following areas:
3. Value the information and abilities needed to accomplish a job through the assessment of objectives and effectiveness to promote professionalism and be paid;
4. Particularly, criteria of equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity should be taken into account when developing individual objective proposals, in the evaluation of performance, and in any wage increments. To encourage the personal and professional development of the group's workforce, equal treatment must be promoted in a manner that demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary for each job.
5. selection: based on the knowledge and skills of the candidates, pick the top professionals using tools and processes for selection;
6. hiring: refrain from establishing unfair wage disparities and guarantee proper professional integration within the organizations, workgroup, and position;
7. Ensuring that all professionals are educated and trained in the information and skills necessary for the proper execution of their tasks; providing assistance for professionals with various skills, encouraging their efficient employment;
1. Respect the idea of equitable employment conditions for employment with the same demands and values when establishing working conditions;
2. encourage the organization of working conditions with a gender perspective, allowing all individuals employed by the group to balance their personal and professional lives in support of gender equality and guaranteeing the abolition of all forms of discrimination based on gender.

### **Primary Conduct Principles about Diversity and the Promotion of Inclusion**

The following primary conduct guidelines must regulate the group's labor interactions to fulfill the stated goals and objectives regarding diversity and inclusion:

1. encourage all employees in the Organization to contribute their skills, expertise, and achievements regardless of their personal or social situations;

2. Cultivate an atmosphere of participation inside the organization that aims to guarantee that all employees are seen as being a part of the commercial sector and understand its position in the local, national, and global communities. Thus, it is desired that the company staff assume core values and purposes as their own and that their participation in them is seen as a crucial part of both professional and personal growth.
3. acknowledge that the integration of different eras is a subject of continuous improvement because of their different viewpoints and skills for the multiple companies and organizational areas and that this coexistence makes a significant contribution to the Company's ability to customize its services for the benefit of the communities in which it operates;
4. Include leadership training tools to support improved decision-making and a culture that values diversity, as well as an internal messaging plan that may demonstrate the inclusion and diversity of the organization.
5. Continually develop rules to increase employees' knowledge so that they support the value that diversity brings to organizations, particularly in leadership roles.
6. Focus on ensuring that each worker is given the information, abilities, and skills necessary for the proper performance of their work during their training, irrespective of the group to which they belong, while also including particular measures in such training from the perspective of accepting diversity and denying discrimination.
7. Lead to better communication and interaction with the specific cultures where the companies operate so that, as a result of its inclusive policies, the company is often seen as a good place for the leadership learning of its diverse groups.
8. Make a measure to maintain that the artificial intelligence processes used for hiring, managing labor relations, training, and promoting professionals, particularly the techniques used, do not suffer from unconscious bias that violates the company's objectives. Hence, it involves understanding how employees, structures, and processes influence each other in the organization (Booyesen, 2013, p. 296(1))

## **Conclusion**

This field of research investigates how individuals behave at work and how that affects things like job structure, effectiveness, motivation, and leadership. In other words, it considers the entire individual, the importance of teamwork, the entire organization, and the entire social system while interpreting interactions between people and organizations. By attaining individual, organizational, and social objectives, its goal is to foster healthier connections. OB covers a wide variety of subjects, including teamwork, leadership, development, and human behavior. The study of organizational behavior is crucial for the smooth and successful operation of enterprises.

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# **Modern young age Woman Entrepreneurs in Emerging India with Special Reference to Villupuram District of Tamilnadu**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Women Entrepreneurs enable to achieve empowerment individually and collectively by helping themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives. Development of women with equality and justice along with people's involvement and participation is the need of this hour. Thus bringing women into the mainstream of development becomes essential for the overall benefits of society. Women entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others and also by being different.

Women Entrepreneurship is based on purposeful and systematic innovation. It is concerned with the performance and co-ordination of the entrepreneurial functions and also creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological, and social risks, and receiving the results rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction. It requires vision and passion.

The several Indian entrepreneurs have become highly successful entrepreneurs and were trying to acquire more and more high places for themselves. It leads to freedom, flexibility, growth and development. The entrepreneurship and innovation are useful not only in business but also applied to social causes and in government organizations. These skills lead to the development of business and ultimately, the result is seen in the economic growth of the country.

Key Words : Women Entrepreneurs, Equality, Innovation, Economic growth, Sustainability

## **Introduction**

**“You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women”**

**- Jawaharlal Nehru**

An entrepreneur in free sense of the word is someone with independence of thought and spirit. Women do possess all the ingrediencies of a promising entrepreneur of the business world. Several Indian women entrepreneurs have become highly successful entrepreneurs and were trying

to acquire more and more high places for themselves. So, those women entrepreneurs can operate successfully their business.

Empowerment of women has emerged as an important issue in recent times. The concept of empowerment is defined as the process by which women take control and ownership of their choices. Empowerment can take place at a hierarchy of different levels - individuals, house hold, community and societal - and is facilitated by providing encouraging factors (e.g. exposure to new activities, which can build capacities). It is not only an efficient tool to fight against poverty, but also as a means of promoting the empowerment of the most marginalized sections of the population, especially women. The present study is an attempt to analyze the Modern young age women entrepreneurs in emerging India with special reference to Villupuram District, which brings the business women on a common platform and ensures that their opinions, ideas and vision are collectively and effectively taken up with policy makers and various other agencies respectively for the development of enterprise in women.

United Nations (UN) appreciated India's efforts for the empowerment of its women. India was cited as an example for doing much to uplift its women even though certain religious and cultural norms prevent women from attaining equal status in the society. The Indian Government has been undertaking various schemes for Women Entrepreneurs. India has more working women than any other country in the world.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Women Entrepreneurs in India represent a dynamic and growing group of women who have taken the initiative to explore and involve in various sectors of economic participation. Women face a variety of traditional views and perceptions of clients, demands at home and other family oppositions leading to lack of support and encouragement.

In modern societies, they have come out of the four walls to participate in all sorts of activities. The global evidences buttress that women have been performing exceedingly well indifferent spheres of activities like academics, politics, administration, social work and so on. The general concept of women entrepreneurs may be defined as a women or group of women who initiated, organize and run a business enterprise. It's to create public awareness towards women's contribution to the national economy, establish pressure groups advocating the cause of women and educate and training young women entrepreneurs for their right initiation into business. The national and international co-operation amongst women entrepreneurs with singular motive **“Together Towards a Glorious Future”**. The important objectives of the women entrepreneurs that:

- Exploration of the prospects of starting a new business enterprise.
- Undertaking of risks and the handling of economic uncertainties involved in business.
- Introduction of innovations or imitation of innovations.
- Coordination, administration and control.
- Supervision and leadership.

### **Significance of the Study**

The emergence of high technologies is rapidly transforming the global production system, with new manufacturing techniques calling for skills quite unlike those applied in correctional processes. Computer-aided and information technologies have attracted women entrepreneurs to attempt innovative enterprises. These efforts are encouraged by the changing scenario whereby India has experienced a higher rate of growth-economically, industrially and technologically. Increasing infrastructural facilities leading to greater ease in acquisition of knowledge, skill, training, information, etc., have been instrumental in providing women with an enabling environment.

**The Women Entrepreneurs lead to the empowerment of women in many ways such as :-**

1. Economic empowerment
2. Improved standard of living
3. Self confidence
4. Enhance awareness
5. Sense of achievement
6. Increased social interaction
7. Engaged in political activities
8. Improvement in leadership qualities
9. Involvement in solving problems related to women and community
10. Decision making capacity in family and community.

**Various Benefits of Entrepreneurship**

- ❖ Entrepreneurship promotes capital formation by mobilizing the idle saving of the public.
- ❖ It promotes immediate large-scale employment. Thus, it helps reduce to the unemployment problem in the country.
- ❖ It promotes balanced regional development.
- ❖ It helps to reduce the concentration of economic power in fewer hands.
- ❖ It stimulates the equitable redistribution of wealth, income and even political power in the interest of the country.
- ❖ It encourages effective resource mobilization of capital and skill which might otherwise remain unutilized and idle.
- ❖ It also induces backward and forward linkages which stimulate the process of economic development in the country.
- ❖ It promotes country's export trade which is an important ingredient to economic development.

**Development of Women Entrepreneurs**

The general consensus that is emerging in all discussions relating to the development of women is that promotion of women entrepreneurs should form an integral part of all development efforts. The experience of the United States where the share of women-owned enterprises is continuously on increase strengthens the view that the future of small-scale industries depends very much on the entry of women into industry. Several national and international organizations and agencies have appreciated the need for and importance of developing women entrepreneurs in recent years.

The Government of India has been assigning increasing importance to the development of women entrepreneurs in the country in recent years. It's promoting female employment in women-owned industries. Some important development of women entrepreneurs are as follows : -

1. To treat women as specific target groups in all development programmes.
2. To devise and diversify vocational training facilities for women to suit their varied needs and skills.
3. To promote appropriate technologies, to improve their efficiency and productivity.
4. To provide assistance for marketing their products.
5. To involve women in decision-making process.

### **Area and Scope of the Study**

The study is undertaken the Modern young age women entrepreneurs in emerging India. The development of women entrepreneurs are quite success. Conference and seminars may be organized where the new entrepreneurs will get a chance to exchange their views and be able to develop their business strength by interaction. Economic growth has increased the demand for workers in traditionally female sector, such as business services.

There are several institutional arrangements both at the centre and the state levels like Nationalized Banks, State Financial Corporations (SFC), State Industrial Corporations(SIC), District Industry Centre (DIC), State Industrial Development Corporations (SIDCO) and voluntary agencies like FICCI's Ladies Organization (FLO), National Alliance and Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE) which have been engaged in protecting and development women entrepreneurs in the country. Added to these are national and international women associations setup with a purpose to create a congenial environment for developing women entrepreneurs in rural and urban areas.

The right kind of training only can improve and develop the women entrepreneurs in the society and create the mass growth in their livelihood. So the entrepreneurs should be given necessary training and guidance for the successful operation of the business. I am sure that women would take a lead in showing the path to new entrepreneurs.

### **The Main Scope of the Women Entrepreneurs are as follows : -**

1. To provide training facilities in export marketing and management, domestic marketing, quality control and standardization, management of enterprise, laws, regulations, procedures and systems for running a small and medium sized enterprise and sustaining its growth etc.,
2. To provide greater access to latest technologies know-how, related equipment and services for modernization and expansion of existing small and medium size enterprises run by women entrepreneurs.
3. To facilitate participation in international and regional exhibitions, buyer-sellers meet, trade fairs, seminars and symposia, to help women entrepreneurs to get greater exposure to regional and global business environment and opportunities.
4. To effectively articulate the problems and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs to get greater exposure to regional and global business environment and opportunities.
5. To strengthen affiliated associations of women entrepreneurs by providing to them package of services including information, contacts, training facilities and other related supporting measures.

## Women Empowerment through Education

*“If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered”.*

- **PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**

Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. The rise of feminist ideas has, however, led to the tremendous improvement of women’s condition throughout the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of these women’s rights movements. Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country.

India is poised to emerge as one of the most developed nations by 2020, more literate, knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing to the country’s development. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is yet to meet the requirements despite reforms. Little has been achieved in the area of women empowerment, but for this to happen, this sector must experience a chain of reforms. Though India could well become one of the largest economies in the world, it is being hindered due to a lack of women’s participation.

### Matrix for analyzing impact on Empowerment of women

Type of Indicator	Level at which impact on empowerment may be assessed
<b>Economic</b>	Increase in savings Increase in income Increase in assets Skill development
<b>Social</b>	Increase in self-confidence Change in attitude to women’s role Improvement in communication skills and in social outlook
<b>Political &amp; Legal</b>	Increase in participation in political process Removal of legal discrimination against women

## **Sample and Research Methodology**

The study is mainly based on both the primary and secondary data collected from modern young age entrepreneurs. Nearly 250 sample units were selected on random sampling for the purpose of this study. This study mainly considers the women entrepreneurs who have started their units during 2005 -2014 and continuing as entrepreneurs. The sample entrepreneurs represent different types of product groups. A questionnaire was prepared covering the socio-economic profile, the motivational factors, the support system available for the development of women entrepreneurs, opportunities and challenges for young women entrepreneurs, performance of women entrepreneurs in emerging India, and opinion of entrepreneurs on their problems faced by them.

## **Emerging Trends in Women Entrepreneurship**

Today, more women are breaking from the traditional, gender-specific roles and venturing into the business world. Not only they are holding high corporate positions but they are also successful women entrepreneurs who own almost half of all business in the United States. Many of the important facts that follow will support these findings.

### **1. Demographic Characteristics**

Studies have shown that successful women entrepreneurs start their business as a second or third profession. As a business owner, these once unhappy individuals are now more satisfied and content with their personal and professional life. Women entrepreneurs enter the business world later on in life, around 40-60 years old. Many of them have higher education degree, a significant characteristic that many successful female entrepreneurs have in common. Women entrepreneurs set a trend to offer better health care benefit package, on job training and education, more tuition reimbursement for students and continuing education employees, and provide more vacation and paid leave options to their staff.

### **1. International Implication**

From a large-scale perspective female entrepreneurs encompass approximately 1/3 of all entrepreneurs worldwide. Women entrepreneurs from higher income countries were more successful at establishing their businesses and more confidence than those of poorer nations, perhaps because of the availability of resources and financial backing from families and friends. In addition, women who had higher education experience were more likely to transform their existing businesses into successful one, proving that learning and work familiarity is universal across all cultures and greatly contributes to the overall success of any business venture.

### **2. Strategy**

Women entrepreneurs have home-based and service-related businesses; they are not afraid of technology and have recently entered many industries that were once male-dominated, such as construction, design, manufacturing and architecture. In addition, the retail industry still makes up the largest share of women owned firms.

### **3. Sources Capital**

The fact that more women entrepreneurs have risen in the past few years has been made possible in part by the easy availability of business capital women entrepreneurs tend to fund their startups with different sources of findings, including personal money from savings and credit cards and commercial loans. Today, not only are

there more grants and bank loans made available to women entrepreneurs, but there are also more diversity programs that specialize in providing seed funding to female business owners.

#### **4. Motivation**

Many successful female business owners are provoked by the opportunity to be their own boss and run their own company, a prospect that would never occur if they had worked for someone else. Their new businesses will greatly stimulate economic development in their community and create new jobs for many people. Another inspiring component that many successful women entrepreneurs share is the fact they have the tendency to balance family life and career. It is no wonder that many successful women entrepreneurs have an amazing ability to multi task, properly balancing both personal and professional life with their goal-oriented approach.

#### **5. Present Challenges**

Even though female entrepreneurship and the formation of women business network are steadily rising, there are still many prospective women entrepreneurs who do not follow through with their great business ideas. This is widely due to the fact that many challenges exist for them to overcome. A second challenge may be their lack of knowledge in information technology and business skills.

Even though many successful business ventures are IT related, there are many other thriving industries that do exist. Experience is always an advantage, however, entrepreneurship is a learning experience and even the most successful business owners have to learn new things throughout the development of their company. Another major challenge that many women entrepreneurs may face is the traditional gender-roles society may still have on women. Entrepreneurship is still a male-dominated field and it may be difficult to surpass these conventional views. However, it is very important to be aware that despite the negativity that may exist over a million women own their own businesses in the U.S.

#### **6. Future Prospects**

There are many promising predictions for women entrepreneurs in the near future. Many women entrepreneurs in the home-based and service-related businesses with eventually shift to the information technology industry, making this once male-dominated commerce to be one of equal gender appeal.

#### **India – Women Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

India is definitely the hub of entrepreneurs worldwide. More than 100 companies start every year, irrespective of the fact; most of them do not survive the competition, and die out sooner. But one cannot deny the fact that people in India are more risk-taking. According, to a research, India ranks second in terms of innovation and the entrepreneurial view point or approach.

India should prepare to remain competitive the changing economic ecosystem. Innovation is the key to sustainability today, in any regional or global scenario. One has to understand that managers or employees who think innovatively have the traits of an entrepreneur. What lacks in them, or resists them from achieving that is risk-taking ability. This can again be attributed to the fact that the person has never had an opportunity to take risk, or has never taken an initiative.

According to **Dr. APJ AbdulKalam**, Knowledge is most important for transforming India from a developing nation. Sowing the thinking skills in the human capital of our nation, over a period of time, will

start fuelling their innovativeness by enabling them to :

- ❖ Be Curious
- ❖ Be Open to New Ideas
- ❖ Be Just Plain Weird
- ❖ Be Ready
- ❖ Be persistent
- ❖ Be Willing to Share

Without these Bees, innovativeness and sustainable entrepreneurship cannot happen. Without thinking this way, there would never be any significant change in the world. The women entrepreneurs have more options in life by strengthening their confidence and capabilities and encouraging a healthy balance between career and home.

- Networking – Establish a network women entrepreneur. Use this resource as an avenue to increase women’s interaction and participation, and to gain new perspectives on the issues of women and entrepreneurship.
- The Internet – Deliver professional online counseling and guidance services tailored for women entrepreneurs.
- Research – Conduct research into women’s entrepreneurial trends to serve as reference for future programs.
- Training – Organize entrepreneurial training programs and guidance workshops designed for women.

### **Limitations**

The study is mainly confined to the performance of modern young age women entrepreneurs in Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu. For a long time, it was thought that entrepreneurs were special, that they were just born with the ability and desire to go their own way, on their own. Over the past twenty years or so, we have discovered that entrepreneurs learn to do what they do that they also learn, to a large extent, to be who they are. That’s why we say they are made, nor born. Here’s a handy way to remember some facts about entrepreneurs:

**E**xamine needs, wants, and problems to see how they can improve the way needs and wants are met and problems overcome.

**N**arrow the possible opportunities to one specific “best” opportunity.

**T**hink of innovation ideas and narrow them to the “best” idea.

**R**esearch the opportunity and idea thoroughly.

**E**nlist the best sources of advice and assistance that they can find.

**P**lan their ventures and look for possible problems that might arise.

**R**ank the risks and the possible rewards.

**E**valuate the risks and possible rewards and make their decision to act or not to act.

**N**ever hang on to an idea, no matter how much they may love it, if research shows it won’t work.

**E**mploy the resources necessary for the venture to succeed.

**U**nderstand that they will have to work long and hard to make their venture success.

**R**ealize a sense of accomplishment from their successful ventures and learn from their failures to help them achieve success in the future.



## **The Role of Women Entrepreneurship in Economic Development**

Women Entrepreneurship does play a significant role in economic development. Now, many have begun to realize that for achieving the goal of economic development, it is necessary to promote entrepreneurship both qualitatively and quantitatively in the country. Only active and enthusiastic entrepreneurs fully explore the potentialities of the country's available resources- labor, technology and capital. It is also opined that development in an economy does not occur spontaneously as a natural consequence, but a catalytic agent is needed, and this is provided by entrepreneurs.

### **Conclusion**

**“A small seed is tomorrow's big tree.”**

Women Entrepreneurship definitely provides the great opportunities to make India as developed country in forth coming decades which strongly increase Indian economy to challenge the developed countries. The unemployment of the country started reducing after global employment has increased because of women entrepreneurship. The strength of India is depending on its women entrepreneurship development.

Predominant of the global countries have the eye on Indian women entrepreneurship and their efficiency, women entrepreneurs are proving their strength globally. Meeting and seminars may be organized where the new entrepreneurs will get a chance to exchange their views and be able to develop their group strength by interaction. As a developer, women entrepreneur has to play a pivotal role in developing among the employees, the requisite knowledge, skills and suitable attitudes and improve their performance.

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# **“An Impact of Customers Brand switching : Identifying the various Factors, Interconnected relationship, that influencing shift from one brand to Another Brand”**

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## **Abstract –**

This research study examines into the critical aspect of customer behavior by focusing on the factors that play a pivotal role in customers' decisions to switch from one brand to another. In today's dynamic and competitive market environment, understanding the motivations behind brand switching is of paramount importance for businesses aiming to retain customer loyalty. The objective of this study is to identify the primary factors influencing customers to switch from one brand to another, and to analyze the interconnected relationships and dependencies among various influencing factors contributing to brand switching, and its impact of brand switching. The data is collected from the Manufacturing sector and the majority of the respondents are only customers. This study is based on empirical study. The sampling size is 50 customers who fill the questionnaire for the survey. Simple random sampling method will be used for sample selection. Primary data and secondary data are used as a tool for data collection. Chi-square test is used to prove the hypothesis. The findings emphasize the significance of aligning products, pricing, customer service, and marketing efforts to meet customer expectations. Moreover, acknowledging the role of external influences and market trends is a vital role in customer preferences. This holistic approach can empower organizations to not only minimize the negative impact of brand switching but also thrive in a competitive landscape by fostering enduring brand loyalty.

**Keywords** –Brand switching Factors, customer loyalty, brand loyalty, customer brand shift.

## **Introduction –**

In today dynamic business environment, marked by intense competition and rapidly changing consumer preferences switching from one brand to another has become a central concern for companies across various industries. The ability to retain a loyal customer base is crucial for sustained success, making it imperative for businesses to comprehend the underlying factors that lead customers to switch their brand loyalty.

Consumer behaviour's and preferences are influenced by a complex interplay of various factors, ranging from product quality, pricing to customer service experiences and brand perception. By identifying the most influential factors and comprehending the motivations driving customers' shifts to different brands, organizations can take a measure to adopt their marketing, product, and service offerings to enhance customer loyalty and minimize defections.

The aspect of brand switching, where consumers shift their preferences from one brand to another, is a critical study in the field of consumer behavior. Understanding the factors that drive this behavior holds immense importance for businesses operating in a dynamic and competitive market environment. Brand switching can have far-reaching implications on a company's market share, customer loyalty, and overall success. This research examines in detail of brand switching factors.

This research seeks to analyze the relationships and dependencies that underlie the brand switching aspect of decision making, negative customer service experience, Brand image and reputation, market trend, long term customer relationship that establish brand over a time.

### **Review Literature -**

M. Satish, K.J Naveen, and V. Jeevananthan's (2011) study highlights the role of factors such as poor network coverage, frequent network problems, high call rates, and the influence of family and friends in prompting consumers to switch service providers. This emphasizes the impact of both service quality issues and social influences on brand switching decisions.

Richard Lee and Jamie Murphy's (2005) research delves into the transition from loyalty to switching intentions among mobile phone customers. Their findings demonstrate that diverse factors such as price, technical and functional service quality, and switching costs influence customers' decisions. The prominence of price as a determinant aligns with its role in shaping customer loyalty.

Jessy John's (2010) study focuses on customer loyalty within the context of BSNL mobile services. The research showcases the resilience of customer loyalty even in the face of alternatives with high quality. This insight suggests that factors beyond just quality may contribute to customer allegiance.

Joseph and Joachim's (2009) exploration into switching costs and customer retention in the Nigerian telecommunications market underscores the connection between customer satisfaction, retention, and switching costs. This finding highlights the complex interplay of factors affecting customer loyalty and the strategic implications of managing switching costs.

### **Objectives of the Study –**

1. To identify the primary factors influencing customers to switch from one brand to another.
2. To analyze the interconnected relationships and dependencies among various influencing factors contributing to brand switching.
3. To analyze the impact of brand switching.

### **Research Methodology –**

This research is mainly based upon the empirical study. This study explains about the type of information and the source of the data collected. Sampling unit implies respondents are employees and questionnaires were administered by the researcher personally and respondents were educated on how to fill the questionnaires. Simple random sampling has been used for the sample section. Statistical tools like Chi-square test have been used to prove the hypothesis for Analysis and Interpretation. The Data has been presented through Tables and Graphs.

“An Impact of Customers Brand switching : Identifying the various Factors, Interconnectedrelationship.....

**Data Collection –**

1. Primary data, collected from the employees through questionnaires.
2. Secondary data, collected from Journals.

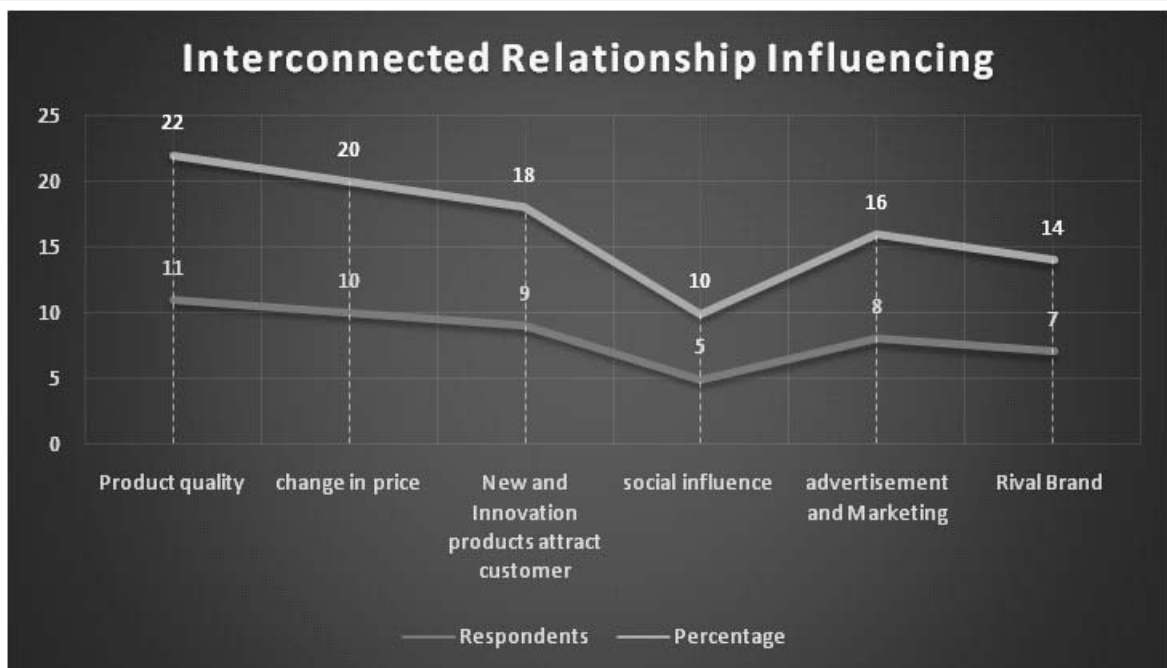
**Limitation of the Study –**

1. The sample of this research is limited to 50 customers.
2. This research focuses on factors, interconnected relationship, impact of brand switching.
3. The information is often biased because of use of questionnaire.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation –**

**Table 01 Factors influencing customers to switch from one brand to another**

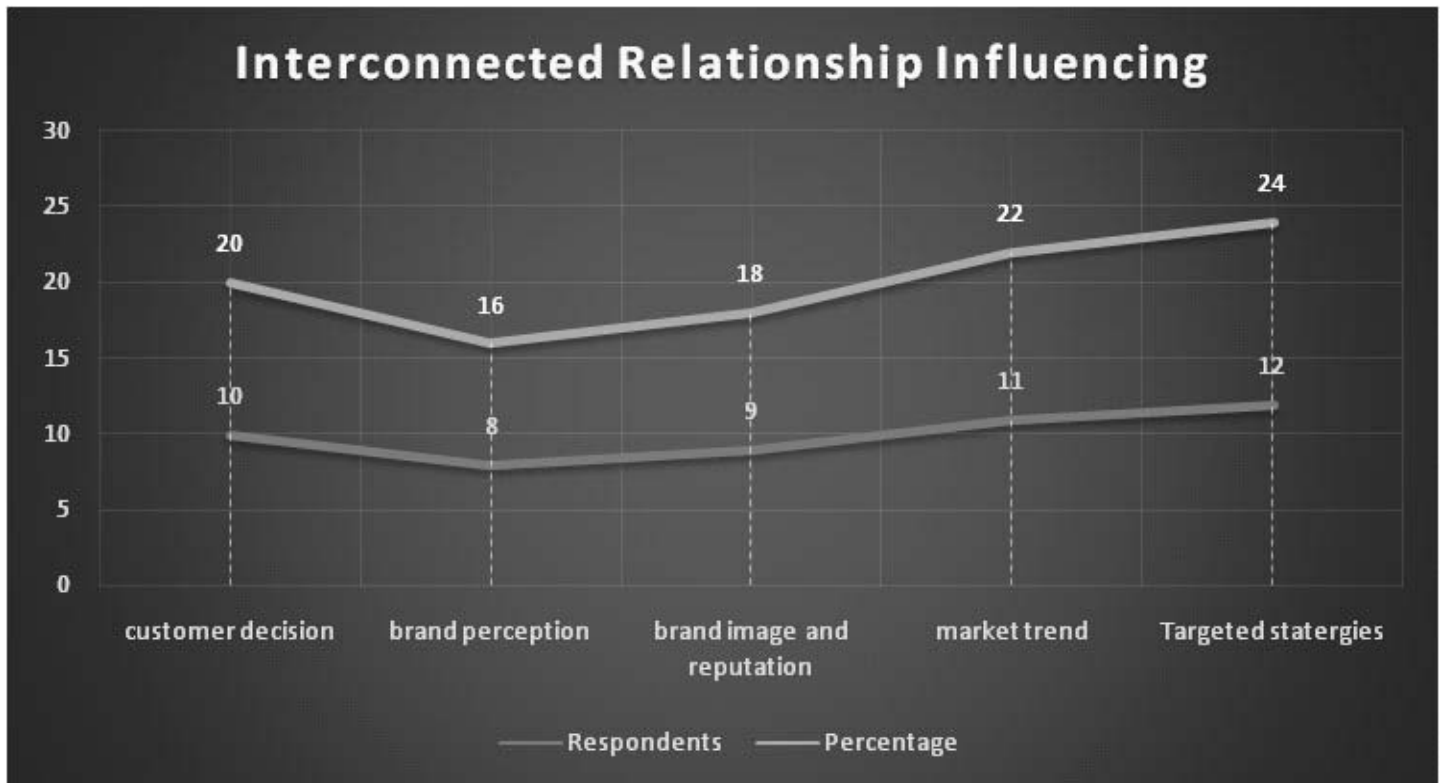
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Product Quality	11	22%
Change in price	10	20%
New and innovation products attract customer	09	18%
Social Influence	05	10%
Advertisement & Marketing	08	16%
Rival Brand	07	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	



From the above analysis of the Table 01, 22% of the customers says product quality, 20% of the customers says change in price, 18% of the customer responds says New and innovation products attract customer, 16% of the customer says Advertisement & Marketing, 14% of the customer says Rival Brand, 10% of the customer says Social Influence.

**Table 02 Interconnected relationships and dependencies among various influencing factors contributing to brand switching.**

Interconnected relationships	Respondents	Percentage
Customer decision	10	20%
Brand perception	08	16%
Brand image and reputation	09	18%
Market trend	11	22%
Targeted Strategies	12	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	

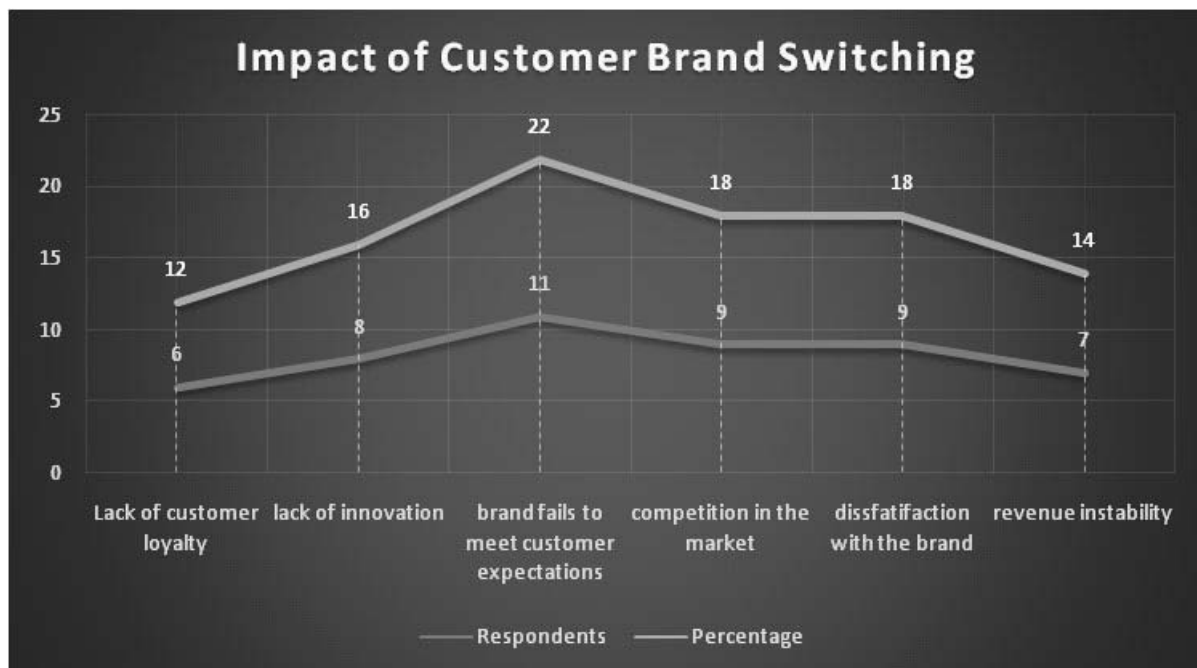


From the above analysis of the Table 02, 24% of the customer says Targeted Strategies, 22% of the customers says Market trend, 20% of the customer says Customer decision, 18% of the customer says Brand image and reputation, 16% of the customer says Brand perception.

“An Impact of Customers Brand switching : Identifying the various Factors, Interconnectedrelationship.....

**Table 03 Impact of customer brand switching**

Measures	Respondents	Percentage
Lack of customer loyalty	06	12%
Lack of innovation	08	16%
Brand fails to meet customer expectations	11	22%
Competition in the market	09	18%
Dissatisfaction with the brand	09	18%
Revenue instability	07	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	



**Table 03 Calculation of Mean and Standard Deviation**

X	$x^2$
06	36
08	64
11	121
09	81
09	81
07	49
<b><math>\Sigma X = 50</math></b>	<b>432</b>

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{n} = \frac{50}{6} = 8.3333$$

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{n} - \left(\frac{\sum x}{n}\right)^2} = 1.5988$$

$H_0$  = There is an Impact on customer brand switching.

$H_1$  = There is no Impact on customer brand switching.

**Type of Test – Two Tailed Test**

Significant level 5%

$$t_{obs} = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu_0}{\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n-1}}} = 0.4662$$

Table value (t.05)

As  $t_{obs} = 0.4662$  is within the interval 2.35 Hence  $H_0$  is accepted.

**From the above analysis of the Table 03,** 22% of the customer says Brand fails to meet customer expectations, 18% of the customer says Competition in the market & Dissatisfaction with the brand, 16% of customer says Lack of innovation, 12% of the customer says Lack of customer loyalty.

**Findings –**

1. From the analysis, 22% of the customers responds product quality. customers attributed their decisions to switch brands to concerns about product quality. This highlights the significance of maintaining and enhancing product quality to retain customer loyalty. Neglecting this critical factor could lead to a decline in customer satisfaction, brand reputation, and market share. By addressing product quality concerns, businesses can bolster customer trust and satisfaction, laying a foundation for long-term success in a competitive market environment.
2. From the analysis, 24% of the customers highlighting the importance of targeted strategies. Implementing targeted strategies can lead to improved customer engagement, loyalty, and overall satisfaction. Neglecting this aspect may result in missed opportunities for enhancing customer relationships and may impact the brand’s competitive standing.
3. The researcher has analysed that 22% of customers are dissatisfied, brand fails to meet customer expectations. this aspect is crucial for ensuring the brand’s sustained success in the long-term success. By focusing on aligning products, services, and communication with customer expectations, the brand can enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall market standing. Failure to do so may lead to continued attrition and diminished brand credibility in the competitive market landscape.
4. From the analysis, 18% of the customers responds towards competition within the market and dissatisfaction with the brand. These findings emphasize the need for businesses to not only remain competitive but also prioritize enhancing customer satisfaction. Ignoring these aspects could

“An Impact of Customers Brand switching : Identifying the various Factors, Interconnectedrelationship.....

potentially lead to customer attrition, reduced market share, and hindered long-term growth. By addressing both competitive pressures and customer dissatisfaction, companies can fortify their position in the market and foster enduring customer relationships.

5. From the analysis, 18% of the customer responds says New and innovation products attract customer, this signifies innovation plays vital role in attracting and retaining customers. Overlooking the importance of introducing fresh and inventive products could result in missed opportunities for captivating consumer interest and fostering brand loyalty. Recognizing the impact of innovation on customer preferences is essential for businesses striving to maintain competitiveness and resonate with evolving market dynamics.

## **Conclusion –**

From the above analysis, the researcher concludes that the above findings of this study’s analysis into the impact of customer brand switching has explainaninterconnected relationship among various influencing factors. The identification and analysis of these factors highlight on the complex decision-making processes that lead customers to switch from one brand to another. This comprehensive understanding is essential for businesses seeking to protect their market positions, enhance customer retention strategies, and navigate the dynamic currents of consumer behavior. By recognizing the interplay of diverse factors and their collective influence, organizations can develop informed strategies that mitigate the drivers of brand switching and encourage sustained brand allegiance. The findings emphasize the significance of aligning products, pricing, customer service, and marketing efforts to meet customer expectations. Moreover, acknowledging the role of external influences and market trends is avital role in customer preferences. This holistic approach can empower organizations to not only minimize the negative impact of brand switching but also thrive in a competitive landscape by fostering enduring brand loyalty.

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# বর্তমান যুগের তুলনায় বৈদিক যুগের নারীদের স্বতন্ত্রতা বিচার

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**সারসংক্ষেপ :** বর্তমান সময়ে আমরা জীবনের প্রতি পদক্ষেপে লক্ষ্য করি নারীদের স্বাধীনতা খর্ব করতেই ব্যস্ত সকলে। সেক্ষেত্রে সমাজের তথাকথিত শিখাধারী ব্রাহ্মণ সম্প্রদায় সর্বদাই শাস্ত্রের প্রসঙ্গ তুলে বলে- মেয়েদের এই বিষয়টি নিষিদ্ধ সেই বিষয়টি নিষিদ্ধ। সর্বদাই তারা নিজেদের আধিপত্য বিস্তার করতে সচেষ্ট। সমাজের পুরুষেরা সর্বদাই পুরুষতান্ত্রিক শাসনব্যবস্থা কায়ম রাখতে সচেষ্ট। কিন্তু বৈদিক যুগে নারীদের অবস্থানের চিত্র আমাদের সামনে যেভাবে তুলে ধরা হয় আসল অবস্থানটি তার অনেকখানি বিপরীত। কিন্তু সেই বিষয়ে আমরা অনেকেই অবগত নয়। বৈদিক যুগে নরদের ন্যায় নারীরাও বিশেষ কিছু অধিকারের অধিকারিণী ছিল। বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে তাঁরা নিজেদের দক্ষতা প্রদর্শনের সুযোগও পেত। বৈদিক যুগের নারীদের অবহেলনার যে চিত্র প্রকটিত হয়, তাঁরা ঠিক ততটাও অবহেলিত বা অনাকাঙ্ক্ষিত ছিল না। উক্ত বিষয়গুলোই এই নিবন্ধে আলোচিত হয়েছে।

**শব্দসূচী :** নারী, স্বাধীনতা, ব্রহ্মচার্য, শিক্ষিকা, ব্রহ্মবাদিনী, উপনয়ন, বেদ, উপনিষদ পতিগ্রহণ, বিধবা বিবাহ।

আমরা গুরুজনদের মুখে সর্বদাই শুনতে পাই যে ‘আগেকার দিনের তুলনায় এখন মেয়েদের সবকিছুতেই অনেক বেশি স্বাধীনতা রয়েছে’। গৃহকাজ, পতিসেবা, সন্তানপ্রসব, সন্তান লালনপালন ইত্যাদি ব্যতীত সত্যিই কি মহিলাদের কোনো অধিকার ছিল না? কিন্তু আদৌ এই কথা কতখানি সত্য তা আমরা যাচাই করার চেষ্টা করি না। প্রাচীন যুগে অর্থাৎ বৈদিক যুগের নারীদের তুলনায় বর্তমান যুগের নারীদের অবস্থার উন্নতি ঘটেছে নাকি অবনতি, সেই বিষয়টি উপযুক্ত প্রমাণ দিয়ে তুলে ধরার চেষ্টা করবো। নিম্নে বৈদিক যুগের নারীদের অবস্থান সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা হল—

আমাদের শৈশব থেকে আরম্ভ করে বর্তমান সময় পর্যন্ত ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে লক্ষ্য করি যে, পুস্তকের মধ্যে পুরুষদের সম্পর্কে যেমন বিস্তৃতভাবে উল্লেখ থাকে ঠিক তেমনভাবে মহিলাদের সম্পর্কে উল্লেখ থাকে না, থাকলেও তার পরিমাণ অতি নগন্য। ঠিক তেমনই পুরুষদের শিক্ষার যেমন সবিস্তার বর্ণনা পাওয়া যায়, যা বেদের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়। কিন্তু নারীশিক্ষা সম্পর্কে এত সবিস্তার বর্ণনা পাওয়া যায় না। বর্তমান যুগের ন্যায় বৈদিক যুগেও পুত্র সন্তান অধিক মাত্রায় কামনা হত—এর কোনো সুনির্দিষ্ট যুক্তি প্রমাণ নেই। কন্যা সন্তান জন্মগ্রহণ করলেও তার প্রতি কোনো প্রকার অবহেলা করা হতো না। যদি কেউ বিদুষী কন্যা লাভ করতে ইচ্ছুক হন তাহলে তিনি পত্নীকে আজ্য মিশ্রিত তিল তণ্ডুল রন্ধন করে সেবন করবেন। পবিত্র বেদের পুত্রের পাশাপাশি কন্যার উদ্দেশ্যে প্রার্থনা করা হয়েছে—

“মম পুত্রঃ শত্রুহপোহথো মে দুহিতা বিরাট্।

উতাহমস্মি সজয়া পতৌ মে শ্লোক উত্তমঃ।।” (ঋগ্বেদ ১০/১৫৯/৩)

উক্ত মন্ত্রের মাধ্যমে কামনা করা হয়েছে যে আমার পুত্র শত্রুর নাশকারী এবং নিশ্চিতরূপে আমার কন্যা বিশিষ্টরূপে তেজস্বিনী হয়। নারীকে তার ইচ্ছে পূরণের জন্য সুযোগ দেওয়া হতো। তারা তাদের প্রতিভা বিকাশের ক্ষেত্রে পূর্ণ সুযোগ পেত। বৈদিক যুগেও গুরুকুল বা শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান ছিল, তবে সে সম্পর্কে সুস্পষ্ট উক্তি পাওয়া যায় না। কিন্তু তা সত্ত্বেও উপস্থাপিত তথ্য থেকে স্ত্রী শিক্ষার মান সম্পর্কে অনুমান করা যায়। বৈদিক সংহিতায় মন্ত্রদ্রষ্টা বহু নারী ঋষি, সাহিত্যে বহু রমণী অধ্যাপিকা, ব্রহ্মচারিণীর নাম পাওয়া যায়। তাদের নিকট বহু বেদমন্ত্র প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। তাদের মধ্যে—বিস্বারা, লোপামুদ্রা, রোমশা, পৌলোমী প্রভৃতির নাম উল্লেখযোগ্য। বৃহদেবতা গ্রন্থে নারীদের ব্রহ্মবাদিনী (ব্রহ্মবিদ্যায় জ্ঞানী) নামে অভিহিত করা হয়েছে। উদাহরণস্বরূপ বলা যেতে পারে বৃহস্পতি পুত্রী রোমশা, গার্গী প্রভৃতি বিদুষী নারীগণকে ব্রহ্মবাদিনী বলা হয়েছে। বৃহদেবতা গ্রন্থে ২৭ জন নারী ঋষির উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে। এমনকি বলা যায় ঋগ্বেদের দশম মন্ডলের দশম অনুবাকের একশ পঁচিশতম সুক্ত বাকসুক্ত বা দেবীসুক্তের রচয়িতা আভূগ ঋষির কন্যা বাক্ এবং ঋগ্বেদের দশম মন্ডলের উনচল্লিশ থেকে একচল্লিশ নং সুক্তের দ্রষ্টা ঋষি কক্ষিবানের কন্যা ঘোষা।

ঋগ্বেদ সংহিতার যুগের তিনটি উচ্চ বর্ণের নারীদের উপনয়ন হত। ঋগ্বেদিক যুগের নারীদের পবিত্র ব্রহ্মসূত্র দ্বারা উপনয়ন সংস্কার করা হত। ‘উপ’ কথাটির অর্থ নিকট এবং ‘নয়ন’ কথাটির অর্থ চোখ। অর্থাৎ যে অনুষ্ঠানের দ্বারা শিক্ষার্থীর জ্ঞানচক্ষু উন্মিলিত হয় এবং

বর্তমান যুগের তুলনায় বৈদিক যুগের নারীদের স্বতন্ত্রতা বিচার

তাকে ঈশ্বরের নিকট নিয়ে যাওয়া হয় তাকে উপনয়ন বলে। উপনয়নের পর তাদের 'দ্বিজ' বলা হয়। 'দ্বিজ' কথাটির অর্থ হলো যার দুবার জন্ম। একবার সাধারণ নিয়মে মাতৃগর্ভ থেকে জন্ম গ্রহণ করে এবং দ্বিতীয়বার উপবীত বা পৈতা ধারণের মাধ্যমে নতুন জীবন। সাধারণত এটি শিক্ষারমুহুর্তকালীন একটি অনুষ্ঠান। যে অনুষ্ঠানের পর শিক্ষার্থীকে গুরুর গৃহে শিক্ষালাভের জন্য প্রেরণ করা হতো তার নামই উপনয়ন। পুরুষ মহিলা নির্বিশেষে উপবীত ধারণ করার অধিকার ছিল। তাঁরা ব্রহ্ম গায়ত্রী মন্ত্র জপ করতেন, বেদ পাঠ করতেন, বৈদিক যাগযজ্ঞে অংশগ্রহণ করতেন এবং অন্যান্য গ্রন্থ সমূহও পাঠ করতেন। স্মৃতিকার যম বলেছেন—

“পুরাকল্পে কুমারীগাং মৌঞ্জীবন্ধনম্ ইয্যতে।

অধ্যাপনং চ বেদনাং সাবিত্রীবচনং তথা।।” (বসু, বৈদিক ভারতে স্ত্রীশিক্ষা, পৃষ্ঠা-১৯৭)

অর্থাৎ প্রাচীনকালে পবিত্র ব্রহ্মসূত্রের দ্বারা নারীদের অভিষিক্ত করা হত। তারা বেদ পাঠ করতো। সাবিত্রী মন্ত্র উচ্চারণও করতো। পরবর্তীকালে হারিত নামে একজন টিকাকার “কুমারীগাম্” শব্দটির পরিবর্তন করে কেবলমাত্র “নারীগাম্” এই পদটি ব্যবহার করে শ্লোকটি উদ্ধৃত করেছেন।

“দ্বিহবিধা স্ত্রিয়ো ব্রহ্মবাদিন্যঃ সদীবধবশ্চ।

তত্র ব্রহ্মবাদিনীনামুপনয়নম্যোন্ধনং বেদাধ্যয়নং স্ব গৃহে ভিকশাচর্যা চৈতি।।” (২১.২৪)

সেই যুগের নারীদের দুইটি বিভাগ ছিল একটি—ব্রহ্মবাদিনী ও অপরটি সদ্যবধু। এই দুই প্রকার নারীদের উপনয়ন হত। ব্রহ্মবাদিনীরা বিবাহ করতেন না তারা পুরুষের ন্যায় ব্রহ্মচর্য পালন করতেন। তারা কেবল বেদ অধ্যয়ন, শিক্ষাদান, জ্ঞানানুশীলনের জন্য বিভিন্ন স্থানে ভ্রমণ করতেন। ব্রহ্মবাদিনীরা ঈশ্বর ও আত্মজ্ঞানানুশীলনে মগ্ন থাকতেন। তারা পবিত্র অগ্নি রক্ষা করতেন। অপরপক্ষে সদ্যবধু নামক স্ত্রীরা একটি উপনয়নের মাধ্যমে পবিত্র ব্রহ্মসূত্র দ্বারা আবদ্ধ হয়ে বেদ পাঠ করতেন। উপকুর্বাণ ব্রহ্মচারিগণ গুরুগৃহে অধ্যয়ন সম্পন্ন করে বাবার গৃহ ফিরে গিয়ে বিবাহবন্ধনে আবদ্ধ হয়ে সংসার জীবনে প্রবেশ করতেন। “সদ্যবধুনাং তু উপস্থিতে বিবাহে কথঞ্চিৎ উপনয়নং কৃৎস্বা বিবাহঃ কার্য্যঃ”—এই উক্তিটির দ্বারা বোঝা যায় পুরুষের ন্যায় নারীদেরও উপনয়ন হত। এই সকল নারীগণ পুরুষদের ন্যায় ব্রহ্মচর্য পালন করত। যজুর্বেদে কথিত আছে ব্রহ্মচর্য সমাপনান্তে যুবতীগণকে যোগ্য যুবকের সঙ্গে বিয়ে দেওয়া হত 'ব্রহ্মচর্যেণ কণ্যা যুবনাং বিন্দতেপতিম্। অথর্ববেদের ১১/৬ সূক্তে উল্লিখিত আছে যে রমণীগণ জীবনের দ্বিতীয় আশ্রমে অর্থাৎ গার্হস্থ্যাশ্রমে প্রবেশের পূর্বে কঠোর নিয়মানুবর্তিতার সহিত ব্রহ্মচর্য পালন করতেন। ভারতীয় আর্ষ শাখায় এই প্রথা যদিও কালে বিলুপ্ত হয়ে গেছে ইরানীয় আর্ষ শাখা এই প্রথার বলবৎ ছিল এবং আজও আছে। আজও জড়থুসত্র সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত নারীরা পবিত্র ব্রহ্মসূত্রের দ্বারা অভিষিক্ত হয়ে থাকেন অর্থাৎ তারা উপনয়ন সংস্কারে সংস্কৃত হন তাহাদের এই উৎসবকে বলা হয় নাওজোত সংস্কার।

গৃহসূত্রের কর্তা নারীদের এই উপনয়ন প্রথা সম্পর্কে বলেছেন— ‘প্রাবৃতাং যজ্ঞোপবীতিনীম্ অভ্যাদানয়ন্ জপেৎ সোমো দদৎ গন্ধর্বায়েতি।’ ইতস্ততঃ বিক্ষিপ্ত উদাহরণগুলি পৌরাণিক যুগের এই প্রথাটির প্রমাণ। মহাভারতের বনপর্বে উল্লেখিত আছে যে একজন ব্রাহ্মণ পাণ্ডবমাতা কুন্তিদেবীকে পবিত্র ব্রহ্মসূত্রদ্বারা ভূষিত করে অথর্ববেদোক্ত গায়ত্রীমন্ত্রে দীক্ষা দিয়েছিলেন—

“ততস্তাম্ অনবদ্যাঙ্গিং গ্রাহয়ামাস স দ্বিজঃ।

মন্ত্রগ্রামং তদা রাজন্ অথর্ব-শিরশি শ্রুতম্।।” (অথর্ববেদ ৩০৫/২০)

খ্রিস্টীয় সপ্তম শতকে এই প্রথা ভারতের কোন অঞ্চলে প্রচলিত ছিল কারণ গ্রন্থকার বানভট্ট একজন নারীর কথা উল্লেখ করেছেন যিনি ব্রহ্মসূত্র দ্বারা উপনীত হয়েছিলেন— ‘ব্রহ্মসূত্রেণ পবিত্রীকৃতয়াং কন্যায়াম্’

দ্বিজ রমণীগণের এই প্রথা মনুরও সুবিদিত ছিল। অন্যান্য হিন্দু ধর্মগ্রন্থ সমূহ থেকেও প্রমাণিত হয় যে দ্বিজ ও পুরুষের ন্যায় বৈদিক যুগে নারীগণও উপনয়নের দীক্ষিত হতেন এবং বেদ অধ্যয়ন করতেন। যজুর্বেদে বেদ পাঠ সম্পর্কে বলা হয়েছে—

“যথেমাং বাচং কল্যাণীমাবদানি জনেভ্যঃ

ব্রহ্মরাজন্যাভ্যাং শূদ্রাং চার্য্যায় চ স্বায় চারণায়।।

প্রিয়ো দেবানাং দক্ষিণায়ৈ দাতুরিহ, ভূয়াসময়স্মে

ম কামঃ সম্ধ্যাতামুপ মাদো নমতু।।” (যজুর্বেদ ২৬/২)

অর্থাৎ, হে মনুষ্যগণ আমি যেদ্রুপে ব্রাহ্মণ, ক্ষত্রিয়, বৈশ্য, শূদ্র, স্ত্রীলোক এবং অন্যান্য সকল জনগণকে এই কল্যানদায়িনী পবিত্র বেদবাণী বলিতেছি, তোমরাও সেই রূপ কর। যেমন বেদবাণীর উপদেশ করিয়া আমি বিদ্বানদের প্রিয় হয়েছি, তোমরাও সেইরূপ হও। আমার ইচ্ছা বেদ বিদ্যা প্রচার হোক। এর দ্বারা সকলে মোক্ষ এবং সুখ লাভ করুক। উক্ত মন্ত্রে বলা হয়েছে পক্ষপাতহীন হয়ে সকলের উদ্দেশ্যে বেদমন্ত্র

প্রচার করার কথা বলা হয়েছে, কিন্তু বেদপাঠ না করলে কি করে প্রচার সম্ভব? সুতরাং সকলের বেদপাঠের অধিকার ছিল।

বৈদিক যুগে নারী অধ্যাপিকারও উল্লেখ পাওয়া যায়। পাণিনি তার সংস্কৃত ব্যাকরণ শাস্ত্রে মহিলা অধ্যাপক আচার্য্যানি এর উল্লেখ করেছেন— “মাতুলাচার্য্যাণামানুক্ত”। পাণিনি একজন ‘আচার্য্যা’ এবং ‘আচার্য্যাণী’, ‘উপাধ্যায়’ এবং ‘উপাধ্যায়ানী’ মধ্যে পার্থক্য নির্দেশ করেছেন। আচার্য্যা হলেন একজন মহিলা শিক্ষিকা এবং আচার্য্যাণী হলেন একজন শিক্ষকের স্ত্রী। উপাধ্যায়্যা হলো একজন মহিলা অধ্যাপিকা এবং উপাধ্যায়নী হল একজন অধ্যাপকের স্ত্রী। ‘উপাধ্যায়ানী’ ও ‘আচার্য্যাণী’ এই সকল গুরুপত্নীগণ শিক্ষিত নাও হতে পারে। পতঞ্জলির মহাভাষ্য গ্রন্থে পাণিনির শব্দদুটির ব্যাখ্যা প্রসঙ্গে কয়েকজন বিদুষী অধ্যাপিকার নাম পাওয়া যায়, তাঁদের মধ্যে ‘আপিশালা’ এবং ‘ঔদমেধা’ উল্লেখযোগ্য। কাশিকা বৃত্তির লেখক কাশকৃৎন ব্রাহ্মণী নামে একজন নারী আচার্য্যার নাম উল্লেখ করেছেন। গার্গী নামক একজন জ্ঞানী, বিদুষী ও তপস্বিনী সংস্কৃত সাহিত্য অমর হয়ে আছেন। তিনি বৈদিক যুগের উল্লিখিত বিদুষী নারীদের মধ্যে অন্যতম। জনক রাজার রাজসভায় বিভিন্ন জ্ঞানীগুণীর সমাবেশ ঘটত ও ব্রাহ্মবিদ্যা বিষয়ে বিতর্ক হতো। সেই সভায় বিতর্কে যজ্ঞবল্ক্যের নিকট অন্য ঋষিগণ পরাস্ত হলে ঋষি গার্গী তাকে আহ্বান জানান। বৃহদারণ্যক গ্রন্থে ব্রহ্মবাদিনী গার্গী ও যজ্ঞবল্ক্যের মধ্যে অনুষ্ঠিত দুইটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিতর্কের বিবরণ রয়েছে। যদিও বিতর্কে কেও জয়ী বা পরাজিত হয়নি। তাদের দুইজনকেই দার্শনিক বিচারে সমজ্ঞানী বলে ঘোষিত করা হয়েছিল।

হারিতের বর্ণিত নারীগণের মধ্যে এক প্রকার নারীগণ ব্রহ্মচারী ব্রত পালন করত এবং অপর প্রকার নারীগণ বেদ অধ্যয়ন শেষ করে বিবাহবন্ধনে আবদ্ধ হতেন—

‘ব্রহ্মচার্যেণ কন্যা যুবানং বিন্দতে পতিম্।

অনুভানব্রহ্মচার্যেণাশ্বে ঘাসং জিগীষতি।।’ (অথর্ববেদ ১১/৫/১৮)

অর্থাৎ ব্রহ্মচার্য অবলম্বন করার পর কুমারী কন্যা যুবপতিকে লাভ করিবে বলবান ও বুদ্ধিমান ব্যক্তি ভোগ্য পদার্থকে সম্যক ভোগ করতে পারে। বৈদিক যুগে নারীদের স্বামী নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রেও যথেষ্ট স্বাধীনতা ছিল। বৈদিক যুগে সমাজ ছিল পিতৃপ্রধান। পিতৃতান্ত্রিক সমাজে নারীপুরুষের যদিও সমান অধিকার আশা করা স্বপ্নের মত। তাদের যেহেতু একটু বেশি বয়সে বিবাহ হত তাই তাদের মতামতকে সম্পূর্ণ উপেক্ষা করা সম্ভব ছিল না। কন্যার স্বেচ্ছায় পতিনির্বাচনের বহু দৃষ্টান্ত পাওয়া যায়। ১০/২৭/১১ ও ১২ এই মন্ত্রদ্বয়ের মধ্যে স্বয়ংবর প্রথার উল্লেখ দেখা যায়। ঐতরেয় ব্রাহ্মণে প্রজাপতির দুহিতা সূর্যার বিবাহকাল উপস্থিত হলে প্রজাপতি কর্তৃক স্বয়ম্বর সভার আহ্বান, সূর্যের পানিপ্ৰার্থী বিবিধ দেবতাগণের সেই সভায় আগমন এবং সূর্য কর্তৃক সোম দেবতাকে পতিরূপে বরণের বর্ণনা দৃষ্ট হয়। বিবাহ ছিল একটি হৃদয়ের সহিত অপর হৃদয়েব শ্রুতিসম্মত বন্ধনের একটি পবিত্র অনুষ্ঠান। ঋগ্বেদে সংহিতার ১০-৮৬ বিবাহ মন্ত্রগুলো পাঠ করলে বিবাহের অর্থ অনুধাবন করা যায়। সেই যুগে নারীদের গৃহ ও সমাজে উচ্চস্থানে অধিষ্ঠিত করা হতো। নববধূকে লক্ষ্য করে একটি সূক্তে বলা হয়েছে—

“সম্রাজ্ঞী শ্বশুরে ভব সম্রাজ্ঞী শুভ্রাং ভব।

ননান্দরি সম্রাজ্ঞী ভব সম্রাজ্ঞী অধিদেবেষু।।” (১০/৮৫/৪৬)

অর্থাৎ তুমি শ্বশুরের উপর সম্রাজ্ঞী হও, শ্বশুরের উপর সম্রাজ্ঞী হও, ননদের উপর সম্রাজ্ঞী হও ও দেবরের উপর সম্রাজ্ঞী হও। অথর্ববেদে নারীদের সম্পর্কে বলা হয়েছে—

“যথা দিক্শুণ্দীনাং সাম্রাজ্যং সুযুবে বৃষো।

এবা ত্বং সাম্রাজ্যেধিপত্যুরন্তং পরেত্য।।” (অথর্ববেদ ১৪/১/৪৩)

অর্থাৎ হে বধু! যেমন বলবান সমুদ্র নদী সমূহের ওপর সাম্রাজ্য স্থাপন করিয়াছে তুমিও তেমন প্রতিগ্রহে গিয়া সাম্রাজ্ঞী হয়ে থাকো। এছাড়াও ঋগ্বেদের ন্যায় অথর্ববেদেও বলা হয়েছে—

“সাম্রাজ্যেধিশুরেষু সাম্রাজ্যুত দেবু।

ননান্দু সাম্রাজ্যেধি সাম্রাজ্যুতশ্বশ্বাঃ।।” (অথর্ববেদ ১৪/১/৪৪)

অর্থাৎ শ্বশুরদের মধ্যে এবং দেবরদের মধ্যে ও শাশুড়ীদের সঙ্গে মিলেমিশে সম্রাজ্ঞী হয়ে থাকো। বিবাহ অনুষ্ঠানে বধূকে অনেক বৈদিক মন্ত্র উচ্চারণ করতে হত। এই মন্ত্রগুলি যদি বর কিংবা বরের পিতা পাঠ করতেন তাহলে সেই মন্ত্রের অভিপ্রায় ব্যর্থ হবে এরূপ বলা হয়েছে। বিবাহের অতিরিক্ত অনুষ্ঠান কুশণ্ডিকাতে ধ্রুবনক্ষত্রকে দেখিয়ে নববধূ পতিকে বলতেন— “ধ্রুবং দ্যৌঃ ধ্রুবা পৃথিবী ধ্রুববেয়ং, ধ্রুবাং পতিকুলে ভূয়াসম্” অর্থাৎ আকাশ ধ্রুব, পৃথিবী ধ্রুব, এই নক্ষত্র ধ্রুব, আমিও পতিকুলে চিরতরে বিরাজ করব। গোভিল প্রভৃতির স্পষ্ট নির্দেশ ‘ইমং মন্ত্রং পত্নী পঠেৎ।’ আবার পতি অরুক্ষতী নক্ষত্রকে দেখিয়ে বধূকে বলতেন— বশিষ্ঠের পাশে যেমন অরুক্ষতী, নারায়ণের পাশে

বর্তমান যুগের তুলনায় বৈদিক যুগের নারীদের স্বতন্ত্রতা বিচার

যেমন লক্ষ্মী, অগ্নির যেরূপ স্বাহা, ইন্দ্রের যেরূপ শচী সেইরূপ তুমিও আমার হও। ‘এছাড়াও তদ্রূপ প্র মে পাতিযানঃ কল্পতাম্’ এই মন্ত্রটি নববধূ পাঠ করবে। এবং বর ও বধূ একত্রে ‘সরস্বতী প্রেদমতে’ ইত্যাদি মন্ত্র পাঠ করবে। সুতরাং এই উক্তিগুলোর মাধ্যমে আরো একটি ঘটনা জানা যায় যে মহিলারা বৈদিক যজ্ঞকর্মে মন্ত্র পাঠ করতেন। পত্নী শব্দটির ব্যুৎপত্তি প্রসঙ্গে পাণিনি ‘পত্য্যনো যজ্ঞসংযোগে’ এই সূত্রটি রচনা করেছেন। এই কথাটির অর্থ হল যে স্বামীকে যজ্ঞকর্মে সহায় করার অর্থেই পতির সঙ্গে ‘ন’ প্রত্যয় যুক্ত হবে। সুতরাং ‘পত্নী’ শব্দটির অর্থ হল যজ্ঞে পতির সহযোগিনী। অপত্নীক ব্যক্তির যজ্ঞকর্মের অংশগ্রহণ করার অধিকার ছিল না, সপত্নীক যজ্ঞমানের পত্নীকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে যজ্ঞকর্ম সম্পন্ন হতো। রামায়ণ গঠিত আছে যে রামচন্দ্র রাজসূয় যজ্ঞ করার ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করলেও সীতাদেবী নির্বাসনে ছিলেন তাই যজ্ঞ করার ইচ্ছা পূরণার্থে তিনি সীতার এক স্বর্ণময় মূর্তি নির্মাণ করেছিলেন। শতপথ ব্রাহ্মণে স্পষ্ট বলা হয়েছে যে স্ত্রী হইলো যজ্ঞের অর্ধাংশ ‘অর্ধোহবা এন যজ্ঞস্য যৎ পত্নী’। প্রত্যেক যজ্ঞেই পত্নী সংযোগ নামে একটি যাগ অনুষ্ঠিত হত, এতে যজ্ঞমান পত্নী বেদ মন্ত্র পাঠ করতেন, তিনি যজ্ঞবেদীর মধ্যে পুরোহিতদের সঙ্গে আসন গ্রহণ করতেন। ব্রাহ্মণগ্রন্থে এই রূপ স্বীকারোক্তি পাওয়া যায় যে দেবতারা অবিবাহিতের হাত থেকে আছতি গ্রহণ করেন না— ‘ন বৈ অপত্নীকস্য হস্তাৎ দেবা বলিং গৃহুস্তি’ (৫/১/৬/১০)। অবিবাহিতদের অগ্নিহত্র যাগ করার অধিকার ছিল না। বিপত্নীক ব্যক্তিরও অগ্নিহত্র যাগ করার অধিকার নেই সর্বদা পত্নী সহযোগে এই যাগ করণীয়। ঐতরেয় ব্রাহ্মণে বলা আছে বিবাহিতা কিন্তু বিপত্নীক হলে অগ্নিহত্র যাগ করার জন্য পুনরায় বিবাহ করতে না চাইলে শ্রদ্ধাকে স্ত্রী বলে কল্পনা করে অগ্নিহত্র যাগ অনুষ্ঠান করবেন। অশ্বমেধ যজ্ঞে রাজার চারজন রানী যজ্ঞে অংশগ্রহণ করতেন এবং কার্যাবলী সম্পন্ন করতেন। ঋগ্বেদে বলা হয়েছে—

“দম্পতী সমনসা সুনুত আ চ ধাবতঃ।

দেবাসো নিত্যয়াশিরা।।” (ঋগ্বেদ ৮/৩১/৫)

অর্থাৎ হে বিদ্বানগণ! যে পত্নী ও পতি এক সঙ্গে একমনে যজ্ঞ করে, উপাসনা দ্বারা যাহাদের মন পরমাত্মার দিকে ধাবমান হয় তাহারা নিত্য পরমাত্মার আশ্রয়েই সব কার্য করে। আরও বলা হয়েছে—

‘পুত্রিণা তা কুমারিণা বিশ্বমায়ূর্ব্যশ্নুতঃ।

উভ হিরণ্যপেশসা।।’ (ঋগ্বেদ-৮/৩১/৫)

অর্থাৎ একসঙ্গে যজ্ঞ করলে পতি পত্নী পুত্র এবং কুমারী কন্যা লাভ হয়। তারা পূর্ণ আয়ু ভোগ করে এবং উভয়েই নিষ্কলঙ্ক চরিত্রের স্বর্ণভূষণে দিপ্যমান হন।

উক্ত বিষয়গুলির পর্যবেক্ষণের মাধ্যমে জানা যায় যে বৈদিক যুগে পুরুষদের ন্যায় নারীরাও যাগ যজ্ঞে অংশগ্রহণ করতেন এবং তৎকালীন সমাজে নারীদের প্রতি কতটা সম্মান প্রদর্শন করা হতো সে বিষয়ে ধারণা লাভ করা যায়। পতি কখনও পত্নীর উপর অযথা প্রভাব বিস্তার করত না বরং জীবনসঙ্গিনী হিসাবে তাকে স্নেহ করত। বৈদিক যুগে সহধর্মিণী কথাটি সার্থক রূপ পেয়েছিল। অথর্ববেদে বলা হয়েছে—

“অহং বদামি তেভুং সভায়ামহ ত্বং বদ।

মমেদস্ত্বং কেবলো নান্যাসা কীর্তয়াশচন।।” (অথর্ববেদ ৭/৩৮/৪)

এই মন্ত্রের মাধ্যমে বোঝানো হয়েছে স্বামীর উচিত শুধু একমাত্র একজন স্ত্রীর প্রতি অনুরক্ত থাকা। দ্বিতীয় কোন নারীর প্রতি অনুরাগ তো দূরে থাক, অন্যকোন নারী সম্বন্ধে তার আলোচনাও করা উচিত নয়। ঋগ্বেদের দশম মন্ডলে উক্ত হয়েছে

“উভে ধুরৌ বহিরাপিদ্মানোহন্যর্যোনেব চরতি দ্বিজানিঃ।

বনস্পতিং বন অসহাপয়ধ্বং নি যু দধিধ্বমখনস্ত উৎসম্।।” (অথর্ববেদ ১০/১০১/১১)

অর্থাৎ বহনকারী পশু রথের দুই ধুরা শব্দায়মান করিয়া বিচরণ করিতেছে, যেন দুই ভার্যার স্বামী রতিক্রিয়া করিতেছে। কাষ্ঠনির্মিত শকটকে ইহার কাঠময় আধারে আরোপণ কর, উত্তমরূপে সংস্থাপন কর, ইহার মূলদেশে যেন খনন করিও না, অর্থাৎ শকট যেন আধার ভ্রষ্ট না হয়। একাদিক স্ত্রী পুরুষদের জীবনকে লক্ষ্যহীন করে তোলে। অর্থাৎ বেদেও একাধিক মহিলা পানিগ্রহণ প্রথাকে সমর্থন করেনি। বেদে পতি মৃত হলে পুনরায় পতিগ্রহণ অর্থাৎ বিধবা বিবাহের সমর্থনের ইঙ্গিত পাওয়া যায়। ঋগ্বেদেও বিধবা বিবাহের সমর্থন করে মৃত্যুর পত্নীর উদ্দেশ্যে বলা হয়েছে—

“উদীর্ষ নার্যভি জীবলোকং গতাসুমেতমুপ শেষ এহি।

হস্তগ্রাভস্য দিধিশোস্তবেদং পত্যুর্জতনিত্তমভি সং বভূথ।।” (ঋগ্বেদ ১০/১৮/৮)

উক্ত মন্ত্রটির মাধ্যমে বলা হয়েছে হে নারী! মৃত পতির শোকে অচল হয়ে লাভ কি? বাস্তব জীবনে ফিরে মায়াত্যাগ কর। পুনরায় পতি কামনা করো এবং পাণিগ্রহণকারী (নতুন পতি) বিবাহের অভিলাষী এই পতিকে জায়াত্বের সহিত প্রাপ্ত হও। এই একই প্রকার অর্থসম্বন্ধিত

মন্ত্র অথর্ববেদেও লক্ষ্য করা যায়—

“উদীর্ঘনার্যতি জীবলোকম্ পগতাসুমেতমুপ শেষ এহি।

হস্তাগ্রাভস্য দধিষোস্তুবেদংপতুর্ষানিত্তমভি সং বভূথ।।” (অথর্ববেদ ১৮/৩/২)

অর্থাৎ ওঠ, হে নারী, জীবিত জগতের দিকে ফিরে এসো, মৃতকে ত্যাগ কর যেখানে তুমি শুয়ে আছেন, এসো এবং এই ব্যক্তির সাথে বিবাহের রাজ্যে যোগ দাও যিনি আপনার দ্বিতীয় স্বামী এবং জীবনসঙ্গী হিসাবে আপনার হাত ধরে রাখার প্রস্তাব দেন।

“ইয়ং নারীপতিলোকং বৃণানা নি পদ্যত উপ ত্বা মর্ত্য প্রেতম্।

ধর্মংপুরাণমনুপালয়ন্তী তস্মৈ প্রজাং দ্রবিণং চেহ ধেহি।।” (অথর্ববেদ, ১৮/৩/১)

হে মনুষ্য! এই স্ত্রী পুনর্বিবাহের আকাঙ্ক্ষা করিয়া মৃত পতির পরে তোমার নিকট আসিয়াছে। সে সনাতন ধর্মের পালয়িত্রী। তাহার জন্য ইহলোক সন্তান ও ধন দান কর। স্বামীর মৃত্যুর পর বিধবাদের পুনরায় বিবাহ করার অনুমতি দিয়ে তৈত্তিরীয় আরন্যক এ পুনর্বিবাহের সমর্থনে বলা হয়েছে স্বামীর মৃত্যুর পর স্ত্রীকে শোকে মুহমান না হতে, শোকত্যাগ করে স্বাভাবিক জীবন শুরু করতে বলা হয়েছে এবং প্রয়োজনে পুনরায় বিবাহ করার অনুমতি দিয়েছে। যদিও পণ্ডিতগণ উক্ত মন্ত্রগুলোর ব্যাখ্যায় একমত হতে পারেননি। বিধবা বিবাহ সমর্থন করে পরাশর সংহিতায় বলা হয়েছে—

“নষ্টে মৃতে প্রব্রজিতে ক্লীবে চ পতিতে পতৌ।

পচস্বাপতসু নারীরং পতিরন্যো ধিবীয়তে।।” (পরাশর স্মৃতি ৪/২৭)

অর্থাৎ নারীর যদি স্বামী মারা যায়, তাঁর স্বামী যদি গোপনে সন্ন্যাস গ্রহণ করে নিখোঁজ হয়ে যায়, স্বামী যদি নিখোঁজ হয়ে যায়, স্বামী যদি সন্তান উৎপাদনে অক্ষম হয়, স্বামী যদি অধার্মিক ও অত্যাচারী হয় তবে নারী এই স্বামী ছেড়ে পুনরায় বিবাহ করতে পারে।

অধিকাংশ পণ্ডিত এই সকল মন্ত্রকে বিধবা বিবাহের প্রমাণস্বরূপ ব্যাখ্যা করেছেন অপরপক্ষে এই মন্ত্রগুলি কয়েকজন পণ্ডিত মনে করেন যে এই মন্ত্রগুলি বিধবা বিবাহের সমর্থন করে না। “বিধবেব দেবরম্” বাক্যের অন্তর্গত দেবর শব্দটির ব্যাখ্যা সম্বন্ধে পণ্ডিতদের মতভেদ দৃষ্ট হয়। অধিকাংশ নিরুক্ত গ্রন্থের পাণ্ডুলিপিতে ‘দেবরঃ দীব্যতিকর্মা’ এইরূপ ব্যাখ্যা দৃষ্ট হয় অর্থাৎ যে খেলা করে। যাঁরা বিধবাবিবাহ সমর্থন করেন না তাঁরা এইরূপ ব্যাখ্যা দিয়ে থাকেন। অর্থাৎ তাঁদের মতে উক্ত মন্ত্রটির অর্থ খেলা করে এমন শিশুকে নিয়ে বিধবা থাকবেন। আবার অপরপক্ষে যাঁরা বিধবা বিবাহের সমর্থন করে তাদের মতে পাণ্ডুলিপিতে ‘দেবরো দ্বিতীয় বর উচ্যতে’ এই ব্যাখ্যা দৃষ্টি হয়। যাঁহারা এই মন্ত্রে বিধবা বিবাহের সমর্থন করেন তাদের মধ্যে দেবর কথাটির মাধ্যমে দ্বিতীয় বর বা দ্বিতীয় স্বামীর কথা বোঝানো হয়েছে।

বৈদিক যুগে ললিতকলাকে নারী শিক্ষণীয় বিদ্যা বলে মনে করা হতো এই উক্তিটি বহুবার করা হয়েছে যে ‘নৃত্যং গীতং স্ত্রীনাং কর্ম’ অর্থাৎ সংগীত করা ও নৃত্য করা স্ত্রীলোকের কার্য। ব্রাহ্মণের একটি প্রবচনে জানা যায় যে পূর্বকালে সামবেদের উদ্ভাঙ্গিতগণের পত্নী যজ্ঞের সামগান করত। পরবর্তীকালে তাদের পতিগণ সাম গান করতে আরম্ভ করায় তারা এই কর্ম থেকে বিরত হন। তৈত্তিরীয় সংহিতা এবং মৈত্রায়নী এই প্রকার সমর্থন দৃষ্ট হয়।

বৈদিক যুগে নারীরা বিভিন্ন পেশার সঙ্গে যুক্ত ছিল। শুল্কযজুর্বেদে তদানীন্তন বৈদিক ভারতের প্রচলিত প্রায় ৭০টি পেশার বা জীবিকার নাম উল্লেখ আছে। তন্মধ্যে বস্ত্রধৌতি, ঝুড়ি প্রস্তুতি, সুগন্ধি দ্রব্য নির্মাণ, কাজল প্রস্তুতি, তরবারির কোষ নির্মাণ, পুত্রলি নির্মাণ, বস্ত্রাদি রং করা, অলংকরণ প্রভৃতি ৮ প্রকার কর্ম কেবলমাত্র নারীদের জন্য নির্দিষ্ট ছিল। ‘রজয়িত্রী’ নামক নারী রজক সুতো বস্ত্রাদি রং করতো।

বৈদিক যুগের সামরিক শিক্ষাদান করার প্রথা নারীদের মধ্যেও যে প্রচলিত ছিল তা ঋগ্বেদের কয়েকটি মন্ত্র স্পষ্ট প্রমাণিত হয়। যুদ্ধক্ষেত্রের রমণীদের অপূর্ব বীরত্বের বহু উদাহরণও পাওয়া যায়। এমনকি খ্যাতনামা রাজন্যবর্গের মহিষীগণ রণাঙ্গনের পুরোভাগে নিভীক চিত্তে যুদ্ধ করতেন। রাজা নমুচির আদেশে তাহার মহিষী অতি ভয়ংকর এবং দীর্ঘস্থায়ী যুদ্ধ অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন। রাজা খেলের রানী বিম্পলার বীরত্বব্যঞ্জক কার্যাবলী ঋগ্বেদের আশ্বিন সূক্তে ১/১১৬ বর্ণিত আছে। একদা যখন তিনি যুদ্ধক্ষেত্রে সেনামুখে অবস্থান করত শত্রুসেনা সঙ্গে ঘোরযুদ্ধে ব্যাপ্ত ছিলেন সেই সময় তিনি উরুতে গুরুতর আঘাত পান ফলে তার একটি উরু শরীর থেকে একেবারে বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়ে গেছিল এবং লৌহ নির্মিত একটি কৃত্রিম উরু তাহার দেহে সংযোজন করা হয়েছিল। নিম্নোক্ত মন্ত্রটিতে উপরোক্ত ঘটনাটি বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে—

“চরিত্রম্ হই বরিবাচ্ছেদি পর্ণমাজা খেলস্য পরিতক্ল্যাম্যাম্।

সদ্যো জঙ্ঘামায়সীং বিম্পলায়ৈ ধনে হিতে সর্তবে প্রত্যধত্তম্।।” (ঋগ্বেদ ১/১১৬/১৫)

বর্তমান যুগের তুলনায় বৈদিক যুগের নারীদের স্বতন্ত্রতা বিচার

এই মন্ত্রটি নারীশিক্ষা প্রমাণস্বরূপ। বৈদিক যুগের বীরাজনা নারীদের মধ্যে তাঁর নাম চিরস্মরণীয় হয়ে থাকবে। তিনি ছিলেন মুদালার স্ত্রী। ঋগ্বেদের ১০/১০২/২ মন্ত্রে নিতীক দুঃসাহসী যোদ্ধা হিসেবে মুদালার বর্ণনা পাওয়া যায়। ইন্দ্রের ব্রজের ন্যায় তিনি হাজার সৈন্য পরাস্তা করেছিলেন। তিনি বহু যুদ্ধে বহু শত্রু বন্দী করে পুরস্কার লাভ করেছিলেন। ঋগ্বেদের সূক্ত পর্যালোচনা করলে আমরা জানতে পারি দাসবর্ণের অনার্যদের সৈন্যবাহিনীতে বহু স্ত্রীসৈন্য থাকত। বেদে জনৈক আর্যযোদ্ধার উক্তি থেকে জানা যায়— স্ত্রিয় হি দাস আয়ুধানি চক্রে কিং ম করম্বলা অস্য সেনা? অর্থাৎ দাসজাতি তাদের স্ত্রীলোকেদের অস্ত্রের ন্যায় যুদ্ধে নিযুক্ত করে তাদের অবলা স্ত্রী সেনা আমার কি ক্ষতি করবে? ঋগ্বেদের আরো কয়েকটি মন্ত্রেও সূক্তে নারীদের বীরত্বব্যঞ্জন কার্যকলাপ ও দক্ষতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়, যেমন— ৫/৮০/৬, ৭/৭৮/৫, ৮/৩৩/১৯ প্রভৃতি উল্লেখযোগ্য।

বেদ পরবর্তী যুগে নারীর অবস্থান দিন দিন অবনতি ঘটেছে। কন্যা সন্তান জন্মগ্রহণ করলে শোক প্রকাশ করা হয়। উপরন্তু আমাদের সমাজ যতই উন্নত হোন না কেন, যতই আধুনিকতার ছোয়া লাগুক না কেন, চিন্তাধারা সংকীর্ণই আছে। এখনো আমাদের সমাজে কন্যাজ্ঞান হত্যা করা হয়। শাস্ত্রে বলা হল যে নারী শুধু কন্যা সন্তানের জন্ম দেয় তাকে ত্যাগ করা যায় দশ বছরের মধ্যে, যে কেবল মৃত সন্তানের জন্ম দেয় তাকে বারো বছরে ত্যাগ করা যায়, আর যে স্বামী মুখের উপর কথা বলে তাকে তৎক্ষণাৎ ছেড়ে দেওয়া যায়। অর্থাৎ নারী-পুরুষের ভোগ্যবস্তু এবং সন্তান উৎপাদনের যন্ত্র মকাত্র। আমরা এত বিজ্ঞান পাঠ করা সত্ত্বেও, এই বিষয়টি জানা সত্ত্বেও, যে গর্ভস্থ সন্তান ছেলে হবে না মেয়ে তা সম্পূর্ণই নির্ভর করে পিতার উপর, কিন্তু তাও আমাদের সমাজ এখনো কন্যা সন্তান হলে মহিলাদের দায়ী করে। ঋগ্বেদিক যুগে নারীরাই ছিল গৃহের সর্বময় কত্রী। বাৎসরিক সংহিতায় নারীদের গৃহলক্ষ্মী রূপে কল্পনা করা হয়েছে। কিন্তু পরবর্তীকালে কথাটির অর্থই পরিবর্তন করে দেওয়া হয়। ঋগ্বেদিক যুগে নারীরা সমস্ত ধর্মীয় আচার অনুষ্ঠানে অংশগ্রহণ করতেন। কিন্তু পরবর্তীতে সেই সকল অনুষ্ঠান থেকে বাদ দিয়ে কেবল পুরুষেরা এককভাবে যজ্ঞানুষ্ঠানে অংশগ্রহণ করা শুরু করে। শুধু তাই নয় নিম্নবর্ণের ন্যায় উচ্চবর্ণের নারীদেরও বেদপাঠের অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করা হয়। পরবর্তী বৈদিক যুগে নারীদের বাল্যবিবাহ পুরুষদের বহুবিবাহের চল শুরু হয় ফলে নারীদের অবস্থার ক্রমবনতি ঘটতে থাকে। বর্তমানে নারীদের বাল্যবিবাহ ও বহুবিবাহ আইন করে রদ করা হলেও এখনও বহুস্থানে এই নিয়ম বহাল থেকেই গেছে। কিন্তু বর্তমান যুগে পণপ্রথা একটি জাতীয় ব্যাধিতে পরিণত হয়েছে। বহু পরিবারে এমন অনেক ঘটনা দেখা গেছে যে বিয়ে দিতে গিয়ে বহু পরিবারকে সর্বশাস্ত হতে হয়েছে। শুধু তাই নয় পণের চাপে বহু নারীদের নিজেদের প্রাণ বিসর্জনও দিতে হয়েছে। সর্বোপরি বলা যায় যে পৌরাণিক পুরোহিতগণ পুরুষতন্ত্র কায়েম করতে একসময় নারীদের শাস্ত্রপাঠ বন্ধ করে দিয়েছিল, সতীদাহের মত জঘন্য প্রথা চালু করেছিল। সর্বোপরি বলা যায় যে আমাদের সংস্কৃতি আমাদের জন্য গর্বের বিষয় এবং এর হারানো গৌরব ফিরিয়ে আনতে আমরা সর্বদা দায়বদ্ধ।

তথ্যসূত্র ও সহায়ক গ্রন্থসূচী :

- ১। বসু, যোগীরাজ। (২০১৫)। *বেদের পরিচয়*। ফার্মা কে. এল. প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, কলকাতা।
- ২। ভট্টাচার্য, নরেন্দ্রনাথ। (২০১৭)। *প্রাচীন ভারতীয় সমাজ*। পশ্চিমবঙ্গ রাজ্য পুস্তক পর্ষৎ, কলকাতা।
- ৩। দাস, দেবকুমার। (২০১৬)। *সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস*। স্বদেশ, কলকাতা।
- ৪। চক্রবর্তী, সত্যনারায়ণ। (২০১৬)। *পাণিনীয় শব্দশাস্ত্র*। সংস্কৃত পুস্তক ভান্ডার, কলকাতা।
- ৫। লাহিড়ী, প্রবোধচন্দ্র; হৃষীকেশ শাস্ত্রী, প্রদ্যোতকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। (২০১৬)। *পাণিনীয়ম্*। দি ঢাকা স্টুডেন্টস্ লাইব্রেরী, কলকাতা।
- ৬। সিংহ, কৈলাসচন্দ্র। (১২৯৩ বঙ্গাব্দ)। *পরশরসংহিতা*। ....., কলকাতা।
- ৭। <https://vedicscriptures.in/atharvaveda/3/18/0/2>
- ৮। [https://www.xn--45baaj2ajao5xbdb.com/2019/blog-post\\_3.html?m=1](https://www.xn--45baaj2ajao5xbdb.com/2019/blog-post_3.html?m=1)
- ৯। Wilson, H. H. *RigVeda (translation and commentary)*. (1866). ISBN-10 : 8171101380. The Bangalore Printing & Publishing co. Ltd, Bangalore.

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# ইতিহাসের আলোকে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের 'ইছামতী' নদীর জীবনকথা (১৯৪০-২০১০)

সঞ্জু সরকার

গবেষক, ইতিহাস বিভাগ, যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

**সারসংক্ষেপ :** ভৌগোলিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক বহুত্বের সমন্বয়ে গঠিত বাংলা হল নদীমাতৃক দেশ। সভ্যতার উত্থান-পতন, জনপদের বিকাশ, নগরায়ণ ও আঞ্চলিক আর্থ-সামাজিক বিকাশের ক্ষেত্রে নদীর গুরুত্ব অপরিসীম। এক্ষেত্রে বলা প্রয়োজন, নদীমাতৃক বাংলার প্রধান দুই ধারা গঙ্গা ও পদ্মা হলেও অসংখ্য ছোট-বড় নদ-নদী, উপনদী, শাখানদী শিরা-উপশিরার মত এই বঙ্গভূমির উপর দিয়ে নিত্য প্রবহমান। মানব সভ্যতার ইতিহাসে নদীর এই গুরুত্বের কারণের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে দক্ষিণ বাংলার ইছামতী নামের একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য শাখানদীর জীবনকথা (বিশেষ করে ১৯৪০-২০১০ সময়ের) আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। আলোচনা করা হয়েছে এই নদীর নামকরণ, ইতিহাস, গতিপথ পরিবর্তন, নদীর উপর সংঘটিত নানা ঘটনা ও বন্যার ইতিহাস নিয়ে।

**সূচক শব্দ :** ইছামতী নদী, রূপরেখা, উৎসমুখ ও গতিপথ, রেল দুর্ঘটনা, বন্যা, সেতু, উদ্বাস্ত পুনর্বাসন।

ভৌগোলিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক বহুত্বের সমন্বয়ে গঠিত বাংলা হল নদীমাতৃক দেশ। সভ্যতার উত্থান-পতন, জনপদের বিকাশ, নগরায়ণ ও আঞ্চলিক আর্থ-সামাজিক বিকাশের ক্ষেত্রে নদীর গুরুত্ব অপরিসীম। ভারতীয় উপমহাদেশের প্রাচীনতম নগর সভ্যতা তথা হরপ্পা সভ্যতার দুটি সর্ববৃহৎ ও সর্বপ্রধান নগর (হরপ্পা ও মহেঞ্জোদারো) মূলত নদীকে কেন্দ্র করে বিদ্যমান ছিল এবং এইসব নগরের সচলতার ক্ষেত্রে নদীর গুরুত্ব এদের পশ্চাদভূমির প্রেক্ষিতেই বোঝা যায়।<sup>১</sup> আবার মধ্যযুগীয় সময়কালেও জলপথে ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য,<sup>২</sup> নগরের বিকাশ<sup>৩</sup> ইত্যাদি বিষয়গুলি নানান ঐতিহাসিক ভিন্ন ভিন্ন প্রেক্ষিতে উপস্থাপন করেছেন। সর্বোপরি ঔপনিবেশিক সময়কাল থেকে শুরু করে বর্তমানেও জনজীবনের বহুলাংশে নদীর গুরুত্ব অপরিসীম। এক্ষেত্রে বলা প্রয়োজন, নদীমাতৃক বাংলার প্রধান দুই ধারা গঙ্গা ও পদ্মা হলেও অসংখ্য ছোট-বড় নদ-নদী, উপনদী, শাখানদী শিরা-উপশিরার মত এই বঙ্গভূমির উপর দিয়ে নিত্য প্রবহমান।

নীহাররঞ্জন রায় লিখেছেন, “বাংলার ইতিহাস রচনা করিয়াছে বাংলার ছোট-বড় অসংখ্য নদ-নদী, এই নদীগুলিই বাংলার প্রধান; ইহারাই বাংলাকে গড়িয়াছে। বাংলার আকৃতি-প্রকৃতি নির্ণয় করিয়াছে যুগে যুগে, এখনও করিতেছে। এই নদীগুলিই বাংলার আশীর্বাদ।”<sup>৪</sup> অর্থাৎ সুপ্রাচীনকাল থেকেই বাংলায় যোগাযোগের একটি মূল মাধ্যম হল নদী। সড়কপথ বা আকাশপথ নির্মাণ বা নির্দেশ করতে হয়। কিন্তু নদীপথ প্রকৃতির দান। বিশেষত প্রাচীন সময়কালে এক দেশের সঙ্গে অন্য দেশের বা এক রাজ্যের সাথে অপর রাজ্যের সাংস্কৃতিক আদান-প্রদান, ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্যের প্রসার প্রভৃতি বহুল পরিমাণে বাধাপ্রাপ্ত হত এই বিপুল জলরাশি বা জলপথ না থাকলে। অর্থাৎ জলপথ ব্যতীত সভ্যতার আদান-প্রদান কখনোই সার্থকভাবে ঘটত না। এক্ষেত্রে নীহাররঞ্জন রায়ের মন্তব্য যথেষ্ট প্রণিধানযোগ্য — “উত্তরবঙ্গ ও দক্ষিণবঙ্গে যোগাযোগ এই নদীপথেই ছিল, সন্দেহ করিবার কারণ নাই। একথা আগেও বলিয়াছি যে, নদীমাতৃক দেশে স্থলপথ অপেক্ষা নদীপথেই যাতায়াত ও বাণিজ্য প্রশস্ততর ছিল।”<sup>৫</sup> অর্থাৎ নদীকে কেন্দ্র করে মানব জীবনের বিচিত্র লীলা উদ্ভাসিত হয়েছে। এই নদী কখনো স্নেহময়ী, কল্যাণময়ী, আবার কখনো রুদ্ররূপী, অনিষ্টকারী। নদীর এই সৃষ্টি ও ধ্বংসলীলার মধ্যে মানুষ যেমন তার ব্যবহারিক জীবনের প্রয়োজন মেটায়, আবার তেমনি অপার্থিব জীবনের শান্তি (আধ্যাত্মিক বা ধর্মীয় রীতিনীতি পালন) পরিতৃপ্তকরণে সক্ষম হয়।

মানব সভ্যতার ইতিহাসে এই গুরুত্বের কারণেই বিভিন্ন জনবসতির উত্থান-পতন, তার বিস্তার ও স্থানান্তর, ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্যের সূচনা ও অগ্রগতি প্রভৃতি আলোচনার সময়ে বিভিন্ন নদ, জলপথ এবং নদী ও সমুদ্রবন্দরের গুরুত্ব আলোচিত হয়েছে। এই পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে আমরা দক্ষিণ বাংলার ইছামতী নামের একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য শাখানদীর জীবনকথা আলোচনা করতে অগ্রসর হয়েছি (বিশেষ করে ১৯৪০-২০১০ সময়ের)। আমরা আলোচনা করব এই নদীর নামকরণ, ইতিহাস, গতিপথ পরিবর্তন, নদীর উপর সংঘটিত নানা ঘটনা ও বন্যার ইতিহাস নিয়ে।

এই আলোচনায় মুখ্য (Primary) ও গৌণ (Secondary) নানা তথ্যসূত্রের উপর নির্ভর করা হয়েছে। এক্ষেত্রে মুখ্য তথ্যসূত্রের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল— মেজর জেনারেল রেনেলকৃত ম্যাপ, ইছামতী নদী সংস্কার সহায়তা কমিটির (১৯৯৭) নিকট থেকে প্রাপ্ত নানা তথ্য ও তাঁদের রিপোর্ট ইত্যাদি। এছাড়া নদী পার্শ্ব বসবাসকারী নানা বৃদ্ধ ব্যক্তির সাক্ষাৎকার ও ক্ষেত্রসমীক্ষা থেকে প্রাপ্ত তথ্যাদিও ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে। আর গৌণ তথ্যসূত্রের মধ্যে স্থানীয় নানা ইতিহাসমূলক গ্রন্থ, বাংলার নদ-নদীর উপর লিখিত নানা গ্রন্থ এবং সর্বোপরি,

ইতিহাসের আলোকে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের 'ইছামতী' নদীর জীবনকথা (১৯৪০-২০১০)

উপন্যাসমূলক সাহিত্য তথা নদীকেন্দ্রিক বাংলা উপন্যাস (বিশেষত বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় রচিত 'ইছামতী' উপন্যাস) থেকেও তথ্য গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে।

### ইছামতী নদীর প্রবাহ পথ — এটি আন্তর্জাতিক নদীও বটে

পশ্চিমবঙ্গের প্রেক্ষিতে বলা যায় যে, নদীয়া জেলার মাজদিয়াতে মাথাভাঙ্গা দুটি শাখায় বিভক্ত হয়েছে। একটি 'চূর্ণী' নামে ভাগীরথীতে মিশেছে। অন্য শাখাটি 'ইছামতী' নামে দক্ষিণে বয়ে গেছে। উল্লেখ্য, গঙ্গার সব শাখানদী দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব বাহিনী। তবে এর মধ্যে 'জলঙ্গি' ও 'মাথাভাঙ্গা' হল ব্যতিক্রম। এই নদী দুটি দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমে বয়ে এসেছে। এ প্রসঙ্গে মেজর এফ. সি. হার্ট লিখেছিলেন যে, নদীয়ায় ভূমি অবনমনের ফলেই জলঙ্গি ও মাথাভাঙ্গার এমন গতিপথ তৈরি হয়েছে।<sup>১৬</sup> যাইহোক, আপাতদৃষ্টিতে ইছামতী নদীকে শাখানদী বলে মনে হলেও এটিকে আন্তর্জাতিক নদী বললেও কোনো ভুল হবে না।<sup>১৭</sup> কারণ এই নদী তার প্রবাহপথের কিছু কিছু স্থানে ভারত ও বাংলাদেশের মধ্যে আন্তর্জাতিক সীমানা হিসেবে কাজ করে এবং এই বিষয়টি নদীর গতিপথ থেকে স্পষ্ট হয়। উল্লেখ্য, ইছামতী নদীর গতিপথ আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে বলা যায় এই নদী পশ্চিমবঙ্গের নদীয়া জেলার মাথাভাঙ্গা থেকে প্রবাহিত হয়েই আন্তর্জাতিক সীমানা অতিক্রম করে বাংলাদেশে চুয়াডাঙ্গা জেলার দামুরহুদা উপজেলায় প্রবেশ করেছে। এরপর এটি বাংলাদেশের চুয়াডাঙ্গা জেলা এবং ভারতে নদীয়া ও উত্তর ২৪ পরগণা জেলার সংযোগস্থল নাগাদ পশ্চিমবঙ্গে পুনঃপ্রবেশ করেছে। অতঃপর ইছামতী নদী উত্তর ২৪ পরগণা জেলার মধ্য দিয়ে বর্তমানে বনগাঁ, স্বরূপনগর, বাদুড়িয়া এবং হাসনাবাদ (ব্লকের নামই উল্লেখ করা হল) হয়ে দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব দিকে প্রবাহিত হয়েছে। ইছামতী তার প্রবাহপথে বারংবার ভারত ও বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলে প্রবেশ করেছে এবং কোথাও কোথাও আন্তর্জাতিক সীমানা তৈরি করেছে (বিশেষত পশ্চিমবঙ্গের উত্তর ২৪ পরগণা জেলার হাসনাবাদ থেকে বাংলাদেশের সাতক্ষীরা জেলার শ্যামনগর পর্যন্ত)। যদিও এই নদী তার প্রবাহপথে বাংলাদেশের বহু জেলাকে (যেমন—চুয়াডাঙ্গা, যশোর ও সাতক্ষীরার মত বেশ কয়েকটি জেলা) ছুঁয়ে গেছে। কিন্তু নদীটির যাত্রার প্রধান গতিপথ পশ্চিমবঙ্গের অঞ্চলগুলির মধ্য দিয়ে। বাংলাদেশের অভ্যন্তরে প্রবাহিত হওয়ার সময় নদীটি নিওডাঙ্গা, হানারসোনাই, শরতখাল ও দাঁতভাঙ্গার মত বেশ কয়েকটি নদীতে মিশেছে। যাইহোক, শেষ পর্যন্ত নদীটি রায়মঙ্গল নদীতে গিয়ে পড়েছে এবং এরপর এই দুটি নদীর (ইছামতী ও রায়মঙ্গল) যৌথ প্রবাহ বঙ্গোপসাগরে পতিত হয়েছে। উল্লেখ্য, নানা স্থানে 'ইছামতী' নানান নামে প্রসিদ্ধ হয়েছে, যেমন—পশ্চিমবঙ্গের প্রেক্ষিতে হিঙ্গলগঞ্জ পর্যন্ত এটি 'ইছামতী' নামে পরিচিত। আর বাংলাদেশের সাতক্ষীরা জেলার কালিগঞ্জ উপজেলায় এটি 'কালিন্দী' নামে একটি ছোট উপনদীতে মিশেছে, যা সেখানে 'ইছামতী-কালিন্দী' নামে পরিচিত লাভ করেছে।<sup>১৮</sup> আবার গোসাবার নিকটে এই নদী 'হাড়িয়াভাঙ্গা' নামে পরিচিতি পেয়েছে।

### ইছামতীর অর্থ ও নদীর 'নাম' সম্পর্কিত বিতর্ক

ইছামতী নদীর নাম প্রসঙ্গে আঞ্চলিক ইতিহাস প্রণেতাদের মধ্যে যথেষ্ট বাদানুবাদ রয়েছে। কুমুদনাথ মল্লিক উল্লেখ করেছেন, "পদ্মা নদী সৃষ্ট মাথাভাঙ্গা নদী হইতে উদ্ভূত ইছামতীর বিভিন্ন সময়ে বিভিন্ন রূপ, যেমন— কখনও শান্ত, কখনও উত্তাল তরঙ্গসঙ্কুল, কখনও মিষ্ট সুপেয় ফটিক জলধারা, আবার কখনও ঘোলা লবণাক্ত। এই রূপ পরিবর্তন দেখে বহু অতীতে হয়ত কোন কবি একে 'ইছামতী' নামে ব্যাখ্যাত করেছিলেন।"<sup>১৯</sup> আবার সতীশচন্দ্র মিত্র দেখিয়েছেন, "...এই নদীর (ইছামতী নদী) ইচ্ছামত গতি পরিবর্তিত হত। আর এ নদীর ইচ্ছামত গতি পরিবর্তনের কারণে অতীতকাল থেকে মানুষেরা একে 'ইছামতী' নামেই পরিচিতি দিয়েছিলেন।"<sup>২০</sup> নির্মল কুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় উল্লেখ করেছেন যে, ইছামতী নদীর নামের একটি বিশেষ অর্থ আছে। 'ইছা'-র অর্থ হল 'গলদা চিংড়ি', আর 'মোতি'-র অর্থ হল 'মুক্তা'। এই দুটো জিনিস এই নদীতে প্রচুর পাওয়া যেত। তবে একইসঙ্গে তিনি এও বলেছেন যে গলদা চিংড়ি এখনও পাওয়া যায়, যদিও পরিমাণে খুব সামান্য। 'মোতি' বা মুক্তা এখন আর পাওয়া যায় না। 'মোতি' পাওয়া যেত শুক্তি বা ঝিনুকের মধ্যে (যদিও সব ঝিনুকের মধ্যে নয়)। জাল দিয়ে জেলেরা নৌকা করে ঝিনুক তুলত। ইংরাজি ১৯২৭-২৮ সালেও নদী থেকে ঝিনুক তুলতে দেখা গিয়েছে।<sup>২১</sup> অর্থাৎ তিনি 'ইছা' ও 'মোতি' এই দুটি প্রসঙ্গ উল্লেখ করে নদীর নাম ইছামতী হয়েছে তা স্পষ্ট করতে চেয়েছেন। এই 'ইছা' ও 'মোতি' এই দুটি প্রসঙ্গ সুকুমার মিত্রের গ্রন্থেও উল্লেখিত হয়েছে।<sup>২২</sup> আবার শশধর চক্রবর্তী নদীর ইচ্ছামত রূপ বা গতি পরিবর্তনের বিষয়টির উপর জোর দিয়ে বলেন যে ইচ্ছামত রূপ বা গতি পরিবর্তন যে হয়েছে তা এ নদীর প্রাচীন ম্যাপের অস্তিত্ব অনুধাবন করলে দেখা যাবে।<sup>২৩</sup> তবে চক্রবর্তী তাঁর রচনায় নির্মল কুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়ের যুক্তিকে খণ্ডন করে বলেছেন, 'ইছা' মানে চিংড়ি মাছ ঠিকই। কিন্তু এই ভাষা প্রচলিত পূর্ববঙ্গের নোয়াখালী-ত্রিপুরা অঞ্চলে, কিন্তু তা সম্পূর্ণভাবেই 'ইছা' বলে পরিচিত নয়। কাজেই বহুদূরে অবস্থিত দেশের ভাষার প্রভাব নদীয়া-যশোরের মধ্যে প্রবাহিত নদীর নামের উপর পড়া সম্ভব নয়। আর 'মোতি' মূলত ইছামতীর কুড়ি-পঁচিশ মাইল এলাকার মিঠা ও লবণাক্ত সংমিশ্রিত



জলের বিনুকেই জন্মাত। এই নদীর অন্য অংশে বিনুক পাওয়া যেত; কিন্তু তাতে মুক্তা জন্মাত বলে কেউ বলেনি। আর এখানকার মুক্তার ইতিহাস খুব বেশি হলে তিনশত বৎসরের বেশি নয়। কিন্তু বহুত নদী বহু প্রাচীনত্বের দাবি রাখে।<sup>১৪</sup> তবে নদীর নাম ‘ইছামতী’ কেন— এ বিষয়ে স্থানীয় আলোচনার আবর্তে নানা বাদবিতণ্ডা থাকলেও এই আলোচনা থেকে ইছামতী নদীর প্রশস্ত ও বিস্তৃত রূপেরই পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়, যা সময়ানুক্রমে ক্ষীণশ্রোতা হয়েছে ও কিছু কিছু স্থানে নদী যেন খালাকৃতিতে পরিবর্তিত হয়েছে। উল্লেখ্য, নদীকে কেন্দ্র করে অর্থনৈতিক ক্রিয়াকাণ্ডও আবর্তিত হয়। আর বাংলায় নদীকেন্দ্রিক অর্থনৈতিক আবর্তের বিষয়টি রাখাকমল মুখোপাধ্যায়ের রচনায় সবিশেষ উদ্ভাসিত হয়েছে।<sup>১৫</sup>

### নদীর গতিপথে প্রতিবন্ধকতা ও নদী চিত্র পরিবর্তনের রূপরেখার ইতিহাস

বর্তমানে ইছামতী নদী হল ক্ষীণশ্রোতা এবং স্থানে স্থানে নদীপার্শ্ব অনেক ভরাটও হয়ে গিয়েছে। তবে পূর্বে ইছামতী নদী যে তীর বেগবতী ও বৃহদায়তন প্রবাহসহ খুবই সক্রিয় নদী ছিল, তা মেজর রেনেলকৃত ম্যাপ, নদীপার্শ্ব বসবাসকারী বিশেষ করে বৃদ্ধ মানুষদের সাক্ষাৎকার, নানা সাহিত্যিক উপাদান থেকে স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে। উল্লেখ্য, ১৭৭৪ সালে তথা ব্রিটিশ শাসনের প্রথমদিকে মেজর রেনেলকৃত ম্যাপে উল্লেখিত ইছামতীর উৎসমুখ বিশ্লেষণ করলে দেখা যায় যে এই নদীর পূর্বসীমা বর্তমানে জয়পুর, ছয়ঘরিয়া; পশ্চিমে সীমা বর্তমানে কোর্ট, মুস্তাফী পাড়ার উচ্চভূমি ও দক্ষিণাংশ মতিগঞ্জ, শিমুলতলা, ভবানীপুর, কালীয়ানি এবং উত্তরাংশ টালিখোলাসমূহ, কুঠিবাড়ী, পাইক পাড়ার বাঁওড় এবং শুকপুরিয়া গ্রামের নিম্নাংশ পর্যন্ত বিস্তৃত ছিল।<sup>১৬</sup> অর্থাৎ অষ্টাদশ শতকের একেবারে শেষভাগ পর্যন্ত ইছামতী ওইসব স্থানের উপর দিয়ে প্রবাহিত হত। কিন্তু রেনেলকৃত ম্যাপে ইছামতীর যে প্রশস্ততা ছিল, সেই প্রশস্ততা যেন সময়ানুক্রমে একেবারে হ্রাসপ্রাপ্ত হয়ে নানা গ্রাম, প্রতিষ্ঠান বা ছোট বাঁওড় ইত্যাদি সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল, এখনও হচ্ছে। কারণ ওই যে স্থানগুলির উল্লেখ করা হল সেগুলি বর্তমানে সমৃদ্ধ গ্রাম ও শহর। যাইহোক, দ্বিতীয় প্রমাণ হিসেবে দেখা যায় যে, ইছামতীর উভয় পাড়ের বর্ণিত চারণভূমিসহ গভীর জঙ্গলাকীর্ণ বনভূমির মধ্যে মানুষের বসবাসের ধারাবাহিক পারিবারিক বিবরণ। আর তাদের সেই বিবরণ থেকেও নদী সংকোচনের বিষয়টি স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে। এমনকি বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের উপন্যাসেও নদীর শ্রোতস্বীনি রূপের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়— “...ওদের সকলের সামনে দিয়ে ইছামতীর জলধারা চঞ্চলবেগে বয়ে চলেছে বড় লোনা গাঙের দিকে, সেখান থেকে মোহনা পেরিয়ে, রায়মঙ্গল পেরিয়ে, গঙ্গাসাগর পেরিয়ে মহাসমুদ্রের দিকে।”<sup>১৭</sup> এছাড়া তিনি বর্ণনা করেছেন, “মড়িঘাটা কি বাজিতপুরের ঘাট থেকে নৌকা চলে যেত চাঁদুড়িয়ার (বর্তমানে বাঁদুড়িয়া) ঘাট পর্যন্ত।”<sup>১৮</sup> কিন্তু পূর্বের সেই শ্রোতস্বীনি ইছামতী আজ ক্ষীণশ্রোতা।

নদীপার্শ্ব বসবাসকারী একজন ব্যক্তি (বনগাঁনিবাসী) বলেছেন যে, “বর্তমানে শীর্ণ ইছামতি দেখলে মনে হবে না যে একদিন আমাদের এখানে ইছামতীর এই পাড়ে দাঁড়ালে ওই পাঁড় ঘোলা দেখাত। পরিষ্কারভাবে কিছু বোঝাই যেত না। ইছামতী এতই প্রশস্ত ছিল; প্রবলও ছিল খুব। আবার এই নদীতে এত কুমিরের উৎপাত ছিল যে স্নানের ঘাটগুলি বাঁশের বেড়া দিয়ে ঘিরে রাখা হত।”<sup>১৯</sup> আবার একজন বলেছেন, “এখন তো দেখি অনেকে নদীর এই পাড় (নদীর ডান তীর) থেকে ওই পাড়ে ঢিল (মাটি বা পাথরের খুব ছোট দলা) হাতে ছুঁড়ে পার করে দেয়। আর আমাদের বাচ্ছা বেলায় নদীর মাঝখান তো দূরের কথা, ঢিল যতই জোরেই ছোঁড়া হোক না কেন নদীর মাঝের হাফ (৪ ভাগের ১ ভাগ)-ও যেত না (যদিও এটি তেঁতুলিয়ার প্রেক্ষিতে বলেছেন)।”<sup>২০</sup> নির্মল কুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় লিখেছেন, “এই ইছামতী কত ঐশ্বর্য, কত প্রতিভা ও কত রনাজন দেখিয়েছিল, আজ তার অনেক চিহ্নই লুপ্তপ্রায়। কতদিনের কত গোপন কথা ও কাহিনি এই জলধারায় মিশে আছে। কত সুখ-দুঃখের কথা, কত প্রাচীন গৌরবের স্মৃতিচিহ্ন এর জলধারায় লুপ্ত হয়ে গেছে — তার সংবাদ আর কেউ রাখে না। এখন এই ক্ষীণশ্রোতা ইছামতী দেখলে বিশ্বাসই হতে চায় না যে একদিন এই ইছামতী প্রবল ছিল।”<sup>২১</sup>

ইছামতী নদীর ক্রম ক্ষীণমান অবস্থার কারণ নদীপথে বাধাসৃষ্টি, বিশেষ করে ভাগীরথী নদী প্রবাহ থেকে ইছামতীতে জল সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে প্রতিবন্ধকতা (১৯৪২ এর রেল দুর্ঘটনার বিষয়টি বর্ণনা করলে এটি স্পষ্ট হবে)। এছাড়া নদীতে দৃশ্যমান বহু বন্যা, মনুষ্য হস্তক্ষেপ (সেতু নির্মাণ, নদীপার্শ্ব ইটভাটা নির্মাণ, শ্মশান নির্মাণ ইত্যাদি), উদ্বাস্ত পুনর্বাসনের ন্যায় বিষয়গুলি নদীকে ক্ষীণমান করে তুলেছিল।

### নদীর উৎসমুখে রেল দুর্ঘটনার ইতিহাস

১৯৪২ সালে মাঝদিয়া রেল স্টেশনে দাঁড়িয়ে থাকা নর্থ বেঙ্গল এক্সপ্রেসকে প্রচণ্ড বেগে এগিয়ে আসা দার্জিলিং মেল সজোরে ধাক্কা মারায় উভয় গাড়ীর সম্পূর্ণ যাত্রীসহ ওয়াগন ও ব্রেকভ্যান ভর্তি মাল ধবংসস্বরূপে পরিণত হয়। তবে যুদ্ধকালীন জরুরী অবস্থার ভিত্তিতে সামরিক বিভাগের লোক ও রেলের পদস্থ অফিসারসহ বিশালাকৃতি ও শক্তিশালী বহু সংখ্যক ক্রেন কলকাতা থেকে এনে রেললাইন মুক্ত করে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত লাইনের স্থলে নতুন রেললাইন বসানো হয়। তবে ভারী ক্রেন হোক বা বহু সংখ্যক ভারী মালগাড়ী দ্রুত গতিতে চলাচলের

ইতিহাসের আলোকে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের 'ইছামতী' নদীর জীবনকথা (১৯৪০-২০১০)

কারণেই হোক ওই রেল ব্রীজের পিলার ভূগর্ভে (মাটিতে) বসে যায়। সেই কারণে ওয়াগন বোঝাই পাথরের চাঁই (বোল্ডার) ফেলে ব্রীজের উত্তর ও দক্ষিণ দিকের প্রায় ২০০ মিটার পরিমিত স্থানে নদীস্রোতের গতি আটকে রাখা হয়। ফলে ব্রীজের নীচে ইছামতীর জলের গভীরতা ও গতি খুবই কমে যায়।<sup>১২২</sup> মনোতোষ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মন্তব্য করেছেন যে, সেতু তৈরি করার সময় নদীতে অস্থায়ী বাঁধ তৈরি করার জন্য বোল্ডার ফেলে নদীপথে বাঁধার সৃষ্টি করা হল ঠিকই; কিন্তু সেতু তৈরি হবার পর সেই বাঁধা অপসারণ করে উপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হয় নি। কালক্রমে স্রোতে আসা সঞ্চিত বালি ও পলিতে জোয়ার-ভাটার গতি রুদ্ধ হয়ে যায়। এটাই হল ইছামতীর ক্ষীণাবস্থার প্রধান কারণ। এর ফলে ইছামতীতে মহানন্দা থেকে জল আসা প্রায় বন্ধই হয়ে গেল। আর সেই জল চূর্ণা খাল দিয়ে প্রবাহিত হয়ে চূর্ণাকে নদীর মর্যাদা দিল।<sup>১২৩</sup>

নদীতে সংঘটিত বন্যার রূপরেখা

উনবিংশ শতকের প্রারম্ভ থেকে ১৯৪০ সালের পূর্বে ইছামতী নদীতে মোট ১২ বার (১৮০২, ১৮১১, ১৮২৩, ১৮৩৪, ১৮৫৭, ১৮৫৯, ১৮৬৭, ১৮৭১, ১৮৮৫, ১৮৯০, ১৯৩৬ ও ১৯৩৮ সাল) বন্যা দেখা গিয়েছিল।<sup>১২৪</sup> ওইসব বন্যার কারণে নদীর গতিপথে কিছু পরিবর্তন দেখা যায়। সেক্ষেত্রে নদীপার্শ্বে প্রাথমিকপর্বে বিস্তৃত চরভূমি সৃষ্টি এবং উত্তরোত্তর বন্যায় পলি সঞ্চয়ের ফলে চরভূমি আরও উচ্চভূমিতে পরিণত হয়। যদিও ১৯৪০-এর দশক পর্যন্ত হিমালয় থেকে আগত জলধারা গঙ্গা, পদ্মা, মাথাভাঙ্গা পথে ইছামতীকে স্বল্প হলেও প্লাবিত করে চলেছিল।<sup>১২৫</sup> তবে ১৯৪০-এর দশক থেকে উত্তরোত্তর বন্যা এবং তার ফলস্বরূপ ইছামতীর বেগবতী ও প্রশস্ততার চিত্র যেন অনেকটাই মুহ্যমান হয়ে পড়েছিল। ১৯৪০-এর দশকের পর থেকে ২০১০ সাল পর্যন্ত এই নদী মোট ১১ বার (১৯৫২, ১৯৫৫, ১৯৫৯, ১৯৬৬, ১৯৭০, ১৯৭১, ১৯৭৮, ১৯৯৯, ২০০০ এবং ২০০৪ সাল) বন্যার সাক্ষী হয়েছিল।<sup>১২৬</sup> তবে শশধর চক্রবর্তী মন্তব্য করেছেন, এই সমস্ত বন্যার মধ্যে ১৯৭১ সালে যে বন্যা হয়েছিল, সেই জলসীমাই অষ্টাদশ শতকের ইছামতীর প্রকৃত রূপ।<sup>১২৭</sup>

১৯৪০-এর দশকের পর ইছামতী নদী বহু বন্যার সাক্ষী হলেও তার মধ্যে ২০০০ সালে দৃশ্যমান বন্যা সবচেয়ে ভয়াবহ ও বিপর্যয়কর ছিল। ওই বন্যার সামগ্রিক রূপরেখা পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকারে সেচ ও জল দপ্তর তাদের 'সেচপত্র'-এর বিশেষ সংখ্যা প্রকাশ করেছিল।<sup>১২৮</sup> ওই বিবরণ থেকে জানা যায়, ভাগীরথীর পশ্চিমপাড়ে ময়ূরাক্ষী-অজয় এবং পাগলা-বাঁশলই দিয়ে যে পরিমাণ জল ছোটোনাগপুর মালভূমি অঞ্চল থেকে নেমে এসেছিল তা বয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার ক্ষমতা ক্ষীণকায় ভাগীরথী-হুগলী নদীর একেবারেই ছিল না। তাই সেই জল ইছামতীতেও প্রবেশ করে। বলা প্রয়োজন, ইছামতীর জল ধারণের ক্ষমতা ২০,০০০ কিউসেক হলেও সেক্ষেত্রে ১.৫ লক্ষ কিউসেকের অধিক জলপ্রবাহ ইছামতীতে প্রবেশ করে। সেক্ষেত্রে নদী অত পরিমাণ জল বহনে অক্ষম হয় এবং বন্যা স্বরূপে ইছামতী অববাহিকা ভাসিয়ে (যার মধ্যে বিশেষ ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত ছিল বনগাঁ, গাইঘাটা ও স্বরূপনগর ব্লকের অধিকাংশ স্থান এবং বাদুড়িয়া, বসিরহাট ব্লকের কিছু অংশ) বাংলাদেশের যশোর ও খুলনা জেলাকেও ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত করে। ওই বন্যা 'মিলেনিয়াম ফ্লাড' হিসেবে চিহ্নিত।<sup>১২৯</sup> আর নদীতে দৃশ্যমান বন্যা যে নদীর গতপথ বা সামগ্রিকভাবে নদী চিত্রের পরিবর্তন ঘটায় সেকথা নিঃসন্দেহে বলা যায়।

নদীর উপরে সেতু নির্মাণ ও তার পরিণতি

ইছামতী নদীর উপরে নির্মিত বিভিন্ন সেতুর মধ্যে দুটি সেতুর (তেঁতুলিয়া ও বসিরহাট সেতু) ইতিহাসগত বর্ণনা করলে কালক্রমে ইছামতীর ক্ষীণকায় রূপ সার্বিকভাবেই স্পষ্ট হয়ে উঠবে। তেঁতুলিয়া সেতুটি স্বরূপনগর ব্লক এলাকায় ও বসিরহাট সেতুটি বসিরহাট টাউন এলাকায় নির্মিত হয়েছিল। এই সমস্ত সেতুগুলি মূলত নদীতে বহু পিলার স্তম্ভ নির্মাণ করে তার ওপরে শায়িত অবস্থায় নির্মিত হয়েছিল। একথা সার্বিকভাবে সত্য যে, কোনো নদীতে গ্রোথিত যেকোনো সেতুর স্তম্ভগুলি বহুলাংশেই নদীর জলস্রোতে বাঁধা প্রদান করে। এর ফলস্বরূপ নদীর জলের স্বাভাবিক প্রবাহবেগ বাধাপ্রাপ্ত হয় এবং পিলার স্তম্ভের তলদেশে (নদীর জলের নীচে পিলার স্তম্ভের যে অংশ গ্রোথিত করা থাকে) ক্রমে পলিমাটি জমতে থাকে, যা ব্যাপক মাত্রায় নদীতলের উচ্চতা বৃদ্ধি করে। আর ইছামতী নদীর উপর নির্মিত তেঁতুলিয়া ও বসিরহাট সেতুও এই স্বাভাবিকতার ব্যতিক্রম নয়।<sup>১৩০</sup>

তেঁতুলিয়া সেতুটি ১৯৭০-এর দশকে নির্মিত হয়েছিল। সেতুটি তিনটি স্তম্ভের উপর নির্মিত হয়েছিল। এর মধ্যে দুটি স্তম্ভ নদীর উভয় তীরে (নদীজলের একেবারে পার্শ্বেই) এবং একটি স্তম্ভ নদীর মাঝ বরাবর নির্মিত হয়েছিল। বলা প্রয়োজন, নানা গবেষণাপত্র এবং স্থানীয় কিছু বৃদ্ধ মানুষের (যারা মোটামুটিভাবে নদীর গতিপথ পরিবর্তনের সাক্ষী) সাক্ষাৎকার থেকে স্পষ্ট হয় যে, সক্রিয় নদীপথের প্রস্থ (প্রশস্ততা) ছিল মোটামুটিভাবে ১৬০ মিটার।<sup>১৩১</sup> কিন্তু সেতু নির্মাণের পর সময় অতিবাহিত হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই সেতুস্তম্ভ নির্মাণের স্থান ও তার পার্শ্ববর্তীতে নদী ক্ষীণকায় হতে শুরু করেছিল। এক্ষেত্রে নদীর প্রস্থ ২০১০ সাল নাগাদ ৫০-৬০ মিটার হয়েছিল।<sup>১৩২</sup>

আবার, যাতায়াত সমস্যার সমাধান হিসেবে বসিরহাটে ইছামতী নদীর উপর সেতুটি ২০০০ সালে নির্মিত হয়েছিল। মাধব মণ্ডল তাঁর গবেষণাপত্রে ২০০২ সাল থেকে ২০১৫ সাল পর্যন্ত সেখানে নদীপথে যে পরিবর্তন হয়েছে, সেই চিত্রটি স্পষ্ট করেছেন। তেঁতুলিয়া সেতুর ন্যায় এই সেতুটিও তিনটি স্তম্ভের ওপর নির্মিত হয়েছিল— একটি স্তম্ভ নদীপথের মাঝ বরাবর এবং অপর দুটি স্তম্ভ নদীর উভয় পাশে নির্মিত হয়েছিল। সেক্ষেত্রেও সময়ানুক্রমে নদীর উভয় তীরে স্তম্ভের পাশে পলি জমতে থাকে এবং মাঝের স্তম্ভের নিকট নদীতলের গভীরতা হ্রাসপ্রাপ্ত হয়েছিল। ২০০২ সালের তুলনায় ২০১৫ সালে উক্ত স্থানে নদী প্রস্থ প্রায় ৬৫৪৩ বর্গ মিটার হ্রাসপ্রাপ্ত হয়েছিল।<sup>১০</sup> উল্লেখ্য, এক্ষেত্রে ইছামতীর উপর নির্মিত সেতুগুলির মধ্যে তেঁতুলিয়া ও বসিরহাট সেতু নিয়ে আলোচনার পশ্চাদে যথেষ্ট যুক্তি আছে। ইতিপূর্বে ইছামতীর উপরে রেল দুর্ঘটনার বিষয়টি নদীর উৎসস্থলের পরিবর্তনের বিষয়টি স্পষ্ট করেছে। আর তেঁতুলিয়া ও বসিরহাট সেতুর অবস্থান যথাক্রমে সামগ্রিকভাবে নদী দৈর্ঘ্যের প্রায় মাঝ বরাবর ও শেষের দিকে নির্মিত হয়েছিল। কাজেই অবস্থানগত বিষয়টির কারণে ইতিহাসের আবর্তে এই দুটি সেতুর আলোচনা প্রণিধানযোগ্য হয়ে উঠেছে।

### উদ্বাস্ত পুনর্বাসন

ইছামতীর নদী তীরে উদ্বাস্ত জনগণের বসবাস অনেকাংশে নদীর সক্রিয়তার ক্ষেত্রে প্রতিবন্ধকতার সৃষ্টি করেছিল। উল্লেখ্য, দেশভাগের পর যে বিষয়টি নিয়ে ইতিহাসে বারংবার আলোচিত হয়েছে, তা হল ‘উদ্বাস্ত সমস্যা ও উদ্বাস্তদের পুনর্বাসন’।<sup>১১</sup> যদিও এই আলোচনায় সার্বিকভাবে দেশে বা রাজ্যে কত সংখ্যক উদ্বাস্ত ও উদ্বাস্ত পরিবার এসেছিল তার সময়ানুক্রমিক বর্ণনা সংখ্যাতত্ত্বের নিরিখে দেওয়া হয়েছে। কিন্তু সেক্ষেত্রে নদী তীরবর্তী এলাকায় উদ্বাস্তদের বসবাস সম্পর্কে স্বল্প আলোচনা হয়েছে। কাজেই নদী তীরবর্তী এলাকায় উদ্বাস্ত হয়ে এসে যারা বসবাস শুরু করেছিলেন তাদের ইতিহাস বা তাদের জীবনধারা সম্পর্কিত নানা বিষয় মূলত নদী বিষয়ে গবেষণা বা নদী সংস্কারের উদ্দেশ্যে গঠিত নানা কমিটির প্রতিবেদন এবং বিশেষ করে নদী তীরবর্তী এলাকায় বসবাসকারী ওইসব মানুষদের সাক্ষাৎকার থেকেই স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে। উল্লেখ্য, নদী সংক্রান্ত এই আলোচনার ক্ষেত্রে এই ইছামতী নদী তীরে কত সংখ্যক উদ্বাস্ত বা উদ্বাস্ত পরিবার বসবাস শুরু করেছিল তা সংখ্যাতত্ত্বের নিরিখে স্পষ্টভাবে বলা যায় না। কারণ সেক্ষেত্রে সকল উদ্বাস্তরা একইসময়ে কিংবা একইসঙ্গে এসে বসবাস শুরু করেননি। তবে স্থানীয় নানা রচনা, ‘পশ্চিমবঙ্গ ইছামতী নদী সংস্কার সহায়তা কমিটি’ ও ‘ইছামতী বাঁচাও কমিটির’ প্রতিবেদন এবং নদী তীরবর্তীতে বসবাসকারীদের সাক্ষাৎকার থেকে জানা যায় যে, বিশেষভাবে ১৯৭১ সালের পরবর্তীতে বাংলাদেশ থেকে বহু সংখ্যক শরণার্থী এসে এই নদী তীরে স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাস শুরু করে। সময়ানুক্রমে এদের সদস্য সংখ্যাও বৃদ্ধিপ্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। আর এই নদী তীরের সঙ্গে সংযোজিত নানা নীচু এলাকা (যেমন— বিল, জলাশয়, নদীর সঙ্গে সংযোজিত খাল ইত্যাদি) ওইসমস্ত উৎপাটিত জনগণের পুনর্বাসনের জন্য অনেকাংশে ভরাট হয়েছিল, যা পরোক্ষভাবে নদীর সক্রিয়তাকে কিছুটা সিয়মান করে তুলেছিল (এখনও তুলছে)।<sup>১২</sup>

### উপসংহার

আপাতদৃষ্টিতে ইছামতী নদীকে দক্ষিণবঙ্গের একটি শাখানদী হিসেবে মনে করা হলেও এটিকে আন্তর্জাতিক নদীও বলা যায়। যদিও এই নদীর সিংহভাগ পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মধ্য দিয়েই (বিশেষত উত্তর ২৪ পরগণা জেলার মধ্য দিয়ে) প্রবাহিত। সুদূর অতীতে আকার-আয়তন এবং জল প্রবাহের দিক থেকে এই নদী ছিল ব্যাপক ও তীব্র। কিন্তু বিশেষভাবে ১৯৪০-এর দশক থেকে ইছামতী যেন ক্ষীণপ্রোতা হতে শুরু করেছিল এবং সময়ানুক্রমে তার গৌরব যেন একেবারেই হারিয়ে যাওয়ার পথে। তবে ইছামতীর এই মৃত্যুঘণ্টার বিষয়টি স্থানীয় রচনাসমূহ, ক্ষেত্রসমীক্ষাকালে সাক্ষাৎকারীদের স্মৃতিচারণায় যেন বারে বারে দুঃখস্মৃতি হিসেবে স্পষ্ট হয়েছে এবং সকল ক্ষেত্রেই এনদীর ভবিষ্যতে সজীবতা ও সক্রিয়তার আশাটি ব্যক্ত হয়েছে। উল্লেখ্য, ইছামতী নদীর পূর্বাঙ্গ ফিরিয়ে আনার জন্য নানা কমিটিও গঠিত হয়েছে, যেমন— ‘ইছামতী বাঁচাও কমিটি’, ‘পশ্চিমবঙ্গ ইছামতী নদী সংস্কার সহায়তা কমিটি (১৯৯৭)’ ইত্যাদি। সর্বোপরি এই নদীতে জল বহনের ক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি ও বন্যা নিয়ন্ত্রণের পরিকল্পনা তৈরির লক্ষ্যে ২০১০ সাল থেকে ‘ভারত-বাংলাদেশ যৌথ নদী কমিশন’ অনুসন্ধানের কাজ শুরু করেছে। আর সামগ্রিকভাবে এই রচনার মধ্য দিয়ে যেন পরোক্ষ ইছামতী নদীর স্ব-ইতিহাস তথা জীবনকথার ইতিহাসের বিভিন্ন প্রেক্ষিত পরিস্ফুট হয়েছে।

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- ৩২। Madhab Mondal: *op.cit.*, p. 190.
- ৩৩। *তদেব*, পৃ. ১৯১।
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# Begum Rokeya : Pioneering Feminist and Educational Reformer in Colonial Bengal

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## Abstract :

*This article primarily focuses on the life and legacy of Begum Rokeya (RokeyaSakhawat Hossain, an eminent educator, thinker, and social reformer who played a pivotal role in advancing women's education during the early 20th century. Born into a conservative Muslim family in Bengal, Begum Rokeya faced societal constraints that limited women's access to formal education. However, her marriage to a progressive-minded individual provided her with opportunities to further her education and advocate for women's rights. Her literary contributions, including genres, essays, stories, and novels, passionately advocated for women's education and gender equality. She founded the Sakhawat Memorial Girls' High School and established the 'Anjuman-e-Khawatin Islam' to empower women through education. Begum Rokeya's progressive educational philosophy emphasized holistic learning, the importance of language in women's liberation, and the need for physical and mental education. Her enduring legacy serves as a testament to her unwavering dedication to women's emancipation through education and societal reform.*

**Key Words :** Begum Rokeya, Feminist, Women Education, Emancipation

## Introduction :

In the present day, women have made significant strides in various fields of society, showcasing their capability to excel in diverse areas of work. They stand on equal footing with men, exhibiting their prowess in science, technology, industry, and many other domains. The pivotal factor behind this remarkable progress is the quality of education that women now have access too. It is undeniable that the status and roles of women today have undergone a profound transformation compared to the past. The historical image of women, characterized by societal constraints, a rigidly defined role, and a defensive attitude towards them, has evolved considerably. Society's lingering prejudices and biases towards women, often rooted in deeply ingrained beliefs, are among the challenges that persist. While society has made progress in changing its stance towards women, some stigmas and biases still endure. In the quest for the intellectual and social advancement of women during a particular period, one figure stands out as a beacon of enlightenment and reform. Begum Rokeya (RokeyaSakhawat Hossain), a prominent educator, thinker, and social reformer (Kaushik, 2019; Jobaira, 2020), played a pivotal role in shaping the minds of women and empowering them. Her tireless efforts marked a turning point in the journey towards women's progress, challenging the societal norms and prejudices that held them back. Her feminist writings have become a symbol of the ongoing struggle for women's rights (Khan et al, 2022). Begum Rokeya's legacy remains a shining example of how one individual's dedication and vision can drive positive change and continue to inspire us today. The primary objective of this paper is to highlight Begum Rokeya's significant contributions to the advancement of women's education as a feminist educational thinker. Additionally, it aims to analyse her perspectives on Education.

### **Early Life and Background:**

Begum Rokeya was born on December 9, 1880, in the Paigarbandvillage of MithapukurUpazila in RangpurBengal Presidency, (erstwhile undivided Bengal), into an esteemed Muslim family (Roy, 2019; Jobaira, 2020). Her father, Zahiruddin Muhammad Abu Ali HayderSaber, was an educated zamindar (Quayum, 2016; Mahmud, 2016), proficient in languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Bengali, Hindi, and English and Rahatunnesa Chowdhury was her mother (Mahmud, 2016). However, despite her father's proficiency in various languages, he held a conservative view towards girls' education (Quayum, 2016), depriving Begum Rokeya of the opportunity for formal education (Mahmud, 2016), a common practice at the time (Quayum, 2016; Mahmud, 2016). It is worth noting that her elder had enjoyed the privilege of education. Begum Rokeya had two sisters and three brothers, one of whom tragically passed away in childhood (wikipaedia.org). Her two elder brothers, Mohammad Ibrahim Abu AsadSaber(Quayum, 2016) and Abu ZaigamKhalilur Rahman Saber, pursued their education at St. Xavier's College in Calcutta (Quayum, 2016). These brothers exhibited a strong passion for learning, a trait that Begum Rokeya shared. However, due to societal norms and her father's conservative stance, she was not afforded the same educational opportunities as her brothers. In 1896, at the age of 16, Begum Rokeya married Khan Bahadur Syed Sakhawat Hossain (Quayum, 2016), a highly educated civil service officer (Deputy Magistrate) (Sultana, 2021; Khan *et al*, 2022) from Bhagalpur, Bihar (Quayum, 2016; Roy, 2019). Despite her family's limitations on formal education for girls, Begum Rokeya's marriage provided her with the opportunity to further her education. Her husband, was a well-educated and progressive-minded individual whose influence greatly expanded her knowledge and abilities. Encouragement of her husband, Begum Rokeya excelled in the English language, which she had already begun to learn. She also improved her Bengali and Urdu language skills, realizing her passion for education. In her early years, Begum Rokeya faced strict restrictions on her freedom due to customary practices among Muslim zamindar families, which enforced veiling and seclusion for unmarried girls (Mahmud, 2016), wearing of Purdha was common practice at that time. She grew up within the confines of these strict traditions (Mahmud, 2016). At the age of five, during her time in Calcutta, she had a limited opportunity to receive some education from a ma'am. However, societal criticism from neighbours and relatives hindered her progress. Fortunately, her brothers and sisters rallied behind her educational aspirations, with both Ibrahim Saber and her immediate elder sister, Karimunnesa Khanam Chaudhurani, playing a significant role in her life (Jobaira, 2020). This support enabled her to attain a reasonable proficiency in Bengali and English. In the stillness of the night, when everyone else in the household was sound asleep, Rokeya's brother clandestinely imparted lessons in Bangla and English to her, their only source of illumination being the gentle glow of candles. Rokeya's ability to grasp Bangla was nurtured through the invaluable support and encouragement she received from her elder sister, Karimunnesa(Mahmud, 2016). It was after her marriage to Sakhawat Hossain, that Begum Rokeya's true passion for education blossomed. Sakhawat Hossain, a progressive and well-educated individual, not only encouraged her literary pursuits but also took several initiatives to promote women's education. Under his influence and guidance, Begum Rokeya excelled in the English language. Her journey into the world of literary expression and writing began under her husband's inspiration. Rokeya passed away due to heart problems on her 52nd birthday, December 9, 1932. Bangladesh annually observes Rokeya Day on this date to honor her remarkable contributions and enduring legacy. On this day, the Bangladeshi government bestows the prestigious Begum RokeyaPadak upon exceptional women in recognition of their outstanding achievements. In 2004, Rokeya achieved the 6th position in BBC's ranking of the Greatest Bengali personalities of all time (Jobaira, 2020).

### **Literary Works and Legacy:**

Begum Rokeya's literary journey was strongly influenced by her husband, and she emerged as an exceptional talent in colonial Bengal. Her contributions were regularly featured in magazines such as Nabnoor, Sawgat, MasikMohammadi, Nabprabha, Al-Islam, Nowroz, BangiyaMussalman Sahitya Patrika, The Mussalman, and Indian Ladies Magazine, among others (Hasan, 2018). Through her writings, she delved into various facets of women's societal status, their struggles, education, and rights. Her primary mission was to champion a feminist perspective that critically examined and addressed the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society, with the ultimate aim of improving their circumstances. Her literary career commenced in 1902 with a Bengali prose piece titled 'Pipasa' (The Trist), (Mahmud, 2016). In 1904, she penned an influential essay known as 'Motichur Volume I (1904),' followed by 'Volume II of Motichur (1922),' (Quayum, 2016; Mahmud, 2016). In these essays, Begum Rokeya passionately advocated for gender equality and called upon men and women to contribute to societal development by championing equal rights and striving for women's economic, social, and political independence. She attributed the primary cause of women's backwardness to their lack of education and delved into various aspects of this issue. The following year, she crafted another remarkable work, the science fiction story 'Sultana's Dream' (1905). This book marked a significant turning point in feminist literature, not only in Bengali but also on a global scale. 'Sultana's Dream' is now recognized as a milestone in world feminist literature. In addition to "Sultana's Dream," she penned two essays, namely, "God Gives, Man Robs" (1927) and "Educational Ideals for Indian Girls" (1931), both of which found publication in The Mussalman magazine (Mahmud, 2016). Additionally, her novel 'Padmarag' (1924) further showcased her literary prowess. In 'Abarodhbasini' (1931), she expressed her views on the veil system and various related issues, presenting both positive and negative perspectives. Through her essays, stories, and novels, Begum Rokeya passionately argued for women's education and gender equality. With a blend of humor and sarcasm, she highlighted the unequal status of women in patriarchal societies. Her writings aimed to raise social awareness, combat injustice against women justified in the name of religion, and underscored that women's emancipation could not be achieved without education and the freedom to choose their professions according to their aspirations.

### **Begum Rokeya's Educational Initiatives and Advocacy:**

Begum Rokeya stands out as a remarkable woman and a dedicated social worker who played a pioneering role in advancing women's education during the first half of the 20th century. Her primary focus was on the empowerment of Muslim women. Growing up in a family with strict traditions and conservative values, she was acutely aware of the challenges faced by women, especially Muslim women. Consequently, she committed her life to championing the cause of women's liberation, making women's education her life's mission. She possessed a visionary outlook, recognizing that education held the key to freeing women from their predicaments and fostering their empowerment. To transform societal attitudes towards women's education, she advocated a rational doctrine in its favour. Her journey began with writing articles and books advocating for women's education and emancipation. With the support and encouragement of her husband (Begum Rokeya's passion for education was initially nurtured by her husband), Sakhawat wholeheartedly supported her literary endeavors and became a passionate advocate for her work. However, Rokeya faced personal challenges as a wife and mother, as both of her infant daughters passed away at a young age, one at five months and the other at four months. Additionally, Sakhawat, who suffered from diabetes, experienced declining health. Recognizing that Rokeya would be left alone after his eventual passing and understanding her deep passion for women's education, Sakhawat made a remarkable decision. He left her an inheritance of Rs. 10,000 with the purpose of establishing a school for Muslim girls. In 1909, Sakhawat passed away in a Calcutta hospital (Quayum, 2016).



Just five months after her husband's passing, she founded a high school in his memory, naming it the "Sakhawat Memorial Girls' High School", her husband's inheritance of 10,000 rupees facilitated this endeavour (Sultana, 2021). Initially, it started in Bhagalpur, an Urdu-speaking area, with only five students (Quayum, 2016). However, in 1910, a property dispute with a stepdaughter and son-in-law led to the school's closure. Undeterred, Begum Rokeya relocated to Calcutta in 1910, where she continued her mission. On March 15, 1911, she reopened the Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School (Quayum, 2016) in a small rented house at 13 WaliUllah Lane, Calcutta (Roy, 2019). In 1911, she established the school permanently in Calcutta and persisted in her efforts to provide modern education to Muslim women. Begum Rokeya tirelessly visited households, emphasizing the importance of educating girls as a means to liberate them from ignorance and illiteracy and to expand their horizons beyond their family confines. Gradually, the number of female students grew, from eight to 84 within four years, at the time, Rokeya faced a shortage of qualified female teachers. As a result, she took the initiative to provide training for the teachers she recruited from various cities such as Madras, Gaya, and Agra. In response to her persistent efforts, the year 1919 marked as the founding of the Muslim Women Training School in Calcutta. Rokeya tirelessly worked to secure both government funding and societal backing for the institute, even in the face of widespread criticism (Khatun, 2023). Her dedication caught the attention of Lady Chelmsford, the wife of the Governor General and Viceroy of India, who visited the school in 1917. The institution evolved into a middle girls' school and was eventually upgraded to a High English Girls' School in 1931. Over the years, the school relocated several times due to the increasing number of students, finally finding its permanent address in 1968 at 17, Lord Sinha Road (Roy, 2019).

In 1916, she founded the 'Anjuman-e-Khawatin Islam' (Islamic Women's Association) with a noble purpose (Quayum, 2016; Jobaira, 2020). This association aimed to empower illiterate and impoverished women, providing financial support to widows, facilitating marriages for poor girls, and offering educational opportunities to those in need through the society's funds (Quayum, 2016). Begum Rokeya, through her tireless efforts, laid the foundation for women to reach their current status today. Her association stressed the importance of knowledge and skills for the sustainable rehabilitation of women. Witnessing the oppression of women up close, especially within her own family where girls lacked freedom and educational opportunities, motivated her to make a difference. Begum Rokeya also presided over the 1926 Conference on Bengali Women's Education (Jobaira, 2020). She believed that girls' education should not only focus on religious teachings but also inspire them to contribute to their country in various ways. Rokeya's vision aimed to introduce modern and progressive education to empower women, eradicate social ills, eliminate subpar educational practices, and dispel superstitious beliefs. According to her, education was the antidote to these injustices, and she dedicated her life to this cause.

### **Begum Rokeya's Progressive Educational Philosophy:**

Begum Rokeya faced significant challenges due to the prevailing religious dogma and societal restrictions on Muslim women's education during her time. In colonial period, women encountered severe limitations and were denied the opportunity to receive formal education. The educational offerings for economically well-off families and zamindar families primarily consisted of Quranic lessons, Urdu, and Arabic, and only a few women had access to these limited educational opportunities. Education was virtually inaccessible to Muslim women, but Begum Rokeya recognized that the emancipation of women required self-assertion, and education was the essential first step. She did not view education solely as religious practice, service to husbands and elders, child-rearing, or knowledge of family management; rather, she saw education as the catalyst for true life and believed that women's liberation could only be achieved through education. We did not find alignment of Rokeya's thought about education to any particular philosophical school of thought, but her perspective on education

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transcended the mere pursuit of money or degrees. She believed that genuine education would make individuals more humane, dispelling ignorance and superstition and fostering open-mindedness, decency, and refinement (Uddin, 2015). She thought that education could empower individuals to assert their civil rights and that it should engage the senses and impart accurate knowledge. Her approach aligned with pragmatist and Realist philosophical schools, emphasizing that comprehensive knowledge would make individuals complete and develop their personalities. She believed that education should instill moral values (Roy, 2019) such as truthfulness, self-reliance, courage, a sense of duty, unity, and etiquette. Begum Rokeya also held the belief that education empowered individuals to distinguish between right and wrong, enabling them to make informed decisions. This perspective embodied an idealistic philosophy that underscored the transformative power of education in shaping ethical and knowledgeable individuals. To Begum Rokeya, education was not limited to literacy, reciting poetry, or storytelling. She advocated for an education that would help students become responsible citizens and develop their individuality (Uddin, 2015). This education should encompass both physical and mental aspects, incorporating subjects like science, literature, history, geography, and mathematics into the curriculum. Additionally, she emphasized practical knowledge by including nutrition, Cooking, sewing, and home economics in the curriculum (Zaman et al, 2011). Begum Rokeya recognized the importance of language in women's liberation and encouraged women to learn English and other languages alongside their mother tongue for self-improvement (Khatun, 2023). She believed in learning languages beyond one's mother tongue. Her vision of education also included leisure and entertainment, advocating for the learning of music, dance, and painting in leisure time. She understood that mental education was as vital as physical education, emphasizing physical exertion to maintain physical fitness (Zaman et al, 2011; Roy, 2019). Begum Rokeya's educational philosophy was pragmatic and realist, promoting methods such as the question and answer approach, which involved active participation from both teachers and students. She valued direct experience as a means of teaching and encouraged inquiry, categorization, and testing as learning methods. Rokeya believed that science subjects should be taught through experiments and that stories should be incorporated into education alongside textbooks. She recognized the importance of complete and effective education, advocating for nature lessons, geography, history, and other subjects to be taught through outdoor experiences, allowing students to explore and learn outside the confines of traditional classrooms.

### **Conclusion:**

Begum Rokeya's life and work exemplify the transformative power of education and advocacy in the pursuit of gender equality and social progress in colonial Bengal. In a time when women, especially Muslim women, faced formidable obstacles to education and self-determination, she emerged as a trailblazer, challenging societal norms and prejudices that held them back. Her contributions to literature, education, and social reform, driven by her feminist ideals, continue to inspire and resonate with contemporary discussions on women's rights and Muslim women's education. Begum Rokeya's legacy reminds us of the enduring importance of empowering women through education and providing them with the tools to shape their destinies in colonial Bengal. Her visionary approach to education, blending pragmatism with a commitment to moral values, underscores the transformative potential of holistic learning. As we celebrate her life and work, we are reminded that individual dedication and vision can drive positive change and pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive society in colonial Bengal. Begum Rokeya's legacy continues to shine as a beacon of enlightenment and reform, inspiring us to champion the cause of women's empowerment, feminist education, and the rights of Muslim women in our own time in colonial Bengal and beyond.

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# **The Contribution of Social Movements in the Construction of Social Justice Education a Namibian Case for Selected Social Movements**

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## **Abstract**

Social movements have a significant role in driving social production and facilitating societal change. These movements represent visible manifestations of underlying divisions and hierarchies within the respective societies they operate in. Since the late 19th century, numerous social movements have exerted substantial influence on the lives of citizens and the political landscape. Social movements often emerge to address the gaps resulting from the state's limited capacity or unwillingness to act in the best interests of its constituents. Analyzing social movements allows for a deeper understanding of the interplay between movements, the state, and power dynamics. Civil society organizations, in particular, contribute to the development, implementation, and monitoring of governmental policies. To comprehensively grasp the impact of social movements on the general population, this study employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing open semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The employment of this exhaustive data collection approach facilitated the researcher in exploring the viewpoints, attitudes, comprehension, and affective responses of individuals who have encountered or are presently confronting pertinent circumstances of interest. The study yielded several significant outcomes, including the promotion of social justice, empowerment, and the enhancement of the capacities of all stakeholders within social movements to actively participate in shaping and implementing societal changes. Based on a thorough analysis of the research findings, it is recommended that social movements collaborate closely with local communities and prioritize transformative education to advance equality for marginalized groups. For effective social justice education, a comprehensive approach is advised, ensuring the efficient organization of various learning components aligned with the principles of social justice. Additionally, conducting further research on social movements and their connection to the development of social justice education in communities, through comparative studies, can offer insights into patterns and discrepancies among respondents concerning social justice education.

**Keywords:** *Egalitarianism, empowering, fairness, justice, exploitative, transformation, construction of social justice education*

## **Introduction :**

Social movements exert a significant influence on policies and cultural norms, often necessitating dialogue and education for resolution (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2009). Essential themes in the realm of social justice education encompass democracy and the actualization of one's humanity (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2009).

Multiple social movements, including civil rights, labor rights, and women's rights movements, have had a profound impact on society since the late 19th century (Warren, 2012). For instance, the American civil rights movement aimed to address the systemic injustices faced by Black Americans and Hispanics during the 1950s

and 1960s. Social movements in the 1970s and 1980s endeavored to eradicate racial discrimination and confront the enduring consequences of racism (Warren, 2012).

In Cuba, social movements prioritize social welfare, economic opportunities, and political rights through education (Keremitsis, 1991). Education is regarded as a means to uplift marginalized individuals within the community. However, uncertainty about the future persists due to poverty and the deterioration of social services (Keremitsis, 1991).

Drawing inspiration from Paulo Freire, citizenship is perceived as active engagement with reality, promoting emancipation and solidarity (Freire, 1973). Freire advocated for education beyond conventional classrooms, utilizing various learning environments, including technology, to prepare students for democratic participation (Gadotti, 2008). This approach underscores autonomy, collaboration, social and political responsibility, and diversity (Araújo, 2011).

Social movements have played a significant role in Namibia's struggle for independence, shaping post-independence educational policies (Angula, 1999). SWAPO, the anti-apartheid movement in Namibia, garnered international recognition and support, resulting in educational initiatives during their exile (Angula, 1999). SWAPO's aspirations for democracy and social justice were evident in the national reform of teacher education (Angula, 1999).

Within a refugee camp, an education center provided education, programs promoting gender equality, vocational training, and political education during SWAPO's exile (Angula, 1999). Efforts to raise gender awareness and foster community-building activities were actively encouraged (Namhila, 1997). Scholarships and international assistance played a pivotal role in educating Namibian students (Namhila, 1997).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The focus of critical theory is on examining social injustices, power systems, and the impact of prevailing ideas on education. Its foundations are found in the writings of philosophers like Karl Marx, and the Frankfurt School has had an impact. It strives to reveal and destroy repressive systems that uphold social injustices in educational institutions (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Lev Vygotsky's Theory of Cultural-Historical Activity (CHAT), which other scholars have expanded upon, emphasizes the social and cultural aspects of learning and development. It emphasizes how historical and cultural context affects learning outcomes and experiences. The importance of understanding sociocultural processes in educational situations and how they impact social justice or inequity is strongly emphasized in this paradigm Delgado and Stefancic, (Eds.). (2017).

The concept of "intersectionality," which was popularized by Kimberlé Crenshaw, examines the complex interactions that result in unique experiences of privilege and oppression across a wide range of social categories, including race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability (Crenshaw, 1991). An intersectional lens in education explores the influence of overlapping identities on access to education, educational experiences, and outcomes. It highlights the necessity of inclusive and equitable educational approaches (Crenshaw, 1991).

The Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum-developed capacity approach places a strong emphasis on people's capacities—their freedoms and opportunities—to lead lives they value. This paradigm emphasizes the importance of providing people with the knowledge and tools they need to participate fully in society, including

access to high-quality education, when it comes to education (Giroux, 2011). Important Race Theory CRT examines the relationships between racism, power, and social justice. It has its roots in legal studies. It challenges existing narratives and examines how racism is rooted in institutions and societal structures, including schooling. CRT seeks answers while looking into how racial inequities in education are upheld by educational practices and policy (Spivak, 1999).

### **Historical History of Social Movements in Namibia**

**Namibian War of Independence:** Also referred to as the Namibian Liberation Struggle, the Namibian War of Independence was an armed and social resistance campaign against South Africa's apartheid rule in Namibia. The movement was led by the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which pushed for racial equality, independence, and self-determination. Between 1966 and 1990, when Namibia eventually attained independence, there was a war (Katjivena, 2017).

**Herero and Nama Genocide Awareness Movement:** Between 1904 and 1908, German colonial forces in Namibia committed genocide against the Herero and Nama people, two ethnic groups there. A burgeoning social movement has emerged in recent years that calls for justice, acknowledgement, and restitution for the victims and their ancestors. This movement has concentrated on informing people about the genocide and applying pressure on the German government to acknowledge its historical responsibility (Nakanyala, 2018).

**Land and Land Reform Movements:** The ownership and distribution of land have long been divisive topics in Namibia, where there are notable differences between native groups and the offspring of colonial settlers. To address land reform and provide fair access to land for disadvantaged populations, numerous movements and organizations have formed. These movements advocate for equitable land allocation and environmentally friendly land management techniques to remedy historical injustices (Katjivena, 2017).

**Movements for Women's Rights and Gender Equality:** In Namibia, groups and movements that support women's rights and gender equality have begun to take shape. These movements concentrate on topics including reproductive rights, equal political representation, economic empowerment, and gender-based violence. Sister Namibia, Women's Action for Development (WAD), and the Legal Assistance Centre are a few well-known organizations. Worker activism has a long history in Namibia, especially in the mining and agriculture industries (Mungunda, 2019). For better pay, safer working conditions, and labour rights, workers' movements have been crucial. One of the most important labour unions in the nation, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), represents the interests of workers in a variety of industries (Mungunda, 2019).

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research utilized a qualitative methodology to gain a comprehensive understanding of human behaviour and the underlying motivations behind it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2009). This approach facilitated the exploration of individuals' perceptions, perspectives, interpretations, and emotions regarding the phenomena they have encountered or experienced (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Social justice problems are recognized as intricate and multifaceted, making this method valuable for acquiring detailed and contextually grounded knowledge about a particular real-world topic (Yin, 2009; Yin, 2014).

Case study research employs a prescriptive methodical procedure. It is an investigative technique where the researcher carefully examines a significant event, activity, process, or one or more people (Schwandt, 2000). Phenomenology is a philosophy as well as a practice that emphasizes the understanding of lived experiences.

To comprehend the experiences of the study participants, the researcher in this procedure sets aside his or her own experiences (Schwandt, 2000).

A specific study topic or phenomenon can be explored and understood in depth using qualitative research methods. It makes it possible for researchers to delve deeply into the specifics, meanings, and circumstances related to the topic being studied. For instance, Smith et al.'s (2020) study used qualitative interviews to examine the lived experiences of people who experience social justice issues. By producing fresh ideas, thoughts, and theories based on the gathered data, qualitative research aids in theory development. It gives academics the chance to investigate and develop current theories or suggest brand-new theoretical frameworks. In-depth interviews and thematic analysis were used in a study by Brown and Jones (2017) to create a theoretical model of resilience in those who have suffered (Brown and Jones, 2017).

The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to carefully select three influential leaders from social movements who possess extensive knowledge and insights regarding the education of their members. Judgment sampling, also known as judgmental or authoritative sampling, is a non-probability sampling approach in which the researcher chooses units to sample based on prior information or professional judgment (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). Where rich information was deemed to be available to the next person, a snowball technique was employed to further investigate the phenomenon.

Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews supported by reflective journals which allowed participants to open up to allow for greater flexibility and freedom to both the interviewers and interviewees (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). A reflective journal contributed to the rigour and trustworthiness, authenticity, appropriateness, attestability and confirmability of the report (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010). According to Saumure and Given (2008: 795), several characteristics are believed to define rigorous qualitative research, including transparency, maximum validity or credibility, maximum reliability or dependability, comparativeness, and reflexivity. (cf. Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Seale, 1999).

Participants should be ensured anonymity, secrecy, honesty, and respect, according to Chilisa and Preece (2005). Participants were not required to disclose their names or any other personal information to remain anonymous. Before they took part in the study, the participants' rights were respected, and their informed consent was obtained. Their privacy was protected, and their confidentiality was guaranteed.

### **The rationale of the study**

Qualitative research delves deeply into complex social phenomena, gathering rich data through methods like interviews, observations, and document analysis. It focuses on understanding these phenomena in their specific cultural and historical contexts, allowing for a holistic grasp of the topic (Denzin, and Lincoln, (Eds.). (2011). The flexibility of qualitative research permits adjustments to methods and approaches as new insights emerge, capturing the dynamic nature of social phenomena (Creswell, 2013).

This research prioritizes participant perspectives, giving them a voice to share their experiences and viewpoints, and promoting inclusivity in knowledge creation. Qualitative research also contributes to theory generation and exploration by identifying patterns and theoretical insights in the data (Flick, 2014).

Furthermore, it acknowledges the role of social and power dynamics in shaping people's experiences, enabling the exploration of issues related to power, inequality, and social justice (Morse, 2015).

### **Contribution of social movements to the construction of social justice education for the social development of a nation.**

How the social movement promotes social and economic equality among those who are marginalized and excluded from social and economic processes demonstrates its dedication to social justice and human rights. Social movements use the benefits of social justice education to combat the injustice and exploitation caused by poverty (Banerjee, 2005). The idea of participation and education is seen as a solution to the issue of marginalised exclusion, drawing influence from Paulo Freire's concept of conscientization (1973).

Participation of the "people" in native governance and decision-making indicates a bottom-up strategy for development that involves the "people" and empowers the marginal. Additionally, it requires that people have a fundamental understanding of how social movement structures work (Camus, 2016). One of the fundamental elements of social growth is social justice education in various senses.

In the same way that social justice education broadens people's perspectives on themselves, raises their standards of living, and benefits society as a whole (Camus, 2016). It is evident that social justice education increases productivity and creativity in individuals, encourages entrepreneurship, and advances technology (Routledge, Kegan, Berger, Nehring, 2017). This is essential for ensuring social and economic progress and balancing income distribution (Routledge, Kegan, Berger, Nehring, 2017).

### **Social movement's contributions to the construction of social change in Namibia.**

At a time when racial, economic, and environmental fairness is at the forefront of social development concerns, empowerment is critical. Similar to how people are preparing to address emergencies where there is harmony, so it is with emergencies in Namibia. Public consensus on issues and the preparation of social developments are becoming increasingly important components for achieving significant social transformations. Yet, these improvements only serve to facilitate transformation (Kelleher and Bhattacharjya 2013).

To be successful in those areas by avoiding the entanglements that could undermine the contributions to the broader public we want to make, we must first understand what varied roles individuals and social developments need to take on (Kelleher and Bhattacharjya 2013). The development and implementation of social protection policies at the national level can benefit greatly from the collective effort of civil society and social movements. Therefore, collaborative effort is essential at the national level to seek and advance transparency and information access in social justice education and citizen's rights (Jones, and Shahrokh, 2013).

In general, social movements can work to change accountability for the most urgent issues as they develop locally. Involving the general public in local government and decision-making suggests a bottom-up approach to development that empowers the least advantaged (Tarrow, 1998). This people's power aspires to overthrow the socially prevalent systems of dominance and power. People's movements involve awareness, protest, and consciousness of this prevailing framework (Tarrow, 1998).

### **The effects of distracted social justice education in social movements have on citizens.**

Democratic ideas, which are founded on tolerance, equality, and respect for others, have not always been present in society. Even if gender, culture, race, and social situations have improved in today's society, there are still many objectives to be met, such as social justice education (Twarog, 2017). Despite the significance of social justice in education, there is a lack of discussion between opposing viewpoints to aid in helping



communities build on their advantages and more effectively identify their difficulties. The dialogue will assist them to reflex on the complexity of education for social justice. It is difficult for community leaders to properly engage the authorities since they scarcely understand what social justice entails as the purpose of the debate (Beach, 2005).

Hence, due to a lack of information, alliances and bridge-building are non-existent at this important time when they should be encouraged and focused more on society and schools. The lack of social justice education by social movements in communities limits them from engaging societies across various commitments and goals within the social justice discipline and from opening up new angles to perceive new possibilities (Bean and Apple 2012).

The largest shortcoming is that communities do not comprehend the comprehensive approach to social justice education, which is a crucial part of democratic citizenship. According to Westheimer and Kahne (1998), the lack of social justice education provided by social movements can result in citizens lacking the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes necessary to take meaningful action on pressing social issues.

### **Educational strategies that social movements can use to contribute meaningfully to social development in Namibia.**

The generation, promotion, teaching, learning, contestation, and transformation of the ideas, identities, and identities of social movements all depend on educational processes. In actuality, movements themselves serve as educators by involving people in informal and non-formal learning. Additionally, movements create knowledge that, when successful, educates not only their supporters but also the general population (Jacoby and Associates, 2006).

The development of social justice and human rights, which results in enduring peace, is of the utmost importance. To effect social change, transformational education challenges established authorities and institutions (Jacoby and Associates, 2006). Adult education is seen as a force for social advancement and the most trustworthy tool for social activists (Jacoby and Associates, 2006). Because adult learning is a crucial component of social movements, this conventional view has encouraged adult education educators to continue playing an active role in these movements. People bring skills and knowledge with them when they come together for collective social action, and they subsequently share these resources for the purpose at hand (Finger, 1989).

Yet, the mainstream adheres to existing frameworks and concentrates on formal, grounded, altruistic, and egalitarian civic education (Jefferess, 2008). Given that Citizenship Education is focused on supporting change to existing arrangements that unevenly restrict access and benefit too many people in society, critical viewpoints need to concentrate on the values of fairness and social justice (Jefferess, 2008).

Education for justice and peace advances the goals of equality, non-discrimination, and human rights. To achieve just peace via education, we not only consider how to resolve interpersonal conflicts but also work to bring about reforms in favour of social justice and human rights (Ty, 2008).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Theme 1: Contribution to Social Justice Education**

Participant 3 highlights the significance of social movements in the promotion of economic autonomy and the education of social justice in order to safeguard vulnerable communities. Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in enhancing the awareness of marginalized communities and advocating for their interests (Hooks, 2012).

Participant 2 places emphasis on the importance of involving individuals in decision-making processes as a fundamental component of social justice education (Tarrow, 1998). Social justice training programs are expanding the scope of democratic participation (Tarrow, 1998).

### **Theme 2: Contribution to Social Change in Namibia**

Participant 1 underscores the significance of collective action in ensuring the implementation of social protection programs by the government. People's movements aim to challenge existing systems of dominance and power (Tarrow, 1998).

Participant 2 highlights the role of the media in drawing attention to issues and exerting pressure on government agencies and other targets of protest (Cichon, 2006).

### **Theme 3: Effects of Distracted Social Justice Education**

Participant 1 observes that young people often feel marginalized and lack the skills and experience to engage in political processes due to inadequate education (Ty, 2008).

Participant 3 mentions the challenge of a dependency syndrome among young people, where they rely on the state for support instead of actively participating in community projects (Ty, 2008).

### **Theme 4: Educational Strategies for Social Movements**

Participant 1 proposes adult education as a solution, highlighting its role in economic development, policy comprehension, and practical application (Finger, 1989).

They also suggest citizenship education to foster informed, socially engaged, and responsible communities, promoting appreciation for diversity and social justice (Jefferess, 2008).

Participant 3 emphasizes the significance of informal education within the movement, particularly in the development of leadership and negotiation skills (Staples, 1984).

## **RELEVANCE TO ACADEMIA**

The findings of the study present valuable perspectives on the intersection of social movements and social justice education in Namibia. These perspectives can be of great benefit to scholars, researchers, and educators alike, as they inform future research endeavors, theoretical frameworks, and instructional approaches in this domain. Furthermore, they have the potential to stimulate critical dialogues on the ways in which social movements can influence educational structures within academic settings.

Moreover, these outcomes hold significance for academic institutions, decision-makers, and professionals in the business world. Grasping the role of social movements in shaping social justice education can facilitate the development of more inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices. It can also aid in the creation of educational environments that actively promote diversity and inclusivity. Policymakers can utilize these insights to construct supportive frameworks for social justice education, while practitioners can gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with its implementation.

In addition, these findings have implications for Namibian civil society groups, campaigners, and advocates who are dedicated to social justice and educational equality. They offer a clearer comprehension of how social movements can bring about positive transformations in education. These perspectives can serve as guidance for community involvement initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and policy recommendations. Civil society organizations can employ them to establish collaborations with social movements, educators, and communities, with the aim of promoting inclusive and equitable educational practices. Furthermore, they can encourage civil society engagement in discussions revolving around social justice and educational equity.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This inquiry emphasizes the significance of social movements, labor unions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Namibia in the advancement of democracy and human rights. At present, the Legal Assistance Centre assumes the principal role in advocating for issues of social equity, thereby rendering the law accessible to individuals with limited means through diverse modalities.

Social movements serve as efficacious instruments for the enlightenment and mobilization of the populace, yet this aspect is frequently disregarded within academia. Historically, education has occasionally impeded popular movements by concentrating on practical knowledge rather than empowering individuals with the requisite knowledge for societal transformation.

To nurture social development, it becomes pivotal to foster democratic values, active citizenship, and social equity through the conduit of education. Engaged citizens ought to partake not only in concerted campaigns, but also in local governance. Social justice education can cultivate morally accountable citizens who actively contribute to their respective communities.

In order to realize socio-economic rights and parity, social movements ought to build upon antecedent endeavors and exercise their rights to participation in public life and the right to be heard. Moreover, they should enhance members' participatory skills for efficacious coalition-building and conflict resolution.

Social justice education within social action collectives can bolster the learning process in pursuance of short-term objectives pertaining to social equity. Nevertheless, challenges ensue from the actions and attitudes of members, as well as the absence of a firm foundation within the movements.

To effectuate positive change, social justice education ought to concentrate on policy advocacy and leadership development, taking inspiration from the work of Paulo Freire. Adult education departments and institutions should foster participatory learning that actively engages individuals in addressing communal predicaments.

Academics and students possess the capacity to contribute to social movements through research and education, by furnishing data and arguments to buttress their objectives. By employing macro-analysis seminars and progressive education methodologies, social movements can gain deeper insights into the underlying causes of social predicaments.

Rather than merely acknowledging problems, social movements should accord priority to education and the attainment of social justice outcomes. They ought to collaborate with local initiatives and communities, embracing the praxis theory, which accentuates learning through observation, participation, and reflection.

Social movements should undertake consciousness-raising campaigns and engage in the implementation of restorative social justice education to rectify community relationships. Inclusivity assumes paramount importance, necessitating the involvement of marginalized groups in project development and execution.

By imparting education to disadvantaged groups, their socio-economic progress can be expedited, thereby fostering a more equitable society. Ultimately, a constructive outlook toward citizenship, fostered through education, can engender unity within Namibia.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Examine how social movements have affected social justice education in various nations or regions by conducting comparative studies. To find similarities and differences, compare the tactics, difficulties, and results of social movements in different circumstances. Look at the ways that social movements approach intersectional challenges in social justice education. Investigate how social movements promote inclusive and equitable education by navigating the intersections of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and other identities. Investigate the pedagogical strategies and techniques used in educational settings by social movements. Examine the relationships that social movement organizers establish with students, teachers, and communities to advance critical thinking, self-determination, and transformative learning.

## **NEW KNOWLEDGE**

By collecting and analyzing data on the role and impact of social movements in social justice education, my study can provide empirical evidence and insights into this specific context. This can fill gaps in the existing literature and offer a more nuanced understanding of the contributions of social movements in Namibia. My research can increase community participation and advocacy efforts for social justice education by interacting with social movements and local communities. It can amplify the voices and experiences of social movement participants, enabling them to speak out for their rights and have an impact on educational policies and practices.

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# **Educational Philosophy and Practices of Pandita Ramabai : A Study of her Views on Women's Education and Social Reform in Colonial India**

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## **Abstract :**

Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) was one of the foremost Indian socio-religious reformers and activists in colonial India. Ramabai was a great social reformer and she devoted her life to bring improvement in the lot of the Hindu women in India. It can be seen that Pandita Ramabai was willing to give conditions so that everyone would have religious freedom to observe their sacred rituals and caste customs. She established various institutions with the aim of the combat child marriage, promote women's rights and women's empowerment. The objectives of this study were to investigate on the women education and women empowerment to educational practices and institutions established in India by Pandita Ramabai and to analyse Pandita Ramabai's views on the role of education in empowering women and promoting social reform in colonial India. *Research question of this study were What were the educational practices and institutions established by Pandita Ramabai? and How did Pandita Ramabai view the role of education in empowering women and promoting social reform in colonial India and what strategies did she use to achieve these goals? The method used in present study is historical method. Present study used primary and secondary sources of data. The analysis of data shows that Pandita Ramabai's educational objectives, philosophy, role of women in society, empowerment of women, language, culture, educational practices and institutions established by Ramabai have a special impact on the society.* Ramabai spread women's education and protected girls from the oppression of child marriage, formed Arya Mahila Samaj, not only that, but also the training system of teachers. Kindergarten schools and vocational training centres for women and published textbooks for her own kindergarten schools. Ramabai pioneered the kindergarten education system as well as the vocational education system in India.

**Keywords :** *Women Education, Arya Mahila Samaj, Mukti Mission, Child Marriage, Women Right.*

## **Introduction :**

There is a popular saying that when a man is educated, a person is educated and when a woman is educated, the whole family is educated. That is, women's education is essential for overall education quality, healthy position and progress of the society. If we analyse the education system of different countries, we can see that the more advanced the country, the more emphasis and opportunity there is on women's education. That is, the social position of women can be improved only through education. And that in turn helps a society move forward on the path of progress. Following the history of India, we find that women's education has progressed through many evolutions. The first attempt to bring women society out of the darkness of ignorance started in British India. The name that needs to be mentioned foremost in this context is Shri Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. Vidyasagar, known as one of the pioneers of Indian renaissance and traditional modernist, realized with his life that the liberation of the nation is never possible without the development of women's society. Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) was one of the foremost Indian socio-religious reformers and activists in colonial India. Ramabai was a great social reformer and she devoted her life to bring improvement in the lot of the Hindu women in

India. it can be seen that Pandita Ramabai was willing to give conditions so that everyone would have religious freedom to observe their sacred rituals and caste customs. At that time the status of Hindu upper caste women was not good at all. Being a Brahmin and marrying a lower caste was against religion in that society. By marrying against the society, Ramabai has shown her reckless mentality and indomitable courage. Also, his protesting voice against labor oppression was also raised. Ramabai spent most of her life in the struggle for women's liberation and fighting against the prejudices of the society. Pandita Ramabai is one of those who have created today's position of patriarchal and superstitious society through intelligence, thought, hard work and courage and has accelerated the progress of women and society.

### **Literature of the review :**

**Salam (2018)** has conducted a study on "Education of Muslim women In India: a brief discussion from past to present". The study revealed that the commission and committees emphasized the problem of women in general but not specifically for Muslim women. 'Right of employment' should be declared as fundamental rights for Muslim Women, Provisions should be made by the government for the reservation of employment for educated Muslim women. **Roy (2019)** has conducted a study on "Pandita Ramabai's role and life struggle in women's awakening". Findings of the Study showed that Pandita Ramabai was a social reformer in order to improve the status of Hindu women in Indian social system, to educate women and to liberate women from Hindu orthodoxy and patriarchy. Pandit Ramabai laid great importance on Arya Mahila Samaj for the liberation of women from the shackles of religious orthodoxy and patriarchy in the society. **Jha and Bajaj (2020)** have conducted a study on "Women empowerment in digital India". The study indicated that Digital technology and several government policies are playing a significant role in empowering Women in India. Financial resources first and foremost are the problem of raising capital, conflict between family and dreams, and women face a major challenge in facing the harsh attitudes of officials and the hard work required to start up a business. **Singh, Acharjee and Jana (2020)** have conducted study on "Development and obstacles of women education in independent India". The researchers identified some important issues which makes obstacle to promote women education in independent India as lack of skilled based courses, girl's harassment in school, poverty, lack of female teachers, violence against women, gender discrimination problem of female education problems related to unemployment, lack of efforts for resource mobilization. **Lasha and Singha (2020)** in their study on "The radical responses of Pandita Ramabai: challenging the spirit of her time through her writings" found that Pandita Ramabai was writing, speaking and travelling across the globe in order to Communicate her understanding of the oppression of Hindu women as well as a need for the Change.

The related literature showed that a thorough research on Educational Philosophy and Practices of Pandita Ramabai is needed. And hence the researcher has taken this specific topic for the present study.

### **Objectives of this study:**

- i) To explore the role of Pandita Ramabai's educational philosophy on the women education and women empowerment.
- ii) To investigate the educational practices and institutions established in India by Pandita Ramabai.
- iii) To analyse Pandita Ramabai's views on the role of education in empowering women and promoting social reform in colonial India.

### **Research Questions :**

- i) What were the role of Ramabai's educational philosophy on the women education and women empowerment ?
- ii) What were the educational practices and institutions established by Pandita Ramabai ?
- iii) How did Pandita Ramabai view the role of education in empowering women and promoting social reform in colonial India and what strategies did she use to achieve these goals ?



### **Methodology :**

In order to draw conclusions about past events, historical study tries to establish facts. This is frequently followed by an assessment of past incidents and how they relate to the current situation and potential future events. This study is Historical in that it used a variety of primary and secondary sources to trace Pandita Ramabai's educational philosophy. This study is a qualitative research study that focuses on the analysis and interpretation of primary sources related to Pandita Ramabai's educational philosophy and practices, as well as their impact on women's education and social reform in colonial India. It utilizes a historical research design, using both descriptive and interpretive methods to analyse and synthesize the data.

### **Data analysis and discussion :**

#### **Early life :**

Ramabai was born on 23rd April 1858 in Karnataka state of India as the youngest daughter of Ananta Shastri Dongre to a high caste Brahmin family. Ramabai Dongre, daughter of Anant Dongre, is a social reformer, learned scholar and intellectual. Ramabai's father Ananta Shastri studied the Vedas, Puranas and other religious scriptures and came to the conclusion that the importance of women's education in society was immense. Ramabai's father is a renowned Sanskrit scholar, who realizes the need for education for women in outwardly orthodox Brahmin families. He was of the opinion that women should be allowed to learn Sanskrit, the sacred ancient language, so that women could read the religious texts of the Hindus without hindrance. Anant Shastri Dongre not only taught education to his wife Lakshibai as well as other children, he opposed child marriage and denied the marriage of a nine-year-old girl Ramabai. He was expelled from society for this kind of work. Because, in the second half of the nineteenth century, women had no right to receive education and child marriage was prevalent. Anant Shastri was forced to live in the forest with his family as a result of being ostracized. Later Ramabai's father took up the life of a pilgrim. Because, he lost all his wealth for his liberal mind and chose the path of reading Puranas in a temple or some other secluded place. Later he traveled all over India on foot with his daughter Ramabai. In this situation, the parents took special care towards Ramabai's studies. At the age of only 12, Ramabai memorized eighteen thousand verses of the Hindu scripture Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Ramabai's father Anant Shastri and mother Lakshibai both died during the severe famine of 1877-78. Ramabai brother's name was Srinivas Dongre and sister's name were Krishnabai Dongre. After sister dies, Ramabai takes her brother with her and follows in the footsteps of her father. As a result of her travels across India, Ramabai has the opportunity to witness the cruel lives of upper caste widows and eventually comes to the aid of helpless child widows. Later his brother also died. After arriving in Calcutta in 1878, Ramabai surprised the world of Sanskrit scholars with her extraordinary erudition in Sanskrit scriptures and knowledge of ancient religious scriptures. The Pandit Mahal was so impressed by Ramabai's mastery of ancient scriptures that Ramabai was bestowed with the titles 'Pandita' (wise man) and 'Saraswati' (goddess of learning). At that time the highest title in Indian society was 'Saraswati', since then she was addressed as "Pandita Ramabai Saraswati".

#### **Social life and Social Work:**

After losing her husband, Ramabai moved from Calcutta to Pune and formed the Arya Mahila Samaj to promote women's education. The purpose of this society was to promote female education and protect girls from the oppression of child marriage. Moreover, Ramabai said on behalf of the Commission on Education in British-ruled India in 1882, "Ninety-nine percent of the educated people of this country oppose proper education by taking a stand against female education. If they find the slightest flaw, they turn that mustard seed into a mountain and trying to portray any woman's character." Not only this, she also organized training for teachers,

got female school-inspectors and women for medical treatment. Not only this, she also recommended providing training for teachers, appointing female school-inspectors and admitting women to medical colleges as women doctors were needed to treat women. This recommendation created a huge stir in the society at that time. Following this recommendation, Lady Dufferin later campaigned for women to be educated in medical colleges. 1883, Ramabai went to Britain to study medicine. But his education was not completed due to hearing problems. She then enrolled at Cheltenham Women's College to study natural sciences, mathematics and English literature. He converted to Christianity during his stay in England. In 1886 she went to America to attend the post-graduate program of Anandibai Gopalrao Joshi, a relative and the first female Indian doctor. During her stay there for two years, she travelled to many places in America with the aim of rehabilitating high caste Hindu widows. Finally, with so much effort she established the 'Ramabai Association of Boston' through which she provided shelter for upper caste widows for ten years, several kindergarten schools and vocational training centres for women and started publishing textbooks for her own kindergarten school. She also translated various textbooks and lectured in USA and Canada. There she published one of his most important books 'The High-Caste Hindu Woman' in English. During the terrible famine of 1896, Ramabai travelled by bullock cart to various villages of Maharashtra and Gujarat and rescued thousands of abandoned, orphaned, starving children and destitute women and sheltered them in 'Mukti Sadan', a Christian organization established in Kedagaon, Gujarat. Along with this Mukti Sadan she also included Sarada Sadan.

#### **Established educational Institution and Practices:**

Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) was one of the foremost Indian socio-religious reformers and activists in colonial India. Ramabai was a great social reformer and she devoted her life to bring improvement in the lot of the Hindu women in India. In this context, a discussion on her social missions and the organisations she established for that purpose needs elaboration. Mukti Mission: That incident during the siege of the Sadan was very shocking for her. She had a Farmland in a place called Kedgaon, that was 40 miles away from Poona. She shifted her Sadan to there and renamed that as Mukti Mission. She wished to make it a self-reliant community. It followed by a dreadful famine and plague epidemic in Central India in 1896. That made many women victims. She then mobilised her own girls to trace the upper caste widows, famine victims, sexually victimised women, and blind Women. She provided shelter to them by constructing tents on that land. She Vehemently criticised the government for the plights of such large number of women In the hospitals. She created a separate section for them and established a rescue home Called the Kripa Sadan (Home of Mercy). It gave shelter especially to more than 350 famine victims who had been sexually abused. In her books she mentioned that all of them were suffering owing to the terrible customs of child-marriage, polygamy and enforced widowhood. The number of the residents of the Mukti Mission reached 1500 by the year 1900 and there were over a hundred cattle inside that. It was by that time her daughter Manorama Came from the US and she joined hands with her mother to run the Mukti Mission. Manorama published a bulletin called The Mukti Prayer Bell symbolically to promote and advocate for the political and social freedom of such a community of sufferers. Another girls' school was established by them in Hyderabad. In the words of Keith J. White (no date), "The intention of Mukti was that women Should be accepted, nurtured, loved, trained, and equipped to take their place in Indian Society whether as parents, teachers, nurses, or Bible women. It was a place of Empowerment and transformation a model Christian community following the Teaching of Jesus and the life of the early Christians. To make them self-reliant they were given the training how to cook, clean, sew, weave Besides study. They knew embroidery, and carpentry, and were running printing press. This was how Ramabai spearheaded the feminist revolution in India by provideing Shelter to the destitute and fallen women. The Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission still exists today. They are given support for housing, education, vocational training, etc. For her activities she was awarded the Kaiser-e-Hind gold medal in 1919 by the British government.

### **Combat child marriage and promote women's rights:**

Ramabai was the pioneer of kindergarten education system as well as vocational education system in India. According to Ramabai the curriculum will be based on moral values complete with compassion and sensitivity as well as moral virtues in literature. she spoke of incorporating adequate knowledge of physiology and biology as well as the natural world around us into the education system. Ramabai was also the world's first woman translator, who translated the Christian scriptures, the Bible, written in Hebrew, into Marathi. Ramabai spent most of her life fighting the women's liberation struggle and against the prejudices of the society. Pandita Ramabai is one of those women who have created today's position in a patriarchal and superstitious society through intelligence, thought, hard work and courage and who have accelerated the progress of women and society. Pandita Ramabai's history of struggle continues to inspire and encourage women's progress throughout the ages. It has been able to strengthen the march of women. Ramabai did three significant works in his in Poona. First of all; The upper caste Pragati Monska founded the Arya Mahila Samaj with women who taught girls and opposed child marriage. Secondly; Ramabai's first book "StriDharmaniti" was published in Marathi language with English translation "Morals for women". Thirdly; He submitted evidence to the Hunter Commission on Education, set up by Viceroy Lord Ripon in 1882 to examine the education system. On this evidence he states that ninety-nine per cent of the educated men of the country are opposed to female education. In 1881 Ramabai formed an organization called "Arya Mahila Samaj" for the emancipation of women in Pune, with the idea of establishing a definite social order in the society and reconstructing the Arya Vedic society of the past. Pandita Ramabai laid great importance on the Arya Mahila Samaj for the liberation of women from the shackles of religious orthodoxy and patriarchy in the society. According to Uma Chakravarti, (Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai'; 1998) the "Arya Mahila Samaj" was founded as an organization to eradicate patriarchy. she also opined that Pandita Ramabai wanted to liberate women from religious bigotry and social prejudices. In the second half of the 19th century, the problems of women became increasingly dire as a result of social injustices such as slavery, early widowhood, polygamy and marriage to the elderly among orthodox Hindus. Ramabai could not distance himself from these problems, deeply involved himself with the situation. In 1889, Ramabai established the "Mukti Mission" in Poona for the women of rejected destitute families. This liberation mission played an important role in social welfare. The mission provided shelter to widows as well as vocational education and services to poor, destitute and blind women. In addition, to the committee on education set up by the british government in India in 1882, Ramabai recommended the provision of training for teachers, the appointment of inspectors in women's schools and the admission of women to medical colleges due to the need for female doctors to treat women. The impact of this recommendation created a huge stir at that time.

### **Social reform and women's empowerment:**

Pandita Rambai was bound by chance with Bipin Bihari Medhabi, a white Bengali lawyer of lower class. Being a Brahmin and marrying a lower caste was an act against religion in the society of that time. By marrying against the society, he showed his unprejudiced mentality and indomitable courage. In Indian society, especially the widows of women sacrificed their lives to free their young lives from the shackles of religious bigotry in the society. In her book *The High Caste Hindu women* (1888) she depicted the dark side of Hindu widow life. Pandita Ramabai laid great importance on the Arya Mahila Samaj for the liberation of women from the shackles of religious orthodoxy and patriarchy in the society. In 1889, Ramabai established the Mukti Mission in Poona for the women of rejected destitute families. Later Nobel Women Society was established to promote women's education and campaign against child marriage. Pandita Ramabai's struggle was not limited to women's education and the movement of upper caste Hindu women, against social customs and vices, but also in the

political arena. Her protesting voice was also loud against the oppression of workers. When the colonial workers were oppressed by the ruling classes, he gathered his protesting masses and criticized the government in strong language saying that “just as the people are bound to the government, so the government should be bound to the people and fulfil their rights”. After leading the women’s suffrage movement for six long years, Bombay women were given the right to vote in 1923. Ramabai spent most of her life fighting against the women’s liberation struggle and the prejudices of the society. In a patriarchal and superstitious society, all women have created today’s position through intelligence, thought, hard work and courage and Pandita Ramabai is one of those who accelerated the progress of women and society.

### Conclusion:

In the society, women are expected to fulfil all the responsibilities of the family, give birth and raise children, all these were the only goals and duties of women’s life. Hindu orthodoxy, patriarchy, caste system, child marriage and upper caste widowhood came to a head when a social reformer aimed at emancipating such conditions in the Indian social system, was born on 23rd April 1858 as the youngest daughter of Ananta Shastri Dongre in the Karnataka state of India in the middle of the 19th century. Pandita Ramabai was born in a high-born Brahmin family. Pandita Ramabai’s father was against child marriage and was expelled for rejecting 9-year-old Ramabai’s marriage proposal. Pandita Ramabai’s educational objectives, philosophy, role of women in society, empowerment of women, language, culture, educational practices and institutions established by Ramabai have a special impact on the society. Ramabai spread women’s education and protected girls from the oppression of child marriage, formed Arya Mahila Samaj, not only that, but also the training system of teachers. Kindergarten schools and vocational training centres for women and published textbooks for her own kindergarten schools. Ramabai pioneered the kindergarten education system as well as the vocational education system in India. According to Ramabai the curriculum will be based on full moral values along with compassion and sensitivity as well as the moral qualities of literature.

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# Digitalization : A Step Towards an Integrated Rural Governance

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**Abstract:** Digital systems are quite important elements for the development of a country. Government of India has taken many important steps in urban and rural governance by creating digital system, which is very important for building the developmental governance of the state. Digitalization is a concept that is not only limited to urban areas but also important for rural governance. The main objective of this article is to see the various steps taken by the Government of India in the field of rural governance and how those steps play a helpful role in the welfare of the rural people. This article attempts to make the various government services not limited to paper and pen only, so that the rural citizens can easily access the services at their fingertips through digitization. Also, an attempt has been made to bring harmony between rural and urban areas through this digitization. However, determining the effectiveness of this combination has been one of the goals of this study.

**Keywords:** Digitalization, Government, Governance, E-governance, ICT, Rural India, Digital India

## Introduction:

The two words government and governance have a lot in common. To understand these two words, one must understand the difference between government and governance. Government is a group of people who basically manage the governance of the state. In other words, government is a group of individuals who rule and control the state for a certain period of time. Government is a medium through which the power of the state is reflected. Different states have different forms of government such as democracy or dictatorship, but the governance system in the modern state is mostly democratic. On the other hand, talking about governance, it can be said that it is a method of conducting the rule of the government. In a democratic state, the government controls and governs the state through the formulation and implementation of various laws and regulations. In a word, governance is what the government does to manage its affairs. E-governance is the most modern initiative to establish good governance. A citizen in e-governance system at low cost, hassle-free seven days a week; can get government services 24 hours a day. E-Governance brings transparency, accountability and corruption free in the system. A term widely used today is e-governance. The full form of e-governance is electronic governance. E-Governance means IT-based governance. That is, the most modern method of delivering government services to all people of the society using information and communication technology is called e-governance or information technology-based governance. The features of e-governance are observed in most of the developed and developing countries of the present world. As a result of the spread of information and communication technology, its impact is being noticed in all areas of social life. Now if you want, you can send communication and information to any part of the world in a moment. As defined by the World Bank, e-governance is the use of information technology by various government agencies to redefine relationships with citizens, the business sector, and other institutions.

Digitalization is one of the factors that encourage the transformation of the state. This digitalization process plays an important role for the smooth progress of the natural life of the individual. India is a very fast

developing country economically. Initially India was mainly known as an agricultural country but now the picture has changed a lot. India has basically started a dynamic revolution process in terms of technology. Nowadays, people are seen to complete their daily work through digital processes starting from the use of smartphones

Akodara, India's first digital village located in Gujrat. Together with ICICI Bank, the Gujarati government adopted the hamlet and turned it into a functioning prototype for Digital India. The village is a perfect illustration of what a digital village would look like, from opening bank accounts and turning cashless to installing CCTV cameras.

### **Research methodology**

For the study the qualitative method shall be applied to collect appropriate information. The collected data shall be arranged properly for analysis. All necessary information will be collected from secondary sources. The secondary data have been taken from various books, journal, articles and from the internet.

### **Digital India:**

Indian government has currently taken various schemes to make rural areas more digitally enabled. One of these plans is the "Digital India Programme". The Digital India Mission was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July 01,2015. One of the objectives of this Digital India program is to digitally enable the Indian society and thereby develop the Indian economy. These programs include high speed internet, making financial transactions electronic or cashless, increasing digital assets sufficiently. That is, through this process, making people more digitally active so that they can easily complete various government documents or certificates or other tasks through digital processes.

The main objectives of this programme are

- Providing high-speed internet service in every gram panchayat.
- Easy access to the Shared Service Centre throughout the entire area.
- The digital India initiative combines various concepts and viewpoints into a singular, all-encompassing vision so that each one can be seen as a component of a bigger objective.

The Government of India has mainly focused on making the rural areas digitally literate and there the Government of India is looking to intensify this process by coming up with various schemes. Rural areas in India are mainly managed by Panchayats. Panchayats are looking to deliver services to people very quickly by creating internet connectivity in Panchayat offices and creating computer resource documents to manage Panchayat activities. Among the various steps taken by the Government of India to make rural areas digitally enabled.

### **Government Schemes for Technology Enabled Rural Development**

**National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) :** All districts, offices, and state capitals have Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) connectivity all the way down to the block level. 2,50,000-gram panchayats across the nation would be connected. This will be accomplished by connecting to gram panchayats as necessary using existing Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) fibres (BSNL, Railtel, and Power Grid). The higher bandwidth produced by the dark fibre network will be advantageous to the gram panchayats. The National Optical Fibre Network will be the name of this (NOFN). As a result, the connectivity gap between blocks and gram panchayats will be closed.

### **Common Service Centres (CSC):**

One of the mission mode initiatives for the Digital India Project is the CSC programme. For individuals living in rural and remote sections of the country, CSCs act as access points for vital public utility services, social welfare programmes, healthcare, finance, education, agriculture services, and a range of business-to-consumer (B2C) services. The government may fulfil its objective for a socially, economically, and technologically inclusive society by utilising this pan-Indian network, which caters to the country's diverse regional, geographic, linguistic, and cultural communities.

### **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP):**

Using existing land record similarities, the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), a central sector initiative, seeks to create a useful Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS). State-specific criteria may also be added by individual states if they are thought appropriate and required.

**Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission:** In order to support India's integrated digital healthcare infrastructure, the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) seeks to build the necessary infrastructure. To reduce the distance between various healthcare industry actors, it will use digital highways.

### **E-Shram:**

E-Shram is a platform created by the Ministry of Labour and Employment for the advantage of unorganised workers who do not belong to EPFO or ESIC. Obtaining an e-Shram card and enrolling in the Shramik Yojana admits you to a number of advantages. Workers will also benefit from the government's acceptance of social security policies.

### **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA):**

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) is a programme run by the Indian government's Ministry of Human Resource Development to improve rural India. The National Institutes of Technology (NITs), the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), and other esteemed government engineering schools nationwide, including the College of Engineering in Pune, are working together to start the programme. The programme includes engaging with neighbouring communities and using technologies for their upliftment.

### **BHARATNET:**

The Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communication, created the government-owned broadband infrastructure provider Bharat Broadband Network Limited, or Bharat Net. In order to accomplish the objective of Digital India, it is hoped that the effort will improve the intermediate layer of the country's nationwide broadband internet, bringing a minimum of 100Mbit/s broadband access to all 250,000 gram panchayats, or roughly 625,000 villages. The project is broken up into two phases, the first of which was finished in December 2017 and the second of which is scheduled to be finished in March 2023.

### **Digital farming:**

For the majority of Indians, agriculture is their main source of income, and ICT has sparked a new agricultural transformation. Several ICT projects have been launched by the federal, state, and private sectors for the agricultural sector, including eKrishi, the Village Resource Center (VRC), and Karshaka Information Systems Services and Networking (KISSAN) in Kerala and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

### **PMGDisha:**

The Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan, which has a budget of Rs 2,351.38 crore and seeks to educate 6 crore rural families in digital literacy by March 2020, is being carried out by PMGDisha. The Union Cabinet, which is presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given the go-ahead for PMGDisha, a Digital India initiative. The Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan's main objective is to provide 6 crore rural residents of India with access to digital education, reaching about 40% of rural households by providing one individual from each eligible household with such access.

In the middle of the pandemic, Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, took action. She declared that the government would deposit 10,000 rupees into the accounts of the 9.5 lakh class 12 students enrolled in government institutions. The students had to deal with issues with an online lesson while in lockdown. Nearly 10 lakh students were able to purchase mobile phones thanks to the government's assistance in order to continue taking online courses. Through this effort, digital literacy in West Bengal villages had quickly grown.

### **Digital Technology Initiatives in the Agricultural Sector for Rural India:**

For farmers, the national lockdown in 2020 came at a bad time and brought difficulties like a lack of farm labour, farm machinery, and Agricultural inputs like seeds and crop protection products. But while lockdowns related to the coronavirus caused a significant hit to the Indian economy, agriculture appeared as the pandemic's silver lining. Data from India's Agriculture Ministry indicates that in 2020, nearly 10% more area was planted than in 2019. This demonstrates that agribusiness as a whole fared better than other industries in containing the pandemic. Farmers' acceptance of digital platforms helped Agritech companies react and advance their penetration with thoughtful interventions in response to the shortage of labour and agricultural inputs as well as the increase in acreage. Using different e-commerce platforms to deliver vital agri-inputs to farmers' last-mile was becoming more popular during COVID-19. Numerous Farm-to-Consumer companies have emerged in the retail sector to offer services to suppliers and customers. Farmers who were comfortable using smartphones were increasingly given funding, market connections, and advice particular to their crop. Gaining the trust of the farmers required such vital crisis assistance. Additionally, it increased their dependence on these Agritech platforms for the services and goods they need for farming. Because mobile phones and the internet are becoming more widely used in rural India, the Indian Agritech eco-system has been expanding quickly in recent years. New start-ups with a healthy influx of funding and developing hyperlocal logistics players further fuel this eco-system. Given that the government believes that the future will be digital, it is possible to observe the increasing potential for digitalization in the way crop insurance programmes like the Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Program are being implemented. As part of the programme, an app can be used to access the insurance portal, and funds are sent straight to the farmer's bank account.

These kinds of digital initiatives are encouraging more farmers to use technology. Other technological advancements are being used to resolve land conflicts, survey lands and crops for insurance coverage, etc. These include geotagging, satellite mapping, geo imaging, and drone technology.

Digital technologies can aid in the efficient dissemination of knowledge and greater comprehension of a farm's micro-climate for effective cultivation because India is a country with many different languages and climatic conditions. This can assist with knowing the best seed variety, early disease/pest detection and treatment, and crop yield estimations and forecasts. One more field with room for innovation is precision farming.



## Conclusion :

Rural and urban India will be in equilibrium as a result of village digitalization. Since rural regions in India are where most people live, it is necessary to provide rural areas with digital infrastructure. The ability to use the internet to perform various services online will be very helpful to the villagers. The digitalization of a village can boost the economy, raise living standards, make job easier, and increase internet literacy. India's rural regions can communicate with the world's cities via the internet. For the farmers, the digitalization of the hamlet will be very advantageous. Only the internet can provide farmers with information about their various farming, cattle, crop, etc. problems. The Digital Village programme has been a focus of the Indian government for the past five years. Six villages were chosen for the pilot effort, and it was a success. Following the implementation of this programme, the villages of Akodara and Dhasai become digitally active. All government process re-engineering, electronic databases, full workflow automation, and IT-based public grievance redressal in all government agencies were planned by the Government of India. The Digital Village initiative faces numerous obstacles, such as poor internet infrastructure, slow internet, and undereducated villagers. After the Digital Village programme was properly implemented, rural India's future is promising. The Digital Village 2.0 is anticipated to produce the same outcome.

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