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*Editor in Chief*

**Dr. Alok Kumar**

Associate Professor & Dean (R&D)  
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Hoping all of you shall enjoy our endeavors and those of our contributors.

**Editor**



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## Problems and Prospects of PMKVY : A Case Study of Nawada District of Bihar

Dr. Jitendra Kumar Sharma\*

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### Abstract:

*Skill development has become a central component of India's strategy for achieving inclusive economic growth and sustainable socio-economic progress. Recognizing the growing demand for a skilled workforce, the Government of India introduced the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) in 2015 to equip unemployed youth with industry-oriented skills, improve their employability, and bridge the gap between education and labour market requirements. As one of India's economically disadvantaged states, Bihar continues to face persistent challenges such as unemployment, underemployment, and large-scale labour migration, making it an important region for evaluating the effectiveness of the scheme. Focusing on Nawada district, this article provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of PMKVY by examining its achievements, operational challenges, and future potential. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research approach based on secondary sources, including government publications, policy documents, and district-level statistical data. The findings reveal several constraints affecting the successful implementation of the programme, including inadequate training infrastructure, limited employment outcomes, insufficient industry collaboration, gender imbalance in participation, and low public awareness. At the same time, the study identifies considerable opportunities to strengthen the scheme through enhanced institutional partnerships, expansion of digital and emerging technology-based skill programmes, promotion of entrepreneurship, stronger industry linkages, and the development of location-specific vocational training initiatives that address the socio-economic needs of Nawada district.*

**Keywords:** PMKVY, Skill Development, Employability, Bihar, Nawada, Vocational Education, Rural Youth, Skill India. etc.

**Introduction :** Human capital has become one of the most important determinants of economic growth and sustainable development in the twenty-first century. In the contemporary global economy, the prosperity of nations depends not only on the availability of natural resources but also on the quality, productivity, and adaptability of their human resources. Countries that have successfully invested in education, vocational training, and skill development have achieved higher levels of industrialization, technological advancement, innovation, and employment generation. Consequently, skill development has emerged as a central component of national development strategies across the world, particularly in developing economies characterized by large youth populations and rapidly changing labour markets<sup>1</sup>.

India is currently experiencing a unique demographic transition. According to various demographic projections, nearly two-thirds of the country's population belongs to the working-age group (15–59 years), making India one of the youngest nations in the world. This demographic dividend presents an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate economic growth, improve productivity, and strengthen global competitiveness. However, the realization of this demographic advantage depends on the ability of the country to equip its young population with industry-relevant knowledge, technical competencies, entrepreneurial capabilities, and employable skills. Without adequate investment in skill development, the demographic dividend may transform into a

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demographic burden characterized by unemployment, underemployment, social inequality, and economic instability<sup>2</sup>.

One of the major challenges confronting India is the persistent mismatch between the skills possessed by job seekers and the skills demanded by industries. While the education system has expanded significantly over the past few decades, a considerable proportion of graduates and school leavers continue to face difficulties in securing gainful employment because of inadequate practical knowledge, limited technical expertise, poor communication skills, and insufficient exposure to modern technologies. This mismatch has created a paradoxical situation in which industries report shortages of skilled workers while millions of educated youth remain unemployed. Bridging this gap has become one of the foremost policy priorities of the Government of India<sup>3</sup>.

Recognizing the strategic importance of skill development for inclusive economic growth, the Government of India launched the Skill India Mission in 2015 with the objective of creating a globally competitive and industry-ready workforce. As one of its flagship initiatives, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) was introduced to provide standardized, quality-oriented, and outcome-based skill training to unemployed youth. The programme seeks to improve employability through short-term vocational courses, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), special projects, entrepreneurship orientation, soft skills, digital literacy, and placement support. By aligning training curricula with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and Sector Skill Councils, PMKVY aims to ensure that beneficiaries acquire competencies that correspond to the evolving requirements of various industrial sectors<sup>4</sup>.

Since its inception, PMKVY has undergone several phases of implementation, each introducing significant reforms in institutional mechanisms, quality assurance, assessment procedures, certification systems, and placement monitoring. The programme has expanded its geographical coverage to include urban as well as rural regions, thereby attempting to reduce regional disparities in access to vocational education. Training is delivered through accredited training centres operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). These institutions collaborate with Sector Skill Councils, assessment agencies, training partners, and state governments to create an integrated ecosystem for skill development.

Despite considerable progress in expanding training opportunities, the effectiveness of PMKVY continues to be debated among policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners. While millions of candidates have received skill certification under different phases of the scheme, several studies have identified persistent concerns relating to training quality, infrastructure, curriculum relevance, assessment procedures, trainer competency, post-training placement, employer satisfaction, and long-term employment sustainability. In many instances, certification has not translated into stable employment because of inadequate industrial linkages, regional economic disparities, and limited demand for trained manpower. These challenges have prompted researchers to examine the implementation of PMKVY at the district level, where local socio-economic conditions significantly influence programme outcomes<sup>5</sup>.

The state of Bihar provides a particularly important context for evaluating the performance of PMKVY. Bihar remains one of India's most densely populated states and possesses a large proportion of young people seeking employment opportunities. Although the state has made notable improvements in literacy, infrastructure, and educational access during the past two decades, it continues to face substantial developmental challenges, including widespread poverty, low industrialization, limited private-sector investment, seasonal unemployment, agricultural dependence, and large-scale interstate migration. These structural constraints restrict employment opportunities within the state and compel a significant number of young workers to migrate to economically advanced regions in search of livelihood.

Within Bihar, Nawada district represents a typical example of a predominantly rural and economically underdeveloped region where skill development programmes assume considerable

importance. Agriculture continues to constitute the principal source of livelihood for a majority of households, while industrial and service-sector employment opportunities remain relatively limited. The district is characterized by moderate educational attainment, uneven infrastructural development, socio-economic disparities, and a sizeable youth population entering the labour market every year. In such circumstances, skill development initiatives like PMKVY have the potential to improve employability, reduce poverty, promote entrepreneurship, enhance household income, and contribute to local economic development.

The implementation of PMKVY in Nawada district has facilitated the establishment of several training centres offering vocational courses in sectors such as healthcare, retail, information technology, construction, apparel, automotive services, hospitality, electronics, agriculture, and beauty and wellness. These programmes are designed not only to impart technical knowledge but also to develop communication skills, digital literacy, financial awareness, workplace ethics, and entrepreneurial competencies. Such multidimensional training is expected to increase labour productivity and enable beneficiaries to participate effectively in both organized and unorganized sectors of the economy.

Nevertheless, the successful implementation of PMKVY at the district level depends upon several interrelated factors, including the quality of training institutions, availability of qualified trainers, adequacy of infrastructure, accessibility for rural youth, participation of women, coordination with local industries, placement support, monitoring mechanisms, and awareness among potential beneficiaries<sup>6</sup>. The absence of any one of these components may significantly reduce the effectiveness of the programme. Therefore, district-level case studies become essential for identifying implementation gaps and formulating evidence-based policy recommendations.

Nawada district presents an especially relevant case because it combines both opportunities and constraints. On the one hand, the district possesses abundant human resources, increasing educational aspirations among young people, expanding digital connectivity, and growing governmental support for skill development. On the other hand, limited industrialization, inadequate employment opportunities, weak market linkages, insufficient career counselling, gender disparities, migration pressures, and infrastructural deficiencies continue to affect programme outcomes. Understanding these local dynamics is essential for evaluating whether PMKVY has achieved its intended objectives of enhancing employability and improving livelihoods.

The present study seeks to critically examine the implementation of PMKVY in Nawada district by analysing its achievements, operational challenges, institutional mechanisms, and future prospects. It explores whether the scheme has successfully addressed the skill gap among unemployed youth and assesses the extent to which vocational training has translated into sustainable employment or self-employment. The study also investigates the role of socio-economic factors such as educational background, gender, rural location, awareness levels, and industrial availability in influencing the effectiveness of the programme.

Furthermore, the research attempts to contribute to the existing literature on skill development by adopting a district-level perspective. While national and state-level evaluations provide valuable macro-level insights, localized studies offer a deeper understanding of implementation realities and contextual challenges that often remain concealed in aggregate analyses. The findings of this study are expected to assist policymakers, administrators, training providers, researchers, and development agencies in strengthening the design and implementation of future skill development programmes, particularly in economically backward districts.

#### **Socio-Economic Profile of Nawada District**

Nawada is situated in South Bihar and comprises predominantly rural settlements.

Major characteristics include:

- High youth population

- Agriculture-based economy
- Low industrialization
- Seasonal migration
- Limited private employment
- Moderate literacy
- High proportion of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes

These characteristics make the district highly dependent on government-sponsored skill development programmes.

**PMKVY Implementation in Nawada :** PMKVY operates through empanelled training centres offering courses such as: Retail, Healthcare, Electronics, Apparel, Construction, Agriculture, Beauty & Wellness, IT-ITES, Hospitality, Automotive

**Training includes:** Technical Skills, Soft Skills, Digital Literacy, Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship Orientation, Government data indicate that Nawada recorded **6,889 PMKVY-trained candidates during 2020–2025**, reflecting continued implementation across the district.

#### **Major Problems in Implementation**

**A. Lack of Awareness :** Many rural youth remain unaware of Available courses, Registration procedures, Certification benefits, Placement opportunities, Awareness campaigns remain largely urban-centric.

**B. Poor Educational Background :** Many beneficiaries possess: Low educational attainment, Weak communication skills, Limited digital literacy, These factors affect learning outcomes.

**C. Inadequate Infrastructure :** Several training centres suffer from: Insufficient laboratories, Outdated equipment, Lack of internet facilities, Poor classroom environment, Infrastructure deficiencies reduce training quality.

**D. Weak Industry Linkages :** One of the biggest weaknesses is inadequate coordination between: Industries, Employers, Training providers, Local administration Consequently, trained candidates often fail to secure employment.

**E. Low Placement Rate :** Although certification rates are satisfactory, placement remains comparatively low : Common reasons include: Limited industrial base in Nawada, Migration constraints, Employer preference for experienced workers, Skill mismatch.

**F. Gender Disparity :** Female participation remains relatively low because of Social restrictions, Early marriage, Family responsibilities, Safety concerns, Mobility constraints.

**G. Migration of Skilled Youth :** Many trained candidates migrate to Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, While migration increases employment, it contributes little to local economic development.

**H. Monitoring Issues :** Several studies have reported: Weak monitoring, Irregular attendance, Poor documentation, Quality variation among centres, Recent audit observations at the national level have also highlighted deficiencies in monitoring, beneficiary verification and placement tracking, indicating the need for stronger oversight mechanisms.

#### **SWOT Analysis**

| Strengths                      | Weaknesses               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Free training                  | Low awareness            |
| National certification         | Poor placement           |
| Government support             | Weak infrastructure      |
| Industry-recognized curriculum | Limited local employment |

| Opportunities     | Threats               |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Startup promotion | Migration             |
| Digital economy   | Skill mismatch        |
| MSME development  | Low industrialization |
| Entrepreneurship  | Funding constraints   |

**Future Prospects**

Despite current challenges, PMKVY possesses enormous potential in Nawada.

**Digital Skill Development**

Future courses should emphasize:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Data Entry
- Digital Marketing
- Graphic Designing
- Web Development
- Cyber Security

**Entrepreneurship Promotion**

PMKVY should integrate with:

- Mudra Yojana
- Start-up India
- Stand-Up India
- PMEGP

This can generate self-employment.

**Agriculture-Based Skill Development**

Given Nawada's agrarian economy, specialized training should include:

- Organic Farming
- Food Processing
- Dairy Management
- Fisheries
- Agri-Business
- Farm Mechanization

**Local Industry Development**

District-level industrial clusters may be promoted in:

- Food Processing
- Handloom
- Bamboo Products
- Leather Goods
- Renewable Energy

**Women Skill Centres**

Separate women-oriented centres should offer:

- Fashion Designing
- Beauty Therapy
- Digital Services
- Food Processing
- Tailoring
- E-Commerce

### **Strong Placement Network**

A district-level placement cell should coordinate with:

- Industries
- MSMEs
- Private companies
- Employment exchanges

### **Digital Monitoring**

Implementation should include:

- Aadhaar verification
- GPS attendance
- Online assessments
- Placement tracking
- Alumni database

Thus Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana represents one of India's most ambitious initiatives to transform its demographic dividend into productive human capital. However, the long-term success of the programme depends not merely on the number of individuals trained but on the quality of training, relevance of acquired skills, sustainability of employment, inclusiveness of participation, and responsiveness to local economic conditions. By focusing on the specific experience of Nawada district in Bihar, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the problems encountered during programme implementation and the opportunities that exist for strengthening skill development as an instrument of inclusive growth, employment generation, and socio-economic transformation.

### **Review of Literature**

**Pratap, S., & Biragoni, Prasad (2025)** critically examined India's skill development ecosystem with particular emphasis on the Skill India Mission and the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). Their study observed that PMKVY has significantly expanded access to vocational training and enhanced the employability of young people by providing industry-oriented skills. However, the authors also identified persistent challenges such as inadequate training infrastructure, poor coordination between training providers and industries, low placement rates, regional disparities, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms. They emphasized that stronger public-private partnerships, curriculum modernization, and continuous evaluation are essential for improving the effectiveness of the programme<sup>7</sup>.

**Behera, P., Singh, M., & Tarai, S. (2024)** evaluated short-term vocational training programmes implemented under PMKVY in Chhattisgarh. The study concluded that skill development initiatives have positively influenced youth employability by improving technical competencies, confidence, and workplace readiness. Nevertheless, the authors highlighted several implementation challenges, including weak employer linkages, inconsistent placement support, limited career counselling, and inadequate post-training follow-up. They recommended strengthening industry collaboration and improving placement tracking to ensure sustainable employment outcomes<sup>8</sup>.

**Sreekanth Nair Thekkumkara, Aarti Jagannathan, & Thanapal Sivakumar (2021)** examined the applicability of PMKVY for persons with mental illness. Their study demonstrated that PMKVY has considerable potential for promoting inclusive employment when appropriate psychosocial support, customized training modules, and institutional collaboration are incorporated. The authors argued that skill development programmes should be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of vulnerable populations to maximize social and economic integration<sup>9</sup>.

**Cabral, Clement, & Dhar, Rajib Lochan (2019)** conducted one of the earliest systematic literature reviews on skill development research in India. Reviewing forty-five empirical studies, they concluded that India's skill development ecosystem has expanded substantially but continues to face structural problems such as poor quality of vocational education, mismatch between labour market

demand and available skills, inadequate industry participation, shortage of qualified trainers, and weak institutional coordination. Their review emphasized the need for stronger labour market reforms and closer integration of vocational education with mainstream education<sup>10</sup>.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. Examine the implementation of PMKVY in Nawada district.
2. Assess the socio-economic profile of beneficiaries.
3. Identify major challenges in programme implementation.
4. Evaluate employment outcomes after skill training.
5. Suggest policy measures for improving programme effectiveness.

### **Research Questions**

1. Has PMKVY significantly improved employability among youth in Nawada?
2. What are the major implementation challenges?
3. How effective are placement mechanisms?
4. What policy interventions can improve the scheme?

**Conclusion-** The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) represents a landmark initiative of the Government of India aimed at transforming the country's demographic dividend into a productive and skilled workforce. By providing free, industry-oriented vocational training, the scheme seeks to bridge the gap between education and employment while promoting inclusive economic growth. In economically backward regions such as Nawada district of Bihar, where unemployment, poverty, seasonal migration, and limited industrial development continue to pose serious socio-economic challenges, PMKVY has emerged as an important instrument for enhancing employability and improving livelihood opportunities among rural youth.

The present study reveals that PMKVY has made a positive contribution by expanding access to skill development programmes across different sectors, including healthcare, retail, information technology, construction, apparel, agriculture, hospitality, and beauty and wellness. The scheme has enabled many young people to acquire nationally recognized skill certifications, improve their technical competencies, and increase their confidence for entering the labour market. It has also contributed to promoting entrepreneurship, financial literacy, digital awareness, and workplace readiness among trainees.

However, the study also identifies several critical challenges that continue to affect the effectiveness of PMKVY in Nawada district. Limited public awareness regarding available training opportunities, inadequate physical infrastructure in certain training centres, shortage of qualified trainers, weak industry-institution linkages, low placement rates, gender disparities in participation, insufficient post-training support, and ineffective monitoring mechanisms remain significant barriers to achieving the intended objectives of the programme. The predominance of an agriculture-based economy and the limited presence of industrial and service-sector enterprises further restrict local employment opportunities, compelling many trained candidates to migrate to other states in search of work.

The findings suggest that merely increasing the number of trained candidates is insufficient unless skill development is closely aligned with the actual demands of the labour market. Greater emphasis must be placed on improving the quality of training, ensuring competency-based learning, strengthening collaboration between training providers and industries, expanding apprenticeship opportunities, and establishing robust placement support systems. District-specific skill mapping should be undertaken to identify emerging employment sectors, while vocational courses should be redesigned to meet local economic needs and future labour market requirements.

The study also highlights the importance of promoting women's participation in skill development by addressing social, cultural, and mobility-related barriers. Dedicated women-oriented training centres, flexible training schedules, safe transportation facilities, and entrepreneurship support can significantly enhance female participation in the programme. Similarly, integrating PMKVY with other flagship initiatives such as the Prime Minister's Employment Generation

Programme (PMEGP), MUDRA Yojana, Start-up India, Digital India, and state-level livelihood missions can facilitate self-employment and reduce dependence on wage employment alone.

Overall, the study concludes that PMKVY possesses considerable potential to transform the socio-economic landscape of Nawada district by enhancing human capital, reducing unemployment, promoting entrepreneurship, and improving the standard of living of rural households. Nevertheless, realizing this potential requires a shift from a target-driven approach focused primarily on enrolment and certification to an outcome-oriented framework emphasizing quality training, sustainable employment, local economic development, and long-term livelihood security. If these challenges are effectively addressed through coordinated policy interventions and continuous institutional reforms, PMKVY can become a powerful catalyst for inclusive development, social empowerment, and sustainable economic growth not only in Nawada district but also in other economically disadvantaged regions of India.

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# Investment Patterns and Economic Development under India's Five-Year Plans

Dr. Md. Ejaz Aslam\*

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## Abstract

*The present study explores the evolution of investment patterns under India's Five-Year Plans and assesses their role in promoting economic development. Investment has long been recognized as a fundamental driver of economic growth and sustainable development in modern economies. In India, the Five-Year Plans constituted the primary policy framework for resource mobilization, capital accumulation, and the promotion of balanced socio-economic progress from 1951 to 2017. These planning initiatives focused on enhancing domestic savings, expanding public investment, fostering industrialization, modernizing agriculture, strengthening infrastructure, and developing human capital. Over successive planning periods, the pattern of investment underwent significant transformation in response to shifting political priorities, economic liberalization, globalization, and technological advancements. While the initial plans concentrated on agricultural development and the establishment of basic industries, later plans increasingly emphasized heavy industrialization, poverty reduction, rural development, infrastructure expansion, market-oriented reforms, and inclusive growth.*

*It examines sector-wise investment allocation, trends in public and private investment, and the dynamics of capital formation, while evaluating their influence on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation, industrial expansion, and overall social welfare. Furthermore, the study reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of investment-led development strategies in the Indian context. The findings suggest that, despite persistent structural constraints and policy challenges, planned investment played a pivotal role in transforming India from a predominantly agrarian economy into one of the world's fastest-growing emerging economies. Nevertheless, issues such as regional imbalances, inefficiencies in resource allocation, and the declining share of public investment in key sectors continue to pose significant challenges, highlighting the need for more effective and inclusive investment policies.*

**Keywords-** Investment Pattern, Economic Development, Five-Year Plans, Capital Formation, Public Investment, Private Investment, Economic Planning, India. etc.

## Introduction

Investment is widely recognized as one of the most significant drivers of economic growth and socio-economic transformation. It represents the allocation of financial and physical resources toward the creation of productive assets that generate future income and enhance national wealth. In macroeconomic theory, investment not only increases the productive capacity of an economy but also stimulates employment, technological innovation, industrial expansion, and infrastructure development. For developing countries such as India, where capital scarcity and structural constraints have historically limited economic progress, planned investment has played a crucial role in accelerating development and improving living standards.

After attaining independence in 1947, India inherited an underdeveloped economy characterized by low per capita income, inadequate industrial infrastructure, low savings, widespread poverty, unemployment, and an agriculture-dependent economic structure. Recognizing these challenges, the Government of India adopted a planned economic development strategy and introduced the First Five-Year Plan in 1951. The planning process aimed to mobilize domestic

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resources, promote capital formation, ensure balanced regional development, and establish a self-reliant economy capable of achieving sustained economic growth.

The Five-Year Plans served as the primary instruments for determining national investment priorities over six decades. The allocation of public investment across agriculture, industry, transport, communication, education, health, power generation, and social infrastructure reflected the changing developmental needs of the country<sup>1</sup>. During the early planning period, investment was concentrated primarily on agriculture and irrigation to address food shortages and improve rural livelihoods.

However, with the adoption of the Mahalanobis strategy in the Second Five-Year Plan, investment priorities shifted toward heavy industries and capital goods production, laying the foundation for long-term industrialization. Over time, India's investment strategy evolved significantly in response to domestic economic conditions and global developments. While the public sector dominated investment during the first four decades after independence, the economic reforms of 1991 introduced liberalization, privatization, and globalization, leading to an increasing role of private domestic investment and foreign direct investment (FDI). Consequently, investment patterns became more diversified, encompassing manufacturing, services, information technology, telecommunications, renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and human capital development.

The relationship between investment and economic development has been extensively discussed in classical and modern economic theories. According to Harrod-Domar growth theory, economic growth depends directly on the rate of savings and investment, while the Solow growth model emphasizes capital accumulation and technological progress as the key determinants of long-run growth<sup>2</sup>. Keynesian economics also considers investment as a critical component of aggregate demand that influences national income, employment, and business cycles. India's planning framework incorporated many of these theoretical perspectives while adapting them to the country's socio-economic realities.

One of the major achievements of India's Five-Year Plans was the significant increase in Gross Capital Formation (GCF) and Gross Domestic Savings (GDS). Investment in infrastructure, irrigation projects, steel plants, power generation, transportation networks, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities contributed substantially to economic modernization. Simultaneously, investments in rural development programs, poverty alleviation schemes, employment generation initiatives, and social welfare programs sought to promote inclusive growth and reduce regional disparities.

Despite these achievements, India's investment experience has also been marked by several structural challenges. Uneven regional distribution of investment, delays in project implementation, cost overruns, inefficient utilization of public resources, low private investment in backward regions, infrastructure bottlenecks, and fluctuations in global capital flows have affected the overall effectiveness of investment-led development. Furthermore, changing demographic patterns, rapid urbanization, climate change concerns, and technological disruptions require a re-evaluation of traditional investment strategies to ensure sustainable economic growth.

The transition from the Planning Commission to NITI Aayog in 2015 marked a significant institutional change in India's development planning process. Although the Five-Year Plan system was discontinued, the historical investment patterns established during the planning era continue to influence contemporary economic policies, infrastructure development, industrial strategy, and public finance management<sup>3</sup>. The experience accumulated over twelve Five-Year Plans provides valuable lessons regarding resource mobilization, capital formation, sectoral priorities, and the role of government intervention in promoting economic development.

**Concept of Investment :** Investment refers to the creation of new capital assets such as machinery, factories, infrastructure, education, technology, and human resources that enhance the productive capacity of an economy. Higher investment generally leads to increased output, income, and employment.

**Importance of Five-Year Plans :** The Five-Year Plans were comprehensive economic strategies designed to allocate national resources efficiently and achieve rapid socio-economic development. They provided a systematic framework for public investment and long-term planning from 1951 to 2017.

**Public Investment and Economic Growth :** Public investment in roads, railways, irrigation, power generation, education, and healthcare created the basic infrastructure necessary for industrialization and private sector expansion. It also promoted balanced regional development.

**Shift in Investment Priorities :** Initially, investment focused on agriculture and irrigation to ensure food security. Later plans emphasized heavy industries, infrastructure, poverty alleviation, information technology, and human capital development, reflecting India's changing economic priorities.

**Capital Formation and Development :** Capital formation increases productive assets within an economy and improves productivity. Higher capital formation enables sustained economic growth, technological progress, industrial expansion, and employment generation.

**Role of Private Investment :** Following the economic reforms of 1991, private investment became a major contributor to GDP growth. Liberalization encouraged domestic entrepreneurship, foreign direct investment, and increased competition across sectors.

**Sectoral Diversification :** Investment gradually shifted from agriculture toward manufacturing and services, contributing to structural transformation and making the Indian economy more diversified and globally competitive.

**Inclusive Growth Strategy :** Recent Five-Year Plans emphasized investment in education, healthcare, rural infrastructure, women empowerment, and social welfare programs to ensure that economic growth benefits all sections of society.

**Challenges in Investment Planning :** Major challenges include regional disparities, project delays, inadequate infrastructure, fiscal constraints, inefficient resource allocation, and fluctuations in domestic and international investment flows.

The study of investment patterns under India's Five-Year Plans is therefore highly relevant for understanding the country's long-term development trajectory. An analysis of sector-wise investment allocation, public and private investment trends, savings mobilization, and capital formation helps explain the structural transformation of the Indian economy from an agriculture-dominated system to a diversified economy driven by industry and services. It also highlights the relationship between investment and socio-economic indicators such as employment, poverty reduction, income distribution, infrastructure development, and human capital formation.

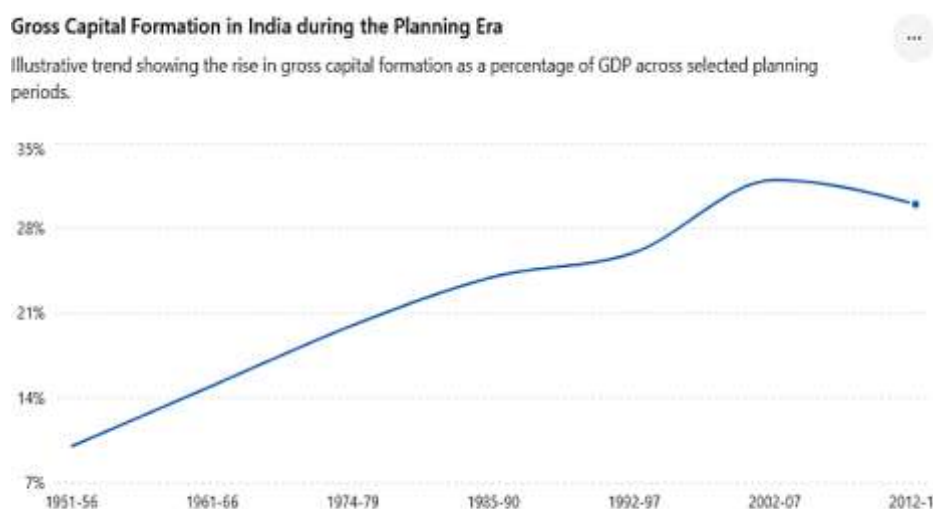
#### **Importance of the Study**

- Explains the relationship between investment and economic development.
- Examines sector-wise investment priorities under different Five-Year Plans.
- Evaluates the contribution of public and private investment to capital formation.
- Analyses structural transformation of the Indian economy.
- Provides policy suggestions for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

#### **Major Dimensions of Investment**

| Type of Investment        | Major Objective                     | Economic Impact                  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Public Investment         | Infrastructure & Social Development | Employment, Regional Development |
| Private Investment        | Industrial Production & Services    | Productivity & Innovation        |
| Foreign Direct Investment | Technology & Capital Inflow         | Global Integration               |
| Infrastructure Investment | Roads, Power, Railways              | Industrial Growth                |
| Human Capital Investment  | Education & Health                  | Long-term Productivity           |
| Agricultural Investment   | Irrigation & Rural Development      | Food Security & Rural Income     |

### Trend of Gross Capital Formation (% of GDP, Approximate)



This research aims to critically examine the evolution of investment patterns across different Five-Year Plans and evaluate their contribution to India's economic development. The study explores how changing policy priorities influenced investment allocation and assesses the extent to which planned investment contributed to capital formation, industrialization, productivity enhancement, and inclusive growth. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and academicians interested in development economics, investment planning, and sustainable economic growth.

#### Review Literature-

A review of literature provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the relationship between investment patterns and economic development. Highlight the major findings related to investment, capital formation, economic planning, and growth in India.

**Michael Paul Todaro & Stephen C. Smith (2021)** Michael Paul Todaro and Stephen C. Smith emphasized that investment is one of the principal determinants of economic development in developing countries. According to their development model, sustained investment in infrastructure, education, technology, and industrialization enhances productivity, employment generation, and long-term economic growth. The authors argue that capital accumulation, combined with institutional reforms and human capital development, accelerates structural transformation and reduces poverty<sup>4</sup>.

**Raghuram Govind Rajan (2017)** Raghuram Govind Rajan examined the importance of financial sector reforms in promoting investment and capital formation in emerging economies. He argued that efficient financial institutions improve resource allocation, increase domestic savings, encourage entrepreneurship, and stimulate sustainable economic development. The study highlights the importance of investment-friendly policies in achieving long-term growth<sup>5</sup>.

**Jagdish Natwarlal Bhagwati & Arvind Panagariya (2013)** Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya analyzed India's post-liberalization economic growth and concluded that investment liberalization significantly increased industrial productivity and private sector participation. Their study demonstrates that higher investment rates contribute directly to employment generation, technological advancement, and national income growth<sup>6</sup>.

**Kaushik Basu (2012)** Kaushik Basu argued that investment-led development remains essential for improving economic efficiency and reducing poverty. He emphasized that public investment in

infrastructure and human capital complements private investment, creating a balanced development strategy. According to Basu, institutional quality significantly influences investment outcomes<sup>7</sup>.

**Amartya Kumar Sen (1999)** Amartya Sen expanded the concept of development by emphasizing investment in human capabilities. He argued that investment in education, healthcare, and social infrastructure is equally important as physical capital formation. Such investments improve productivity, enhance social welfare, and create conditions for sustainable economic growth<sup>8</sup>.

**Sukhamoy Chakravarty (1987)** Sukhamoy Chakravarty critically evaluated India's planning process and observed that investment allocation should focus on productivity, employment generation, and balanced regional development. He highlighted the importance of efficient resource utilization and long-term planning for achieving sustainable economic development<sup>9</sup>.

**Hollis Burnley Chenery & Moshe Syrquin (1975)** Hollis Burnley Chenery and Moshe Syrquin examined patterns of economic development across developing countries and concluded that increased investment and capital formation are strongly associated with industrialization and structural transformation. Their comparative analysis demonstrated that investment shifts gradually from agriculture toward manufacturing and services as economies develop<sup>10</sup>.

**Simon Smith Kuznets (1971)** Simon Kuznets investigated long-term economic growth and found that sustained investment and capital accumulation are essential for increasing national productivity and income. He emphasized that structural changes in investment allocation contribute significantly to modernization and economic transformation<sup>11</sup>.

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that investment is a fundamental determinant of economic development. Classical and contemporary economists agree that capital formation, infrastructure development, industrialization, and human capital investment contribute significantly to economic growth. Studies focusing on India indicate that the Five-Year Plans played a crucial role in mobilizing domestic resources, expanding public investment, and promoting structural transformation. However, the literature also identifies challenges such as regional disparities, inefficient resource allocation, and uneven investment distribution.

#### **Objectives-**

1. To examine the evolution of investment patterns during different Five-Year Plans in India from 1951 to 2017.
2. To analyze the sectoral allocation of investment across agriculture, industry, infrastructure, and social services under the planning framework.
3. To evaluate the relationship between public and private investment and their contribution to economic growth and capital formation.
4. To assess the impact of planned investment on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation, industrial development, and social welfare.
5. To identify the major challenges and limitations associated with investment planning, including regional disparities, resource allocation inefficiencies, and changing policy priorities.

#### **Hypothesis-**

1. Planned investment under India's Five-Year Plans has had a significant positive impact on the country's economic development.
2. Sectoral investment allocation has undergone substantial changes across different planning periods in response to evolving economic priorities and policy reforms.
3. Higher levels of public investment have positively influenced infrastructure development, employment generation, and social welfare outcomes.
4. The increasing participation of private investment after economic liberalization has contributed significantly to GDP growth and industrial expansion.
5. Despite the overall success of planned investment, regional imbalances and inefficient resource allocation have constrained the achievement of balanced economic development.

**Discussion :** The analysis of investment patterns under India's Five-Year Plans reveals that investment policy has been instrumental in shaping the country's economic transformation. During the initial planning period (1951–1965), investment was primarily directed toward agriculture, irrigation, and basic industries to establish a strong economic foundation. The strategy emphasized public sector investment due to the limited capacity of the private sector. The economic reforms initiated in 1991 marked a turning point in India's investment strategy. The Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Five-Year Plans encouraged greater private sector participation, foreign direct investment (FDI), and market-oriented policies. Investment increasingly flowed into telecommunications, information technology, services, highways, power generation, and urban infrastructure. These changes accelerated GDP growth and improved India's global economic competitiveness.

The study also highlights that Gross Capital Formation consistently increased during the planning era, supporting higher productivity and technological advancement. Investments in education, healthcare, and rural development contributed to improvements in human capital and social indicators, although progress remained uneven across states and regions.

Despite these achievements, several challenges persisted. Regional disparities in investment allocation resulted in unequal economic development, with some states attracting significantly greater public and private investment than others. Delays in project implementation, bureaucratic inefficiencies, cost overruns, and declining public investment in agriculture and social infrastructure reduced the overall effectiveness of planned investment.

Overall, the findings indicate that while investment planning successfully facilitated structural transformation and economic modernization, future investment policies must emphasize efficiency, sustainability, innovation, and inclusive development to address emerging economic and social challenges.

**Conclusion :** Investment has been a cornerstone of India's economic development strategy throughout the Five-Year Planning era. The planned allocation of resources enabled the country to strengthen its agricultural base, establish a diversified industrial structure, expand infrastructure, and improve human development outcomes. The gradual shift from a state-led investment model to a mixed economy with greater private sector participation reflected changing domestic and global economic conditions.

The study concludes that investment under the Five-Year Plans significantly contributed to economic growth, employment generation, capital formation, and poverty reduction. It also facilitated India's transition from a predominantly agrarian economy to a rapidly growing and globally integrated emerging economy. However, persistent issues such as regional inequalities, inefficient resource utilization, inadequate infrastructure financing, and uneven social development continue to limit the full potential of investment-led growth.

Future investment policies should focus on balanced regional development, sustainable infrastructure creation, technological innovation, digital transformation, green investments, and strengthening public-private partnerships. Such measures will enhance economic resilience and support the achievement of long-term inclusive and sustainable development objectives.

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# Feminine Consciousness and Identity in Anita Nair's Fiction

Dr. Manoj Kumar Singh\*

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## Abstract

Anita Nair occupies a significant position in contemporary Indian English literature for her insightful exploration of women's lives, identity, and psychological consciousness. Her novels examine the emotional, social, and cultural realities of Indian women negotiating the pressures of patriarchy, tradition, and modernity. Rather than advocating an overtly ideological feminism, Nair presents women as complex individuals whose struggles arise from the conflict between personal aspirations and social expectations. This paper examines the representation of feminine consciousness in Anita Nair's major novels, particularly *Ladies Coupé* and *Mistress*, highlighting her treatment of identity, gender relations, sexuality, and psychological freedom. Through close textual analysis and feminist literary criticism, the study explores how Nair's female protagonists move from silence and subordination towards self-awareness and self-realisation. The paper argues that Nair redefines women's liberation as an inward journey of emotional growth rather than merely an external rebellion against patriarchal institutions. Her fiction combines psychological realism with social critique, revealing the emotional complexities of contemporary Indian women while challenging traditional notions of marriage, family, and female identity. Ultimately, Anita Nair's novels contribute significantly to feminist discourse in Indian English literature by presenting women who negotiate their own destinies with courage, resilience, and intellectual independence.

**Keywords:** Feminine Consciousness, *Ladies Coupé*, *Mistress*, Feminism, Women's Identity, Psychological Realism, Indian English Literature, Gender; Self-realisation.

## Introduction

Contemporary Indian English literature has witnessed the emergence of several women writers whose works have significantly transformed the representation of women in fiction (K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar 1985, pp. 712–718). Among these writers, Anita Nair occupies a distinctive position because of her profound understanding of women's psychology and her sensitive portrayal of human relationships (R. K. Dhawan 2005, pp. 96–101). Unlike many feminist writers whose narratives primarily focus on ideological resistance against patriarchy, Anita Nair explores the emotional, psychological, and existential dimensions of women's lives (Anita Nair 2001, pp. 12–16). Her novels examine the intricate relationship between individual identity and social expectations, presenting women as complex human beings rather than symbolic representatives of gender politics (Shashi Deshpande 1998, pp. 145–150). Through psychologically rich narratives, she investigates the experiences of women who struggle to reconcile personal aspirations with the constraints imposed by family, culture, and society (Elaine Showalter 1985, pp. 243–247).

Born on **26 January 1966** in Shoranur, Kerala, Anita Nair has established herself as one of the most accomplished contemporary Indian English novelists (Anita Nair 2018, p. vii). Beginning her literary career with the short-story collection *Satyr of the Subway* (1997), she subsequently published a series of critically acclaimed novels including *The Better Man* (2000), *Ladies Coupé* (2001), *Mistress* (2005), *Lessons in Forgetting* (2010), *Cut Like Wound* (2012), *Idris: Keeper of the Light* (2014), *A Chain of Custody* (2016), and *Eating Wasps* (2018) (Anita Nair 2018, pp. vii–ix). Her literary achievements have earned national and international recognition, including the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award and nominations for prestigious international literary honours (M. K. Naik 2009, pp. 284–286). Besides fiction, Nair has contributed significantly as a poet, essayist, playwright, travel

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writer, and children's author, reflecting the remarkable diversity of her literary interests (R. K. Dhawan 2005, p. 98).

A defining characteristic of Anita Nair's fiction is her ability to combine psychological realism with social criticism (Anita Nair 2005, pp. 21–25). While her narratives remain deeply rooted in the cultural realities of contemporary India, they also address universal questions concerning identity, freedom, love, loneliness, and human fulfilment (Makarand Paranjape 2002, pp. 167–171). Her female characters belong to different generations, classes, professions, and social backgrounds, yet they share a common desire to establish meaningful identities beyond the limitations imposed by patriarchal society (Anita Nair 2001, pp. 48–53). Rather than portraying women merely as victims of oppression, Nair presents them as active participants in shaping their own destinies (Simone de Beauvoir 1949/2011, pp. 721–724). Their journeys involve emotional conflict, self-examination, and gradual psychological transformation, making feminine consciousness the central concern of her fiction (Elaine Showalter 1985, pp. 248–250).

Among her novels, *Ladies Coupé* represents one of the most significant explorations of feminine consciousness in contemporary Indian English literature (Anita Nair 2001, pp. 1–8). The novel brings together six women from diverse backgrounds whose conversations challenge conventional assumptions regarding marriage, motherhood, sexuality, and female independence (Anita Nair 2001, pp. 35–162). Through the experiences of Akhila, Janaki, Margaret Shanti, Prabha Devi, Sheela, and Marikolanthu, Nair presents multiple dimensions of Indian womanhood (R. K. Dhawan 2005, pp. 100–104). Each character negotiates patriarchal expectations differently, yet collectively they demonstrate that women's liberation begins with self-awareness and the recognition of personal identity (Virginia Woolf 1929, pp. 75–82). The railway compartment itself functions as a symbolic space where women freely articulate experiences that remain suppressed within ordinary social life (Anita Nair 2001, pp. 15–18).

Similarly, *Mistress* extends Nair's exploration of feminine consciousness through a more complex examination of desire, art, betrayal, and emotional conflict (Anita Nair 2005, pp. 54–61). Drawing upon the classical aesthetics of Kathakali, the novel investigates the intricate relationship between individual passion and social morality (Anita Nair 2005, pp. 87–102). Female characters in the novel seek emotional fulfilment while confronting restrictive cultural conventions that deny women autonomy over their bodies, emotions, and desires (Judith Butler 1990, pp. 33–37). By integrating mythology, classical dance, and psychological realism, Nair expands the scope of feminist discourse beyond social protest to include questions of artistic creativity, personal freedom, and existential identity (Susie Tharu and K. Lalita 1991, pp. 214–220).

Anita Nair has repeatedly resisted being labelled exclusively as a feminist writer. In interviews she has maintained that she writes stories rather than ideological manifestos and that gender issues emerge naturally from the narratives she wishes to tell (Anita Nair 2012, pp. 4–6). Nevertheless, her fiction consistently interrogates patriarchal assumptions and foregrounds women's experiences with remarkable sensitivity (R. K. Dhawan 2005, pp. 101–105). Her balanced perspective avoids simplistic binaries between men and women, instead presenting gender relations as complex human interactions shaped by culture, history, and individual psychology (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak 1988, pp. 271–276). This nuanced approach distinguishes her from more overtly ideological feminist writers and contributes to the originality of her literary vision (Jasbir Jain 2003, pp. 201–204).

The concept of feminine consciousness in Nair's fiction therefore extends beyond political resistance to encompass psychological awakening, emotional independence, and ethical self-realisation (Elaine Showalter 1985, pp. 249–251). Her protagonists gradually recognise that true freedom cannot be achieved merely through economic independence or physical mobility but requires the courage to redefine personal identity and challenge internalised social expectations (Simone de Beauvoir 1949, pp. 726–730). Their struggles illustrate that liberation is a continuous process of self-discovery rather than a single act of rebellion (Virginia Woolf 1929, pp. 108–112). By exploring the

emotional complexities of women's inner lives, Nair reveals how identity is negotiated through memory, desire, relationships, and personal choice (Anita Nair 2005, pp. 211–220).

Anita Nair's fiction represents a significant contribution to contemporary Indian English literature through its profound exploration of feminine consciousness, identity, and psychological realism. Her novels move beyond conventional representations of women by portraying them as complex individuals who negotiate the intersecting pressures of patriarchy, tradition, and modernity. Rather than presenting women solely as victims of social oppression, Nair depicts them as resilient individuals whose journeys towards self-awareness are marked by emotional conflict, introspection, and personal transformation. Her narratives demonstrate that the search for identity is not merely a social or political struggle but also a deeply psychological process that requires courage, self-reflection, and emotional independence.

This paper examines the representation of feminine consciousness in Anita Nair's fiction with particular reference to *Ladies Coupé* and *Mistress*. It analyses how the novelist portrays women's search for identity within the intersecting contexts of patriarchy, modernity, and cultural tradition (R. K. Dhawan 2005, pp. 96–108). Through feminist literary criticism and psychological analysis, the study argues that Anita Nair has significantly expanded the scope of Indian English fiction by presenting women whose emotional journeys challenge conventional gender roles while affirming the values of dignity, autonomy, and self-realisation (Jasbir Jain 2003, pp. 202–205). Her fiction demonstrates that the pursuit of identity remains inseparable from the broader quest for human freedom, making her one of the most important voices in contemporary Indian English literature (M. K. Naik 2009, pp. 284–286).

The study reveals that *Ladies Coupé* and *Mistress* occupy a distinctive place in feminist discourse by examining women's experiences from multiple social, cultural, and emotional perspectives. In *Ladies Coupé*, the lives of women from diverse backgrounds collectively challenge traditional assumptions regarding marriage, motherhood, sexuality, and female dependence. Their shared experiences illustrate that liberation begins with self-recognition and the assertion of individuality. Similarly, *Mistress* explores the complexities of love, desire, betrayal, and artistic expression, revealing that emotional fulfilment cannot be achieved within relationships founded upon inequality and repression. Through these novels, Nair demonstrates that feminine consciousness develops through the gradual recognition of one's dignity, emotional needs, and intellectual autonomy.

Unlike many writers associated with ideological feminism, Anita Nair adopts a balanced and humanistic approach to gender relations. She neither glorifies rebellion nor idealises traditional social institutions. Instead, she critically examines the inequalities embedded within patriarchal structures while emphasising the importance of dialogue, mutual respect, and emotional companionship. Her female protagonists seek not dominance over men but equality, self-respect, and the freedom to shape their own lives. In doing so, Nair redefines feminism as a quest for human dignity rather than a confrontation between the sexes. This balanced perspective enables her fiction to transcend ideological boundaries and engage with universal questions of identity, love, loneliness, and personal fulfilment.

Another remarkable feature of Nair's fiction is its psychological depth. By focusing on the inner lives of her characters, she shifts the emphasis of Indian English fiction from external social realities to the complexities of human consciousness. Her novels explore memory, desire, fear, alienation, and emotional resilience with remarkable sensitivity, demonstrating that individual identity is shaped as much by internal conflicts as by external social conditions. This psychological realism enriches her portrayal of women and distinguishes her from many of her contemporaries, making her fiction both intellectually compelling and emotionally authentic.

Ultimately, Anita Nair's novels affirm that genuine liberation cannot be achieved merely through economic independence, legal rights, or social mobility. True freedom emerges from self-awareness, emotional integrity, and the courage to challenge internalised social expectations. Her

women redefine their identities by confronting personal fears, questioning inherited traditions, and embracing the possibility of change. Through this process, Nair presents feminine consciousness as an ongoing journey of self-realisation rather than a fixed ideological position.

In conclusion, Anita Nair has established herself as one of the foremost voices in contemporary Indian English literature through her nuanced portrayal of women's inner worlds and her insightful critique of patriarchal society. Her fiction successfully integrates feminist concerns with psychological realism, cultural consciousness, and humanistic values, offering a rich and multidimensional understanding of women's lives in contemporary India. By foregrounding the themes of identity, freedom, and emotional self-discovery, Nair not only enriches feminist literary discourse but also broadens the scope of Indian English fiction. Her novels continue to remain relevant for their powerful exploration of the universal human quest for dignity, autonomy, and meaningful existence, ensuring her enduring place among the leading novelists of modern Indian literature.

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# Bacterial Contamination and Antimicrobial Resistance in Raw Milk

Ravi Ranjan Kumar\*

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## Abstract-

Raw milk is an important source of essential nutrients including proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. However, due to its rich nutritional composition and favorable growth conditions, raw milk can support the multiplication of pathogenic microorganisms and may become a potential vehicle for foodborne diseases. In addition to microbial contamination, adulteration of milk with various chemical substances remains a major concern affecting food quality and consumer safety. The present study was designed to assess the bacterial contamination of raw milk, determine the antimicrobial resistance pattern of bacterial isolates, and qualitatively detect common milk adulterants. Raw milk samples were collected from different sources including dairy farms, local milk vendors, and household suppliers under aseptic conditions. Bacterial isolation was carried out using selective and differential culture media, followed by identification based on morphological and biochemical characteristics. Antimicrobial susceptibility testing was performed using the Kirby–Bauer disc diffusion method according to Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) guidelines. Common milk adulterants were detected using standard qualitative chemical tests. The bacterial isolates recovered from raw milk samples included *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Klebsiella* spp., *Bacillus* spp., *Pseudomonas* spp., and *Enterococcus* spp. Among the isolated bacteria, *E. coli* and *S. aureus* were the predominant organisms. Antimicrobial susceptibility analysis revealed variable resistance patterns, with higher resistance observed against commonly used antibiotics such as ampicillin and tetracycline, while comparatively greater sensitivity was observed toward ciprofloxacin and gentamicin. Qualitative analysis of milk adulterants revealed the presence of water, starch, urea, detergents, and other chemical substances in some samples. The findings indicate that raw milk may act as a reservoir for pathogenic and antimicrobial-resistant bacteria along with chemical adulterants. Continuous monitoring of milk quality, implementation of hygienic production practices, responsible antibiotic use in dairy farming, and regular adulteration screening are essential measures for ensuring milk safety and protecting public health.

**Keywords:** Raw milk; Antimicrobial resistance; Bacterial contamination; Milk adulteration; Antibiotic susceptibility; Food safety; Dairy microbiology.

Milk is an important nutritional food containing essential proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals required for human growth and health. Due to its rich nutrient composition and favorable conditions for microbial growth, raw milk is highly susceptible to contamination during production, collection, transportation, and storage.

Poor hygienic practices, contaminated equipment, infected animals, and improper handling may introduce pathogenic bacteria into milk. Common milk-associated microorganisms include *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus* spp., *Pseudomonas* spp., and *Klebsiella* spp., which may cause foodborne infections and reduce milk quality.

The increasing occurrence of antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in dairy products has become a major public health concern. Extensive and improper use of antibiotics in dairy farming may contribute to the development and spread of resistant bacterial strains through the food chain. Therefore, monitoring the antibiotic resistance profile of milk-borne bacteria is important for food safety and effective disease control.

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Besides microbial contamination, milk adulteration is another serious challenge. Addition of substances such as water, starch, urea, detergents, and preservatives affects the nutritional value and safety of milk. Regular detection of adulterants is essential to maintain milk quality and protect consumers.

Milk is considered an essential food source because of its high nutritional value, containing proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals required for human growth and development. However, the same nutrient-rich composition makes raw milk an excellent medium for microbial growth, especially when proper hygienic practices are not maintained during production, handling, and storage (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2022).<sup>1</sup>

Common bacteria isolated from raw milk include *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Salmonella* spp., *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Bacillus* spp., *Pseudomonas* spp., and *Klebsiella* spp. (Oliver et al., 2009). The presence of coliform bacteria, particularly *E. coli*, is considered an important indicator of poor sanitation and possible fecal contamination during milk production (Jayarao & Henning, 2001).<sup>2</sup>

*Staphylococcus aureus* is one of the most frequently reported bacterial contaminants in dairy products. It is strongly associated with bovine mastitis and contamination during milking and handling processes. Some strains of *S. aureus* produce enterotoxins that may cause foodborne intoxication in humans. Similarly, environmental organisms such as *Pseudomonas* spp. and *Bacillus* spp. contribute to milk spoilage and reduction in dairy product quality due to their enzymatic activity and ability to survive under unfavorable conditions (Jay et al., 2005).<sup>3</sup>

Milk adulteration is another major challenge affecting food quality and consumer safety. Various studies have reported intentional addition of substances such as water, starch, urea, detergents, neutralizers, formalin, and hydrogen peroxide to increase economic value, improve appearance, or extend shelf life. Water is the most common adulterant because it increases milk quantity but decreases nutritional quality. Other adulterants such as urea and detergents may cause harmful effects when consumed regularly (Singuluri & Sukumaran, 2014).<sup>4</sup>

WHO (2022) Several qualitative methods have been developed for rapid detection of milk adulterants. The iodine test is commonly used for starch detection, while p-dimethylaminobenzaldehyde methods are used for urea detection.<sup>5</sup> Chemical tests for formalin, hydrogen peroxide, and other adulterants provide simple and economical approaches for routine milk quality monitoring (Sharma et al., 2012).<sup>6</sup>

The present study was conducted to evaluate bacterial contamination in raw milk samples, determine antimicrobial resistance patterns of bacterial isolates, and qualitatively detect common milk adulterants. The study provides important information regarding microbiological safety and quality assessment of raw milk.

### Methodology

(i). *Study Area*: The present study was conducted in selected dairy farms, local milk vending shops, household dairy sources, and retail outlets. The sampling locations were selected to represent different milk production and distribution systems. The study area included both organized and unorganized milk supply sources to evaluate the microbiological quality, antimicrobial resistance profile, and adulteration status of raw milk available to consumers.

(ii). *Sample Collection*: A total of 40 raw milk samples were collected randomly from different sources, including dairy farms, local milk vendors, and household suppliers. Approximately 100 mL of each milk sample was collected aseptically into sterile screw-capped containers. Each sample was labeled with a unique identification number, date of collection, and source information. For microbiological examination, samples were immediately transported to the microbiology laboratory in an insulated ice box maintained at approximately 4°C. All samples were processed within 4 hours of collection to maintain microbial integrity and prevent changes in bacterial population.

(iii). *Isolation of Bacterial Isolates*: Raw milk samples were mixed thoroughly, and serial ten-fold dilutions were prepared using sterile physiological saline.

Appropriate dilutions were inoculated on different culture media that is *Nutrient Agar* (NA) – for total bacterial isolation, *MacConkey Agar* (MCA) – for isolation of Gram-negative enteric bacteria, *Eosin Methylene Blue* (EMB) Agar – for detection of coliform bacteria, especially *Escherichia coli*, and *Mannitol Salt Agar* (MSA) – for isolation of *Staphylococcus* species

The inoculated plates were incubated aerobically at 37°C for 24–48 hours.

After incubation, colonies were examined based on Colony morphology, Colour and pigmentation, Size and shape, Margin and elevation & Hemolytic characteristics (where applicable).

Distinct colonies were purified by repeated streaking and maintained on nutrient agar slants at 4°C for further identification.

Biochemical identification of the purified bacterial isolates were identified using standard biochemical tests.

(a). Catalase Test: The catalase activity of isolates was determined by adding hydrogen peroxide to bacterial colonies.

Reaction:  $2H_2O_2 \rightarrow 2H_2O + O_2 \uparrow$  Formation of gas bubbles indicated a positive reaction.

(b). Oxidase Test: The oxidase test was performed to detect cytochrome oxidase enzyme activity. A purple colour development within seconds indicated a positive reaction. The ability of bacterial isolates to hydrolyze urea was determined.

Reaction:  $(NH_2)_2CO + H_2O \rightarrow 2NH_3 + CO_2$  Ammonia production caused an alkaline shift resulting in colour change.

**Coliform Enumeration:** Coliform bacteria were enumerated as indicators of sanitary quality and possible fecal contamination. Appropriate dilutions of milk samples were inoculated onto Violet Red Bile Agar (VRBA) plates and incubated at: Temperature: 37°C and Duration: 24 hours.

Typical colonies were counted and expressed as colony-forming units per milliliter (CFU/mL).

The bacterial count was calculated using:

$$CFU/mL = \frac{\text{Number of colonies} \times \text{Dilution Factors}}{\text{Volum of sample plated}}$$

#### Antibiotic Susceptibility Testing

Antimicrobial susceptibility testing was performed using the Kirby–Bauer disc diffusion method on Mueller–Hinton Agar according to Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) guidelines.

A bacterial suspension equivalent to 0.5 McFarland turbidity standard was prepared and uniformly spread on Mueller–Hinton Agar plates.

The antibiotic discs has been used:

| Antibiotic      | Disc concentration |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Ampicillin      | 10 µg              |
| Tetracycline    | 30 µg              |
| Gentamicin      | 10 µg              |
| Ciprofloxacin   | 5 µg               |
| Chloramphenicol | 30 µg              |
| Erythromycin    | 15 µg              |

After incubation at 37°C for 18–24 hours, the diameter of inhibition zones was measured in millimetres.

**Results:** All experimental results were recorded and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data were expressed as frequency, percentage, and graphical representation.

**(i). Microbiological Quality Assessment of Raw Milk Samples:** A total of 40 raw milk samples were examined for bacterial contamination. Among these samples, 36 (90%) showed bacterial growth, indicating a high prevalence of microbial contamination in raw milk.

The bacterial contamination level varied according to the source of milk samples. Retail milk samples showed comparatively higher contamination than samples collected directly from dairy farms.

**Table 1 : Bacterial Contamination Status of Raw Milk Samples**

| Source of milk sample | Number of samples tested | Positive samples | Contamination (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Dairy farms           | 15                       | 13               | 86.7              |
| Retail vendors        | 15                       | 14               | 93.3              |
| Household sources     | 10                       | 9                | 90.0              |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>40</b>                | <b>36</b>        | <b>90.0</b>       |

The high bacterial positivity rate indicates inadequate hygienic conditions during milk production, handling, transportation, or storage.

**(ii). Identification and Prevalence of Bacterial Isolates:** A total of 45 bacterial isolates were recovered from positive raw milk samples. The isolates were identified through cultural characteristics, Gram staining, and biochemical reactions.

The identified bacterial species included both Gram-positive and Gram-negative organisms.

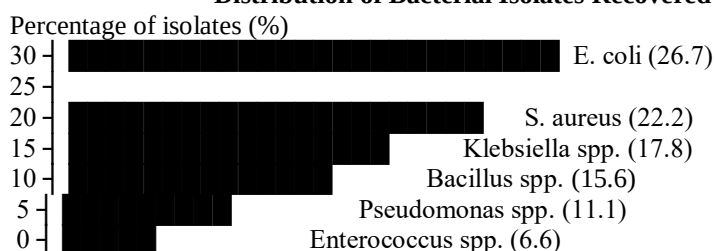
**Table-2 : Distribution of Bacterial Isolates from Raw Milk Samples**

| Bacterial species            | Number of isolates | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <i>Escherichia coli</i>      | 12                 | 26.7           |
| <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> | 10                 | 22.2           |
| <i>Klebsiella</i> spp.       | 8                  | 17.8           |
| <i>Bacillus</i> spp.         | 7                  | 15.6           |
| <i>Pseudomonas</i> spp.      | 5                  | 11.1           |
| <i>Enterococcus</i> spp.     | 3                  | 6.6            |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>45</b>          | <b>100</b>     |

Among the isolated bacteria, *Escherichia coli* was the predominant organism (26.7%), followed by *Staphylococcus aureus* (22.2%). The presence of coliform organisms suggests possible fecal contamination, whereas *S. aureus* contamination may be associated with mastitis and poor milking hygiene.

**Figure-1**

**Distribution of Bacterial Isolates Recovered from Raw Milk**



**(iii). Biochemical Confirmation of Bacterial Isolates-** The bacterial isolates showed characteristic biochemical reactions that supported their identification.

**Table-3 : Biochemical Characteristics of Major Isolates**

| Organism                 | Gram reaction       | Catalase | Oxidase      | Indole | Citrate  | Coagulase |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| <i>E. coli</i>           | Gram-negative rod   | +        | –            | +      | –        | NA        |
| <i>S. aureus</i>         | Gram-positive cocci | +        | –            | –      | –        | +         |
| <i>Klebsiella</i> spp.   | Gram-negative rod   | +        | –            | –      | +        | –         |
| <i>Bacillus</i> spp.     | Gram-positive rod   | +        | + / Variable | –      | Variable | –         |
| <i>Pseudomonas</i> spp.  | Gram-negative rod   | +        | +            | –      | +        | –         |
| <i>Enterococcus</i> spp. | Gram-positive cocci | –        | –            | –      | –        | –         |

**(iv). Antimicrobial Resistance Profile of Bacterial Isolates-** The antimicrobial susceptibility pattern of bacterial isolates was determined against six antibiotics.

**Table-4 :** Antibiotic Resistance Pattern of Raw Milk Bacterial Isolates

| Antibiotic      | Resistant isolates (%) |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Ampicillin      | 70.0                   |
| Tetracycline    | 62.2                   |
| Erythromycin    | 44.4                   |
| Chloramphenicol | 33.3                   |
| Gentamicin      | 17.8                   |
| Ciprofloxacin   | 13.3                   |

The results showed variable resistance among isolates. The highest resistance was observed against ampicillin, followed by tetracycline, whereas ciprofloxacin and gentamicin showed comparatively lower resistance rates.

**Figure-2****Antibiotic Resistance Profile of Raw Milk Bacteria Resistance (%)**

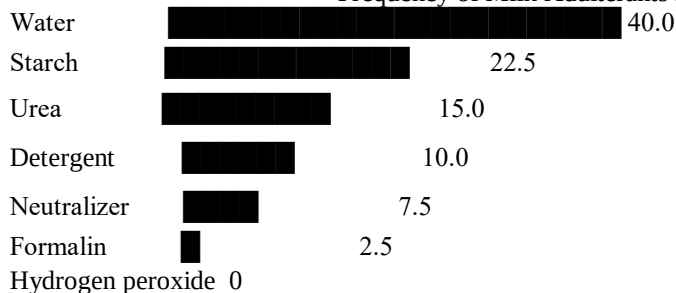
The results indicate the presence of antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in raw milk samples, with greater resistance against frequently used veterinary antibiotics.

**(v). Detection of Common Milk Adulterants-** Qualitative analysis was performed to detect common adulterants present in raw milk samples.

Among the tested adulterants, water was detected most frequently.

**Table-5 :** Detection of Milk Adulterants in Raw Milk Samples: Detection (%)

| Adulterant        | Positive samples | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Water             | 16               | 40.0           |
| Starch            | 9                | 22.5           |
| Urea              | 6                | 15.0           |
| Detergent         | 4                | 10.0           |
| Neutralizer       | 3                | 7.5            |
| Formalin          | 1                | 2.5            |
| Hydrogen peroxide | 0                | 0              |

**Figure-3****Frequency of Milk Adulterants Detected**

The results demonstrated that raw milk samples contained diverse bacterial populations and antimicrobial-resistant isolates. The detection of pathogenic bacteria along with adulterants indicates that raw milk quality can be affected by both biological and chemical hazards. The findings emphasize the importance of regular microbiological surveillance, antibiotic resistance monitoring, and routine adulteration testing to ensure consumer safety.

**Discussion:-** Raw milk is an important nutritional product; however, its high nutrient content also makes it an excellent medium for the growth and survival of microorganisms. In the present study, a high proportion of raw milk samples showed bacterial contamination, indicating that raw milk may become contaminated during milking, transportation, storage, or handling. The presence of diverse bacterial species highlights the importance of maintaining proper hygienic practices throughout the dairy production chain.

In the present investigation, 90% of raw milk samples showed bacterial growth, which indicates considerable microbial contamination. Similar observations have been reported in previous studies where raw milk samples showed high bacterial loads due to inadequate sanitation, contaminated equipment, poor personal hygiene of milk handlers, and improper storage conditions. The high contamination rate may also be associated with environmental exposure during collection and distribution.

The bacterial isolates identified in this study included *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Klebsiella* spp., *Bacillus* spp., *Pseudomonas* spp., and *Enterococcus* spp. Among these, *E. coli* was the predominant isolate. The presence of *E. coli* in raw milk is considered an important indicator of fecal contamination and poor hygienic conditions. Contamination may occur through contact with animal feces, contaminated water, soil, or unclean milking equipment.

*Staphylococcus aureus* was the second most frequently isolated organism. The occurrence of *S. aureus* in milk is commonly associated with bovine mastitis, infected udders, and contamination from milk handlers. Some strains of *S. aureus* can produce enterotoxins that may cause food poisoning if contaminated milk is consumed without adequate processing.

The detection of *Klebsiella* spp., *Pseudomonas* spp., and *Bacillus* spp. further indicates environmental contamination of milk samples. *Pseudomonas* species are particularly important because they can produce enzymes responsible for milk spoilage and may reduce the shelf life of dairy products. *Bacillus* species can form resistant spores that survive unfavorable environmental conditions and may persist in dairy processing environments.

The antimicrobial susceptibility analysis revealed considerable resistance among bacterial isolates. In this study, the highest resistance was observed against ampicillin (70%) and tetracycline (62.2%). Similar resistance patterns have been reported among milk-associated bacteria, which may be linked to extensive use of these antibiotics in veterinary practices for treating infections such as mastitis.

The development of antibiotic resistance in dairy-associated bacteria is a growing public health concern. Continuous exposure of bacteria to antimicrobial agents creates selective pressure, allowing resistant strains to survive and multiply. Resistant bacteria present in raw milk may reach consumers directly or may transfer resistance genes to other bacteria through horizontal gene transfer mechanisms involving plasmids, transposons, and integrons.

Lower resistance was observed against ciprofloxacin and gentamicin, suggesting comparatively better activity against the tested isolates. However, the presence of resistance even against these antibiotics indicates the need for continuous monitoring and responsible antibiotic usage in dairy farming.

The qualitative analysis of milk adulterants revealed that water was the most frequently detected adulterant (40%), followed by starch (22.5%), urea (15%), and detergent (10%). Water addition is one of the most common forms of milk adulteration because it increases volume and economic profit while reducing nutritional quality. Furthermore, contaminated water may introduce additional pathogenic microorganisms into milk.

Detection of starch indicates attempts to restore the thickness and appearance of diluted milk. Starch adulteration may interfere with the natural composition of milk and reduce its nutritional value. Urea detection is also concerning because excessive consumption of urea-contaminated milk may negatively affect human health, particularly kidney function.

The presence of detergent in milk samples suggests improper adulteration practices aimed at improving foaming properties and maintaining apparent milk consistency. Detergent residues may cause gastrointestinal irritation and other health problems. Although formalin and hydrogen peroxide were detected at very low frequency or absent in most samples, their possible use as preservatives remains a significant food safety concern because of their toxic effects.

The combined assessment of microbial contamination, antimicrobial resistance, and chemical adulteration provides a comprehensive evaluation of raw milk safety. The findings of the present study demonstrate that raw milk quality is influenced by both biological hazards and intentional adulteration practices.

Therefore, implementation of strict hygiene measures during milk production, improved storage conditions, regular microbial testing, antibiotic stewardship programs, and enforcement of food safety regulations are essential to minimize risks associated with raw milk consumption.

**5. Conclusion-** The present study highlights the importance of evaluating the microbiological safety and chemical quality of raw milk before consumption. Raw milk, although highly nutritious, provides a favorable environment for bacterial growth due to its rich nutrient composition and high moisture content. Poor hygienic practices during milking, transportation, and storage may contribute significantly to microbial contamination.

In this investigation, raw milk samples showed the presence of various bacterial species, including *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Klebsiella* spp., *Bacillus* spp., *Pseudomonas* spp., and *Enterococcus* spp. The predominance of *E. coli* and *S. aureus* indicates possible contamination from fecal sources, infected udders, contaminated equipment, and improper handling practices.

The antimicrobial susceptibility analysis demonstrated that several bacterial isolates exhibited resistance to commonly used antibiotics, particularly ampicillin and tetracycline. The presence of resistant bacteria in raw milk represents a potential public health concern because milk may act as a vehicle for transmission of antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms and resistance genes through the food chain. Therefore, responsible antibiotic use in dairy animals and continuous surveillance of antimicrobial resistance patterns are essential.

The study also revealed the occurrence of common milk adulterants, including water, starch, urea, detergent, and neutralizers. Such adulteration practices negatively affect the nutritional quality of milk and may pose health risks to consumers. Regular screening of milk products using rapid and reliable detection methods is necessary to ensure food safety.

Overall, the combined approach of microbiological analysis, antimicrobial resistance profiling, and adulterant detection provides valuable information regarding the quality and safety status of raw milk. Implementation of good hygienic practices, strict quality control measures, consumer awareness programs, and effective regulatory monitoring are required to improve milk safety.

Future investigations should include larger sample sizes, molecular identification techniques, detection of antimicrobial resistance genes, and quantitative estimation of adulterants to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of raw milk-associated risks.

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# Role of Sports Science in Enhancing Athletic Performance and Health

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Dr. Vibha Chauhan\*\*

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## Abstract

*Sports science has emerged as a crucial discipline in improving athletic performance, preventing injuries, and enhancing overall health. The present study investigates the impact of scientifically designed training programs on selected physical fitness variables among school-level athletes. A total of 30 male students (aged 14–17 years) participated in an 8-week structured sports science training program. Variables such as speed, endurance, flexibility, and strength were measured before and after the intervention. The results showed significant improvement in all selected variables, indicating the effectiveness of sports science-based training. The study concludes that integrating sports science principles in physical education can significantly enhance performance and well-being.*

**Keywords :** Sports Science, Athletic Performance, Physical Fitness, Training, Physical Education, Exercise Physiology

## 1. Introduction

Sports science integrates various scientific disciplines such as physiology, biomechanics, psychology, and nutrition to enhance athletic performance. In modern physical education, the application of scientific training methods is essential for achieving optimal results.

Traditional training methods often lack precision and may lead to injuries or inefficient performance. Sports science provides evidence-based approaches that improve performance and ensure safety.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate the effect of sports science training on physical fitness
- To measure improvement in speed, endurance, flexibility, and strength
- To analyze the role of scientific training in physical education

## 3. Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance.

H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant improvement after training.

## 4. Methodology

### 1. Research Design

This study adopts an experimental design with a pre-test and post-test approach to evaluate the role of sports science in enhancing athletic performance and health.

### 2. Sample

The subjects in the study are between the ages of 14 - 17 and have never had any serious injuries or illnesses before. A total of 30 male students were chosen for the sample. Simple random sampling was used to select participants based on their willingness to participate and commitment to the training schedule.

### 3. Variables

- Speed (50m sprint)
- Endurance (600m run)
- Flexibility (Sit & Reach test)

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- Strength (Push-ups)

#### 4. Training Program

The total duration of the training program was 8 weeks, with 5 sessions per week, each lasting 60–90 minutes.

Components:

- Warm-up
- Speed drills
- Strength training
- Endurance training
- Flexibility exercises

#### 5. Data Analysis and Results

The process of data collection was systematically planned and executed to ensure accuracy, consistency, and reliability of results. Data were collected in two main phases: pre-test (before the training program) and post-test (after the completion of the training program). Pre-Test Data Collection was conducted one week prior to the start of the training program. Post-Test Data Collection was conducted within one week after the completion of the training program.

**Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores**

| Variable         | Pre-test Mean | Post-test Mean | Improvement | Result      |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Speed (sec)      | 8.5           | 7.8            | +0.7 sec    | Significant |
| Endurance (min)  | 3.5           | 3.0            | +0.5 min    | Significant |
| Flexibility (cm) | 18            | 24             | +6 cm       | Significant |
| Strength (reps)  | 20            | 28             | +8 reps     | Significant |

**Table 2: Paired t-test Analysis**

| Variable         | Mean | Difference | t-value | p-value     | Result      |
|------------------|------|------------|---------|-------------|-------------|
| Speed (sec)      | 0.70 | 4.21       | <0.05   | Significant | Significant |
| Endurance (min)  | 0.50 | 3.87       | <0.05   | Significant | Significant |
| Flexibility (cm) | 6.00 | 5.02       | <0.05   | Significant | Significant |
| Strength (reps)  | 8.00 | 6.15       | <0.05   | Significant | Significant |

- Level of significance: 0.05

#### 6. Discussion

The results clearly indicate that the 8-week sports science training program significantly improved all selected physical fitness components. Strength and flexibility showed the highest improvement, while speed and endurance also improved considerably.

These findings support previous research that emphasizes the importance of structured and scientific training methods. The application of sports science ensures systematic development and reduces injury risks.

#### 7. Findings

- Significant improvement in all physical variables
- Scientific training is more effective than traditional methods
- Sports science enhances both performance and recovery

#### 8. Recommendations

- Schools should adopt sports science-based training programs
- Physical education teachers should receive scientific training
- Regular fitness assessment should be conducted

#### 9. Conclusion

The study concludes that sports science plays a vital role in enhancing athletic performance and overall health. Incorporating scientific principles in physical education programs leads to better results, improved fitness, and reduced injuries.

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# Reconceptualizing Educator's Empowerment through Digital Transformation for a Knowledge Driven Future

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## Abstract

*A key component of India's national development strategy is the shift to a knowledge-based, digitally enabled society, which is fueled by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the Digital India program. The move from traditional pedagogical models to those based on critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning is highlighted in this study, which examines the crucial role of teacher education as a main driver of this revolution. As global societies move away from industrial frameworks toward knowledge economies, the capacity for teachers to co-create and interpret knowledge within digitally mediated environments becomes essential.*

*Despite significant policy convergence with international norms such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4), there is still "policy-practice friction" in the Indian teacher education landscape. While infrastructure coverage has expanded, institutional readiness and digital pedagogical competencies remain unevenly distributed, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. This study identifies that digital integration often remains at a surface level, driven by compliance rather than pedagogical conviction, resulting in a "pedagogical divide".*

*The paper provides a four-pillar framework that can be implemented to overcome systemic challenges through Policy Vision, Educator Agency, Institutional Preparation, and Curricular Integration. It also broadens its debate and includes malicious ethical issues like algorithm bias, data privacy, and the danger of technological determinism. The conclusions indicate that professional competence in the digital age is a cultural shift to being knowledge workers as opposed to technical experts. This research concludes by considering the importance of institutionalizing the digital pedagogy as an ongoing thread in the training process and inclusion of powers in the hands of teacher educators as a vital step towards the successful implementation of knowledge future in India.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge-Based Society, Teacher Education in India, Digital India Programme, Pedagogical Competence, NEP 2020, Digital Divide, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4)

## 1. Introduction

The aspiration for India to emerge as a digitally enabled, knowledge-based nation has gained significant impetus through the Digital India programme. This is a landmark as a national policy stimulus, emphasizing a strong interest in technology as an inclusive developer and capacity-building tool, especially in the education sector.

Currently, the world is evolving into knowledge societies, where the main factors of growth are the production, sharing, and strategic application of intellectual capital.

In such a dynamic environment, teacher education has taken on a new prominent role. Rather of relying solely on information availability, a knowledge society is built on knowledge produced via critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and a lifelong learning mindset. According to this theory, the importance of teacher training programs cannot be emphasized since they give aspiring educators the tools, they need to create cutting-edge technology and integrated classrooms. But when it comes to exposure to digital technology, Indian teacher education

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has lagged; instead, it has been encouraging the use of tools without a thorough pedagogical integration. By focusing the reform on teachers, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to address this.

## **2. Conceptualizing a Knowledge-Based Society**

The notion of a knowledge-based society has emerged as a defining framework for understanding social and economic development in the contemporary world. Unlike industrial societies, where physical capital and manual labour were primary drivers of growth, knowledge-based societies place knowledge, innovation, and human intellect at the centre of progress (Drucker, 1993). In such societies, the creation, application, and circulation of knowledge become central to productivity, citizenship, and social cohesion.

UNESCO conceptualises a knowledge-based society as one that is grounded not only in technological advancement but also in human development, cultural diversity, democratic participation, and ethical responsibility (UNESCO, 2005). According to this viewpoint, having access to information is not enough; people also need to have the cognitive, social, and ethical skills necessary to understand it, create new knowledge, and use it effectively in certain situations. Therefore, education serves as the primary means by which communities develop these abilities.

**2.1 Key Characteristics of a Knowledge-Based Society-** A knowledge-based society has several underlying, intertwined attributes. In the modern context, knowing is not understood as a thing that is fixed and finite, but is seen as a resource that keeps growing. It is continuously renewed by research, innovation, interaction, and idea-sharing practices of people. Concurrent with this evolution, lifelong learning has evolved from a choice to a social need. People must constantly develop their skills and adjust to new circumstances due to the dynamic nature of economic and technological-progress.

Digital technology is crucial. They increase the availability of knowledge, enable teamwork, and enhance the flow of ideas. However, having these tools alone does not always lead to genuine innovation or meaningful learning. Another important change is that the passive reception of information will be changed to active knowledge creation. Now people are supposed to examine, question, intertwine, and implement the knowledge learned, as opposed to repeating it. This change has far-reaching consequences on education. The traditional model of education, which relied on pure content delivery, is no longer valid in educational institutions and teacher-training courses; they have to resort to the learner-centered approach, which promotes inquiry, reflection, and deep knowledge acquisition.

**2.2 Learning and Pedagogy in a Knowledge-Based Society** -Educators play a very crucial role within a knowledge-based society, as agents of knowledge production through learning, as intermediaries of knowledge, and as producers of professional and social knowledge. Modern teaching no longer involves adherence to the delivery of a set curriculum; it has transformed into the building of learning experiences that spur critical thinking, foster creativity, teamwork, and the development of digital skills. This development necessitates allowing teachers to reorganize their identity as reflective practitioners who actively participate in the lifelong learning process, thereby embedding the lifelong learning experience into their professional identity.

Teacher education combines these orientations. Pre-service programs have a legal obligation to prepare prospective teachers not just in topic knowledge and teaching methods, but also in the ability to critically analyze digital technologies and cope with the ever-changing epistemologies of contemporary knowledge. When they are ignored, empirical studies regularly show that teachers enter the classroom unprepared to deal with the reality of a digitally mediated, knowledge-rich educational environment.

This problem becomes exceptionally more important in terms of strategic significance in India. The young population, the rapid growth of the digital infrastructure, and an established policy agenda on innovation make education, in particular, teacher education, the focal point of the national development. The paradigm of a knowledge-based society is useful in analyzing teacher education because it explains the ways in which many initiatives like Digital India align with wider reform goals and why it is important to strengthen teacher education as the key to building a future-ready education system.

### **3. Digital India: Vision, Educational Dimensions, and Relevance to Teacher Education**

The Digital India program is an all-encompassing national endeavor to make India a knowledge economy and society enabled by technology. The initiative, launched to ensure digital access, inclusion and skills, emphasizes leveraging technology to drive institutional and societal transformation rather than viewing it as an end in itself (Government of India, 2015). This vision places a strong emphasis on education since the ability of people to interact meaningfully with technology is ultimately what will determine the success of digital transformation.

**3.1 Digital India: Vision and Core Components-** Digital India is structured around three broad vision areas: the creation of robust digital infrastructure, the delivery of digital services, and the digital empowerment of citizens. The purpose of the initiatives is to enhance connectivity, transparency, and effectiveness across all sectors. With respect to education, this vision translates into increased access to digital resources and online formats for learning opportunities through the use of technology; the overall success of these initiatives is reliant upon the willingness of schools/colleges/teachers to move to using digital tools as part of everyday procedures for teaching/learning. Considerably higher levels of coverage for digital infrastructure have been attained through programs like the Digital India initiative. A large portion of growth has happened as a result of increased mobile technology use and better broadband connections that have expanded internet access. These advancements, however, do not apply equally to all institutions and locations, and they maintain the current patterns of disparity between institutions and regions based on the sufficiency and availability of resources. For instance, poor facilities, a lack of technical assistance, and restricted access to digital resources and tools are persistent problems for teacher education institutes located in rural and semi-urban locations. The everyday experiences of educational institutions and their teachers are thus determined by these difficulties, which negate much of the influence of Digital India advances on the ground.

**3.2 Educational Dimensions of Digital India-** From an educational aspect, Digital India seeks to enhance technology-enabled capacity building, online education, and digital literacy. National platforms for digital learning and teacher professional development have been established to aid in achieving these objectives. These programs are particularly important for teacher education because they create new opportunities for collaboration, resource sharing, and ongoing professional-development.

However, there has been inconsistent use of digital activities in teacher education programs. Instead of incorporating digital pedagogy into the discipline and teaching courses, pre-service curricula frequently still treat ICT as a distinct subject or skill-based supplement. Research shows that although prospective teachers regularly pick up basic technical skills, they often lack the deeper pedagogical understanding needed to use technology to engage students, increase knowledge, and meaningfully assess learning.

**3.3 Digital India and the Transformation of Teacher Education in India-** Digital India presents both opportunities and problems for teacher education in India. As per a moderate viewpoint, the digital platforms possess a large amount of potential to support reflexivity, increase access to academic literature, and promote new approaches to learning. Nevertheless, their implementation is usually hindered by institutions and through training. Teacher educators can decide the way in which

future educators will consider and utilize digital technologies. Nonetheless, when they are not confident or trained on using digital pedagogy, they tend to utilize the technology in a surface manner, in either test tasks or entry-level usage, as opposed to the interactive learning that could be encouraged.

Through the empirical study, it has been demonstrated that in the case of a true integration of digital technology in the training of teachers, the provision of infrastructure is just one of the ways. It requires extensive professional growth, curricular innovation, and effective leadership of the institution to attain a transformative change.

This is a more serious dilemma in the Indian context. Suggesting that teacher education be re-packaged as a knowledge-building process as well as a process of credentialing is aligned with the Digital India agenda, which is to facilitate change. To achieve this, the concept of the digital initiatives must be evaluated in the conceptual framework of the pedagogies and contextual perspectives that consider the institutional capacity, diversity in learners, and the reality of the Indian classrooms. Without this congruence, the prospect of Digital India upon teacher education is becoming dangerously close to wishful thinking.

#### **4. Status of Teacher Education in India: Present and Future Problems**

Given that teacher training has a direct effect on teacher competency and the overall quality of the school, it is pivotal to the whole educational process. To enhance standards and ensure contextual relevance and accountability, the industry has undergone several structural and regulatory adjustments over the years. Despite all these efforts, there is a great skepticism about the real effectiveness of teacher training programs. This is especially vital in the development of good professional identities, forming solid educational bases, and the capability to adapt swiftly to socio-technical shifts.

**4.1 Structure and Orientation of Teacher Education Programmes-** In India, there are several pre-service and in-service teacher education programs available, with the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program serving as the primary pathway for preparing school teachers. These schools have typically been defined by a strong emphasis on academic coursework, exam-oriented grading, and limited opportunities for contemplative practice. The integration of theory and practice is still inconsistent among institutions, despite recent changes aiming to improve practicum components (Kumar&Sarangapani,2004). Pedagogical techniques at many teacher education institutes are still mostly teacher-centered, reflecting the teaching strategies used in classrooms. This reproduction of conventional pedagogies limits opportunities for prospective teachers to engage with inquiry-based learning, collaborative knowledge construction, and reflective engagement with practice. Such limitations become particularly significant in the context of a knowledge-based society, where teachers are expected to function as adaptive professionals rather than routine implementers of prescribed curricula.

**4.2 Digital Readiness of Teacher Education Institutions-** Geographical location, institutional administration, and resource accessibility all have a significant impact on how digitally prepared Indian teacher education schools are. While some institutions—especially those connected to metropolitan universities—have started incorporating digital tools into instruction and evaluation, many others still struggle with capacity and infrastructure issues. Inadequate hardware, a lack of technical assistance, and restricted access to dependable internet connectivity continue to be prevalent issues, particularly in rural and semi-urban institutions (MHRD, 2019).

Infrastructure is only one aspect of digital readiness; another is the pedagogical capacity to successfully integrate technology into teaching. According to research, ICT integration in teacher education is often limited to straightforward presentations, online submissions, or administrative tasks rather than fostering critical thinking, teamwork, or knowledge acquisition (Bhattacharjee & Deb, 2016).

**4.3 Professional Challenges Faced by Teacher Educators-** The teacher educators play the central role of mediating reform initiatives and defining the professional identities of future teachers. Nevertheless, these teachers work in institutions where they are overworked, lack chances of developing professionally, and their administration is increasingly becoming demanding. One of the most frequent complaints among educators is the shortage of resources to change to more advanced digital instructional capability or research-informed practice.

The high rate of change of the policy also complicates this situation. It is expected that with the ambitious efforts of Digital India and the National Education Policy 2020, pedagogies will be changed and technology will be incorporated in education. Nevertheless, teacher educators are often required to propose both institutionally unsupported and ill-equipped solutions. Thus, instead of an intentional and designed integration strategy, a policy-professional capacity imbalance results in a superficial usage of digital tools, which is primarily based on compliance.

Taking all these factors into account, it is clear beyond doubt that Indian teacher preparation should be reconsidered according to the knowledge-based culture of the country. Improving pedagogical orientation and being digitally equipped is not a technical problem but a precondition for teachers become knowledge writers and that they assume the lead role in digitally mediated classrooms.

#### **5. NEP 2020 and SDG-4: Reimagining Teacher Education for a Knowledge Society**

The National Education Policy 2020 is a significant attempt to reorganize India's educational system in response to contemporary social, economic, and technological circumstances. The core of the policy is the recognition that educators are not merely curriculum implementers but also active participants in learning, knowledge creation, and social transformation (Government of India, 2020). This perspective aligns with the global focus of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes teacher quality, equity, and lifelong learning as essential preconditions for achieving inclusive and sustainable development (United Nations, 2015).

**5.1 NEP 2020 and the Reform Agenda for Teacher Education-** The NEP 2020 refers to teacher education as the core of the educational system and views it as an essential component of educational reform (Government of India, 2020). The methodology demands several educational innovations, such as technology-enhanced continuing professional development, emphasis on a wide variety of disciplines, and combined teacher education. These recommendations signal a major change in terms of a more unified and professionalized model of teacher training as compared to the existing system of qualification-based variations.

The NEP 2020 claims that education will be digitized. It eases the process of building online professional learning groups, online teaching, and online learning systems. In this regard, one of the aspects of teacher preparation is to prepare new teachers to perceive technology as a necessary component of the teaching process, as opposed to a supportive one.

The problem is that such desires have to be provided. To achieve this, the institutions should be well-equipped and have unceasing professional guidance, which is not always given by the teacher education institutes in India.

**5.2 SDG-4 and the Global Emphasis on Teacher Quality-** SDG-4 emphasizes how important teachers are to attaining high-quality education and encouraging chances for lifelong learning for everyone. It emphasizes that in order to ensure educational equity and efficacy, teachers must be competent, driven, and well-supported (United Nations, 2015). According to this perspective, teacher education is a worldwide priority connected to social fairness, economic growth, and democratic engagement rather than merely a domestic issue.

In the context of a knowledge-based society, SDG-4's emphasis on teacher capacity extends beyond subject expertise to include digital literacy, critical thinking, and flexible pedagogical skills. As a result, teacher education programs need to train future teachers to manage a range of student needs, use digital tools responsibly, and foster inclusive learning environments.

**5.3 Policy–Practice Tensions in Indian Teacher Education-** Even while SDG-4 and NEP 2020 present a progressive and forward-thinking vision, there are still big differences between institutional practice and legislative purpose. Teacher education institutes frequently have limited resources and strict regulatory frameworks that restrict their ability to innovate. Instead of being motivated by pedagogical conviction, compliance requirements often drive the adoption of digital tools, leading to shallow integration that does not significantly change teaching-learning processes.

Furthermore, policy expectations have not always been met by teacher educators' professional development. Without sustained opportunities to engage with digital pedagogy, research-informed practices, and collaborative learning, teacher educators may struggle to model the competencies envisioned by NEP 2020 and SDG-4. Addressing these tensions requires viewing policy implementation as a process of professional learning and institutional change, rather than as a one-time structural reform.

## **6. Intersection of Digital India and the Knowledge-Based Society in Teacher Education**

The intersection of Digital India and the concept of a knowledge-based society provides a powerful analytical lens for re-examining teacher education in India. While Digital India foregrounds technological infrastructure, access, and digital empowerment, the knowledge-based society framework emphasises human capacity, critical engagement, and the productive use of knowledge. Teacher education sits at the convergence of these two agendas, mediating between technological possibilities and pedagogical realities.

### **6.1 Teachers as Knowledge Workers in the Digital Era**

Since knowledge societies see teachers as knowledge workers who co-create, interpret, apply, and transfer knowledge rather than merely knowledge bearers, there are substantial implications for the pre-service teacher education process in relation to the present educational reforms. Pre-service teachers need to know how to incorporate digital technology in order to promote inquiry, discussion, and introspection in classroom settings without eliminating instructional activities.

This is a challenge to the Indian paradigm of learning, which involves completing a curriculum and passing tests. The Digital India project provides the means and resources to support collaborative learning, get access to multiple sources of knowledge and information, and create a professional network. Nevertheless, current practices might be strengthened through the use of such technology tools instead of enhanced change due to the lack of change in the methods of pedagogy.

It brings to a rather categorical understanding of the teacher education field: it needs to intentionally prepare the professional identity of a teacher as an area of knowledge procreation and learning facilitator in a digitally mediated setting. Only in this instance can there be true application of the technology as a form of change and not merely an additional layer of the practices that are already present.

**6.2 Digital Pedagogical Competence and Teacher Preparation-** A key area of convergence between Digital India and the knowledge-based society lies in the development of digital pedagogical competence. These days, digital competency extends much beyond simple literacy. It involves having the ability to select, modify, and critically use digital tools in ways that support learning objectives, accommodate a variety of learners, and improve assessment procedures. According to research, using technology in the classroom effectively requires striking a balance between topic knowledge, good pedagogy, and technological savvy.

However, in many teacher-education programmes in India, digital competence is viewed in a limited and technical sense. New teachers tend to learn how to use presentation software, find materials over the Internet, etc., but seldom get to learn how technology may be used to build knowledge, support inquiry, or develop reflective practice. This discrepancy is more so noticeable in school internships where student teachers use traditional approaches due to circumstantial limitations and a lack of mentorship services.

In order to overcome this gap, digital pedagogy should not be enclosed but should be represented as an uninterrupted thread in the overall teacher-education curriculum, and not restricted to any course or competency module. The teacher educators have a role of leading by example, clearly showing how technology can be intentionally utilized to achieve the aims of the curriculum, the needs of students, and the concerns of ethics and morality. The aspirational vision of Digital India as an empowerment initiative without such modelling may remain abstract; but on the other hand, its practice can bring the substantive change of classroom practice promised.

**6.3 Institutional and Systemic Transformation-** The changes within the organisation can also be described as the institutional and system transformation. Consequently, institutional and systemic transformation may be explained as the developments that occur in an institution. To achieve the successful implementation of the ideas of the Digital India concept in the sphere of teacher education, institutional and structural change is necessary. Teacher-education institutions ought to transcend the use of technology as an administrative requirement in order to establish organizational cultures that foster inquiry, collaboration, and continuous professional growth. There should be solid institutional leadership to create a friendly atmosphere in which teacher educators are able to apply new and meaningful teaching strategies.

Coherence is also important at the systemic level. Curriculum, assessment modes, and professional development programs must all be unified. Without such cooperation, the changes to teacher education would be diffused and short-lived. It is much more urgently needed in India, considering the convergence of Digital India and the bigger objective of a knowledge-based society. It must be holistic as it acknowledges its interrelationship with other education and social spheres, and that teacher education is not a process but a system.

## **7. Framework for Educating Educators in a Digital Knowledge Society**

The aforementioned discussion makes it evident that an integrated framework is needed, one that captures the vision of Digital Indians and the principles that underpin a knowledge-based society while also taking into consideration the realities of teacher education in India. Such a paradigm is expected to describe how institutions, teacher educators, law, and pedagogical practices can work together to develop a substantial change instead of being limited to several minor ones.

The policy vision formulated by Digital in compliance with the international commitment to SDG 4 is the cornerstone of this framework, the NEP-2020. All those policies focus on life long learning, equity, quality education, and digital empowerment. A vision however cannot be brought into existence on its own, it has to be brought into existence in pedagogical processes and institutional practices, and teacher-education institutions are the main places where this is done.

The second pillar is institutional preparation that does not only refer to digital infrastructure but to corporate culture, leadership support, and professional development opportunities. Organizations that promote experimentation, reflection, and group work are in a better position to embrace the digital technology in an environment where knowledge building is highly facilitated. Reform has now become more of a developmental than a requirement by the existing gap in preparedness in India of the various settings.

The third pillar will be the agency and competence of teacher-educators. The teacher-educator can play an important role in the perceptions of aspiring educators about the application of digital technologies. The well-preparedness of the teacher depends on his/her beliefs, pedagogical skills, and confidence in the use of digital tools. Hence, their empowerment via continuous professional growth is one of the relevant steps towards establishing an educational system, in which the generation of knowledge by teachers will be the priority.

The curriculum and online learning are covered under the fourth pillar. In order to foster learning that encourages inquiry and the need to reflect and discuss practical tasks, digital pedagogy should be integrated into teacher-education programs through courses at the subject and professional levels. Digital methods should be seen as tools for knowledge building rather than finished goods.

The focus of this paradigm is on professional work and knowledge generation. Basically, one of the main tasks of educators preparing in an innovative technological society is to thoroughly equip them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to create, alter, and utilize knowledge in various educational contexts. This viewpoint links social goals such as innovation, inclusiveness, and sustainable development very closely to teacher preparation.

### **8. Challenges and Critical Concerns**

The proposed framework offers a clear and useful vision, however there are numerous challenges in implementing it in the Indian context. First of all, disparities in digital competency and access to pedagogical support are examples of other forms of the digital divide, in addition to unequal access to infrastructure. In rural and marginalized locations, schools and institutions tasked with preparing teachers frequently encounter structural barriers that prevent a comprehensive implementation of digital innovations.

The other hindrance that needs to be mentioned is the threat of technological determinism, that is, the assumption that digital tools in all cases are going to improve the result of learning. There could be a decrease in the use of technology to a daily or meaningless ritual unless well-established educational concepts are in place; it is not a teaching process. Moreover, there is a possibility that policy-based anticipations can be heaped on teacher educators and student teachers without giving them the institutional support that they require to succeed.

Other ethical issues are algorithmic discrimination, data privacy, and the growing commercialization of educational technologies. To have technology applied in education purposefully and equitably, it logically follows that training of teachers to work in a knowledge-based society cannot be achieved by simply imparting technical skills to teachers. Ethical and critical responsibilities should also be taught to teachers.

### **9. Recommendations and Policy-Relevant Way Forward**

Indian teacher education needs to be restructured, and capacity building should be the focus instead of just adopting technology. Teacher educators should also become lifelong learners with a focus on digital pedagogy and reflective practice, which ought to be viewed as a critical aspect of the process. The institutions should promote communities of practice that enable cooperation, knowledge sharing, and innovation.

The curriculum needs to be restructured with an increased focus on the diversity of Indian classrooms and schools and the situational specifics of using digital technologies. When assessing methods of teacher education programs, reflection, inquiry, and professional development must all be considered.

The policy level needs more coherence (support of professionals, institutional autonomy, and regulatory frameworks). The existing educational system can be improved by the reconstruction of teacher education as a long-term investment in building a knowledge society.

## 10. Conclusion

The vision of India of becoming a digitally empowered and knowledge society places teacher education on the center stage of national development. The future that the Digital India initiative, National Education Policy 2020, and the global adherence to SDG -4 all seek to project resembles a scenario in which teachers are not just the holders of knowledge, but active co-producers and agents of social change.

The implementation of this ambition requires not only expanding infrastructure but also pedagogically sound reforms with institutional backing. This paper argues that a thought-provoking transformation of teacher education in India requires the incorporation of a two-fold lens of digital transformation and the knowledge-based development of society. The institute's preparedness, the empowerment of teacher educators, and the institutionalization of digital pedagogy in teacher practice would be key to making teacher education play a decisive role in shaping India's knowledge future.

It will not be the case that such a transformation will happen overnight, nor will it be applied in the same way across the board. However, it is still essential to the educational practice to conform to the demands of a fast-changing digital society.

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# The Role of Psychological Interventions in Mental Health Treatment

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## Abstract:

*Mental health disorders are among the leading contributors to disability worldwide, affecting individuals' emotional, psychological, and social functioning. The growing prevalence of conditions such as depression, anxiety, stress-related disorders, and other psychological illnesses has increased the need for effective, evidence-based interventions. Psychological interventions have become an integral component of modern mental healthcare because they address cognitive, emotional, and behavioural factors that contribute to mental illness while promoting recovery and long-term well-being. Among the most widely adopted approaches are cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support, each of which has demonstrated effectiveness in improving treatment outcomes across diverse populations. Despite substantial evidence supporting individual intervention approaches, comparatively few studies have examined their combined influence on overall mental health treatment outcomes. The present study investigates the role of psychological interventions in mental health treatment by examining the influence of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support on psychological well-being, symptom reduction, and functional recovery. A quantitative cross-sectional research design is proposed using a structured questionnaire administered to individuals receiving mental health services. Data are analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings are expected to indicate that psychological interventions significantly improve mental health treatment outcomes. The study contributes to the growing evidence supporting integrated psychological care within modern mental healthcare systems.*

**Keywords:** Psychological Interventions, Mental Health, Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies, Psychoeducation, Counseling, Psychological Well-being

## Introduction

Mental health is a fundamental component of overall health and well-being, influencing how individuals think, feel, behave, and interact with others. Good mental health enables individuals to cope with everyday stress, maintain productive relationships, perform occupational and educational responsibilities, and contribute meaningfully to society. Conversely, poor mental health can impair emotional functioning, reduce quality of life, disrupt interpersonal relationships, and increase the risk of physical illness and disability. Consequently, mental health has become a major public health priority worldwide.

**The World Health Organization (2022)** estimates that one in every eight people globally lives with a mental disorder, with depression and anxiety representing the most common conditions. The increasing prevalence of mental health disorders has created significant challenges for healthcare systems, emphasizing the need for accessible, evidence-based interventions that not only reduce symptoms but also promote long-term recovery and psychological well-being. Modern mental healthcare therefore places considerable emphasis on interventions that address the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of mental illness.

Historically, treatment approaches focused primarily on symptom management through institutional care and pharmacological interventions. Although medication remains an important component of treatment for many psychiatric conditions, growing evidence suggests that psychological interventions play an equally important role in improving recovery, preventing relapse,

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enhancing functioning, and promoting resilience. Contemporary mental healthcare increasingly adopts a multidisciplinary approach in which psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, social workers, and other healthcare professionals collaborate to provide comprehensive care tailored to individual needs.

Psychological interventions encompass a broad range of evidence-based therapeutic approaches designed to modify maladaptive thoughts, emotions, and behaviours while strengthening adaptive coping skills. Among these interventions, cognitive-behavioral strategies have received extensive empirical support because they help individuals identify and modify dysfunctional thinking patterns that contribute to emotional distress. Psychoeducation assists individuals and their families in understanding mental illness, improving treatment adherence, recognizing early warning signs of relapse, and developing effective self-management skills. Counseling and therapeutic support provide individuals with a safe therapeutic environment where they can express emotions, develop coping strategies, and improve psychological functioning.

The effectiveness of psychological interventions extends across numerous mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. These interventions have also demonstrated effectiveness in improving emotional regulation, reducing psychological distress, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and enhancing overall quality of life. Consequently, they have become essential components of modern mental healthcare services delivered through hospitals, community mental health centres, primary healthcare facilities, schools, and private practice.

In addition to symptom reduction, contemporary mental health treatment increasingly emphasizes recovery-oriented care. Recovery is viewed not merely as the absence of symptoms but as the restoration of psychological well-being, social participation, occupational functioning, and personal fulfilment. Psychological interventions contribute significantly to these broader treatment goals by empowering individuals to develop resilience, improve self-awareness, strengthen coping abilities, and actively participate in their recovery process.

Although substantial research has demonstrated the effectiveness of individual therapeutic approaches, many previous studies have focused on specific interventions or particular mental disorders. Comparatively fewer studies have examined the combined contribution of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support in influencing overall mental health treatment outcomes. Understanding their collective impact may provide a more comprehensive perspective on the role of psychological interventions within contemporary mental healthcare.

Therefore, the present study examines the role of psychological interventions in mental health treatment by investigating the influence of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support on mental health treatment outcomes. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature supporting integrated psychological care and evidence-based mental health practice.

## **Literature Review**

### **Psychological Interventions in Mental Health Treatment**

Psychological interventions have become a cornerstone of contemporary mental healthcare because they address the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes underlying mental disorders. Unlike approaches that focus solely on symptom control, psychological interventions aim to improve coping skills, emotional regulation, problem-solving abilities, interpersonal functioning, and overall psychological well-being. These interventions are used across a broad range of mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and schizophrenia. They are increasingly delivered in hospitals, primary healthcare settings, community mental health centres, schools, and private practice as part of multidisciplinary treatment programmes.

**The World Health Organization (2022)** emphasizes that effective mental healthcare requires integrating evidence-based psychological interventions into routine health services. Such integration improves accessibility to treatment, reduces the burden of mental disorders, enhances recovery, and promotes long-term psychological well-being. **The American Psychological Association (2019)** highlights that psychological interventions constitute an essential component of evidence-based mental healthcare because they improve emotional functioning, strengthen resilience, and facilitate sustainable behavioural change.

#### **Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies and Mental Health Outcomes**

Cognitive-behavioral strategies represent one of the most extensively researched and widely implemented psychological interventions. These strategies are based on the principle that maladaptive thoughts influence emotions and behaviours, and that modifying dysfunctional cognitive patterns can reduce psychological distress while promoting healthier behavioural responses. Cognitive restructuring, behavioural activation, problem-solving, exposure techniques, and self-monitoring are common cognitive-behavioral strategies employed across diverse mental health conditions.

**Beck (2011)** proposed that dysfunctional beliefs and automatic negative thoughts contribute substantially to depression, anxiety, and other emotional disorders. By helping individuals identify and modify these maladaptive thought patterns, cognitive-behavioral strategies improve emotional regulation and reduce psychological symptoms. **Hofmann et al. (2012)** conducted a comprehensive review of meta-analyses and concluded that cognitive behavioural therapy demonstrates substantial effectiveness in treating anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, substance use disorders, and various other psychological conditions. Their findings confirm that cognitive-behavioral approaches consistently improve psychological well-being and contribute to long-term recovery.

#### **Psychoeducation and Mental Health Recovery**

Psychoeducation is an evidence-based intervention that provides individuals and their families with accurate information regarding mental disorders, treatment options, coping strategies, relapse prevention, and self-management techniques. Increased knowledge enables individuals to understand their conditions, participate actively in treatment decisions, recognize early warning signs of relapse, and adhere more consistently to therapeutic recommendations.

**Xia, Merinder, and Belgamwar (2011)** reviewed psychoeducational interventions for individuals with schizophrenia and found that psychoeducation significantly improved treatment adherence, reduced relapse rates, and enhanced family understanding of mental illness. **Donker et al. (2009)** demonstrated that psychoeducational programmes effectively reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety while improving mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviours. These findings indicate that psychoeducation strengthens treatment effectiveness by empowering individuals with knowledge and practical coping skills.

#### **Counseling and Therapeutic Support**

Counseling and therapeutic support provide structured opportunities for individuals to discuss emotional difficulties, explore personal experiences, develop adaptive coping strategies, and strengthen psychological resilience. Therapeutic relationships based on empathy, trust, acceptance, and collaboration facilitate emotional expression while promoting self-awareness and problem-solving abilities.

Research has consistently demonstrated that counseling interventions improve psychological functioning across diverse populations. **Cuijpers et al. (2013)** reported that psychological therapies produce significant improvements in depressive symptoms among adults and contribute to enhanced quality of life. **Lambert (2013)** emphasized that the quality of the therapeutic relationship itself is a major determinant of successful treatment outcomes regardless of the specific therapeutic approach employed. Effective counseling promotes emotional support, strengthens coping abilities, and facilitates functional recovery among individuals experiencing mental health difficulties.

### **Psychological Interventions and Mental Health Treatment Outcomes**

Mental health treatment outcomes extend beyond symptom reduction to include improvements in psychological well-being, functional recovery, interpersonal relationships, occupational performance, and overall quality of life. Contemporary recovery-oriented mental healthcare recognizes that successful treatment involves helping individuals regain meaningful participation in daily life while developing resilience and self-management skills.

Psychological interventions contribute significantly to these broader treatment outcomes by addressing emotional regulation, cognitive functioning, behavioural adaptation, and social functioning. **Cuijpers et al. (2020)**, through a comprehensive meta-analysis, reported that psychological treatments consistently reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety while improving overall functioning and quality of life across diverse clinical populations. These findings support the growing integration of psychological services within modern healthcare systems.

**The World Health Organization (2022)** advocates the incorporation of evidence-based psychological interventions into routine healthcare because they improve treatment effectiveness, reduce disability, and support long-term recovery. Multidisciplinary models integrating psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and social workers have demonstrated greater effectiveness in improving patient outcomes than treatment approaches relying exclusively on pharmacological management.

### **Research Gap**

Although previous research has established the effectiveness of various psychological interventions, several important gaps remain. First, many studies have evaluated cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychoeducation, or counseling independently, whereas comparatively few investigations have examined their combined contribution to overall mental health treatment outcomes. Second, a substantial proportion of existing research focuses on specific psychiatric disorders, limiting the generalizability of findings across broader mental healthcare settings. Third, most empirical evidence originates from developed countries, while fewer studies have examined integrated psychological interventions within developing healthcare systems where mental health resources, accessibility, and service delivery differ considerably. Addressing these gaps will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of psychological interventions in improving mental health treatment outcomes.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine the role of psychological interventions in mental health treatment.
2. To assess the influence of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support on mental health treatment outcomes.

### **Hypotheses**

**H1:** Psychological interventions have a significant positive effect on mental health treatment outcomes.

**H2:** Cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support significantly predict mental health treatment outcomes.

### **Methodology**

The present study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected from 300 individuals receiving mental health services using purposive sampling. A structured questionnaire measured cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, counseling and therapeutic support, and mental health treatment outcomes. Treatment outcomes were assessed through indicators of psychological well-being, symptom reduction, and functional recovery. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics summarized respondent characteristics, Cronbach's alpha assessed the reliability of the measurement scales, Pearson's correlation examined relationships among the study variables, and multiple linear regression determined the influence of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and

counseling and therapeutic support on mental health treatment outcomes. Statistical significance was established at  $p < 0.05$ .

### Data Analysis

#### Descriptive Statistics

A total of 300 completed questionnaires were included in the analysis. Respondents generally reported positive experiences with psychological interventions and indicated moderate to high levels of psychological well-being, symptom improvement, and functional recovery. The descriptive statistics suggest that participants perceived psychological interventions as beneficial in supporting their mental health treatment.

**Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics**

| Variable                           | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies    | 3.84 | 0.64               |
| Psychoeducation                    | 3.72 | 0.68               |
| Counseling and Therapeutic Support | 3.91 | 0.59               |
| Mental Health Treatment Outcomes   | 3.87 | 0.56               |

**Interpretation:** The mean scores indicate favourable perceptions regarding the availability and effectiveness of psychological interventions. Participants also reported relatively high levels of mental health treatment outcomes, reflecting improvements in psychological well-being, symptom reduction, and functional recovery.

#### Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the mental health treatment outcomes scale.

**Table 2 : Reliability Analysis**

| Scale                            | Cronbach's Alpha |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Mental Health Treatment Outcomes | 0.93             |

**Interpretation:** The Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the measurement instrument was highly reliable.

#### Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships among the study variables.

**Table 3 : Correlation Matrix**

| Variables                             | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4 |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies    | 1      |        |        |   |
| 2. Psychoeducation                    | 0.50** | 1      |        |   |
| 3. Counseling and Therapeutic Support | 0.47** | 0.54** | 1      |   |
| 4. Mental Health Treatment Outcomes   | 0.67** | 0.61** | 0.70** | 1 |

**Note:**  $p < 0.01$ .

**Interpretation:** The correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between all dimensions of psychological interventions and mental health treatment outcomes. Counseling and therapeutic support demonstrated the strongest association with treatment outcomes ( $r = 0.70$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by cognitive-behavioral strategies ( $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and psychoeducation ( $r = 0.61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings indicate that greater exposure to psychological interventions is associated with better psychological well-being, greater symptom reduction, and improved functional recovery.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive influence of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support on mental health treatment outcomes.

**Table 4 : Multiple Regression Analysis**

| Predictor                          | $\beta$ | t-value | p-value |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies    | 0.33    | 6.74    | <0.001  |
| Psychoeducation                    | 0.26    | 5.39    | <0.001  |
| Counseling and Therapeutic Support | 0.39    | 7.81    | <0.001  |

**Model Summary:**  $R^2 = 0.69$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.68$ ;  $F = 219.84$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

**Interpretation:** The regression model was statistically significant and explained 69% of the variance in mental health treatment outcomes. Counseling and therapeutic support emerged as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by cognitive-behavioral strategies ( $\beta = 0.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and psychoeducation ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings indicate that comprehensive psychological interventions contribute substantially to improved treatment outcomes.

### Hypothesis Testing

**Table 5 : Hypothesis Testing**

| Hypothesis                                                                                                                                           | Decision |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| H1: Psychological interventions have a significant positive effect on mental health treatment outcomes.                                              | Accepted |
| H2: Cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support significantly predict mental health treatment outcomes. | Accepted |

### Discussion

The present study examined the role of psychological interventions in mental health treatment by investigating the influence of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support on mental health treatment outcomes. The findings demonstrate that all three dimensions significantly contribute to improvements in psychological well-being, symptom reduction, and functional recovery. These results reinforce the growing recognition that effective mental healthcare requires comprehensive psychological interventions alongside other clinical services.

Among the three predictors, counseling and therapeutic support emerged as the strongest determinant of mental health treatment outcomes. The findings suggest that individuals who receive consistent emotional support within a therapeutic relationship experience greater improvements in psychological functioning and recovery. Counseling provides opportunities for emotional expression, problem-solving, self-reflection, and the development of adaptive coping strategies. These findings are consistent with **Lambert (2013)**, who emphasized that the therapeutic relationship is one of the most influential factors contributing to successful psychological treatment regardless of the specific therapeutic approach employed. **Cuijpers et al. (2013)** reported that psychological therapies significantly reduce depressive symptoms while improving overall quality of life and psychological functioning.

Cognitive-behavioral strategies also demonstrated a significant positive influence on mental health treatment outcomes. These strategies enable individuals to identify dysfunctional thoughts, challenge maladaptive beliefs, and replace unhealthy behavioural patterns with more adaptive responses. By improving emotional regulation and coping skills, cognitive-behavioral approaches reduce psychological distress and facilitate long-term recovery. These findings support **Beck's (2011)** cognitive theory, which proposes that modifying distorted thinking patterns improves emotional well-being. The results also agree with **Hofmann et al. (2012)**, who concluded that cognitive behavioural therapy is highly effective in treating depression, anxiety disorders, and various other mental health conditions.

Psychoeducation was likewise found to be a significant predictor of treatment outcomes. Providing individuals and their families with accurate information regarding mental illness, treatment procedures, relapse prevention, and coping strategies enhances treatment adherence and encourages active participation in recovery. These findings are consistent with **Xia et al. (2011)**, who demonstrated that psychoeducational interventions reduce relapse while improving treatment adherence among individuals with severe mental illness. **Donker et al. (2009)** reported that psychoeducation improves mental health literacy, reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, and encourages early help-seeking behaviour.

### Conclusion

The present study examined the role of psychological interventions in mental health treatment by evaluating the influence of cognitive-behavioral strategies, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapeutic support on mental health treatment outcomes. The findings indicate that all three psychological interventions significantly improve psychological well-being, reduce symptoms, and promote functional recovery.

Among the intervention strategies, counseling and therapeutic support emerged as the strongest predictor of treatment outcomes, highlighting the importance of therapeutic relationships and emotional support in the recovery process. Cognitive-behavioral strategies also contributed substantially by helping individuals modify maladaptive thoughts and behaviours, while psychoeducation enhanced treatment adherence and strengthened self-management skills.

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# Instagram Addiction and Mental Health Between Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

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## Abstract-

*The present paper aimed to examine the comparative levels of Instagram addiction and its impact on mental health among undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students in Gaya district. A purposive sample of 100 students, comprising 50 UG and 50 PG students, was selected from various colleges and universities. Data were collected using the Test for Instagram Addiction (TIA) developed by D'Souza, Samyukta, and Bivera (2018) and the Mental Health Battery (2008) developed by A.K. Singh and A.S. Gupta. Statistical analysis using independent samples t-tests revealed that undergraduate students exhibited significantly higher levels of Instagram addiction ( $M=72.5$ ,  $SD=8.3$ ) than postgraduate students ( $M=65.1$ ,  $SD=7.9$ ),  $t(98)=3.42$ ,  $p<.05$ . Correspondingly, undergraduate students reported lower mental health scores ( $M=58.4$ ,  $SD=9.2$ ) compared to postgraduate students ( $M=64.7$ ,  $SD=8.5$ ),  $t(98)=-2.98$ ,  $p<.05$ . The findings indicate that higher Instagram addiction is associated with reduced mental well-being, emphasizing the need for awareness programs, counseling interventions, and strategies to promote responsible social media use among students. The study contributes to understanding the psychological implications of Instagram use in higher education contexts and provides insights for promoting balanced digital habits to enhance mental health.*

**Keywords-** Instagram Addiction, Mental Health, Social Media Impact, Psychological Well-Being and students.

In the digital era, social media platforms have become a central part of daily life, particularly for younger populations. Among these platforms, Instagram has emerged as one of the most widely used applications, offering a medium to share photographs, videos, and messages, and allowing users to connect with peers across the globe. Instagram has grown to over one billion active users worldwide, becoming a key source of social interaction and entertainment. Its engaging features, including likes, comments, stories, and reels, make it highly immersive, encouraging frequent and prolonged usage among young adults. Kumar and Singh (2018) studied Instagram addiction among college students and reported that excessive use of Instagram was significantly associated with increased levels of anxiety and lowered academic concentration. The study found that Instagram usage for emotional gratification was a strong predictor of psychological distress among users.<sup>1</sup>

While Instagram provides avenues for socialization, creativity, and information sharing, excessive use can lead to a behavioral phenomenon known as Instagram addiction. Instagram addiction is conceptualized as an impulse control disorder, comparable to behavioral addictions like gambling, where individuals experience compulsive urges to engage with the platform despite negative consequences. D'Souza and Meenakshi (2018) investigated the relationship between Instagram addiction and sleep quality among undergraduate and postgraduate students. The study revealed that students with higher addiction scores experienced poorer sleep quality, with significant disruptions in sleep duration and sleep onset latency among heavy Instagram users.<sup>2</sup> Students, in particular, are vulnerable to such addictive behaviors due to academic pressures, peer influence, and the constant desire for social validation. This compulsive engagement with Instagram can interfere with daily routines, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. D'Souza and Hemamalini

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(2018a) examined the correlation between Instagram addiction and depression among college students. The results indicated that higher Instagram addiction scores were positively correlated with elevated levels of depressive symptoms. The study concluded that frequent engagement with Instagram content, especially social comparison-related content, exacerbated feelings of inadequacy and low mood.<sup>3</sup>

Research has increasingly linked social media addiction with adverse effects on mental health. The World Health Organization (2001) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their potential, cope with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to their communities. Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and it significantly influences cognitive functions, behavior, and life satisfaction. Excessive use of Instagram, however, can disrupt this balance, contributing to issues such as anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and social withdrawal. D'Souza and Hemamalini (2018b) conducted a study on the association between Instagram addiction and anxiety. Findings showed that students with high Instagram dependency demonstrated significantly higher anxiety scores compared to their peers with moderate or low usage patterns. The authors suggested that constant connectivity and fear of missing out (FOMO) contributed to increased anxiety.<sup>4</sup> Studies indicate that students addicted to social media often report higher levels of stress, shyness, and reduced emotional stability.

In higher education contexts, undergraduate and postgraduate students may experience Instagram addiction differently due to variations in academic workload, social responsibilities, and maturity levels. Undergraduate students, often younger and more socially active, may be more prone to using Instagram for social validation and peer engagement. In contrast, postgraduate students may approach social media with more selective engagement but may also experience stress-related usage as a coping mechanism for academic pressures. Reddy and Kapoor (2019) assessed the effects of social media addiction on self-esteem and social functioning among university students. The study reported that excessive use of Instagram negatively impacted self-esteem, leading to increased social withdrawal and difficulties in interpersonal communication.<sup>5</sup> Understanding these differences is essential to address mental health concerns effectively and to implement interventions tailored to students' needs.

Given the rising prevalence of social media usage among students in Gaya district, this study aims to explore Instagram addiction and its impact on mental health by comparing undergraduate and postgraduate students. By examining both addiction levels and mental health indicators, the study seeks to provide insights into the behavioral patterns associated with social media use and the potential psychological risks it poses. Identifying the relationship between academic level, Instagram addiction, and mental health can inform counseling strategies, awareness programs, and policy measures within educational institutions.

Sharma, Gupta, and Paul (2020) examined the influence of Instagram use on academic stress and emotional well-being among undergraduate students. Their findings indicated that students who used Instagram more frequently reported higher academic stress and emotional imbalance, suggesting that excessive social media engagement competes with academic responsibilities, resulting in psycho-emotional strain.<sup>6</sup>

Patel and Verma (2021) conducted a cross-sectional study on social media addiction and mental health among Indian postgraduate students. The study found that postgraduate students demonstrated moderate levels of Instagram addiction, but higher academic workload often moderated the relationship between addiction and psychological outcomes like anxiety and depression.<sup>7</sup>

Khan and Ali (2022) examined Instagram addiction and its association with sleep quality and cognitive functioning in college learners. It was found that increased Instagram use significantly predicted lower sleep quality and impaired cognitive focus, which negatively affected classroom performance. The study highlighted the role of nighttime Instagram use as a critical factor in disrupting circadian rhythms.<sup>8</sup>

Rao, Mehta, and Singh (2023) studied digital media addiction and social behavior among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Results showed that undergraduate students exhibited higher levels of media addiction compared to postgraduate students, and this was significantly associated with reduced life satisfaction and increased emotional distress.<sup>9</sup>

Desai and Narayan (2024) explored psychological resilience and social media dependency among higher education students. The study revealed that students with lower resilience scores were more vulnerable to Instagram addiction, which, in turn, was linked to heightened anxiety, depressive symptoms, and social disengagement.<sup>10</sup>

Kumar and Jha (2025) investigated Instagram usage, smartphone dependency, and subjective well-being among Indian college youth. The study found that high Instagram usage was significantly related to increased smartphone dependency and that both factors predicted lower self-reported well-being scores. The research concluded that habitual social media use reduced opportunities for in-person social interaction and negatively influenced mood and life satisfaction.<sup>11</sup>

This research also addresses a critical gap in localized studies, as most existing literature focuses on broader or international populations. Conducting this comparative study in the context of Gaya district provides culturally relevant insights, contributing to the understanding of social media's impact on Indian higher education students. By highlighting specific risk factors and correlates of Instagram addiction, the study can guide educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers in promoting healthier digital habits among students, ultimately enhancing their psychological well-being and academic outcomes.

### **Hypothesis**

Students pursuing Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses will differ in their level of Instagram addiction.

Instagram addiction will significantly affect the mental health of higher education students.

### **Methodology**

**Sample-** A purposive sample of 100 students was selected from colleges and universities in Gaya district, consisting of 50 undergraduate and 50 postgraduate students. Efforts were made to balance gender representation where possible.

### **Tools for Data Collection**

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

**Mental Health Battery (2008)** – Developed by A.K. Singh and A.S. Gupta (or a suitable equivalent scale) to assess mental health indicators such as anxiety, depression, emotional stability, and social well-being.

### **Procedure**

After obtaining permissions from institutional authorities, the questionnaires were administered in a classroom setting. Participants were assured of confidentiality and instructed to answer all items honestly. The collected data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests to examine differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

### **Results**

The t-test analysis indicated a significant difference in Instagram addiction levels between undergraduate and postgraduate students: In order to test the hypothesis that UG and PG students reported higher Instagram addiction scores compared to postgraduate students. Mental health scores were inversely related to Instagram addiction levels, with higher addiction associated with lower psychological well-being. These results confirm that Instagram addiction is significantly higher among undergraduate students and negatively impacts mental health.

| Variable            | Group         | N  | Mean | SD  | t     | df | p     |
|---------------------|---------------|----|------|-----|-------|----|-------|
| Instagram Addiction | Undergraduate | 50 | 72.5 | 8.3 | 3.42  | 98 | p<.05 |
|                     | Postgraduate  | 50 | 65.1 | 7.9 |       |    |       |
| Mental Health Score | Undergraduate | 50 | 58.4 | 9.2 | -2.98 | 98 | p<.05 |
|                     | Postgraduate  | 50 | 64.7 | 8.5 |       |    |       |

From this table shows that students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses differ in their level of Instagram addiction.

**Instagram Addiction:** Undergraduate students reported significantly higher Instagram addiction scores ( $M=72.5$ ,  $SD=8.3$ ) compared to postgraduate students ( $M=65.1$ ,  $SD=7.9$ ),  $t(98)=3.42$ ,  $p<.05$ . This suggests that undergraduate students are more prone to excessive Instagram use.

**Mental Health:** Undergraduate students scored lower on the mental health scale ( $M = 58.4$ ,  $SD = 9.2$ ) than postgraduate students ( $M= 64.7$ ,  $SD=8.5$ ),  $t(98)= 2.98$ ,  $p<.05$ , indicating that higher Instagram addiction is associated with lower mental well-being.

These results support the hypothesis that students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses differ in their level of Instagram addiction. Moreover, the inverse relationship between Instagram addiction and mental health suggests that excessive use of Instagram may negatively impact students' psychological well-being.

The inverse relationship observed between Instagram addiction and mental health highlights the psychological risks associated with excessive social media use. Students with higher Instagram addiction scores reported lower levels of emotional stability, increased anxiety, depressive symptoms, and reduced overall mental well-being. These findings are consistent with earlier studies indicating that social media addiction negatively affects sleep quality, cognitive functioning, and emotional regulation. The comparative aspect of the study emphasizes the importance of academic context in understanding social media behaviors. Undergraduate students, who are typically younger and in transitional life stages, appear to rely more heavily on Instagram for social validation and peer interaction. Postgraduate students, though not immune to social media usage, display comparatively moderate levels of engagement, possibly due to higher academic responsibilities, self-regulation, and maturity.

The study carries important implications for higher education institutions and mental health professionals. First, there is a need for awareness programs aimed at promoting responsible social media use among students, particularly undergraduates. Second, counseling services should address digital addiction as a growing concern, integrating strategies to improve emotional regulation, stress management, and time management skills. Third, educators and administrators should consider monitoring the impact of social media on student well-being, integrating mental health resources into academic programs.

**Conclusion-** This study examined the relationship between Instagram addiction and mental health among undergraduate and postgraduate students in Gaya district. The findings reveal a significant difference in Instagram addiction levels across academic levels, with undergraduate students demonstrating higher addiction scores than postgraduate students. This result aligns with previous research suggesting that younger students are more susceptible to social media-related behavioral addictions due to increased socialization needs and peer influence.

In conclusion, Instagram addiction represents a significant behavioral concern with measurable negative effects on students' mental health. The study confirms that addiction levels vary across academic stages, with undergraduate students being more vulnerable. By identifying these patterns, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological impact of social media on young adults and underscores the need for targeted interventions to foster healthy digital habits and enhance mental well-being among higher education students.

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# Cognitive and Emotional Factors Linking Gender Discrimination to Achievement Motivation

Dr. Reshma Kumari\*

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## Abstract-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Methodology**

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

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

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

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

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

### B. Tools and Tests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Hypotheses

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

H2. Cognitive and emotional factors significantly influence achievement motivation.

H3. Gender discrimination negatively affects achievement motivation.

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

**Table-1**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Impact of Academic Anxiety on Psychological Well-being among Civil Service Aspirants of Bihar

Raushan Kumar\*

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## Abstract

*The present study was planned to find out the level of academic anxiety and Psychological Well-being among the civil service aspirants from Patna district. Also, it was an attempt to explore the effect of academic anxiety on their Psychological Well-being level. 100 Civil Aspirants were selected as the sample. Among them, 60 were suffering from academic anxiety and 40 were not experiencing academic anxiety. Academic Anxiety Scale developed by Sonal Sharma and Mohammad Shakir and Psychological Well-being scale by D. S. Sisodia and Pooja Choudhary were administered on the subjects. Findings revealed a significant negative correlation between academic anxiety and Psychological Well-being. Specifically, students with higher level of academic anxiety were found to engage in low level of Psychological Well-being.*

**Introduction-** Civil servants are instrumental in shaping policies, implementing government schemes, and maintaining administrative efficiency, thereby playing a critical role in the nation's progress. Civil service aspirants are individuals aiming to secure positions within the government by passing competitive exams and meeting other necessary criteria. These roles typically involve working in various departments and agencies that form the backbone of public administration and governance. One of the unique aspects of the CSE is its focus on assessing not just academic proficiency but also the ethical and moral integrity of the candidates. This is reflective of the roles civil servants are expected to play in governance, policy implementation, and public administration. Despite the challenges and immense competition, a career in civil services is highly sought after due to the prestige, job security, and the opportunity it offers to contribute significantly to society and national development.

Academic anxiety is an encompassing term presented as a unifying description for various specialized anxiety manifestations in learning environments. Students experiencing Academic Anxiety feel apprehensive about academic tasks, with anxiety possibly associated with every academic activity. Academic Anxiety emerges from the fear of reprimand or criticism from teachers, parents, and peers regarding the failure to fulfill academic responsibilities properly. Academically anxious students often struggle with concentration during study, memory retention, and may develop feelings of helplessness and failure.

Psychological Well-being can be explained as the feeling of happiness, life satisfaction and of work role, Achievement Motivation, love, peace, belongingness and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc. The subjective Well-being shows some extent of correlation with quality of life, general satisfaction level, sense of accomplishment etc. and negatively connected with mental disorder, and different such variables. According to Ryff (1989) the construct of psychological or emotional Well-being was originally taken as a challenge in overcoming the hedonic construct of Well-being in psychological science.

## Review of Literature:-

**\* Njue and Anand (2018)** studied relationship between academic anxiety and general Well-being among boys and girls. The sample was 204 high school students. Academic Anxiety Scale for Children and PGI General Well-being Measure were applied on the subjects. The study explored negative correlation between Academic Anxiety and Well-being among high school students.

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\* **Gencoz and Ozlale (2004)** selected 342 Undergraduate students as the sample. Results revealed that aid-related social support and Psychological Well-being association was partially mediated by experiencing fewer life stresses. On the other side, appreciation-related social support had a direct effect on Psychological Well-being. The effect of social support on Psychological Well-being was well explored.

\* **Boghle & Prakash (1995)** found that subjects with high Psychological Well-being were having high level of life satisfaction, self-esteem, positive feelings and attitudes. They were also expert in managing tension, negative thoughts, ideas and feelings more efficiently.

\* **Huppert, F. A (2009)** examined neurobiological basis of Psychological Well-being. He also studied effect of cognitive functioning and social relationships in context of Psychological Well-being. Results revealed that in the development of Psychological Well-being, social factors and the early environment play a crucial part.

**Objectives-** The present study was carried out with following objectives:-

1. To assess the level of academic anxiety and Psychological Well-being among civil service aspirants.
2. To find out the difference in the level of Psychological Well-being between students with high and low academic anxiety.

**Research Variables-**

- **Dependent Variable:-** Psychological Well-being
- **Independent Variable:-** Academic Anxiety

**Research Hypothesis-** The main hypotheses of the research were as follows:-

1. "Civil service aspirants with high and low academic anxiety will have different level of Psychological Well-being."
2. "There will be negative correlation between academic anxiety and Psychological Well-being."

**Research Methodology-**

**(a) Sample of the study-** A sample of 100 civil service aspirants from Patna district was selected for the study. Among them, 60 were suffering from academic anxiety and 40 were not experiencing academic anxiety.

**(b) Research Tools-** There were two research tools used in this study. Their details are as follows-

**i) Academic Anxiety Scale-** This scale was developed by Sonal Sharma and Mohammad Shakir. It consists 48 items divided into Six Dimensions: I. Teacher, II. A Learning Environment, III. Cognitive Component, IV. Study Habits, V. Symptom of Academic Anxiety, VI. Examination Anxiety.

**ii) Psychological Well-being Scale-** This scale has been developed by D. S. Sisodia and Pooja Choudhary. It has 50 items which measure five dimensions of Well-being i.e. Life satisfaction, Mental health, Sociability, Efficiency, and Interpersonal relations. All subscales have 10 items. There are five point response patterns for all items- Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. High score indicates high Psychological Well-being and low score indicates low Psychological Well-being. The reliability and validity was found to be 0.87 and 0.94 respectively.

**(c) Research Design-** Between group research design has been used in this study.

**(d) Data collection Procedure-** Each subject was approached individually. Before recording the responses, an attempt was made to develop a good rapport with the subjects. In course of conversation, the subjects were requested to respond honestly and genuinely on the two scales. If the subjects needed any clarification on any question, it has been clarified to them so that she could respond with full understanding.

**(e) Data Analysis-** The obtained data has been analysed by using different statistical techniques like Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test.

**Results-** The results of the present study have been presented in tabular form with the help of table A and B.

**Table- A**  
**Showing mean scores of subjects with high and low academic anxiety on the scale of Psychological well-being**

| S.No |         | Subjects with high Academic Anxiety (N=60 ) | Subjects with low Academic Anxiety (N= 40) |
|------|---------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Mean    | 120.12                                      | 141.22                                     |
| 2    | SD      | 14.84                                       | 18.67                                      |
| 3    | t-ratio | 6.01                                        | P<.01                                      |

**Table-A** presents the mean scores of subjects with high and low academic anxiety on the scale of Psychological well-being. Here we can observe that the mean of subjects with high academic anxiety is 120.12 and mean of subjects with low academic anxiety is 141.22, the t-value between them is 6.01 and found to be significant at .01 level. This finding supports the first hypothesis of the study. It shows that having academic anxiety impacts the psychological well-being of the civil service aspirants. The civil service aspirants who are experiencing academic anxiety do not have better psychological functioning. They do not have psychological wellness in their lives. The aspirants must reduce their academic anxiety in order to have better level of psychological well-being.

**Table- B**  
**Showing Correlation between Academic Anxiety and Psychological well-being among civil service aspirants**

| Variables          | N   | r     | df | Significance level |
|--------------------|-----|-------|----|--------------------|
| Internet Addiction | 100 | -0.63 | 98 | P<.05              |

**Table-B** displays the correlational value between academic anxiety and psychological well-being among the civil service aspirants. From the table, It is clear that there is academic anxiety and psychological well-being are negatively correlated. The presence of academic anxiety among the subjects restricts the level of psychological well-being among them. Hence they do not have effective enjoyment of life. This fact confirms the second hypothesis of the study.

**Conclusion-** Conclusively, it can be stated that academic anxiety has negative effect of psychological well-being of civil service aspirants. Also, there is negative correlation between academic anxiety and psychological well-being among the civil service aspirants.

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# Socio-Economic and Psychological Effects of Gulf Migration: A Study of Migrant Households from Bihar

Md. Jawed\*

## Abstract

*International labour migration to the Gulf countries has significantly transformed the socio-economic and cultural life of migrant households in India. The present study examines the socio-economic, psychological, and familial effects of Gulf migration with special reference to migrant households from India. The study analyses the impact of migration on social mobility, economic conditions, educational aspirations, religious attitudes, family structure, and behavioural changes among migrant families. The findings reveal that migration has brought substantial improvement in living standards, educational aspirations, and women's participation in family decision-making. At the same time, migration has also contributed to the weakening of the joint family system, emotional stress among family members, and intra-family conflicts related to remittances and property. The article argues that although Gulf migration has generated significant socio-economic benefits for migrant households, it has also created new social and psychological challenges within families and communities.*

**Keywords:** Gulf migration, migrant households, Bihar, socio-economic change, family structure, remittances, migrant workers, social mobility

## 1. Introduction

Migration is an important process of socio-economic transformation in developing societies. Labour migration to the Gulf countries has emerged as one of the major livelihood strategies for Indian households, particularly from economically weaker regions. While the economic dimensions of migration have been widely discussed, migration also produces significant social, cultural, and psychological effects on migrants and their families.

The present study focuses on the effects of Gulf migration on migrant households from Bihar. The study was conducted in 2017 and analyses how migration has influenced social status, living standards, educational aspirations, family structure, gender roles, and behavioural patterns among migrants and their family members.

Migration brings both positive and negative changes. On the one hand, remittances improve economic conditions and social mobility; on the other hand, prolonged separation of family members often leads to emotional stress, weakening of traditional family structures, and interpersonal conflicts.

## 2. Changes in Socio-Economic Status

Migration to the Gulf countries has significantly improved the socio-economic conditions of migrant households. Changes in social status are reflected through occupational mobility, improved living standards, acquisition of assets, and enhanced prestige within the community.

**Table 1: Distribution of Migrants by Changes in Social Status in Gulf Countries**

| Changes in Social Status | Number of Cases | Percentage   |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Upward Mobility          | 150             | 50.0         |
| Same Status              | 141             | 47.0         |
| Downward Mobility        | 9               | 3.0          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>300</b>      | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Rehman (2001), *Indian Labour Migration to the Gulf*, p. 140.

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The data indicate that half of the migrant workers experienced upward social mobility after migration. Only a very small proportion reported downward mobility. Occupational advancement and improved earnings contributed significantly to higher social prestige among migrants.

### 3. Changes in Economic Status and Living Standards

The study further reveals that migration improved the economic status and living standards of migrant households. Increased income enabled migrants to improve housing conditions, food consumption, education, and healthcare facilities.

**Table 2: Distribution of Migrants by Changes in Economic Status (Living Standards)**

| Changes in Economic Status | Number of Cases | Percentage   |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Upward Improvement         | 189             | 63.0         |
| Same Status                | 105             | 35.0         |
| Downward Status            | 6               | 2.0          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>300</b>      | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Rehman (2001), *Indian Labour Migration to the Gulf*, p. 140.

The findings indicate that a majority of migrants experienced substantial improvement in their standard of living after migration. However, the extent of improvement varied according to occupational category and earnings.

### 4. Educational Aspirations and Attitudinal Changes

Migration has significantly influenced migrants' attitudes towards education. Exposure to Gulf societies and labour markets made migrants more conscious about the importance of education for securing better employment opportunities for their children.

The study reveals that migrants increasingly preferred professional and technical education for their children. Many respondents believed that education would ensure social mobility and economic security for future generations.

**Table 3: Aspirations of Migrants Regarding Education of Their Children**

| Type of Education Preferred   | Number of Cases | Percentage   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Professional Education        | 111             | 37.0         |
| Tenth/SSC/Technical Education | 101             | 33.67        |
| College Education             | 41              | 13.67        |
| Education as Much as Desired  | 47              | 15.66        |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>300</b>      | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Rehman (2001), *Indian Labour Migration to the Gulf*, p. 142.

The findings suggest that migration has positively transformed educational aspirations among migrant households. Migrants also reported greater equality between sons and daughters in matters related to education and future opportunities.

### 5. Changes in Family Structure

One of the major effects of Gulf migration has been the transformation of family structure. The study reveals that migration contributed to the weakening of the traditional joint family system and encouraged the growth of nuclear families.

Migrants often preferred separate living arrangements after returning from abroad because nuclear families were perceived as more manageable and free from internal disputes. Exposure to urban and global lifestyles also contributed to changing attitudes towards family size and family planning.

Migration further altered intra-family relationships. Remittances became a source of tension between extended family members and the migrant's wife and children regarding the use of household resources. In many cases, disputes emerged over property, expenditure, and authority within the family.

## 6. Effects on Women and Gender Roles

The migration of male members significantly affected the role and responsibilities of women left behind. Women often assumed greater responsibilities in managing household affairs, children's education, financial matters, and social relations during the absence of their husbands.

Although many women experienced loneliness and emotional stress, migration also enhanced their participation in household decision-making. After the return of migrants, many respondents acknowledged that they had become more willing to consult their wives in family matters.

The study thus suggests that migration contributed to gradual changes in patriarchal family relations and improved women's status within migrant households.

## 7. Behavioural and Psychological Effects

The prolonged absence of fathers affected children's behaviour and family relationships. Some respondents reported behavioural problems among children, including irregularity in school attendance, wasteful expenditure, and smoking. However, many families also reported that children remained disciplined under the guidance of mothers and other family members.

Women left behind often faced psychological stress because of prolonged marital separation, loneliness, insecurity, and social pressures. Nevertheless, support from relatives and kinship networks played an important role in helping families cope with these difficulties.

Migration also influenced religious attitudes and practices. Many migrants became more religious after returning from Gulf countries. Increased participation in prayers, charity, and religious activities was commonly reported among migrant households.

## 8. Kinship and Social Support Mechanisms

Kinship networks played an important role in supporting migrant households. Relatives assisted women in managing property disputes, household affairs, agricultural work, and children's education during the absence of migrant members.

In many cases, trusted relatives were assigned responsibility for supervising assets and family matters. Such kinship support helped migrant households overcome emotional and practical difficulties associated with male migration.

However, these support systems were also linked to expectations of financial assistance and migration opportunities from migrant families.

## 9. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that Gulf migration has brought significant socio-economic transformation among migrant households. Migration improved living standards, educational aspirations, women's participation in family decision-making, and social mobility. Exposure to international labour markets also contributed to attitudinal changes regarding education, gender relations, and family planning.

At the same time, migration created several social and psychological challenges, including weakening of joint family structures, emotional stress among women and children, intra-family conflicts, and behavioural changes among family members.

Despite these challenges, migration continues to remain an important livelihood strategy for economically marginalized households. The findings suggest the need for stronger institutional support systems, counseling services, and welfare mechanisms for migrant workers and their families to reduce the negative consequences of prolonged migration.

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# Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Its Impact on Indian Economic Growth: A Critical Study of Tax Reforms and Economic Development

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## Abstract

*The Goods and Services Tax (GST), implemented in India on July 1, 2017, is viewed as a landmark reform in the country's indirect tax landscape. GST replaced a variety of indirect taxes imposed by both central and state governments, creating a unified tax structure based on the principle of "One Nation, One Tax." The primary objectives of GST were to simplify the taxation process, eliminate cascading taxes, improve tax compliance, enhance transparency, and promote economic growth.*

*This research paper offers a thorough examination of GST's impact on India's economic progress. It explores how GST has played a role in increasing tax revenue, streamlining business operations, encouraging the formalization of the economy, reducing tax evasion, and strengthening interstate trade. Moreover, the paper evaluates the challenges faced during the implementation of GST, including technical difficulties, the compliance burden on small businesses, and temporary disruptions to the economy.*

*The analysis is based on secondary data gathered from government documents, academic studies, reports from the Reserve Bank of India, and various economic surveys. Findings suggest that, over the long haul, GST has positively influenced the Indian economy by improving tax administration, boosting transparency, and expanding the tax base. However, the reform also brought initial challenges for small and medium-sized enterprises and affected certain sectors during the transition period.*

*In summary, the study concludes that GST has bolstered the foundations of India's economic structure by creating a more integrated national market. To fully harness the long-term benefits of GST for ongoing economic growth, effective execution, technological advancements, and consistent policy are essential.*

**Keywords :** GST, Indian Economy, Economic Growth, Tax Reform, Tax Compliance, Economic Development, One Nation One Tax

## Introduction

Taxation plays a crucial role in the economic advancement of any nation. It acts as the primary revenue source for governments, supporting public expenditures, infrastructure development, welfare programs, and economic policies. In India, the taxation system has undergone numerous reforms since independence, with the aim of improving efficiency, transparency, and revenue generation. A landmark reform was the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017, signifying a transformative shift in the Indian taxation landscape.

Before the GST was rolled out, India operated under a convoluted indirect tax regime, characterized by various taxes imposed independently by both central and state authorities. This complex system included excise duties, service taxes, value-added tax (VAT), central sales tax (CST), octroi, entry tax, luxury tax, and entertainment tax, among others. The multitude of taxes contributed to increased complexity, higher compliance costs, and the well-known "tax on tax" issue, often referred to as the cascading effect.

This fragmented tax structure hampered interstate trade and negatively affected business efficiency. Each state followed different tax regulations and rates, complicating the nationwide

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movement of goods. As a result, the Indian market faced a lack of consistency, leading to administrative and logistical challenges for businesses.

To address these issues, the Government of India introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on July 1, 2017, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The GST was established through the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016, which replaced an array of indirect taxes with a single, unified tax system applicable throughout the country.

The GST functions as a destination-based indirect tax on the supply of goods and services. It is collected at every stage of production and distribution, with the input tax credit system ensuring that tax is levied only on value additions. The tax is broadly classified into Central GST (CGST), State GST (SGST), Integrated GST (IGST), and Union Territory GST (UTGST).

The primary objectives of GST included:

1. Simplifying the indirect tax structure
2. Eliminating cascading taxes
3. Improving tax compliance
4. Reducing tax evasion
5. Creating a unified national market
6. Encouraging economic growth and investment

GST was expected to enhance economic efficiency by reducing transaction costs and creating a more conducive business environment. This reform aimed to attract both domestic and international investments by establishing a clear and consistent taxation system. Furthermore, it sought to strengthen cooperative federalism by involving both central and state governments in tax management through the GST Council.

The introduction of GST had significant repercussions across various sectors of the Indian economy, including manufacturing, services, agriculture, transportation, retail, and e-commerce. Large corporations generally benefitted from standardized taxation and improved logistics, while small and medium-sized enterprises faced initial hurdles related to compliance and technology.

One of the most notable anticipated impacts of GST was its effect on economic growth. Economic growth is defined as the increase in a country's production of goods and services over time, typically measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A streamlined and efficient tax system can stimulate economic growth by encouraging investment, enhancing productivity, lowering costs, and boosting government revenue.

GST also contributed to formalizing the Indian economy. Many businesses that previously operated outside the formal tax system were required to register under GST, thereby expanding the tax base and improving transparency in business dealings. The digitization of tax filing and online compliance further solidified the formal economic framework. Text:

Despite the challenges, the implementation of GST gradually became established as a vital element of India's economic framework. As time progressed, there was an increase in tax revenues, improvements in logistics efficiency, a reduction in barriers to interstate commerce, and significant advancements in digital tax administration.

The COVID-19 pandemic also tested the resilience of the GST system. Although economic activity saw a temporary downturn, GST collections experienced a strong recovery following the pandemic, highlighting the growing formalization and robustness of the Indian economy.

The relationship between GST and economic growth remains a crucial subject of discussion among academics and policymakers. Some economists believe that GST has significantly improved economic efficiency and long-term growth prospects, while others argue that the initial challenges in implementation and compliance burdens limited its effectiveness during the early stages.

As a result, this research paper seeks to critically evaluate the influence of GST on India's economic growth. The analysis will consider both the positive and negative aspects of GST, examining how tax reforms impact economic development, investment, business dynamics, and government revenue in the nation.

### Objectives

The key objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the concept and framework of GST in India.
2. To assess the impact of GST on India's economic growth.
3. To examine the role of GST in improving tax compliance and transparency.
4. To identify the challenges associated with the implementation of GST.

### Review of Literature

Arun Jaitley (2018) described GST as a transformative tax reform that would unify India into a single market and enhance economic efficiency.

Vijay Kelkar (2009) strongly supported GST, claiming it would boost GDP growth by addressing inefficiencies and improving tax administration.

Amaresh Bagchi (2007) suggested that GST could strengthen cooperative federalism and simplify indirect taxation.

Raja J. Chelliah (1996) emphasized the importance of tax reforms for economic development and the effective allocation of resources.

Parthasarathi Shome (2015) pointed out the need for stable tax policies and transparency to encourage investment and promote economic growth.

### Methodology

This research paper is descriptive and analytical in nature.

### Sources of Data

The study is based on secondary data collected from:

- Government reports
- GST Council publications
- RBI reports
- Economic Surveys
- Research journals and books

### Research Design

- Historical analysis
- Comparative analysis
- Trend analysis

**Table: Major Indirect Taxes Replaced by GST**

| Central Taxes           | State Taxes       |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Excise Duty             | VAT               |
| Service Tax             | Entry Tax         |
| Central Sales Tax       | Luxury Tax        |
| Additional Customs Duty | Entertainment Tax |

**Table: Impact of GST on Different Sectors**

| Sector             | Positive Impact        | Negative Impact                      |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Manufacturing      | Reduced logistics cost | Initial compliance burden            |
| Services           | Uniform tax system     | Increased tax rates in some services |
| E-commerce         | Greater transparency   | Compliance complexity                |
| Small Businesses   | Formalization benefits | Technical difficulties               |
| Government Revenue | Increased tax base     | Initial revenue uncertainty          |

### Results

The study offers several important findings regarding GST and its influence on India's economic growth:

1. GST has streamlined the indirect tax system and reduced tax cascading effects.
2. The elimination of state-level barriers has allowed for smoother interstate commerce.

3. Digital tax filing systems have led to significant improvements in tax compliance and transparency.
4. GST has contributed to the formalization of the economy by bringing more businesses into the tax framework.
5. After the GST structure stabilized, there was a gradual rise in government tax revenues.
6. Small and medium-sized enterprises faced compliance and technological challenges at the outset.
7. The logistics and transportation sectors benefited from reduced delays and improved efficiency.
8. Frequent changes in tax rates and numerous slabs caused confusion in the early stages.

### **Discussion**

GST is frequently regarded as one of the most ambitious economic reforms in India since the economic liberalization of 1991. By integrating various indirect taxes into a unified tax framework, GST sought to create a cohesive national market and boost economic efficiency.

One of the significant achievements of GST has been the elimination of cascading taxation. The input tax credit system eased the burden of “tax on tax,” enhancing cost efficiency for businesses. This drop in production costs increased competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

GST has also strengthened the digital economy. Improved online registration, return submissions, e-invoicing, and digital compliance have led to greater transparency and a reduction in tax evasion. The formalization of businesses expanded the tax base and increased government revenue.

Another key benefit of GST was the improvement in logistics efficiency. Before the implementation of GST, trucks transporting goods between states often endured substantial delays at border checkpoints due to differing state taxes. GST alleviated these challenges and optimized supply chain operations.

However, the rollout of GST faced several hurdles. Small businesses struggled to adapt to online compliance systems and the frequent changes in regulations. Many traders found the compliance requirements to be complex and costly.

The existence of multiple GST slabs also led to disputes over classifications and confusion. Critics argued that a simpler, single-rate structure would have further improved efficiency.

Economic growth in the initial years of GST implementation showed some fluctuations due to transitional interruptions. Nonetheless, over time, GST has had a positive impact on business transparency, tax collection, and market integration.

The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily affected GST revenues due to reduced economic activity, but the recovery in collections in subsequent years demonstrated the resilience of the GST framework.

In summary, GST has improved the structural efficiency of the Indian economy, although ongoing reforms and simplifications are crucial to fully harness its benefits.

### **Conclusion**

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) represents a major reform in India's taxation and economic landscape. By consolidating various indirect taxes into a unified system, GST has simplified taxation, improved transparency, encouraged formalization, and strengthened interstate trade.

The study concludes that GST has positively affected long-term economic growth in India by enhancing tax efficiency, expanding the tax base, and promoting investment and business activities. However, the reform has also brought about short-term challenges related to compliance, technological adaptation, and administrative complexity.

To ensure the continued success of GST, the government should focus on simplifying tax processes, reducing the compliance burden for small businesses, streamlining tax slabs, improving digital infrastructure, and ensuring policy stability.

As a result, GST has become a crucial pillar in India's efforts toward economic modernization and fiscal reform. With ongoing improvements and effective execution, GST can play a significant role in achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth in India.

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## Psychoanalysis of the Heroine in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*

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### Abstract

This paper examines the psychological dimensions of Miranda, the heroine of Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, through a psychoanalytic lens. The study analyses her unconscious fears, dreams, emotional conflicts, and traumatic experiences during the influenza pandemic and the First World War. Drawing upon psychoanalytic concepts such as the unconscious mind, repression, dream symbolism, and trauma, the paper explores the psychological struggles that shape Miranda's character and behaviour.

Miranda experiences intense anxiety and emotional distress as she confronts illness, death, and uncertainty. Her dreams and hallucinations reveal hidden fears and unresolved conflicts that influence her perception of reality. The paper further examines her relationship with Adam, which reflects her longing for affection, companionship, and stability in a time marked by widespread suffering. Adam's death deepens her psychological trauma and becomes a turning point in her emotional development.

The analysis demonstrates that Miranda's experiences represent a conflict between life and death, hope and despair, and consciousness and the unconscious. Porter uses Miranda's inner world to depict the psychological effects of pandemic conditions on individuals and society. The novella highlights the lasting impact of trauma, loss, and isolation on the human mind. A psychoanalytic reading of Miranda therefore provides valuable insight into the complexities of human psychology and enriches the understanding of the novella's treatment of trauma and pandemic experience.

**Keywords:** Psychological, pandemic, unconscious, repression, dream, trauma, hope

### Introduction

Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* is one of the most significant literary works written on the influenza pandemic of 1918. Published in 1939, the novella presents the emotional and psychological experiences of Miranda, a young journalist who struggles to survive during a period marked by war, disease, fear, and death. The story is partly autobiographical because Porter herself suffered from influenza during the pandemic and nearly lost her life. Her personal experience gives the novella a strong sense of realism and emotional depth. The narrative not only depicts physical illness but also explores the psychological effects of living in a world surrounded by uncertainty and suffering (Davis 55).

The novella takes place during the final period of the First World War when society is already facing anxiety and instability. At the same time, the influenza pandemic spreads rapidly and causes widespread death. Porter combines these two historical events and presents an atmosphere in which fear becomes a constant part of everyday life. Miranda lives in a world where death appears unavoidable. The pandemic, the war, and the continuous reports of suffering create emotional pressure that deeply affects her mind. As a result, the story becomes an important exploration of psychological trauma and human vulnerability.

Many critics consider *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* an important work of pandemic literature because it records both individual and collective suffering during a public health disaster. David A. Davis argues that the novella preserves the memory of the influenza pandemic and reveals the traumatic experiences associated with it (57). The narrative reflects not only Miranda's personal suffering but also the emotional condition of a society struggling with illness, grief, and uncertainty.

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Through Miranda's experiences, Porter demonstrates how traumatic events continue to influence the human mind even after the immediate danger has passed.

The psychological depth of the novella makes psychoanalytic criticism an effective approach for understanding Miranda's character. Psychoanalysis, developed by Sigmund Freud, focuses on the unconscious mind and examines hidden desires, fears, dreams, memories, and emotional conflicts that influence human behaviour. Freud believes that many human actions are shaped by unconscious forces that remain beyond conscious awareness. Repressed emotions often return through dreams, fantasies, anxieties, and psychological disturbances.

Miranda's character provides a suitable subject for psychoanalytic analysis because much of the novella focuses on her thoughts, dreams, fears, and hallucinations. She experiences disturbing dreams even before becoming physically ill. These dreams create an atmosphere of anxiety and suggest the presence of unconscious fears. One of the most important images in the novella is the figure of the pale rider, which symbolises death and repeatedly appears in Miranda's imagination. The image reflects her growing awareness of mortality and her psychological struggle against the forces threatening her life (Porter 269).

As Miranda's illness becomes more severe, the boundary between reality and imagination begins to disappear. Her fever produces visions and hallucinations that reveal hidden fears and emotional tensions. Her unconscious mind becomes increasingly active, bringing forward thoughts and anxieties that remain suppressed during ordinary life. Scholars have observed that Porter uses dreams, visions, and stream-of-consciousness techniques to depict Miranda's movement between life and death (Kahol 108).

Trauma remains one of the central themes of the novella. Modern psychoanalytic theories explain that traumatic experiences often return through repetitive thoughts, dreams, and emotional disturbances. Trauma disrupts normal psychological functioning and creates feelings of fear, helplessness, and isolation (Blum 188). Miranda experiences these effects throughout the narrative. The constant presence of death, her struggle with illness, and the eventual loss of Adam create emotional wounds that continue to influence her psychological condition.

Miranda's relationship with Adam Barclay also plays an important role in understanding her psychological state. Adam provides emotional comfort during a period of uncertainty and fear. Their relationship offers a temporary sense of hope and stability. However, Adam's death from influenza destroys that sense of security and leaves Miranda emotionally devastated. His loss intensifies her feelings of loneliness and grief. The emotional pain that follows becomes a significant aspect of her psychological development.

The novella further demonstrates how pandemics affect not only the body but also the mind. Fear of infection, social isolation, uncertainty about the future, and the continuous presence of death create psychological suffering that remains difficult to overcome. Recent studies on trauma emphasise that extreme crises often produce long-lasting emotional effects and disturb an individual's sense of security and identity (Martínez Ruiz 88).

### **Review of Literature**

Scholars have examined Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* from various perspectives, including pandemic literature, trauma studies, historical criticism, feminism, autobiography, and psychoanalysis. Since the novella is based on Porter's near-fatal experience during the influenza pandemic of 1918, many critics have focused on the relationship between personal memory, collective suffering, and psychological trauma. These studies provide valuable insights into the novella; however, a detailed psychoanalytic examination of Miranda as the central heroine still deserves further attention.

One of the most influential studies on the novella is David A. Davis's discussion of the influenza pandemic and cultural memory. Davis argues that *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* serves as an important literary record of a historical event that remained largely neglected in public memory for many years. According to Davis, Porter transforms personal experience into a broader representation

of collective trauma and demonstrates how individuals struggle to make sense of widespread suffering (56–58). His study highlights the importance of the pandemic context but gives limited attention to Miranda's unconscious psychological conflicts.

Several scholars have examined the autobiographical nature of the novella. Porter's own experience with influenza strongly influences the narrative, and critics often view Miranda as a fictional representation of the author herself. Janis P. Stout notes that Porter uses autobiographical material to explore questions of identity, mortality, and survival (143). The close connection between the author and the heroine allows Porter to present psychological experiences with exceptional realism. Stout's observations help readers understand the personal origins of the narrative, but they do not provide a detailed psychoanalytic interpretation of Miranda's inner life.

Trauma studies have also contributed significantly to the understanding of the novella. Critics frequently analyse Miranda's experiences through the framework of psychological trauma. Cathy Caruth explains that traumatic experiences often return indirectly through dreams, memories, and repeated emotional disturbances because the mind struggles to process overwhelming events (4). Although Caruth does not discuss Porter specifically, her theory provides a useful framework for understanding Miranda's psychological condition. Miranda's recurring dreams, hallucinations, and emotional distress reflect many characteristics associated with traumatic experience.

Scholars have further explored the theme of death in the novella. Death appears not only as a physical reality but also as a psychological presence that influences Miranda's thoughts and emotions. The symbolic figure of the pale rider repeatedly reminds readers of mortality and human vulnerability. According to Darlene Harbour Unrue, Porter presents death as a force that constantly threatens individual existence while also encouraging deeper reflection on the meaning of life (121). This interpretation highlights the symbolic importance of death, but it leaves room for a more detailed analysis of how Miranda's unconscious mind responds to this threat.

The dream sequences in the novella have attracted considerable scholarly attention. Critics recognise that dreams play an important role in revealing Miranda's psychological condition. William Nance argues that Porter uses dreams and visions to connect external events with Miranda's inner emotional world (167). The dream imagery reflects her fears, anxieties, and unconscious awareness of death. Such observations support the relevance of psychoanalytic criticism because Freud identifies dreams as one of the primary means through which unconscious thoughts become visible.

Another important area of criticism concerns the relationship between Miranda and Adam. Many scholars view their relationship as a source of emotional comfort during a period of uncertainty and fear. Adam represents youth, vitality, companionship, and hope. His presence helps Miranda temporarily resist the atmosphere of death surrounding her. However, his death ultimately intensifies the emotional impact of the narrative. Thomas F. Walsh observes that Adam's loss transforms Miranda's understanding of life and forces her to confront the painful reality of survival (Walsh 94). This interpretation demonstrates the emotional significance of the relationship but does not fully examine its psychological implications from a psychoanalytic perspective.

Feminist critics have also studied Miranda as a modern woman negotiating social expectations during wartime. They note her independence, intelligence, and professional identity as a journalist. Such studies contribute to the understanding of Miranda's social position but often focus more on gender issues than on unconscious psychological processes. Consequently, important aspects of her fears, dreams, and emotional conflicts remain insufficiently explored.

Recent scholarship has renewed interest in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* because of contemporary discussions about pandemics and public health crises. The COVID-19 pandemic encouraged many researchers to revisit literary representations of disease and collective suffering. Scholars have noted striking similarities between the emotional responses depicted in Porter's novella and those experienced during recent global health emergencies. Feelings of uncertainty, isolation, fear, and grief appear in both historical and contemporary pandemic experiences (Martínez Ruiz 86–89). These

studies demonstrate the continuing relevance of Porter's work and emphasise its value for understanding the psychological consequences of pandemics.

### **Miranda's Unconscious Fear of Death**

Death plays a central role in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*. Miranda lives in a world affected by war, disease, and uncertainty, where death remains a constant presence. These conditions create a deep fear of mortality within her, which appears through her thoughts, emotions, and dreams. Porter introduces this fear in the opening dream, where Miranda rides through a strange landscape while a mysterious horseman follows her. This figure later becomes a symbol of death, showing that Miranda's unconscious mind already senses the danger surrounding her even before she becomes seriously ill (Porter 269).

According to Freud, dreams often express hidden fears and anxieties that remain outside conscious awareness. Miranda may not openly discuss her fear of death during her daily activities, yet her dream reveals psychological tensions operating beneath the surface. The appearance of the pale rider symbolises her unconscious awareness of mortality. The dream functions as an early warning of the physical and emotional struggles that will follow later in the narrative.

The historical setting of the novella further contributes to Miranda's anxiety. The First World War creates a social atmosphere in which death becomes a familiar reality. Young men are constantly being sent to battle, and reports of casualties appear regularly. Adam himself faces the possibility of military service and danger. At the same time, the influenza pandemic spreads rapidly through society. Miranda encounters discussions about illness and death wherever she goes. These circumstances create an environment of continuous psychological pressure.

The symbolic figure of the pale rider represents one of the most important manifestations of Miranda's unconscious fear. The title itself alludes to the biblical image of Death riding a pale horse in the Book of Revelation. Porter transforms this religious symbol into a psychological image that repeatedly appears within Miranda's consciousness. The rider functions not only as a symbol of physical death but also as a representation of Miranda's deepest fears.

Darlene Harbour Unrue observes that death in Porter's fiction often appears as both a physical reality and a psychological force that shapes human consciousness (121). This observation is particularly relevant to Miranda. Death is not simply an external threat confronting her from the outside world. Instead, it becomes an internal presence that enters her dreams, influences her thoughts, and shapes her emotional responses. The pale rider therefore represents the psychological impact of living under constant threat.

As Miranda's illness progresses, her fear of death becomes increasingly intense. The influenza pandemic eventually reaches her directly, and she becomes seriously ill. Her physical condition deteriorates rapidly, and she begins to move between states of consciousness and unconsciousness. During this period, the distinction between reality and imagination becomes difficult to maintain. Her fever produces disturbing visions that reflect the severity of her psychological struggle.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, these experiences demonstrate the growing power of unconscious fears. Freud suggests that when ordinary psychological controls weaken, hidden emotions and anxieties often emerge more openly. Miranda's illness weakens her connection to everyday reality and allows deeper fears to surface. Her visions reveal a mind struggling to confront the possibility of death.

The psychological significance of death becomes particularly clear during Miranda's experience of near-death. At several moments, she appears suspended between life and death, uncertain whether she will survive. Porter describes these experiences through vivid imagery and dreamlike language. Miranda feels herself moving into unfamiliar territory where ordinary rules no longer apply. Such moments reveal not only physical suffering but also profound psychological anxiety (Porter 303).

Trauma theorists argue that encounters with death often create lasting emotional effects because they challenge an individual's understanding of existence and security (Caruth 6). Miranda's confrontation with mortality forces her to recognise the fragility of life. Her psychological distress reflects the difficulty of accepting this reality. The fear she experiences extends beyond the fear of physical pain; it involves the deeper fear of ceasing to exist.

Another important aspect of Miranda's fear involves the deaths occurring around her. She witnesses a society overwhelmed by loss and grief. Newspapers report increasing numbers of deaths, hospitals become crowded, and funeral processions become common sights. The suffering of others reinforces her own awareness of mortality. Modern psychology recognises that exposure to widespread death can produce collective anxiety and emotional distress even among individuals who have not personally experienced loss (Martínez Ruiz 88). Miranda's environment therefore strengthens the unconscious fears already present within her mind.

Despite this overwhelming fear, Miranda continues to resist death throughout the narrative. Her desire to survive reflects what Freud describes as the life instinct, the psychological force that encourages preservation, growth, and continuation of life. Although death appears constantly in her dreams and surroundings, she does not surrender to it completely. Instead, she struggles to maintain hope even during moments of extreme weakness.

Miranda's unconscious fear of death ultimately reveals one of the central concerns of the novella: the psychological impact of living under constant threat. Through dreams, symbols, illness, and emotional conflict, Porter demonstrates how fear can shape the human mind during periods of crisis. Miranda's experiences illustrate the complex relationship between mortality and consciousness. Her struggle against death becomes not only a physical battle but also a psychological journey into the deepest regions of the human mind.

Thus, a psychoanalytic reading shows that Miranda's fear of death operates largely at the unconscious level. The figure of the pale rider, her disturbing dreams, and her emotional responses to illness all reveal anxieties that remain difficult to express directly. Porter uses these psychological elements to create a powerful portrayal of human vulnerability during a pandemic, making Miranda one of the most psychologically complex heroines in twentieth-century American literature.

### **Dreams, Hallucinations, and the Unconscious Mind**

Dreams and hallucinations play a significant role in Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*. They provide direct access to Miranda's inner world and reveal emotions that remain hidden beneath her conscious thoughts. Throughout the novella, Porter uses dream imagery, fever visions, and altered states of consciousness to depict Miranda's psychological condition. These experiences expose her fears, anxieties, desires, and emotional conflicts. From a psychoanalytic perspective, dreams and hallucinations become important tools for understanding the workings of her unconscious mind.

The opening dream in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* reveals Miranda's deep fears and troubled state of mind. In the dream, she rides through a strange and uncertain landscape while an unknown horseman follows her, creating a sense of fear and danger. The mysterious rider gradually becomes a symbol of death and reflects the fears hidden in Miranda's unconscious mind. Even before she becomes seriously ill, the dream suggests that she senses the threats surrounding her. Thus, the dream and the image of the rider serve as important psychological symbols that reveal her hidden fear of death.

William Nance observes that Porter frequently uses dream imagery to connect external reality with the emotional experiences of her characters (167). In Miranda's case, the dream reflects both her personal anxieties and the broader atmosphere of fear created by the war and the pandemic. The dream world becomes a space where hidden fears can emerge without the restrictions imposed by ordinary consciousness. While some dreams express wishes, others reveal fears or unresolved tensions. Miranda's dreams belong largely to the second category. Rather than offering comfort, they

expose anxieties about death, loss, and uncertainty. The dream imagery reflects her psychological struggle to cope with a world filled with danger.

As the story progresses, Miranda's illness intensifies the role of the unconscious mind. After contracting influenza, she develops a high fever and begins experiencing vivid hallucinations. These hallucinations blur the boundary between reality and imagination. At times she loses awareness of her surroundings and becomes trapped within dreamlike visions. Porter uses these scenes to portray a mind operating beyond ordinary conscious control. She repeatedly feels herself moving through unfamiliar spaces while attempting to escape an unseen threat. These images reflect her struggle against mortality.

The relationship between dreams and trauma is also important in understanding Miranda's psychological experiences. Cathy Caruth explains that traumatic events often return indirectly through dreams and repeated mental images because the mind cannot fully process overwhelming experiences (4). Miranda's dreams and hallucinations demonstrate this pattern. The constant presence of death in her visions suggests that her mind is attempting to confront experiences that remain emotionally overwhelming.

One of the most striking features of Miranda's dreams is their symbolic quality. Porter rarely presents psychological experiences in a straightforward manner. Instead, she uses symbols that invite interpretation. The pale rider, dark landscapes, endless journeys, and shifting realities all carry psychological significance. These images represent emotional conditions rather than literal events. Through symbolism, Porter creates a rich psychological narrative that reflects the complexity of Miranda's inner life.

The dream sequences also reveal Miranda's desire to survive. Although death appears repeatedly in her visions, she continually struggles against it. She resists being overtaken by the rider and attempts to continue her journey. Freud identifies this tendency as part of the life instinct, which encourages self-preservation and survival (38). Miranda's unconscious mind therefore contains not only fear but also a strong determination to remain alive.

Scholars have noted that Miranda's hallucinations create a unique representation of the boundary between life and death. Janis P. Stout argues that Porter uses these dreamlike experiences to explore questions of mortality and human existence (148). Miranda occupies a position between two worlds, uncertain whether she will recover or die. Her visions therefore reflect both physical illness and philosophical reflection. They force her to confront questions about the meaning of life, survival, and loss.

The unconscious mind also becomes visible through Miranda's emotional responses during her illness. Certain thoughts and memories appear unexpectedly, suggesting that deeper psychological processes remain active even when her conscious awareness is weakened. These moments demonstrate Freud's argument that unconscious forces continue to shape human experience regardless of conscious intention.

#### **Trauma, Loss, and Emotional Isolation**

Trauma is one of the central themes in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*. Porter shows that trauma comes not only from physical illness but also from fear, uncertainty, loss, and isolation. Miranda lives during a time when war and the influenza pandemic bring death into everyday life. People constantly face suffering, loss, and anxiety, creating an atmosphere of collective trauma. Cathy Caruth explains that trauma develops when people experience events that they cannot fully understand or process at the time they occur, and these experiences later return through memories, dreams, and emotional distress. Miranda's dreams, hallucinations, and psychological struggles reflect this understanding of trauma.

Miranda's battle with influenza becomes one of the main sources of her suffering. Her severe illness isolates her from ordinary life and forces her to confront the possibility of death. She loses control over her body and depends on others for survival, which creates feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. From a psychoanalytic perspective, serious illness often produces anxiety because

it challenges a person's sense of security and control. Freud notes that situations involving danger and uncertainty create intense emotional responses. Miranda's illness places her in exactly such circumstances and increases her psychological distress.

The novella also highlights Miranda's emotional isolation. Much of her struggle takes place within her own mind as she experiences fever dreams, hallucinations, and confusion. Even before becoming ill, she often feels disconnected from others because war and disease create barriers between people. In this difficult situation, Adam Barclay becomes a source of comfort, companionship, and emotional support. Thomas F. Walsh argues that Adam symbolises life, vitality, and human connection in the novella (94). His presence gives Miranda hope and helps her escape, for a time, the fear and anxiety that surround her.

However, the pandemic eventually destroys this source of comfort. Although Miranda survives, Adam dies from influenza. His death becomes one of the most painful experiences of her life. She loses not only someone she loves but also the person who helped her cope with fear and uncertainty. As a result, she experiences deep sadness, loneliness, confusion, and feelings that resemble survivor's guilt. Trauma scholars describe survivor's guilt as the emotional struggle people face when they survive while others do not. Adam's death also forces Miranda to accept the unpredictable nature of life, as she survives despite appearing closer to death than he does.

Even after her physical recovery, Miranda continues to carry the emotional burden of grief and trauma. Her survival does not erase the pain of loss. Janis P. Stout observes that traumatic experiences permanently change individuals and that survival often involves both gain and loss (152). After Adam's death, Miranda faces the future alone, which deepens her emotional isolation. Porter's portrayal of trauma remains relevant to modern discussions of pandemics because people often experience anxiety, loneliness, grief, and psychological distress alongside physical illness (Martínez Ruiz 88–89).

### **Psychological Transformation and Self-Realisation**

Miranda's psychological transformation is one of the most important aspects of *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*. At the beginning of the novella, she lives with constant fear and anxiety caused by war and the influenza pandemic. Her dreams, hallucinations, and emotional struggles reveal a mind deeply affected by the possibility of death. As her illness becomes severe, she is forced to confront mortality directly, which changes her understanding of herself and the world around her.

Miranda's recovery marks a major turning point in her life. Although she survives the pandemic, she returns to a world that has been permanently changed by loss and suffering. The death of Adam deeply affects her and becomes an important part of her emotional growth. His companionship provides comfort and hope during her illness, but his death leaves her with profound grief. Through this experience, Miranda learns to face loss and continue living despite her pain.

The novella shows that Miranda's suffering leads to greater self-awareness and a deeper understanding of human existence. After confronting death, she recognises both the fragility and value of life. Porter presents survival not as a complete victory or a return to happiness but as a process of personal growth. By the end of the novella, Miranda develops a more mature outlook on life, accepting that joy and sorrow, hope and loss, exist together. Her ability to continue living despite this knowledge reflects her psychological resilience and self-realisation.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, a psychoanalytic reading of Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* reveals the deep psychological impact of pandemic, war, illness, and loss on the human mind. Through the character of Miranda, Porter explores not only physical suffering but also the emotional and unconscious dimensions of human experience. Miranda's dreams, fears, hallucinations, and anxieties expose her hidden fear of death, while the recurring image of the pale rider serves as a powerful symbol of mortality. These psychological experiences demonstrate how unconscious fears emerge during times of extreme uncertainty and suffering.

The analysis further shows that trauma, grief, and loss play a significant role in Miranda's psychological development. Her severe illness during the influenza pandemic and Adam's death leave lasting emotional wounds that continue beyond her physical recovery. Adam's companionship offers comfort and hope, whereas his loss deepens Miranda's sense of isolation and sorrow. At the same time, her personal experiences reflect the wider psychological effects of a pandemic on society. Feelings of fear, loneliness, uncertainty, and grief affect both individuals and communities. Therefore, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* remains an important literary work that provides valuable insight into trauma, mental health, and human resilience during periods of widespread suffering.

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# Pre-Partition Trauma and Female Psyche: A Psychological Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*

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## Abstract

Bapsi Sidhwa has carved out an important space in South Asian English literature because she digs into the complex layers of women's lives, history, trauma, and the way society pushes people to the margins. Her novel *Water* (2006) isn't technically a Partition novel, but because it's set in 1938 colonial India, you can see the cracks forming in society that would later erupt in 1947. Sidhwa tells the story of Hindu widows forced to live out their days in an ashram in Varanasi, and she doesn't shy away from showing how patriarchal rules, rigid religion, and organized oppression shape their inner worlds.

This article looks at how trauma and female identity are connected in the novel, using ideas from trauma theory, feminism, and psychoanalysis to dig into the emotional journeys of Chuyia, Kalyani, and Shakuntala. The point is that Sidhwa turns private pain into a shared sense of history and casts women's resistance as a way to survive, not just physically, but psychologically. *Water*, with all its rich symbolism, becomes a call for freedom, rebirth, and dignity throughout the novel.

**Keywords:** Bapsi Sidhwa, *Water*, female psyche, trauma, widowhood, patriarchy, psychological suffering, memory, identity, colonial India.

## Introduction

Bapsi Sidhwa stands out in South Asian English literature for how she constantly digs into tough issues—gender discrimination, social injustice, communal violence, and the way history shapes people's lives. She was born in Karachi in 1938, into a Parsi family, and her writing always brings the lives of marginalized communities—and especially women—to the foreground. Her well-known novels—*The Crow Eaters*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *Ice-Candy-Man*, *An American Brat*, and *Water*—keep circling back to the same questions: how does history scar individuals, and who gets left out of the story?

*Water* feels different from some of her other books. While *Ice-Candy-Man* talks head-on about the violence of Partition in 1947, *Water* steps back to 1938, in colonial India. But it's not a simpler world; the cracks are already showing. Sidhwa paints a society divided by sharp social hierarchies, strict religious codes, and relentless gender oppression. The story centers on a group of Hindu widows in Varanasi, forced to live in an ashram after their husbands die. Through their stories, Sidhwa reveals just how destructive patriarchy can be, and how people start to accept exclusion as just another part of life.

This novel has a backstory too. Deepa Mehta first tried to bring *Water* to the screen, but hit a wall of angry protests from conservative groups in India. The movie finally got made in Sri Lanka and came out in 2005, with Sidhwa publishing the novel a year later. Both versions take aim at traditions that strip women of their agency and dignity.

Even though *Water* unfolds before Partition, its themes echo through Partition studies. You can see the same forces at work—the stubborn ideologies and rigid structures—that would end up tearing a country in two. The way women suffer, the way communities shut out the vulnerable, and how religion gets twisted into a tool for exclusion: all of this builds the atmosphere of trauma that

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eventually erupts during Partition. So, Water doesn't just look at one wound—it holds up a mirror to a much bigger, lingering pain.

The novel turns the female body into a battleground—religion, politics, and patriarchy all want to lay their claim. Trauma here isn't just something one woman quietly carries; it seeps through generations, woven into the fabric of society itself. Women get shut out from so much: money, love, desire, even the freedom to think for themselves. Is it any wonder their sense of self starts to break apart?

This article dives into the psychological side of female trauma in Water. It leans on thinkers like Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman, Sigmund Freud, and feminist theorists to dig into how trauma shapes women from the inside out, and how resistance becomes a tool for survival. The main point? Sidhwa takes pain that starts with one woman and turns it into a collective legacy, showing that the path to freedom is all about taking back your own story—and your humanity.

#### **Trauma Theory and Female Psychology**

Trauma studies have become a key part of understanding how overwhelming experiences affect people, pulling together ideas from different fields. The idea really started to gain attention after people began researching war survivors, Holocaust survivors, and those who lived through domestic violence. Trauma isn't just a bad memory—it shakes your sense of safety and continuity at its core.

Cathy Caruth puts it this way: trauma is “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.”(11) That's a mouthful, but it really matters for Water. The widows in the novel don't just suffer from one terrible moment. Their trauma builds up, bit by bit, becoming an everyday part of life, shaped by the very social practices that surround them.

Judith Herman sees trauma as something that targets the powerless: “Psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force.”(33) That's the widows, completely. Their identities don't just fade away—they're stripped by rules and systems that everyone around them seems to accept, as if it's all perfectly normal. Their pain isn't a fluke—it's built right into how the system works. When trauma hits, it doesn't just hurt—it breaks people apart inside. Victims struggle to hold onto who they are because trauma messes with how they think and feel. The widows end up stuck somewhere in between—they're not part of society, but they're not totally outside of it either. They live in a gray area, half-seen and half-erased.

Through Water, Sidhwa shows exactly how patriarchy turns everyday rituals into instruments of trauma. Widowhood becomes a life sentence. Even religion, something that's supposed to offer comfort, twists into a tool of control.

And female trauma isn't the same as male trauma. For women, trauma often hides in plain sight, woven tightly into the fabric of home and culture. Violence against women often happens in places everyone trusts—in families, marriages, temples. That makes it hard to resist or even call out, because the oppression looks like tradition, like duty.

All of this means you can't just look at trauma as something inside one person's head. Water asks us to see trauma as something created by the rules and structures of the whole society, not just as individual pain.

#### **Colonial India and the Social Construction of Widowhood**

In colonial India, widowhood wasn't just about personal loss—it was shaped by rigid, patriarchal readings of religious texts. People saw widows as bad luck, even unclean, and their identities got erased—they existed only in relation to their husbands.

Once a woman lost her husband, everyone expected her to give up everything: color, jewelry, good food, even her place in society. She was supposed to live like an ascetic, as if that loss had become her only story.

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Through her portrait of the widows' ashram, Sidhwa doesn't hide any of this. Instead, she lays bare just how cruel the whole system was. This wasn't just about individual widows; it was a bigger project—society's way of controlling women's bodies. Patriarchal thinking branded women's sexuality as dangerous, so it built elaborate rules to contain it.

There's a bitter irony here: widowhood became a punishment for something these women couldn't control. Over and over, the novel shows that widowhood isn't fate or divine will—it's constructed, kept alive by twisted religious arguments that prop up male authority. Uma Chakravarti gets right to the heart of it: "Control over women has been central to the maintenance of social hierarchies in Indian society" (*Gendering Caste* 29). That's exactly what plays out in *Water*. The widows aren't punished for spiritual reasons; they're set apart because their presence threatens the patriarchal status quo. Keeping them on the margins helps those in power stay in power.

So Sidhwa pushes back against the idea that tradition deserves blind respect. She shows tradition for what it really is: a battleground, a space people fight to define and control. The pain these widows bear is just a warning sign—it foreshadows the deeper cracks that will later split the country during Partition. Any society that treats internal oppression as normal ends up sowing the seeds for its own unraveling.

### **Chuyia and the Trauma of Interrupted Childhood**

Chuyia stands out as the novel's most emotionally gripping character. She's only eight when she suddenly becomes a widow—her much older husband dies, and just like that, her whole world falls apart. Her father abandons her at the ashram, not even thinking about what she feels or needs. That moment is her first taste of real trauma.

The thing is, Chuyia isn't like the adult widows around her. She doesn't even understand what it means to be a widow. Her innocence is actually her greatest strength—it cuts right through the nonsense. She blurts out, "Can a man not live without a wife?" (Sidhwa 15). It's such a simple question, but it hits the heart of how absurd and unfair these old rules are. Kids don't buy into all these social expectations because nobody's taught them that stuff yet; they ask what's obvious to them.

Chuyia isn't trying to rebel—she resists just by being herself. She's caught in a nightmare before she's even had a chance to grow up. If you think about it from a psychologist's view, childhood is supposed to be when we figure out who we are, find some love and support, and start to feel safe in the world. Chuyia gets all of that ripped away at once—her family, her freedom, and any hope for her future.

The trauma she faces hits from every angle. She's abandoned, pushed to the very edge of her community, and left so confused about everything that nothing makes sense anymore. What really twists the knife is that everyone around her just accepts her suffering as normal. Her pain gets stamped as her duty.

Nobody tries to understand her or recognizes how wrong all this is. That lack of empathy makes her even more alone—psychologically stranded. Over time, Chuyia learns a brutal lesson: what she wants doesn't matter. That kind of realization is devastating. We build our self-worth on how the people around us treat us, and if nobody values you, it's easy to start believing you have no worth at all.

In showing Chuyia's story, Sidhwa reveals how childhood trauma isn't just one painful moment, but something that shapes a person for the rest of their life.

### **The Ashram as a Psychological Prison**

The widow's ashram in *Water* isn't just a place to stay—it's a kind of psychological cage. It keeps widows apart from normal life and pushes them into a strict routine. They lose color, joy, sexuality, family, and a sense of dignity. Inside the ashram, the women start to see themselves as less than others, as if their pain isn't society's cruelty but some kind of sacred duty. That makes the oppression even tougher to spot and harder to fight.

The widows learn to see their pain as natural, even necessary. Shaved heads, white saris, bland food, isolation—all these mark them as erased people. Foucault's idea of discipline fits here, since the ashram controls their bodies to control their minds. No one has to punish them nonstop—they already follow the rules. Their bodies just obey, almost reflexively.

Living like this leaves deep scars. The widows deal with fear, loneliness, depression, or just plain numbness. Some grow angry, some give in completely, and others get lost spiritually. Sidhwa makes it clear: patriarchy doesn't only hurt women from the outside. It sneaks in and convinces them to see their pain as fate, not oppression.

#### **Kalyani and Sexual Trauma**

Kalyani might be the novel's most tragic figure. She's young, strikingly beautiful, and deeply sensitive, but that very beauty traps her. Madhumati, who's supposed to guide others with morals, pushes her into prostitution just to keep the ashram afloat. The place that's meant to protect and uphold purity ends up turning Kalyani into something to be bought and used.

Her pain cuts deep—physically and emotionally. She's stuck playing two roles that tear her apart. Out in public, everyone expects her to be a pure, untouched widow. Behind closed doors, she's at the mercy of wealthy men who use her however they want. This double life shatters any sense of wholeness she might've had. Kalyani can't even figure out who she is anymore. Guilt, silence, and the feeling that she's powerless eat away at her identity. Then there's Narayan. For a minute, her love for him lets her imagine escaping, building a real life beyond all these rules and labels. But that dream dies fast when she learns that Narayan's own father is one of the men who abused her. That blow crushes her completely. In the end, her suicide isn't about giving up—it's what happens when a society leaves her no way to survive with any kind of dignity.

#### **Shakuntala's Psychological Awakening**

Shakuntala's story is all about inner conflict and slowly waking up to what's wrong. While Chuyia fights back against society with her childlike honesty, and Kalyani endures outright abuse, Shakuntala wrestles with injustice through quiet reflection. At first, she goes along with the harsh rules for widows, thinking that's what her faith expects. But as she watches the pain these rules cause, her trust in them starts to crack.

Meeting people with new, reformist ideas shakes something loose in her. She starts to see that religion isn't the same as the unfair system controlling her life. Real spirituality, she realizes, doesn't excuse cruelty or suffering. That understanding is a turning point—she still believes, but she refuses to let others use faith as an excuse to harm.

What really matters is what she does next. When Shakuntala helps Chuyia escape, it's more than just a kind act—it's proof that her awakening actually means something. She stops just enduring and decides to fight back. Through her, Sidhwa shows that even people deeply shaped by tradition can choose to create change from the inside.

#### **Freudian Psychoanalysis and Repressed Desire**

If you look at *Water* through a psychoanalytic lens, it's hard to miss how repression twists the inner lives of the women in the story. Freud said that when you push down your real feelings and wants, they don't just vanish—they come back in hidden or even harmful ways. That's what happens to the widows in the novel. They're not just told to give up love or sex; they're also denied simple things like friendship, motherhood, and the freedom to make choices for themselves.

This kind of forced repression does real damage. Since they can't speak about what they want, their feelings sneak out in other ways—jealousy, bitterness, daydreams, or just a quiet kind of heartbreak. Look at Kalyani: her longing for love isn't only about romance—it's about wanting to be seen as a full human being. Chuyia clings to the people around her because she aches for comfort and safety. And Shakuntala's whole struggle shows what happens when you're trapped between what you're told is your duty and what you honestly believe is right.

Sidhwa doesn't shy away from showing how cruel it is to call these women "desireless" and pretend that human needs can be erased just by following tradition. The novel makes it clear—

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treating natural emotions like a crime is a kind of violence in itself. Sidhwa wants us to see just how much is lost, and how unfair it is, when a society demands people bury their own hearts.

### **Internalized Patriarchy**

One of the most striking things about *Water* is how it doesn't reduce patriarchy to men simply dominating women. Women play a role in enforcing these rules too. Take Madhumati, the head widow—she keeps the other widows in line and actually benefits from their suffering. Even though she's trapped by the same system, she keeps the cycle of abuse going.

This is what people mean by internalized patriarchy. Over time, when people live inside an oppressive system, they can start buying into the same ideas that hurt them. Madhumati keeps her power by making sure the ashram stays the way it is, but that comes at the expense of the others.

So, Sidhwa's feminist vision is anything but simple. The novel doesn't paint men as the only villains or women as pure victims. Instead, it shows patriarchy as a condition that shapes everyone, no matter their gender. Real freedom means changing how people think, not just changing the rules on the outside.

### **Water as a Symbol of Trauma and Renewal**

The title *Water* carries a lot of weight. Water stands for purity, cleansing, flow—it's about death and rebirth too. The Ganges is supposed to be holy, but in the novel, it quietly observes pain, exploitation, and even suicide. That's where the irony hits: this sacred river is a silent neighbor to cruelty.

For Kalyani, water isn't peaceful. It's tied to death. Her drowning shows how trauma can drag someone under. Still, water keeps moving. It changes, slips away from barriers, and never stays trapped forever. That's where possibility sneaks in—the chance for women like Kalyani to break free.

Then there's Chuyia. Her escape at the end lines up with what water means: movement, starting over. She's carried away from the ashram, drifting toward something new. Sure, it's not complete freedom, but it lets hope in. In the end, water isn't just a witness to pain; it's also a source of healing, holding both hurt and hope side by side.

### **Gandhian Ideology and Female Liberation**

It's 1938, and India's inching closer to independence. Gandhi walks into the story bringing new ideas—he pushes everyone to question old norms, especially untouchability, social injustice, and how women are treated. For Shakuntala, Gandhi's thinking sparks something new inside her, a kind of awakening.

But Sidhwa doesn't stop with national freedom. She shows how real independence means more than kicking out the British. Indian society keeps its own women trapped, stuck under caste rules, gender bias, and religious traditions. The widows aren't just victims; their lives show how the country itself holds its women back.

Water ties Shakuntala's personal struggles to the bigger fight for freedom. National independence only really matters if it includes women who have been pushed aside. That's Sidhwa's vision—she stretches “freedom” beyond just politics. Independence should also break social and psychological chains.

### **Pre-Partition Anxiety and Collective Memory**

Water takes place before Partition, but you can feel the tension of a country on the edge of something big and unsettling. The novel doesn't pretend violence just exploded in 1947—it's clear that it has been simmering all along, hidden in daily life. Think about how widows get pushed to the margins, how everyone polices women's bodies, or how religion gets twisted to justify cruelty. There's a crack running through society, and you can see it everywhere.

We usually talk about Partition trauma in terms of trains packed with refugees, riots, rape, the agony of losing home. But *Water* steps back and says, look closer—plenty of trauma existed long before the big headlines. The misery of widows isn't just personal suffering; it's a kind of inner partition: men versus women, “pure” versus “impure,” those with power versus those left powerless, tradition fighting off any hint of reform.

So, you can read the novel as a record of trauma before borders ever shifted. These women are living through a subtler, psychological violence that always ran just below the surface in India, even before the political lines were drawn. Sidhwa is pretty clear. The idea of a divided nation grows out of even older divisions—ones that people lived with day after day.

### Conclusion

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water* digs deep into the ways women suffer, get pushed to the margins, and fight back. By following Chuyia, Kalyani, and Shakuntala, Sidhwa lays bare how patriarchy wrecks women's lives—it strips them of love, freedom, dignity, and even a sense of who they are. Losing a husband doesn't just mean grief; for these women, widowhood is like being erased from society. The ashram isn't just a place to live—it's a cage, where pain gets dressed up as something holy, and the world expects them to accept it in silence.

What makes the novel so striking is how it ties personal heartbreak to a bigger story. Even though it's set just before Partition, *Water* gets at the deep cracks in society that led to so much later turmoil across the subcontinent. Sidhwa's message is clear: a country can't call itself free if its women are still shackled by old customs.

But there's a pulse of hope running through the book, too. The story isn't just about suffering—it's about finding a way out. When Chuyia escapes, and Shakuntala opens her eyes to the truth, you start to see that change begins when silence ends, and when people finally call out injustice for what it is.

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# Lal Bahadur Shastri: A Great Leader

Dr. Manoj Kumar Bihari\*

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## Abstract

*Lal Bahadur Shastri was the second Prime Minister of India and is widely remembered as a symbol of simplicity, honesty, and integrity. Even after assuming the office of Prime Minister, he continued to lead a simple and humble life. As Prime Minister, he proved to be an outstanding leader who not only strengthened India's military prestige but also promoted industrialization and paved the way for the Green Revolution.*

*Although Shastri regarded the farmers of India as the nation's providers, he also had immense respect and affection for the soldiers guarding the country's borders. He played a significant and leading role in India's struggle for independence. He served as the Parliamentary Secretary to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and later became the Police and Transport Minister in Uttar Pradesh. At the national level, he held several important portfolios, including Railways and Transport, Commerce and Industry, Communications, and Home Affairs.*

*Lal Bahadur Shastri is regarded as one of India's most respected Prime Ministers. He was a firm believer in secularism and opposed mixing religion with politics. Owing to his remarkable tenure as Prime Minister and his outstanding service to the nation, he became one of the most admired leaders in India. In recognition of his exceptional achievements and invaluable contribution to the country, he was posthumously awarded the **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian honour.*

## Early Life

Lal Bahadur Shastri was born on **2 October 1904** in **Mughalsarai** (now **Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Nagar**), a small railway town located about seven miles from **Varanasi** in the present-day state of Uttar Pradesh. His father, **Sharada Prasad Srivastava**, was a school teacher. In **April 1906**, when Shastri was barely eighteen months old, his father, who had recently been promoted to the post of Deputy Tehsildar, died during an outbreak of **bubonic plague**.

Following her husband's death, **Ramdulari Devi**, who was only twenty-three years old and pregnant with her third child, moved with her two young children from Ramnagar to her father's home in Mughalsarai, where she settled permanently. In **July 1906**, she gave birth to a daughter named **Sundari Devi**.<sup>1</sup>

## Education

Lal Bahadur Shastri's education played a significant role in shaping his political ideals and intellectual outlook. He completed his early schooling in **Mughalsarai** and later pursued higher education at **Kashi Vidyapith** in Varanasi. To enable him to attend high school, he was sent to live with one of his uncles in Varanasi.

Affectionately called "**Nanhe**" (meaning "little one") at home, Shastri often walked several miles barefoot to school, even during the scorching summer heat. His dedication to education and his growing interest in social and political issues became evident during his student years. Despite severe financial hardships, he continued his studies with determination and successfully completed his higher education.

The academic environment exposed him to the ideals of the Indian freedom movement and inspired him to participate actively in the struggle against British colonial rule. During **Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement** in **1921**, Shastri joined the movement and was briefly imprisoned for his participation. After completing his education, he returned to public life as a

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devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi. He was imprisoned several times for his involvement in the freedom struggle and gradually rose to hold influential positions in the **Indian National Congress** in the **United Provinces (present-day Uttar Pradesh)**.

#### **Lal Bahadur Shastri as a Freedom Fighter:**

Lal Bahadur Shastri was only **sixteen years old** when **Mahatma Gandhi** called upon the people of India to join the **Non-Cooperation Movement**. At that time, Shastri was studying in the **tenth grade** and was only three months away from his final examinations. Inspired by a public meeting in **Banaras**, addressed by Mahatma Gandhi and **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya**, he decided to dedicate himself to the national movement.

Responding to Gandhi's appeal for students to withdraw from government schools and participate in the freedom struggle, Shastri left **Harish Chandra High School** the very next day. He joined the local branch of the **Indian National Congress** as a volunteer and actively participated in demonstrations and protest activities. He was soon arrested and sent to jail but was released shortly afterward because he was still a minor. His decision deeply disappointed his mother, and although his family tried to discourage him, Shastri remained firm in his resolve. Those who knew him well understood that once he had made up his mind, he would never turn back, as his gentle nature concealed remarkable determination and strength of character.

In **1926**, he was awarded the title "**Shastri**" upon completing his studies at **Kashi Vidyapith**. Thereafter, he devoted himself entirely to the service of the nation. He became a life member of the **Servants of the People Society**, founded by **Lala Lajpat Rai** in **1921**, whose objective was to train young men and women committed to serving the country. Members of the society pledged to dedicate at least twenty years of their lives to public service while leading simple and honest lives. Through his dedication and hard work, Shastri earned the affection and trust of Lala Lajpat Rai and later rose to become the President of the Society.

By **1930**, India's struggle for independence had intensified. When Mahatma Gandhi launched the **Salt Satyagraha (Salt March)**, Shastri played an active role in the movement. Following Gandhi's call, he joined the **Civil Disobedience Movement** and encouraged people to resist paying land revenue and taxes to the British Government. For his participation, he was imprisoned for **two and a half years**. During his imprisonment, he devoted himself to studying the works of Western philosophers, revolutionaries, and social reformers. In **1937**, he was appointed the **Organising Secretary of the Parliamentary Board of the United Provinces Congress Committee**.

After the outbreak of the **Second World War** in **1939**, the Indian National Congress launched the **Individual Satyagraha Movement** in **1940** to press for India's independence. During this movement, Shastri was again arrested and imprisoned for one year. On **8 August 1942**, when Mahatma Gandhi launched the **Quit India Movement**, Shastri responded enthusiastically and took an active part in the struggle. He was arrested once again and remained in prison for a prolonged period.

Following his release, he worked closely with **Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant** and played a significant role in the **1946 provincial elections**. Recognising his dedication and organisational abilities, Pant appointed him as his **Parliamentary Secretary**. In **1947**, Shastri entered the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet as the **Minister for Police and Transport**, marking the beginning of his distinguished career in public administration.

#### **Political Career:**

After India attained independence and the **Indian National Congress** came to power, Lal Bahadur Shastri's sincerity, humility, and administrative abilities were widely recognised by the national leadership. When the Congress government was formed in **1946**, this modest and dedicated leader was entrusted with an important role in the governance of the country.

Shastri was appointed as the **Parliamentary Secretary** in his home state of **Uttar Pradesh**, where he demonstrated exceptional dedication, efficiency, and administrative competence. Owing to his hard work and effective performance, he was soon promoted to the position of **Minister**,

establishing himself as one of the most capable and respected leaders in the state. His commitment to public service and his administrative skills earned him a distinguished reputation in Uttar Pradesh and laid the foundation for his future role in national politics.

#### **State Minister**

After India gained independence, Lal Bahadur Shastri was appointed **Parliamentary Secretary** in his home state of **Uttar Pradesh**.<sup>6</sup> On **15 August 1947**, after **Rafi Ahmed Kidwai** joined the Union Cabinet, **Govind Ballabh Pant**, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, appointed Shastri as the **Minister for Police and Transport**.

As **Transport Minister**, Shastri became the first minister to appoint **women as bus conductors**, reflecting his progressive outlook toward women's participation in public service. As the minister in charge of the **Police Department**, he introduced significant reforms in crowd-control practices. He instructed the police to use **water jets** instead of **lathi (baton) charges** to disperse unruly crowds, thereby encouraging a more humane approach to maintaining law and order.<sup>7</sup>

During his tenure as **Police Minister**, he also played an important role in maintaining peace during the communal disturbances that followed the **Partition of India in 1947**. He supervised the management, relief, and rehabilitation of a large number of refugees displaced by the Partition. His efficient handling of these challenging responsibilities further strengthened his reputation as a capable and compassionate administrator.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Union Minister:**

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru appointed Shastri as the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee in 1951. He was personally responsible for selecting candidates and guiding election campaigns and publicity programs. In the Indian general elections of 1952, 1957, and 1962, he made a significant contribution to the Congress Party's massive victories. With more than 69% of the votes, he won the 1952 Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly election from the Soraon North/Phulpur West seat. Nehru unexpectedly invited him to join the central cabinet as a minister, although it was initially thought that he would become the Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh. On 13 May 1952, Shastri was appointed as the Railway and Transport Minister in the first cabinet of the Republic of India<sup>9</sup>.

In addition, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri coined the slogan "*Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*", which later came to symbolize patriotism. The two main objectives of Shastri's ideal slogan were: first, to strengthen the military power of the country; and second, to improve its economic condition. By establishing the National Dairy Development Board and supporting the Amul Milk Cooperative of Anand (Gujarat), Shastri promoted the White Revolution. As a result, India became a leading producer of milk.

Later, Shastri was elected as the Union Railway and Transport Minister. However, at that time, a railway accident caused injuries to many people, for which he took moral and political responsibility. With the intention of accepting accountability, he offered his resignation as Railway Minister to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in September 1956 following the Mahbubnagar train accident, but it was not accepted. About two and a half months after the Ariyalur train accident of 1956, Shastri once again resigned from the post of Railway Minister on 7 December 1956, and this time his resignation was accepted.<sup>10,11</sup>

In 1959 and 1961, he held the positions of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Home Affairs<sup>12</sup>. In 1964, as a minister without portfolio, Shastri laid the foundation for the Mangalore port<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Prime Minister:**

After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, he was appointed as the second Prime Minister of India, and in 1965 he helped India defeat Pakistan in the war. This was truly a difficult time for the country, and everyone was facing serious challenges. There was a shortage of food in the country, and Pakistan had launched an attack on India. He was a person of great courage and firm

determination, and throughout the struggle he inspired the nation with the slogan “*Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*” to mobilize support for the country.

People all over the world appreciated his leadership. He was a great source of inspiration for all Indians and lived a life of extraordinary simplicity and honesty. During his tenure as Prime Minister, many significant events—both good and bad—took place, including the Indo-Pak war and his mysterious death. A description of some of these events is given below.

#### **Domestic Policies:**

After becoming Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri was also involved in resolving the anti-Hindi agitation in Madras in 1965. Since Hindi was considered the sole national language, some Indian states where non-Hindi languages were spoken opposed its imposition. To handle the situation, in a meeting with Indira Gandhi, he decided that English would continue as an official language along with Hindi in the non-Hindi-speaking states. After his assurance, the unrest subsided.

#### **Economic Policies:**

During his tenure as Prime Minister, he not only maintained but also strengthened the Indian economy through his effective policies. He formulated strategies to promote economic growth while continuing the socialist economic policies of the previous Prime Minister. By supporting dairy organizations such as the Amul Milk Cooperative in Anand, Gujarat, and by establishing the National Dairy Development Board, he promoted the famous national campaign known as the White Revolution, which aimed at increasing milk production and supply.

His significant contribution to managing the long-term shortage of food grains in India can never be forgotten. He appealed to the people of India to voluntarily skip one meal a day to help those living in food-scarce regions. During the 22-day Indo-Pak war of 1965, he also encouraged increased food production across the country by promoting the Green Revolution campaign, popularized with his slogan “*Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*.”

#### **Foreign Policy:**

Shastri continued Nehru’s policy of non-alignment, while also maintaining close relations with the Soviet Union. After the 1962 Indo-China war and the development of military ties between China and Pakistan, the Shastri government decided to expand the country’s defense budget. In 1964, Shastri signed an agreement committing local governments to provide adequate facilities for refugees arriving on Indian soil. Particularly in the Madras state, the then Chief Minister M. Bhaktavatsalam took special care in the rehabilitation of returnees.

In December 1965, Shastri, along with his family, made an official visit to Rangoon (Burma) and re-established cordial relations with the military government of General Ne Win.

#### **Indo-Pak War:**

He was a great leader who led India to victory in the Indo-Pak war of 1965. He stated that during the course of the country’s economic development, Indians might have to live with poverty for a long time if necessary, but they would never compromise their independence. During the Indo-Pak war, Pakistan’s objective was Kashmir; however, Lal Bahadur Shastri made it clear that aggression would be met with force.

After prolonged conflict, the war ended on 23 September 1965 with the involvement of the United Nations to restore peaceful coexistence. Following the end of the war, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani President Muhammad Ayub Khan met in Tashkent, where both leaders signed the Tashkent Declaration on 10 January 1966.

#### **Death of Lal Bahadur Shastri:**

Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of India, died on 11 January 1966 under mysterious circumstances. The official cause of death was a heart attack, but many conspiracy theories have emerged regarding his death. Some theories suggest that he was poisoned, while others propose that his death was due to natural causes but that the official account was concealed.

However, there is no solid evidence to support these claims, and the official position of the Government of India is that Shastri died of a heart attack. Many newspapers in the country were

unable to publish this news at the time, but *The Times of India* released the report in a night-city edition after stopping its regular print.

In the past 50 years, no official investigation into Shastri's death has been conducted. It is said that after his death, his body turned blue, which led to speculation that his death was caused by poisoning rather than a heart attack. Following this, a butler on duty was arrested, but he was later released due to lack of evidence. Several questions were also raised about his statements.

The case file is said to be present in the Prime Minister's Office, but it has not been made public. There is no formal record of an inquiry into his death. The first investigation was reportedly initiated by Raj Narain, but it did not yield any conclusive results. It has also been alleged that no post-mortem examination was conducted.

Later, in 2009, the central government stated that Shastri's personal doctor, R. N. Chugh, along with some Russian doctors, had examined the cause of his death. However, the government does not have any official record of this investigation.

#### Conclusion:

Lal Bahadur Shastri devoted more than thirty years of dedicated service to the nation. During this period, he came to be known as a man of great integrity and capability. With humility, patience, inner strength, and firm determination, he was among those who truly understood the language and needs of the people. He was also a visionary leader who guided the country toward progress.

Lal Bahadur Shastri was deeply influenced by the political teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He once remarked in a tone reminiscent of his mentor, "*Hard work is equal to prayer.*" In the true tradition of Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri represented the finest values of Indian culture.

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# Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Adjustment of College Students

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## Abstract

*The present study was conducted to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on the adjustment of college students studying in constituent colleges of Siwan and Gopalganj districts of Bihar. The study also investigated gender differences in emotional intelligence and adjustment among college students. A sample of 200 undergraduate students, comprising 100 male and 100 female students, was selected from constituent colleges using an appropriate sampling technique. Data were collected using the Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII-MM) developed by Mangal and Mangal (2018) and the Adjustment Inventory for College Students (AICS-SS) developed by Sinha and Singh (2012). A self-developed Personal Information Inventory was also used to obtain demographic information. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) and the independent samples t-test. The findings revealed a significant gender difference in emotional intelligence, with male students obtaining significantly higher emotional intelligence scores than female students. However, no significant gender difference was found in the adjustment of college students. The results further indicated significant differences in adjustment among students with high, average, and low levels of emotional intelligence, both in the total sample and within the male and female groups. The study concludes that emotional intelligence is an important psychological variable positively associated with the adjustment of college students. The findings have important implications for higher educational institutions in promoting emotional intelligence through counselling services, life-skills education, and student development programmes to enhance students' adjustment and overall well-being.*

**Keywords:-** Emotional Intelligence, Adjustment, College, Students, Gender Differences.

## Introduction

Education in the twenty-first century emphasizes not only intellectual achievement but also the development of emotional, social, and psychological competencies that enable students to succeed in academic as well as personal life. In today's rapidly changing educational environment, students are required to cope with increasing academic competition, technological advancements, changing social relationships, career uncertainties, and various psychological challenges. Consequently, emotional intelligence has gained considerable attention as an essential factor contributing to students' overall development and successful adjustment to college life.

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's ability to perceive, understand, regulate, express, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and in others. Unlike cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence focuses on managing emotions to facilitate adaptive thinking, effective decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being. Early theoretical contributions by Salovey and Mayer (1990) conceptualized emotional intelligence as a set of mental abilities involving emotional perception, understanding, and regulation. Later, Goleman (1995) popularized the concept by emphasizing that emotional competencies often contribute more significantly than intellectual ability to success in education, work, and life. Bar-On (1997) further viewed emotional intelligence as a collection of emotional and social competencies that determine how effectively individuals understand themselves, relate to others, and cope with environmental demands.

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College life represents a critical developmental period during which students undergo significant academic, social, emotional, and personal transitions. For many students, entering college involves adapting to a new educational environment, increased academic expectations, greater independence, changing peer relationships, financial concerns, and future career planning. These transitions often create stress, anxiety, emotional conflicts, and adjustment difficulties. Successful adaptation to these challenges depends not only on cognitive ability but also on the students' capacity to understand and regulate their emotions while maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships.

Adjustment is a continuous psychological process through which individuals maintain harmony between themselves and their environment. It involves modifying one's behaviour, attitudes, and emotional responses to meet environmental demands while preserving psychological well-being. In the educational context, adjustment includes academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and institutional adjustment. Well-adjusted students generally demonstrate better academic performance, stronger interpersonal relationships, higher self-esteem, effective coping strategies, and greater psychological resilience. Conversely, poor adjustment may lead to stress, anxiety, depression, behavioural problems, absenteeism, poor academic achievement, and even dropout from educational institutions.

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in facilitating successful adjustment because emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to recognize emotional experiences, regulate negative emotions, solve interpersonal conflicts, empathize with others, and adopt constructive coping strategies. Students possessing high emotional intelligence tend to remain calm under stressful situations, communicate effectively, build supportive social relationships, and make rational decisions despite emotional pressures. Such qualities contribute substantially to successful adjustment in educational settings.

Several empirical studies have reported a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and various indicators of adjustment among adolescents and college students. Research has demonstrated that emotionally intelligent students experience lower levels of psychological distress, better stress management, improved interpersonal relationships, enhanced academic engagement, and greater life satisfaction. Emotional intelligence has also been associated with resilience, optimism, mental health, self-esteem, and effective coping, all of which promote healthy adjustment during the college years.

Within the Indian educational context, particularly in states such as Bihar, college students often face additional socio-economic, cultural, and educational challenges. Many students come from diverse rural and urban backgrounds, varying family environments, and different educational opportunities. The transition from school to higher education frequently demands considerable psychological adaptation. Limited institutional support, academic pressure, family expectations, financial constraints, and career uncertainty may further influence students' adjustment. Therefore, understanding the role of emotional intelligence in promoting adjustment among college students in Bihar has considerable educational and psychological significance.

The present study focuses on undergraduate students studying in constituent colleges of Siwan and Gopalganj districts of Bihar. These districts represent an important segment of higher education in the state, where students encounter diverse academic and socio-cultural experiences. Investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment among these students can provide valuable evidence for developing counselling programmes, life-skills education, emotional intelligence training, and student support services.

The objectives of the study are to examine the gender differences in emotional intelligence and to investigate the differences in adjustment among college students belonging to different levels of emotional intelligence (High, Average, and Low) at the college level. In the light of the above objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female college students.

2. There will be significant difference between male and female students on adjustment.
3. There will be significant difference in the adjustment of college students belonging to different levels of emotional intelligence (High, Average, and Low).

### Method

**Sample** :- The present study was conducted on a sample of 200 undergraduate college students studying in the constituent colleges of Siwan and Gopalganj districts of Bihar. The sample comprised 100 male and 100 female students, selected using an appropriate sampling technique. Based on their scores on the Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII-MM), the students were classified into three groups using the Quartile Deviation (QD) method: High Emotional Intelligence (50 students), Average Emotional Intelligence (100 students), and Low Emotional Intelligence (50 students). The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 22 years, representing students enrolled in undergraduate programmes.

**Tests Used** :- The present study employed two standardized psychological instruments along with a self-developed personal information schedule for data collection. Emotional intelligence was assessed using the Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII-MM) developed and standardized by Mangal and Mangal (2018). The inventory consists of 100 items covering four dimensions: intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal awareness, intrapersonal management, and interpersonal management, with 25 items in each dimension. Responses are recorded on a three-point scale—Always, Sometimes, and Never—and scored according to the manual, with reverse scoring for negatively worded items. The total score ranges from 0 to 200, where higher scores indicate a higher level of emotional intelligence. Based on the Quartile Deviation (QD) method, the participants were classified into three groups: High Emotional Intelligence (50 students), Average Emotional Intelligence (100 students), and Low Emotional Intelligence (50 students). To measure students' adjustment, the Adjustment Inventory for College Students (AICS-SS) developed by Sinha and Singh (2012) was administered. The inventory comprises 102 items distributed across five dimensions, namely home, health, social, emotional, and educational adjustment, and follows a Yes/No response format. The scoring procedure was carried out as prescribed in the manual, with higher scores indicating poor adjustment. In addition, a self-developed Personal Information Inventory was used to collect demographic information such as gender, college, and other relevant background details of the participants.

**Statistical Analysis** :- To examine the effect of emotional intelligence on the adjustment of college students, the scores obtained on the Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII-MM) and the Adjustment Inventory for College Students (AICS-SS) were analyzed. The emotional intelligence scores of male and female college students were calculated separately and compared to determine gender differences. Further, the adjustment scores of male and female students and those belonging to High, Average, and Low Emotional Intelligence groups were computed and compared. In addition, comparisons were made among the High, Average, and Low Emotional Intelligence groups separately for male and female students. For the analysis of data, Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and the independent samples *t*-test were employed to determine the significance of differences between the groups.

### Results and Discussion

The comparison of emotional intelligence scores between male and female college students (Table – 1) reveals that the mean emotional intelligence score of male students ( $M = 141.26$ ,  $SD = 22.62$ ) is higher than that of female students ( $M = 129.14$ ,  $SD = 20.54$ ). The obtained *t*-value of 3.967 with 198 degrees of freedom is significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that the observed difference between the two groups is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there will be significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female college students is verified.

The findings suggest that male college students in the present sample possess significantly higher emotional intelligence than their female counterparts. This indicates that the male students demonstrated greater ability in perceiving, understanding, regulating, and managing emotions in themselves and in their interactions with others. Emotional intelligence encompasses competencies

such as emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal effectiveness, all of which contribute to successful adaptation in academic and social settings.

The observed gender difference may be explained by the socio-cultural context in which the participants were raised. In many parts of India, including Bihar, males often experience greater independence, wider social exposure, and increased opportunities to develop interpersonal skills and decision-making abilities. Such experiences may enhance emotional competence and confidence in handling emotionally demanding situations. Female students, on the other hand, may encounter comparatively greater social restrictions, family expectations, or cultural norms that influence emotional expression and emotional management. These contextual factors may contribute to the differences observed in emotional intelligence scores. The present finding is consistent with the view that emotional intelligence is influenced not only by innate emotional abilities but also by environmental experiences, socialization practices, and opportunities for emotional learning. Students who are encouraged to communicate, solve problems independently, and engage in diverse social interactions are more likely to develop stronger emotional competencies. Hence, gender differences in emotional intelligence should be interpreted within the broader framework of cultural and educational experiences rather than biological factors alone.

The result of the present study is supported by the findings of Parker et al. (2004), who reported that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in students' successful adjustment and academic functioning during the transition to higher education. Similarly, Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2016) emphasized that emotional intelligence represents a set of abilities related to the perception, understanding, and regulation of emotions, which develop through learning and life experiences. Goleman (1995) also argued that emotional competencies contribute substantially to personal effectiveness, interpersonal relationships, and educational success.

However, the present finding differs from several previous investigations that reported either higher emotional intelligence among female students or no significant gender difference. For example, Brackett and Mayer (2003) observed that gender differences in emotional intelligence vary depending on the measurement approach and cultural setting. Likewise, Joseph and Newman (2010) concluded that gender differences in emotional intelligence are generally small and are influenced by the type of emotional intelligence measure employed. Such inconsistencies across studies suggest that emotional intelligence is shaped by multiple psychological, educational, and socio-cultural factors rather than gender alone.

**Table – 1 : Showing Means, S.Ds. and ‘t’ ratios of Emotional Intelligence Scores**

| Groups | N   | Means  | S.Ds. | df  | ‘t’ ratios | Level of Sig. |
|--------|-----|--------|-------|-----|------------|---------------|
| Male   | 100 | 141.26 | 22.62 | 198 | 3.967      | 0.01          |
| Female | 100 | 129.14 | 20.54 |     |            |               |

The findings reveal that there is no significant difference in the overall adjustment scores of male ( $M = 41.57$ ,  $SD = 9.72$ ) and female students ( $M = 42.62$ ,  $SD = 10.27$ ), as the obtained  $t$ -value of 0.743 is not significant. This indicates that both male and female students exhibit almost similar levels of adjustment in the college environment. Thus, adjustment appears to be independent of gender in the present sample. The major objective of the study was to examine whether adjustment differs according to the level of emotional intelligence. The results demonstrate a clear and statistically significant variation in adjustment among students with High, Average, and Low Emotional Intelligence (Table – 2). The comparison between students with High Emotional Intelligence ( $M = 32.48$ ,  $SD = 9.25$ ) and Average Emotional Intelligence ( $M = 41.73$ ,  $SD = 9.83$ ) yielded a  $t$ -value of 5.653, which is significant at the 0.01 level. Similarly, the comparison between the High Emotional Intelligence and Low Emotional Intelligence groups ( $M = 52.44$ ,  $SD = 10.12$ ) produced a highly significant  $t$ -value of 10.294 ( $p < .01$ ). Furthermore, students with Average Emotional Intelligence also differed significantly from those with Low Emotional Intelligence, as reflected by a  $t$ -value of 6.168 ( $p < .01$ ).

A similar trend was observed when male and female students were analyzed separately. Among male students, the adjustment scores differed significantly between the High and Average Emotional Intelligence groups ( $t = 4.284, p < .01$ ), High and Low Emotional Intelligence groups ( $t = 8.162, p < .01$ ), and Average and Low Emotional Intelligence groups ( $t = 5.571, p < .01$ ). Likewise, among female students, significant differences were found between the High and Average Emotional Intelligence groups ( $t = 3.498, p < .01$ ), High and Low Emotional Intelligence groups ( $t = 6.106, p < .01$ ), and Average and Low Emotional Intelligence groups ( $t = 3.477, p < .01$ ). These consistent findings across both genders indicate that the level of emotional intelligence is associated with significant differences in students' adjustment.

It is important to note that, according to the scoring procedure of the Adjustment Inventory for College Students (Sinha & Singh, 2012) used in the present study, higher adjustment scores indicate poor adjustment. Therefore, students classified in the Low Emotional Intelligence group obtained the highest adjustment mean score (52.44), followed by the Average Emotional Intelligence group (41.73), while the High Emotional Intelligence group obtained the lowest mean score (32.48). These findings suggest that the adjustment levels of the three emotional intelligence groups differ significantly and students of higher EI are significantly higher on adjustment. Accordingly, the hypothesis stating that there will be a significant difference in the adjustment of college students belonging to different levels of emotional intelligence is supported. Many earlier studies (Saini and Tyagi, 2024; Goyal and Malik, 2023; Basu, 2019; Patel, 2013) have reported a positive association between emotional intelligence and adjustment, the present findings support these findings. The significant differences observed among the three emotional intelligence groups suggest that emotional intelligence is associated with students' adjustment, and the direction of this association in the present sample is in consonance with that reported in many previous investigations.

Overall, the findings of Table 2 reveal that while male and female students do not differ significantly in their adjustment, students belonging to different levels of emotional intelligence exhibit statistically significant differences in adjustment. Hence, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, indicating that adjustment varies significantly across the High, Average, and Low Emotional Intelligence groups. The findings contribute to the growing literature on emotional intelligence by highlighting that its relationship with adjustment is positive.

**Table – 2 : Showing Means, S.Ds. and 't' ratios of Adjustment Scores**

| Groups       | N   | Means | S.Ds. | df  | 't' ratios | Level of Sig. |
|--------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|------------|---------------|
| Male         | 100 | 41.57 | 9.72  | 198 | 0.743      | NS            |
| Female       | 100 | 42.62 | 10.27 |     |            |               |
| High EI      | 50  | 32.48 | 9.25  | 148 | 5.653      | 0.01          |
| Average EI   | 100 | 41.73 | 9.83  |     |            |               |
| High EI      | 50  | 32.48 | 9.25  | 98  | 10.294     | 0.01          |
| Low EI       | 50  | 52.44 | 10.12 |     |            |               |
| Average EI   | 100 | 41.73 | 9.83  | 148 | 6.168      | 0.01          |
| Low EI       | 50  | 52.44 | 10.12 |     |            |               |
| M-High EI    | 30  | 32.34 | 9.45  | 83  | 4.284      | 0.01          |
| M-Average EI | 55  | 41.80 | 10.22 |     |            |               |
| M-High EI    | 30  | 32.34 | 9.45  | 43  | 8.162      | 0.01          |
| M-Low EI     | 15  | 59.19 | 10.48 |     |            |               |
| M-Average EI | 55  | 41.80 | 10.22 | 58  | 5.571      | 0.01          |
| M-Low EI     | 15  | 59.19 | 10.48 |     |            |               |
| F-High EI    | 20  | 32.60 | 9.36  | 63  | 3.498      | 0.01          |
| F-Average EI | 45  | 41.65 | 9.68  |     |            |               |
| F-High EI    | 20  | 32.60 | 9.36  | 53  | 6.106      | 0.01          |
| F-Low EI     | 35  | 49.59 | 10.47 |     |            |               |
| F-Average EI | 45  | 41.65 | 9.68  | 78  | 3.477      | 0.01          |
| F-Low EI     | 35  | 49.59 | 10.47 |     |            |               |

**The study has finally led to the following conclusions :-**

- (1) Male students are significantly higher on emotional intelligence than female students, indicating that gender differences exist in emotional intelligence among the participants of the present study.
- (2) No significant gender difference was found in the adjustment of college students, suggesting that male and female students are equal on overall adjustment.
- (3) Students belonging to different levels of emotional intelligence (High, Average, and Low) differ significantly in their adjustment scores, indicating that emotional intelligence is an important factor associated with students' adjustment.

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