LOOK EAST

A Journal of CDS - RBCEC
Volume 8 | Issue 1 | 2022
ISSN 2231-0029

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A Journal of CDS-RBCEC

ISSN 2231-0029

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1, 2022

Centre for Development Studies

Rishi Bankim Chandra Evening College

East Kantalpara, Naihati

North 24 Parganas, West Bengal

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LOOK EAST is an annual peer-reviewed journal of the Centre for Development Studies, Rishi Bankim Chandra Evening College. The journal publishes papers on economics, social science and management subjects with special focus on Southeast Asian Countries.

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Impact of COVID-19 on Indian Banking Sector

Subham Dastidar[1]

Abstract

Pandemic COVID-19 changes the complete economic scenario of the world. Perhaps this is the most tragic period of human history so far. Developing country or under developed country, no country escaped safe from this. The Indian economy has been hugely affected due to COVID-19 Pandemic. Indian Banking sector faced and continue to face many challenges. Government and RBI made necessary changes in their policy with the help of reforms for facing COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of the paper is to study the effect of covid-19 on Indian banking sector and the reforms RBI bought in its policy due to COVID19. Moreover, how the Indian Banking Sector is affected by COVID-19. It's true that banks are established in India with a primary purpose to make profit by giving expected services to customers. But Covid19 has changed the state of Indian customers. Due to lockdown and shut down of businesses, income source of the Indian people has been reduced to a great extent. These challenges our Indian banks are facing in current pandemic situation.

Keywords: *Pandemic COVID-19, Indian economy Economic scenario, Banking sector*

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1. Introduction

The pandemic has hit millions of lives with thousands of deaths across the world. The Coronavirus, first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019, spread exhaustively to the overall world. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic on 11th March 2020 (WHO, 2020). India, like many other countries, was extensively affected by the Coronavirus. The total world economy went into a recession due to the impact of COVID-19. In India, the pandemic had a profound impact on all sectors of the economy.

A report published by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) indicates that the Coronavirus pandemic affected even those companies and businesses that were performing well before the outbreak (RBI, n.d.). The Indian economy is primarily supported by three important sectors: the primary sector, secondary sector, and tertiary sector. These three sectors are significantly reliant on the banking sector for financial support. The banking sector plays a crucial role by providing loans, advances, short-term credits, issuing letters of credit, and bank guarantees (Singhal & Goyal, 2020).

The vulnerability of borrowers increased due to job losses, slowdown in sales, and decreased profits as the virus spread globally. Banking customers were in desperate need of financial relief. The Reserve Bank of India encouraged national banks to provide relief by framing suitable banking policies for customers (RBI, n.d.). The challenges faced by Indian banks due to the COVID-19 pandemic were substantial. The operating environment of the banking sector became uncertain and unenthusiastic due to the overall uncertainty in the economy.

Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching effects on global health and economies, including India. The banking sector, a critical pillar of the Indian economy, faced challenges due to the pandemic's impact. The virus's spread led to job losses, reduced sales, and decreased profits, affecting various sectors that the Indian economy relies upon. The banking sector's role in providing financial support became even more crucial during these uncertain times. As a result, the Reserve Bank of India encouraged banks to adopt appropriate policies to assist their customers and mitigate the pandemic's economic impact.

2. Research Methodology

The present research methodology outlines the framework employed in the investigation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian Banking Sector. The primary objective of this study is to comprehend and elucidate the ramifications of the pandemic on the banking industry in India. The research primarily relies on secondary data sources, given the constraints posed by the ongoing nature of the pandemic.

The choice to employ secondary data stems from its availability and accessibility, as primary data collection methods might be hindered by the present circumstances. The sources of secondary data encompass a diverse array of reputable outlets, ensuring a comprehensive and reliable foundation for analysis. These sources include the Reserve Bank of India's official website, the Reserve Bank of India Manual, guidelines furnished by the RBI in their publications, various books, internet resources, magazines, and newspapers.

Given the evolving and dynamic nature of the pandemic, this study refrains from the application of statistical tools at this juncture. The lack of comprehensive and up-to-date data due to the ongoing pandemic renders statistical analysis less tenable. Instead, the research focuses on a descriptive approach, wherein existing published data available from trustworthy sources is meticulously reviewed, collated, and synthesized.

It is important to note that the scope of this research is bounded by the temporal limitations imposed by the current state of the pandemic. The shortage of extensive historical data necessitates a cautious approach in drawing definitive conclusions. However, this study serves as a foundational effort to shed light on the initial effects of the pandemic on the Indian Banking Sector, paving the way for more comprehensive analyses in the future.

3. Objectives of the Study

a. To study the effect of COVID-19 in Indian Banking Sector.

b. To study the Government initiatives and RBI Reforms due to COVID-19.

c. To find out ways to overcome challenges for Indian Banking system caused by COVID-19 Pandemic.

4. Effect of COVID-19 in Indian Banking Sector

a. Significant Reduction in Demand from SMEs/Corporate: The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the Indian banking sector, particularly in terms of demand from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and corporate entities. The widespread economic slowdown resulting from lockdowns and restrictions led to a sharp decrease in economic activity. This, in turn, resulted in a reduced demand for financial services from SMEs and corporate clients. The lack of business operations and uncertain economic prospects led these entities to curtail their borrowing and investment plans, affecting the banking sector's overall lending and revenue.

b. Structural Shift in Customer Behavior: The pandemic brought about a seismic shift in customer behavior within the Indian banking sector. Social distancing norms, government-imposed restrictions, and the general fear of contracting the virus altered the way customers interacted with banks. This transformation prompted banks to reevaluate their customer engagement strategies. To navigate these challenges, banks had to place a stronger emphasis on building deeper customer relationships. One crucial aspect of this shift was the accelerated adoption of technology. Banks had to invest in digital infrastructure and innovative solutions to cater to the evolving needs of customers who were now more inclined towards remote and contactless banking. This reorientation towards technology not only allowed banks to meet immediate demands but also positioned them to better serve customers in the future. Consequently, the focus of the banking business shifted towards customer retention strategies, as highlighted by Abhay Kamat in 2021.

c. Transformation of Employee Roles and Operating Models: The pandemic-induced restrictions also had a significant impact on the operational dynamics of the Indian banking sector. Mobility constraints and the need for remote work arrangements forced banks to swiftly adapt their employee roles and operating models. The sudden shift towards contactless banking and remote operability meant that traditional ways of conducting banking operations were disrupted. Banks had to reconfigure their processes to enable remote account management, digital customer interactions, and efficient back-end operations. This transformation required considerable investments in technology and changes in organizational culture to ensure that employees could perform effectively in this new operational landscape. The insights shared by Abhay

Kamat in 2021 underscored the challenges and imperatives for such adaptations.

d. Increase in Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA): One of the notable consequences of the pandemic's impact on the Indian banking sector was the increase in the Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio. Over a specific period from September 2020 to September 2021, this ratio surged from 7.5 percent to 13.5 percent. The economic disruption caused by the pandemic led to financial stress for individuals and businesses, affecting their ability to repay loans. This rise in NPAs posed a challenge for banks as they had to allocate more resources to manage bad loans, impacting their overall financial health. The increase in NPAs underscored the need for effective risk management strategies and closer monitoring of loan portfolios in the face of unpredictable economic conditions.

Banking operations such as cash deposits, withdrawals, clearing of cheques and other traditional teller services had to be executed by maintaining a safe distance of at-least a meter. This situation created severe operational and technical challenges for both the customers and employees which highlighted a deficiency in our banking systems when struck by an emergency situation. Answer to this problem is to immediate shift towards digitizing and optimizing the bank's backend operations. This will eliminate the dependency on manual intervention, i.e., paper and employee intervention within banks. The COVID-19 situation made us understand the importance of adoption technology in an accelerated manner .As consequences of the pandemic and economic uncertainties, banking sector understands only innovative technologies can play a key role in speeding up transactions and reducing costs for banks. Indian banking sector has realized the role of technology in achieving the success. These new technologies will play major roles in digital transformation of Banks and Financial Institutions .As per global index report by the World Bank(2017), India is the world's second largest unbanked population at 190 million adults without access to a bank account. With increased access of mobile and Internet, the primary focus would to accelerate technology enabled digital financial inclusion. Covid-19 act as a catalyst in this process, as many people who preferred traditional banking shifted towards digital banking out of compulsion and found it convenient and safe. This situation helped to gained confidence of customer on digital banking. This situation created a steady shift in customer preference from visiting bank branches to using digital channels. Now Banks are providing innovative technologies to the customers to interact over multiple automated and digital channels for their entire banking needs. According to RBI, for the financial year 2017-18, India's banking sector faced a hike in cyber frauds and reported the losses of $ 13.7 million. Shifting towards cashless and digital economy, it will be the utmost priority for the banks to implement secure frameworks and systems. Some of the obvious cyber risks include financial frauds, money laundering, data loss, identity thefts and privacy breaches. Banks became more vigilant to identify both internal and external security threats. Banks are now more focused on strengthening security by rigorous KYC, strong customer authentication (SCA), financial grade APIs, firewalls, smart networks, etc., for secure and seamless transactions. The focus should be on increased digital payment infrastructure, especially in rural India, with an intention to create a financial ecosystem for the unbanked and under-banked population of our country.

5. Steps taken by RBI to counter COVID-19 pandemic

Repo Rate Reduction: As a crucial measure to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took swift action by reducing the Repo rate by 75 basis points (bps), equivalent to 0.75%. This brought the Repo rate down from 5.15% to 4.4%. This reduction marked a significant policy response, aimed at providing immediate relief to borrowers, encouraging borrowing, and stimulating economic activity. This action was particularly important in the wake of the pandemic's adverse effects on economic growth and liquidity.

Reverse Repo Rate Adjustment: In a complementary move, the RBI decided to lower the reverse repo rate by a substantial 90 basis points, or 0.90%. This rate cut addressed the excessive liquidity in the banking system. On average, banks had been parking substantial amounts, around Rs. 3 lakh crore, with the RBI through the reverse repo mechanism. By reducing this rate, the RBI aimed to discourage banks from holding excess funds with the central bank, thereby encouraging them to lend more to individuals and businesses, ultimately boosting economic activity.

Loan Moratorium Implementation: Recognizing the widespread financial stress caused by the pandemic-induced lockdowns and disruptions, the RBI introduced a crucial relief measure by allowing lenders to grant a three-month moratorium on term loans. This moratorium was applicable to outstanding loans as of March 1, 2020. The relief was extended to various types of financial institutions, including commercial banks, regional and rural banks, small finance banks, co-operative banks, all-India financial institutions, and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), including those engaged in housing finance and microfinance. This measure provided much-needed breathing space to borrowers facing difficulties in loan repayments due to the economic turmoil.

Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) Reduction: In a move to enhance liquidity in the financial system and stimulate credit growth, the RBI announced a substantial reduction of 100 basis points, or 1%, in the Cash Reserve Ratio. This reduction brought the CRR down to 3% from its earlier level. Effective from March 23rd, this action infused a considerable sum of Rs. 137,000 crores into the economy. The lower CRR allowed banks to hold less mandatory reserves with the RBI, thereby freeing up funds that banks could utilize for lending and investment purposes.

Long Term Repo Operations (LTRO): The RBI implemented Long Term Repo Operations (LTRO) as a mechanism to provide banks with additional liquidity over an extended horizon. However, the central bank specified that the liquidity infused through LTRO was to be deployed by banks in specific financial instruments. These instruments included commercial papers, investment-grade corporate bonds, and non-convertible debentures. This strategic deployment of liquidity aimed to support the credit flow to different sectors of the economy, ensuring that the funds effectively reached those areas most in need.

Ease of Working Capital Financing: In response to the economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, regulatory authorities took measures to facilitate working capital financing for businesses. Lenders were granted the flexibility to recalibrate the drawing power of borrowers by reducing margins and/or reassessing the working capital cycle. This adjustment aimed to provide relief to businesses facing liquidity constraints and operational disruptions. Importantly, these changes were made without triggering asset classification downgrades, thus allowing borrowers to access essential financing without jeopardizing their credit standings.

Working Capital Interest Moratorium: Acknowledging the financial strain experienced by both individuals and businesses due to the pandemic, lending institutions were granted a noteworthy concession. A three-month interest moratorium was extended, allowing borrowers relief from servicing their working capital interest obligations. This concession aimed to provide immediate financial breathing room, offering a temporary respite from the burden of interest payments and allowing businesses to allocate resources toward operational stabilization and recovery efforts.

Postponed Implementation of NSFR: To accommodate the challenges posed by the pandemic's economic impact, regulatory timelines were adjusted. The implementation of the Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR), designed to enhance banks' funding stability, was postponed from the initial deadline of April 1, 2020, to October 1, 2020. This shift recognized the need for banks to prioritize immediate financial stability amidst the uncertainties brought about by the pandemic, while also aligning the regulatory timeline with the evolving economic situation.

Enhanced Marginal Standing Facility (MSF): As part of the comprehensive response to support the banking system during the crisis, the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) was bolstered. The permissible limit for MSF was increased to 3% of the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), effectively enhancing the liquidity cushion available to banks. This strategic measure, in effect until June 30, 2020, provided a significant injection of liquidity—approximately 137,000 crore INR—bolstering the banking system's ability to weather liquidity challenges during the heightened uncertainty.

Fresh Liquidity Injection and Predicted Impact: In the wake of these multi-pronged reforms and interventions, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) demonstrated its commitment to stabilizing the economy. Commencing from February 2020, a substantial liquidity injection of 2.8 lakh crore INR—equivalent to approximately 1.4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—was infused into the financial system. Furthermore, the RBI's projections indicated a visionary approach, predicting that this liquidity injection would potentially increase to 3.2% of GDP. This forward-looking strategy underscored the central bank's dedication to fostering financial stability and supporting economic recovery amid unprecedented challenges.

Cumulative effect of that reform is quite visible now. Global Rating Agency Moody has up-grade the outlook of Indian Banking Sector from Negative to Stable, on the back of stabilizing asset quality and improved capital. The problem of NPA moved down from 8.5 per cent in FY19 to 7.1 per cent in FY21.

6. Revival strategies for Indian banking sector

Balanced Portfolio Structuring for Risk and Return Optimization: In the dynamic landscape of the banking sector, achieving a balanced portfolio structure has become imperative. Banks need to carefully assess and identify viable sectors that offer a favorable risk-to-return ratio. This involves a meticulous evaluation of potential risks associated with lending to different sectors and their corresponding return potentials. By diversifying their portfolio across industries, geographies, and asset classes, banks can mitigate concentration risk and reduce vulnerability to economic shocks. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the necessity for robust loan loss provisioning practices. Banks must recalibrate their approach to evaluating loan loss provisions, factoring in the heightened uncertainties brought about by the pandemic. Accurate and forward-looking provisioning mechanisms are pivotal to maintain financial stability and absorb potential credit losses effectively.

Adaptive Customer Engagement and Continuous Monitoring: The banking sector's relationship with customers has evolved significantly, driven by the shift in customer behavior amplified by the pandemic. In this dynamic environment, banks must proactively engage in continuous monitoring and adopt innovative strategies to remain attuned to the ever-changing needs of their customers. Establishing seamless and personalized digital channels of communication is crucial for maintaining a strong and lasting connection with customers. To address the evolving preferences of customers, banks need to design proactive and flexible plans that can swiftly adapt to changing circumstances. By offering tailored financial solutions, personalized advice, and value-added services, banks can enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction, ultimately ensuring their competitiveness in a rapidly transforming marketplace.

Strategic Operational and Financial Planning with Risk Management: The pandemic has underscored the critical importance of developing comprehensive operational, financial, and risk management plans across different time horizons. Banking institutions need to be equipped to navigate short-term disruptions, address medium-term uncertainties, and establish robust long-term strategies. These plans should encompass operational contingencies, capital allocation strategies, liquidity management, and stress testing frameworks. Regulatory compliance also takes on added significance in times of uncertainty. Banks must be adept at adhering to evolving regulatory requirements while maintaining operational efficiency. Furthermore, re-analysis of business models is essential to ensure alignment with the changing market dynamics. Adapting strategies, revisiting revenue streams, and reassessing risk exposures will empower banks to respond effectively to disruptions and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

7. Conclusion

Covid-19 has been an unprecedented challenge for Indian Banking Sector. The Reserve Bank of India has recognized the challenges and responded timely and the positive result is to some extent visible, but this is just the beginning and they still have a long way to go. Any assertive comment on this will be very much premature. In this situation banks will need to quickly take measures to ensure seamless delivery of services to customers with minimal disruptions. They will have to frame policies to provide rapid resolutions to the problems created by the COVID-19 crisis. This I really a tough challenge for the financial institutions, and collaborating with a trusted service provider may be the way forward.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 11-18

Dalit and Human Rights in India

Jayita Pal*

Abstract

Dalits in India generally remained socially excluded, economically exploited and politically marginalized. In India not a single aspects of Dalits life were left unaffected by systematic discrimination. In Indian institution of inequality is constructed in the form of caste system which has been existence since ancient times. For that reason, the term 'Dalit' not only symbolizes oppressed but also represent the inherent voice of dissent. Dalits have been called by different name like 'Harijon', 'Depressed classes', 'Mlechha', 'Chandala', 'Antyajo' etc. Though Indian constitution ensures equality in social sphere but in reality, their human rights are regularly violated. This is evidenced by various recent incidents that violence against Indian Dalits in present time is still continuing and no way less horrific than that reported in the past.

Key words: *Concept of Dalit, Indian constitution, Dalit movement, violation against Dalit, NCRB Report*

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1. Introduction

Though India has proudly entered its 75th year of independence, It experienced the presence of social cleavages in every sphere of life, in terms of caste, class, gender and so on. In India Dalits are the people who are economically, socially and politically exploited through the centuries. The exploitation is due to the discrimination followed by age old caste hierarchical tradition in the Hindu society. Caste system in India is considered as more than 3000 years old. Dalits are traditionally lower caste people who are regarded as untouchables and are discriminated socially, economically and politically. The Dalits make up what are known in India as the scheduled castes, the scheduled Tribes and the backward classes. Therefore, these groups are classically known as the shudras or the slave. The term Dalit has come into popular use in India only very recently. Social reformer and revolutionary Mahatma Joytiba Phule used it to describe the outcastes and untouchables as the oppressed and crushed victims of the Indian caste system. In 1970 the Dalit Panther movement of Maharashtra gave currency to the term Dalit. Dalits are discriminated socially economically and in multiple ways and they do not enjoy equal status. To them there are threats, prohibitions and harassment, and there is practice of untouchability. Many classical studies have been carried out in this regard that shows magnitude and nature of continuing practice of untouchability or human rights violations against the untouchables (Deshpande, 1999; Thorat, 2009). Indian ancient history has records showing unequal treatment of humans of different social, economic and cultural status. The people in lower strata have been referred to as down trodden, untouchables, Harijans, Dalits etc., during the evolution. Indian social system in form of caste system is in direct conflict with concept of equality (Nirmal, 2000). Inequality is the heart of the caste system in India.

2. Historical Evolution and Struggles of the Dalit Community in India

Dalit (‘oppressed’ or ‘broken’) is not a new word. In The Untouchables, published in 1948, Ambedkar chose the term ‘broken men’, an English translation of ‘Dalit’. Dalits, the group of people who constitute the last category of castes in the Varnashrama Theory. This is the traditional definition of the term Dalit as is given by different scholars. According to the Indian Constitution the Dalits are the people coming under the category Scheduled castes. With slight changes, however, the term ‘Dalit‘ would mean not only one category of caste, it means the human who is exploited economically, socially, politically and from all the spheres of life, by the traditions of the country. By tradition would mean the 'Brahmanical Indian tradition' prevailing in the country for centuries. A Dalit is the person who has the realization of the sorrows and struggles of those inthe lowest stratum of the society. The Dalits, called by different names like 'Harijon', 'Depressed classes',' Mlechha', 'Chandala', 'Antyajo' etc. Dalit is one who believes in equality, who practices equality and who combats inequality. A Dalit is the believer of Humanism - the ultimate ideology of human beings. The real symbol of present Dalit is 'Change and Revolution '. Therefore, any individual from any caste category, will be considered a Dalit given the fact that the person is depressed and exploited, aspire to attain equality through change and revolution, being the firm believer of the ideology of Humanism'.

India evidenced Dalit Movement which was the result of the constant hatred and barbaric activities from the upper castes of India. It was a general belief that the Dalits are part of the lowest of low Varnas. Thus, for centuries Dalits have been positioned at the bottom of the rigid Indian caste society. People from other castes, who considered themselves to be higher, believe that Dalits are impure by birth and that their touch or sheer presence could be polluting. Hence, they are assumed to be untouchable. They were the people who cultivated the land and worked as bonded labour, did the work of scavenging and did all types of manual works. The most inhuman practice is that of untouchability, which made the Dalits to live in extreme inhuman situations. This has made the Dalits to rise and protest, against the inhuman practices of Brahmanism . From the Vedic age the Dalits began struggle against oppression and exploitation. The inhuman and barbaric practices committed against the Dalits, led them to protest against the caste –based hierarchical system of India.The Dalit movement that gained momentum in the post-independence period, have its roots in the Vedic period. It was to the Shramanic -Brahmanic confrontation and then to the Mukti Movement. In the 1970s, the Dalit Panther Movement began in Maharashtra. The most fundamental factor responsible for the rise of Dalit Panthers was the repression and terror under which the oppressed Dalits continued to live in the rural area. Inspired by the Black Movement, the Dalit Panthers was formed by a group of educated Mahars in order to lead the movement.

3. Persistent Challenges: Contemporary Violations of Dalit Human Rights in India

Indian recent history has records showing unequal treatment of humans of different social, economic and cultural status and Dalits are the no exception to that. Though Indian constitution guarantees equal rights to all of its citizen but in reality, inequality exists in all its form. India has acceded to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as to the subsequent international covenants of Economic, Social and Cultural rights and Civil and Political rights adopted by the Central Assembly of the United Nations. In Indian constitution there are several provisions, laws, Acts and Articles for the protection of Human Rights of Dalits. Article 15 of Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of caste, religion, race, sex or place of birth and envisages equality before law (Article 14). Also, equality of opportunity in public employment (Article 16) is enshrined. Anti-caste discriminatory provisions are also incorporated in Article 17 by abolition of untouchability. As such, right to equality is provided under articles 14 to 18 of the Indian Constitution. For Human rights violation one can also move Human Rights National and state level Commissions. There are also many other legislations in India besides constitution of India; those are meant to protect human Rights of Dalits which also include procedures and rules for protection and implementation of Human Rights of Dalits. Against commission of offences of atrocities against the members of SC/ST, special courts for trials of offences, relief and rehabilitation of the victims of offences are provided in the ambit of SC/ST prevention of atrocities Act 1989 (POA, 1989). But there is no improvement in conditions of Dalits.

It is observed that government machinery is indifferent towards atrocities on Dalits. Dalits plight in India has not improved after independence. It has become worse which is borne out by the fact that every day two Dalits are assaulted, every day 3 Dalits women are raped, every hour two Dalit houses are burnt down. Dalits are some 160 million people in India, earlier called untouchables. Present times in various part of India we can still observe rampant violation against Dalits. Very astonishing incident took place in Rajasthan. There atrocities against Dalit took place in school premises. The schools have made different seating arrangement for children from Scheduled castes (SC) while serving mid-day meal. National Commission for Scheduled Caste (NCSC) has received such complaint.

In 2015 in Rajasthan Jat-Dalit violence took place. Three Dalits killed and 13 were injured in that incident. In 2016 Rohit Vermula suicide case was gained widespread media attention. It was the incident happened in Central University of Hyderabad where a PhD student had to face caste discrimination against Dalits. In 2017 a 17-year-old Dalit girl was raped by some politicians in Unnao District of UP. Surprisingly victim's father was assaulted and charged with possessing illegal arms. These are the few cases that got widespread media attention. But the actual picture is much more alarming.

The Central government celebrated Independence Day with "Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav*'*. Meanwhile Dalit school boy suffered a gruesome assault by his upper-caste Hindu teacher, all for touching a water pot. The heart-wrenching incident has posed questions for India's ethical-legal contract through the Constitution, which had abolished untouchability under Article 17 of the right toequality.

In 2021 National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released the annual report of crime in India. For a long period of time this report is considered as a valuable compilation of statistics. The National Coalition for Strengthening SCs and STs Act (NCSPA) has analysed this report. According to its report despite explicit constitutional provisions and guidelines the suffering of Dalits across India remains the worst. Dalits and Adivasi community is not only the victim of this scourge caste system but also faces institutional discrimination and social exclusion. The organisation believes that small number of cases that got the attention of mainstream media. However, the number is huge and even the 2021 Crime data shows a similar trend of an upsurge in violence;with a large proportion of crimes against Dalits and Adivasi women and children. The report revealed that atrocities or crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs) have increased by 1.2% in 2021 with Uttar Pradesh reporting the highest number of cases of atrocities against SCs accounting for 25.82% followed by Rajasthan with 14.7% and Madhya Pradesh with 14.1% during 2021. Further, the report reveals that atrocities against Scheduled Tribes (ST) have increased by 6.4% in 2021 with Madhya Pradesh reporting the highest number of cases accounting for 29.8% followed by Rajasthan with 24% and Odisha with 7.6% in 2021.Violence against Dalit and Adivasi women has also risen. Cases of Rape against SC women, (including minors) account for 7.64% and ST women account for 15% out of the total cases reported. The reporthas also tabled detailed numbers for cases of rape against Dalit Women cases of minor rape, attempt to rape, assault on women to outrage her modesty, and Kidnapping of women and minors which cumulatively stood at 16.8% in SC women and 26.8% in ST women.

The report showed that a total of 70,818 cases of atrocities against SCs were pending investigation at the end of the year 2021, including the previous year's cases. Similarly, 12,159 Cases of atrocities against STs were pending investigation and a total of 2,63,512 cases of atrocities against SCs and 42,512 cases of atrocities against STs came for trial in court. Conviction percentage under the SCs and STs (PoA) Act in conjunction with the Indian Penal Code (IPC) remained at 36.0% for SCs and 28.1% for STs. At the end of the year, 96.0% of cases of atrocities against SCs were pending trial whereas, for STs, the percentage stood at 95.4%.

The NCPSA believes that even after the amendments came into force in the year 2016, which generated hope for the Dalit and Adivasi victims in accessing speedy justice, the implementation of the amended SCs and STs (PoA) Amended Act 2015 remains a challenge.

The organisation has called upon the Government of India to robustly, enforce and implement the new provisions of the amended Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 (2015), and take swift and robust action against the dominant caste perpetrators violating the human rights of Dalits and Adivasis, conduct an open and transparent investigation under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015 and prosecute those Government and police officials who are found to have aided and abetted criminals. The organisation has also demanded that the GOI robustly implement the Exclusive Special Courts mandated in the amended act for speedy trials.

In a seeming paradox, the latest National Crime Records Bureau data show that West Bengal, which at 214 lakh has the second highest population of Scheduled Castes, recorded just 108 incidents of crimes against SC in 2021. This works out to 0.5 per cent. Uttar Pradesh has the highest population of Scheduled Castes - 413.6 lakh. In West Bengal, among the crimes committed against Scheduled Castes there was not a single case of murder, dacoity, robbery or arson. Four incidents of attempted to murder were reported.

Sociologist Partha Chatterjee described this phenomenon differently. In an interview in 2012 he told that “However, to my sense, in the normal course the police here do not record your caste. For example, in a case involving a Scheduled Caste person where there is a dispute over land, it would be recorded as a land dispute and not as a caste-related one. Maybe the absence of adequate Dalit movements here is a reason why the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 is not applied much." Professor Chatterjee added: "The practice of untouchability is very low in West Bengal society; it is not a general phenomenon. That sense of everyday practice of untouchability is gone in Bengal society." Even if it does happen, it is mostly in terms of ritual-based rights where Dalits could be denied them. Caste has not fully disappearedin Bengal society, but unlike other parts of India violent incidents of castediscrimination do not happen there.

Dalit intellectual Kancha Ilaiah said the National Commission for Scheduled Castes should mandate police stations to register the caste identity of victims in order to understand the sociological aspects of victims. "Who gets killed, who gets attacked frequently, who gets raped, should be recorded in terms of caste identity."

4. Conclusion

Although India has made measurable progress in terms of the protections afforded to Dalits since independence, Dalits still suffer discrimination and mistreatment at the hands of some upper caste members and law enforcement officials. Such mistreatment is inexcusable under both India's domestic laws and under international law. It is necessary to critically analyse the shortcomings of existing laws for the protection and implementation of Dalits human Rights. This is to be doneextensively not only for effective protection and implementation of Human Rights of Dalits but also to uplift them in every sphere of life that is socially, economically and politically. Various shortcomings leading to problems of Dalits need to be addressed which may include short comings in protection laws, implementation of laws and procedures to know why violations of Human Rights are still taking place in spite of so many protection laws in existence. Short comings in implementing international laws in this regard need due consideration. To what extent political unwillingness of the people in power is responsible for the failure of legal system for protection of Human Rights of Dalits also need to be assessed. Short comings in role played by Human Rights Commissions at the Centre and state level to protect Human Rights of Dalits are to be considered also. Government officials and specially police officer must consider that every case of violation against Dalits be registered, otherwise the real scenario of Dalit oppression can't be completely exposed. Numerous reports of violence and discrimination indicate that Dalits still remain as India's "broken people."

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 19-26

The Current Scenario of HR and the challenges ahead: An explorative study

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Abstract

The advent of COVID-19 brought about unprecedented levels of uncertainty, fear, and doubt, marking a period of unparalleled challenges in the lives of individuals worldwide. As the novel virus emerged, the lack of familiarity with its nature and the absence of a clear course of action intensified the pervasive sense of unease. Fast forward nearly two years, and a concerted effort has been made to accumulate information and marshal resources to combat the virus effectively. Encouragingly, the current state of recovery reflects a positive trajectory. However, the notion of reverting to a pre-pandemic "normal" is elusive, as the very definition of what is considered "normal" has undergone a profound transformation. This paper contends that a return to the pre-COVID status quo is unlikely, prompting a fundamental shift in the landscape that Human Resources (HR) professionals must navigate.In the aftermath of the pandemic, HR professionals are compelled to adapt to this new paradigm. This paper explores key post-COVID HR trends, providing insights and recommendations to empower HR practitioners in preparing for the evolving workforce dynamics in the redefined "normal" post-COVID era.

Keywords: *COVID-19*, *Uncertainty*, *Workforce dynamics*, *Post-COVID HR trends*

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1. Introduction

In the wake of the global pandemic, a profound transformation has swept through the professional landscape, fundamentally altering the way individuals work. The focal point of this paradigm shift is undeniably remote work, an aspect that has assumed unprecedented significance in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. The ubiquitous presence of video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Skype has become emblematic of this transformative trend, signaling a trajectory toward the normalization of remote work in the business realm.

While antecedent trends indicated a growing interest in remote work, particularly among the self-employed, the pandemic acted as a catalyst, expediting the adoption of remote working practices across diverse sectors. A noteworthy revelation from the Pew Research Center underscores the magnitude of this change: before the pandemic, approximately 20 percent of Americans were engaged in remote work; however, this figure has since surged to an astounding 71 percent. Furthermore, within this substantial majority, a significant 54 percent express a desire to perpetuate their remote work arrangements.

In light of these transformative statistics, a shift towards greater flexibility in working practices is not only inevitable but also imminent. Businesses, cognizant of this evolving landscape, may find themselves compelled to invest in more enduring communication tools and services. The objective is clear – to not only stay connected with employees in remote settings but also to provide robust support conducive to sustained productivity. As we navigate this paradigm shift, the trajectory of professional engagement appears destined to become more adaptable and responsive to the demands of a workforce increasingly inclined towards remote work.

2. Integration of Technology in Post-COVID Human Resources Trends

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, technology stands at the forefront of transformative change, assuming a pivotal role in shaping emerging trends within the realm of Human Resources (HR). An integral aspect of this technological revolution lies in the domain of talent acquisition, where advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and blockchain technology are poised to revolutionize HR practices.

The infusion of these cutting-edge technologies holds the promise of a streamlined recruitment process and an enhancement in the overall quality of hires. The potential impact extends beyond mere procedural efficiency, fostering a paradigm shift in how HR professionals approach talent acquisition. Embracing AI, VR, AR, and blockchain not only expedites the hiring process but also introduces novel dimensions to candidate assessment, contributing to a more nuanced and comprehensive evaluation of potential employees.

Moreover, the transformative power of technology extends beyond the procedural realm. A notable advantage lies in the identification and recruitment of tech-savvy candidates possessing digital and transferable skills. This strategic alignment ensures the cultivation of a dynamic and adaptive working environment, poised to confront and surmount any challenges that may arise. In essence, the integration of technology in HR is not merely a tool for efficiency; it becomes a catalyst for the creation of a modern workplace, marked by continual evolution and resilience.

For those seeking exemplary HR tools that embody the cutting edge of technological integration, the Talent Culture 2021 HR Tech winners present a compelling resource. The innovative solutions recognized in this prestigious accolade exemplify the industry's best practices and serve as beacons for organizations aspiring to navigate the evolving landscape of HR technology effectively.

3. Prioritization of Employee Well-being

There is a noticeable shift in the corporate landscape as an increasing number of companies place a paramount emphasis on the welfare of their employees. This transformative trend is marked by a departure from a traditionally business-centric approach to one that is more people-centric, reflecting a positive evolution in organizational values. Employers are now demonstrating heightened understanding, awareness, and flexibility in ensuring the overall well-being of their workforce.

To actualize this commitment, organizations are exploring various strategies, one of which involves enhancing the employee experience through improved rewards and incentives. By offering benefits such as additional time off or comprehensive well-being packages, companies can effectively address both the mental and physical health concerns of their staff.

Leading by example, several prominent companies are pioneering initiatives that showcase a genuine dedication to employee welfare. Notably, during a period of reduced demand, Microsoft stood out by continuing to remunerate hourly workers who were providing essential support. Likewise, Starbucks took a proactive approach by enhancing mental health benefits and introducing therapy sessions for all its U.S.-based employees and their family members, starting in April 2020.

4. Reevaluating Contemporary Business Approaches

In response to dynamic shifts in the business landscape, human resource (HR) managers must embrace adaptability. This necessitates a comprehensive review of existing company policies and practices to align with the evolving demands of the times. A critical aspect of this reevaluation involves scrutinizing the efficacy of strategies employed during crises, assessing both successful and unsuccessful elements from the employee perspective.

The aftermath of the pandemic has unveiled a divergence in the fortunes of various industries. While some have weathered the storm, others faced the grim realities of downsizing or even closure. Recognizing the imperative for strategic recalibration, Deloitte's Workforce Strategies for Post-COVID-19 Recovery Workbook emerges as a valuable resource for managers undertaking a reassessment of their business methodologies. This workbook systematically addresses the tripartite pillars of 1) respond, 2) recover, and 3) thrive, offering a holistic guide to organizations seeking success through adaptive transformation in every facet of their operations.

5. Changing Paradigms in Learning and Training Approaches

In the landscape of post-COVID Human Resources (HR) trends, a notable shift away from traditional face-to-face learning towards the adoption of e-learning resources is poised to be particularly significant.

Online learning has emerged as a commendable and dependable modality for delivering training. Its effectiveness became particularly evident during the challenging times of the coronavirus pandemic, where it served as a crucial asset. Given its cost-effectiveness and heightened efficiency, there is a discernible inclination for businesses to invest in e-learning, supplanting outdated training methodologies.

A surge in the popularity of diverse online training formats such as webinars, virtual classrooms, online courses, video training, and mobile learning is evident. Tools facilitating these types of training, including Learning Management Systems (LMSs), onboarding tools, and course platforms, play pivotal roles in enhancing employee training programs. This trend underscores a broader industry recognition of the value and versatility offered by contemporary online learning solutions.

6. Leveraging Data for Strategic Decision-Making in Times of Financial Turbulence

In the dynamic landscape of business, particularly when faced with financial instability, the imperative to forecast workforce needs and implement cost-cutting measures assumes critical significance. During such precarious times, Human Resource (HR) managers play a pivotal role in steering organizations toward sustainable success.

To navigate the complexities of fluctuating financial scenarios, HR managers must pivot towards a data-centric approach to decision-making. Embracing data analytics emerges as a strategic imperative, offering a reliable compass to guide HR professionals in making well-informed decisions that are crucial for the resilience and longevity of the business.

The utilization of data analytics stands out as the linchpin in the quest for accurate and timely information. Through data-driven insights, HR managers can adeptly navigate the recruitment landscape, ensuring the identification and acquisition of the most qualified candidates. Furthermore, data analytics empowers organizations to assess and monitor employee performance, engagement, and productivity metrics with precision.

By relying on comprehensive data analytics, HR professionals can align their decisions with the strategic goals of the organization, facilitating the creation of agile and responsive workforce strategies. This data-driven approach not only enables the optimization of recruitment processes but also enhances the ability to gauge the effectiveness of existing talent management initiatives.

7. Top HR Trends In 2023

I. The Shift to Hybrid Work: A Catalyst for Business Transformation

The paradigm shift to hybrid work is not merely a response to the challenges posed by the pandemic; it is a catalyst for profound business transformation. As organizations embrace this flexible work model, HR leaders find themselves at the forefront of a monumental change. A staggering 95% of HR leaders anticipate at least a portion of their workforce continuing to operate remotely post-pandemic, necessitating a strategic readiness to support and optimize the hybrid work environment.

II. Prioritizing Worker Well-being: A Long-Term Imperative

Despite commendable employee performance during the pandemic, the disruptions have left enduring and challenging-to-reverse impacts on workforce health. Recognizing the imperative of long-term employee well-being, HR professionals must now shift their focus towards mental health, fostering trust among team members, leaders, and individuals, and nurturing inclusive work environments.

III. Digital Transformation: Navigating the Tech Evolution

The relentless evolution of HR technology requires HR professionals to continually enhance their digital proficiency. In the era of digital transformation, acquiring skills to navigate evolving HR technologies becomes paramount. Understanding basic algorithms and being adept at asking the right questions when selecting technology are integral components of this digital literacy.

IV. Cybersecurity in HR: Safeguarding HRMS Effectiveness

The widespread adoption of Human Resource Management Systems (HRMS) demands a parallel commitment to cybersecurity. Cybersecurity breaches, regardless of organizational size, can be financially crippling. HR managers must proactively understand and implement cybersecurity measures to ensure the security and efficiency of HR data.

V. Data-Driven Decision-Making: Overcoming Bottlenecks in Analytics

The challenge of implementing analytics in HR departments necessitates a concerted effort to understand and leverage data effectively. HR managers are now required to access dashboards for relevant data retrieval, while HR analysts must seamlessly integrate financial and business data to enhance the precision of their analyses.

VI. Evolution of the Hiring Process: HR as Change Leaders

HR's pivotal role in managing and measuring the transformation of the hiring process requires strategic leadership and collaboration. HR managers, drawing on their experience and expertise, must align business and leadership needs with employee capabilities, facilitating the creation of talent markets and driving data-driven decisions.

VII. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belongingness: A Call for Real Progress

With an increasing emphasis on empathy and a humane workplace, stakeholders in HR are pressing for tangible progress in equity, diversity, and inclusion. The focus extends to diversifying leadership, not just as a moral imperative but as a means to create a more productive and inclusive workplace.

VIII. Talent Allocation & Management: Navigating the Tight Labor Market

Post-pandemic lessons underscore the importance of not solely relying on external talent acquisition. Talent marketplaces emerge as a strategic tool to connect internal talent with opportunities, including job openings, cross-departmental projects, and temporary assignments.

IX. Building Skills & Competencies: The Rise of Data-Driven Skills

In the competitive landscape, skills have become a currency for career progression, remuneration, and upskilling. The emphasis on mapping internal skills at the organizational level aligns with a broader shift towards data-driven skills assessments during the hiring process.

X. Career Experiences & Training: Investing in Employee Growth

The year 2023 marks a continued focus on employees and their career experiences. Organizations recognize the value of investing in employees' career growth, not only for individual professional development but also as a strategic move to enhance organizational capabilities, quality, delivery, and customer service. Supporting career progressions is poised to become a pivotal HR trend, resulting in more skilled, engaged employees and a competitive advantage for organizations in the evolving landscape.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the dynamic landscape of Human Resources (HR) in 2023 is steering organizations towards a significant overhaul of their workplace and workforce strategies. The identified top HR trends for the year not only underscore the necessity for change but also present a unique and compelling opportunity for HR professionals to lead transformative initiatives. This juncture marks an exhilarating phase in the realm of HR, demanding swift and strategic responses from organizational leaders.

The imperatives of the identified HR trends necessitate a proactive approach from HR leaders who must skillfully adapt their methodologies. The primary focus lies in the identification, attraction, and retention of critical skills, acknowledging the pivotal role these skills play in organizational success. This demands a departure from traditional HR practices and an embrace of innovative strategies that align with the evolving needs of the workforce.

Furthermore, the contemporary HR landscape emphasizes the crucial task of redesigning work structures to enhance the employee value proposition. Recognizing that employees are integral assets, HR leaders are tasked with creating an environment that not only attracts top talent but also fosters retention by providing a compelling and enriching workplace experience. The optimization of the employee value proposition is instrumental in not only attracting new talent but also in fortifying the commitment and engagement of existing employees.

Ultimately, the overarching goal of these strategic adaptations is to drive tangible business results. HR leaders find themselves at the forefront of organizational success, wielding their influence to align workforce strategies with overarching business objectives. This convergence of HR practices with business outcomes underscores the pivotal role HR plays in shaping the trajectory of organizations, making this era an unprecedented and exciting time for professionals in the HR domain.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 27-32

Mahatma Gandhi's Thoughts on Women Empowerment – A Critical Study

Susmita Santra[1] & Bhaskar Jha[2]

Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi was a great leader. He advocated the empowerment of women. Gandhi Ji always wanted to empower the women belonging to all the class and sections of the society. He always led his life and had always motivated his countrymen to lead their lives on the Principles of the Srimad Bhagaved Gita. In this research work an attempt has been made to explore and identify the need of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of political freedom (Swaraj) and non-violence (Ahimsa) in women empowerment. Another objective of this study is to find out the importance of Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts on Women Empowerment. It has been found that Mahatma Gandhi had always wanted that Women would be empowered from all the aspects. For this they need to enjoy freedom from all kinds of bondages, obstacles, hindrances. After getting freedom women should also enjoy peace in their personal and professional lives. Then only they would be able to enjoy true freedom. True freedom would empower them. It will make them self-reliant and self-dependent in nature.

Keywords: *Mahatma Gandhi, Women, Empowerment, Swaraj, Ahimsha*

1. Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi, The Father of the Nation of India was a true believer and practitioner of the philosophy of Srimad Bhagaved Gita. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to streamline the development and progress of the people of India in accordance with the philosophy and guideline of ever pervading and globally

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recognised greatest book- Srimad Bhagavad Gita. The Global Legendary Scholar, the Great Educationist Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also acknowledged this truth.

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the strong advocators of Women's self-sufficiency and self-dependency. From this stand point Mahatma has always emphasised upon the doctrine of women liberation. The study of the traditional social problem of women in India especially during the long pre-independence and post-independence period in India and its outcome is desired to be found out from socio-philosophical means of study.

Statement of the Problem

Empowerment is a process of empowering a person or a group of persons. It is also about the awareness and capacity building of an individual. Empowerment is a journey towards greater and better participation towards greater decision making power and better and greater control with the help of Higher Education.

Women's Empowerment refers to enhancing and improving the social, economic, political and legal power of women to ensure equal right to women. It leads women to control and benefit from resources, assets income and their own time and develop their socio-economic status.

Women's empowerment is the most important thing to be materialised for the overall development of a country. But they have been facing manifold challenges related to access to education, adequate employment opportunities, choice of work and safety at the work place.

Mahatma Gandhi also had spoken about the empowerment of women because he believed that social, economic and political freedom could be achieved through women's empowerment.

2. Objectives of the Study

To identify the need of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of political freedom (Swaraj) and non-violence (Ahimsa) in empowering women.

To explore the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi regarding women empowerment particularly economic empowerment.

3. Findings and Analysis

According to Gandhiji Political Freedom (Independence) is a pre-condition for the implementation of the ideal state. He introduced non-violence intercourse in order to gain political freedom in India. According to Gandhi the freedom of politics is Swaraj. The general meaning of Swaraj is control or governance. But Mahatma Gandhi used to word 'swaraj' in a broader sense.

Young India in 1929 Gandhi told that Swaraj, I mean, the Indian Government formed by the opinion of the majority of the men and women who have settled in the country permanently. These people have to serve the state by baboring their bodies. Swaraj will not be established if some people have power in it. When the power is equal among all, there will be law and that law will be observed properly then the environment of true self government will be created.

According to Mahatma Gandhi Independence means not only getting freedom from political bondage but also making the downtrodden and the poor empower. Freedom means giving the poor the due respect and due position in the society. Because of this particular reason while making the plan and programme for building the Nation we had put special emphasis on development and welfare of the untouched portion of the society as well as the women, the farmers and the workers of the society.

In our country women were seen in a different light for a long time. This discriminatory attitude towards women deprived women not only in India but all over the world also.

Mahatma Gandhi was the first to call women into the movement and society building. He said that participation of women in public works can also bring success. A society in which women are not respected can not be considered a good society. He said that every woman must be a man and every man must be a woman.

Gabdhiji played an important role in uplifting the status of the women in India all through his life. He was instrumental in bringing women out of their homes to take part in the freedom movement of India. It was as the research and historical scholars point out the most radical of his ideas. It involved bringing Indian women out of the 'Pardah' or 'Curtain' – a system that was prevalent among Hindus as well as Muslims of the times.

This involved the possibility of being put behind the bars and thus being separated from their families. This aware steps that were truly revolutionary for these times.

Nationalist Response in the wake of the World War II a part from bringing women into the struggle for Swaraj got opposed various social ills affecting women like child marriage, the dowry system and female infanticide. Ill treatment of the widows was also a social crime.

Mahatma Gandhi considered women to be the presiding duties of the household affair of the homes. This was their dharma to take care of the home-affairs. According to Mahatma Gandhi – "If they do not follow dharma, the people would be totally destroyed". However Mahatma Gandhi had also said that dharma had not implied to be brutal in nature. Women should never be treated as cattle.

Influence of Rabindranath Tagore upon Mahatma Gandhi regarding position and rights of the women in the society:

The Great Poet and Novelist Rabindranath Tagore said in 'Chitrangada' -

"I am Chitrangada, a princess from a line of Great Kings

No goddess am I, nor an ordinary women.

I do not crave worship nor ask to be exalted,

That is not I

That you should ask me in passing to follow behind

That is not I.

I ask to be at your side

In both the good times and ill,

And that you allow yourself to share

Equally in the penances that may come,

They will you know my worth."

Women will be as independent as men not because of the humiliation of unwarranted neglect but because of abandonincy decepting.

Mahatma Gandhi also saw women in this same vision and wanted to empower women. Gandhi told Harijan " My opinion is basically that men and women are equal in terms of their problems. Both have the same soul. Both live the same life and their feeling are the same. They complement each other.

Gandhi's Observation regarding Women in the Society

Mahatma Gandhi has categorically established a fact that women are very important part of the society. Women should never be oppressed or suppressed in the society. They should all ways be given the opportunity to come out of the corner of the room. They must take part in the public life. Women must be empowered so that they could achieve their targets and the targets of the society can also be achieved.

Mahatma Gandhi had always shown respect to the women. He has always advocated for their peace, harmony, growth and development in the society. Without the development of the women in our country, India would not be able to achieve holistic social, economic growth and development. Thus women in the society must be given the freedom. They should live a free life. Then only society would be able to achieve true 'Swaraj'.

4. Conclusion

According to the great social reformer Mahatma Gandhi Swaraj and Ahimsha are the two pillars of women empowerment. The women must be given freedom. After getting freedom they would be able to show the world their abilities, capabilities, qualities. On the other hand women should also be treated with non violence. Peace and harmony can make many constructive things in the society. Violence of any nature be it political violence, social violence, religious violence, domestic violence or economic violence would lead to destruction. Thus Mahatma Gandhi had always advocated for these two fundamental principles of life. These are also the guiding principles of empowerment of women. The Srimad Bhagaved Gita has always talked about this Principles of Life. Swaraj and Ahimsha are the guiding force behind the empowerment of women in all walks of life in this present world also. Self-respect, self-control, self-confidence would come from the sense of security. This security is freedom which is an essential thing in our personal as well as in our professional life. On the other hand jealousy, greed can never make a person winner in life. Ahimsha is very important not in our personal life but also in our professional life. Thus Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophical principles are also the economical principles behind the empowerment of women.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 33-50

An Index to Understand the Monetary Policy Impulse for Indian Economy: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract

The study primarily attempts to address the problem associated with multiplicity in monetary policy instruments for Indian by estimating a set of indices to represent monetary policy stance. The study is confined to post introduction of Liquidity Adjustment Facility (Post-LAF). This set of monetary policy instruments incorporates a set of rates (i.e., Bank Rate, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate) and a set of ratios (i.e., CRR, SLR). In addition to construction of Monetary Policy Index (MPI), this study extends further to understand the impact of monetary policy impulse on a number of key macroeconomic variables. The results of the principal components analysis and subsequent factor analysis suggest that, two Component accounts for almost 84% of variation in the observed variations in the policy instruments. We created two indexes, the Policy Rate Index and the Policy Ratio Index, from these two components.

Keywords: *Monetary policy*, *Monetary policy instruments*, *Monetary policy stance*

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1. Introduction

Monetary policy is the key policy instrument for the macroeconomic stabilization of any modern economy. An expansionary monetary policy primarily represented by a reduction in rate of interest, which accelerate aggregate demand via expansion in consumption and investment demand. Although this expansionary effects on real variables are temporary, the policy generates a permanent upward effect on inflation. An opposite scenario is expected to occur with a contractionary monetary policy, i.e., a temporary deceleration in aggregate demand along with a permanent down-ward pressure on inflation. Central Bank of any modern economy uses multiple monetary policy instruments to introduce the monetary policy shocks to the system, which influence a number of nominal variables, such as, nominal rate of interest, asset prices and foreign exchange rate, etc. Due to the multiplicity of instruments of monetary policy, it is not wise to assess monetary policy stance of any central bank using variation in any single policy instrument. For example, monetary aggregates, policy rates or central bank target rates can be used to represent the monetary policy action by the monetary authority. In addition to that, a number of studies suggests use of the policy statements of the monetary authority to identify or estimate the monetary policy action. For example, in Indian context, the RBI (the monetary policy authority of India) use instruments such as, Open Market Operations, Bank Rate, Cash Reserve Ratio, Statutory Liquidity Ratio, Repo and reverse Repo rate, etc. A multiple indicator approach was adopted by RBI from 1998 replacing monetary targeting.

This study primarily attempts to address the multiplicity of monetary policy instruments problem for Indian context by estimating a set of indices (since, a single index may not represent all type of policy actions) to represent monetary policy stance. The study is confined to post introduction of Liquidity Adjustment Facility (Post-LAF), i.e., 2nd Quarter of 2001 to 1st Quarter of 2020. In this analysis, set of indicators of monetary policy stance, i.e., Bank Rate (BR), Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), are pooled together in order to construct the indices of monetary policy stance of RBI. This set incorporates a set of rates (i.e., Bank Rate, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate) and a set of ratios (i.e., CRR, SLR). RBI effectively regulate the CRR to influence the level of bank reserves and control money supply. The Bank Rate was introduced in April 1997 and

RBI linked all other rates to it, including the Reserve Bank's refinance rates. Even after introduction of repo and reverse repo rates, bank rate continued to be used for signaling the medium-term stance of policy.

The indices the study is intended to construct, are supposed to be summary measures to represent a set of monetary policy indicators. That is, the study is attempting to reduce the dimension of the policy space. The factor analysis technique is used as empirical methodology in this step of the study.

In addition to construction of Monetary Policy Index (MPI), this study extends further to understand the impact of monetary policy impulse on a number of key macroeconomic variables (e.g., inflation, growth rate of real GDP, exchange rate variation, etc.). In order to assess the impact accurately, the empirical study incorporates a number of macroeconomic shocks in the model; i.e., Fiscal Policy Impulse (represented by the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure) and Oil Price Shock (proxy for exogeneous supply side shocks). A standard vector autoregressive model is used for this purpose. Finally, impulse response functions are estimated to understand the interactions between several variables, including MPI. This empirical framework primarily intended to understand the impact of monetary policy impulse on inflation, growth rate of real GDP, exchange rate return. On the other hand, presence of fiscal policy shock in the model helps us to compare the effectiveness of fiscal policy and monetary policy shocks side-by-side. In addition to that, it helps us to evaluate the possible spillovers between monetary and fiscal policy shocks in Indian context.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: Section 2 of this chapter explore the literature with respect to the objective of this study. Section 3 specified the set of variables used in this study along with the source. Section 4 explain the empirical methodology used in this study. Section 5 reports the results of the empirical study. Finally, Section 6 concludes and discusses some possible extensions.

2. Literature Review

One of the earliest attempts to measure monetary policy stance came from Bernanke and Mihov (1998). The study developed a model-based, VAR methodology for measuring innovations in monetary policy. The empirical framework helps to compare existing approaches to measuring monetary policy shocks. In addition to that, the study provided a new measure of policy innovations based on estimates of the central bank's operating procedures.

Romer and Romer (2004) develops a measure of U.S. monetary policy shocks for the period 1969–1996 to address the problem associated with multiplicity of monetary policy instruments. According to them, The MPI, as suggested in the study, is relatively free of endogenous and anticipatory movements. Quantitative and narrative records are used to identify the Federal Reserve's intentions for the federal funds rate around FOMC (the Federal Open Market Committee) meetings. Finally, the study attempts to understand the impact of monetary policy action on inflation and output, using the newly estimated MPI as indicator of policy action. The study found out that, policy action has large, relatively rapid (relative to conventional indicators), and statistically significant impact on both output and inflation.

Berument (2007) proposed a measure to assess the monetary policy for Turkey (considered to be highly inflationary small open economy). The study proposed the spread between the Central Bank's inter-bank interest rate and the depreciation rate of the domestic currency as an indicator of monetary policy. Monetary authority of any country may control either inter-bank interest rate or exchange rate. The measure is robust when the monetary authority switches between pure exchange rate targeting and interest rate targeting regimes. The study further concludes that, the impact of monetary policy on prices and the exchange rate is permanent, while the same on output is transitory.

Bhattacharyya and Ray (2007) developed a measure of the monetary policy stance from the detailed reading of various monetary policy announcements by RBI from 1973 to 1998. A long list of monetary policy instruments is taken into consideration while constructing the index (such as, CRR, SLR, Bank Rate, the refinance mechanism, interest on deposits and lending, Open Market Operations, Selective Credit Control etc. Analysing the proposed MPI, the study suggests, the monetary policy stance remain contractionary during the study period to put emphasis on inflation control. The VAR analysis described in the study suggested that, monetary policy stance was successful in controlling inflation rather than accelerating output.

Samantaraya (2009) develops a monetary policy index (similar to human development index) by synthesising the extracted signals from the policy documents and quantitative information embedded in key indicators for Indian economy. The index proposed in this study incorporates information such as, policy stances (i.e., expansionary, contractionary or neutral), year-on-year broad money (M3) growth, call money rate. The study eventually attempts to the impact of monetary policy on key macroeconomic variables such as interest rates, bank credit, inflation, and output growth during the post-reform period. The study found that, while monetary policy has an instant influence on interest rates, the impact on inflation and output is not instantaneous (i.e., it requires a lag of around 6 to 18 months). The primary limitation of this study comes from the choice of formula to construct MPI. The study adapts an ad-hoc approach to construct the MPI.

Xiong (2012) developed a new monetary policy stance index for the People's Bank of China (PBC). The PBC has employed a range of different instruments in the implementation of its monetary policy, such as, Credit plan for banks' lending, Various interest rates, Central bank's refinancing to banks, Reserve requirement ratio, Open market operations etc. The policy Index suggested in this study can take only three possible values, 1 for contractionary policy change, -1 for expansionary policy change and 0 for neutral policy. Therefore, the suggested policy index only can reflect the direction of the policy, not the intensity of policy change. The study extends further to understand the impact of monetary policy stance on key macroeconomic variables, such as, Output, Inflation and Money growth.

Sensarma and Bhattacharyya (2016) in their study recognized the problem of identifying monetary policy stance in the presence of multiple instruments in the context of Indian economy. According to them, simultaneous changes of several instruments (which is common to RBI's monetary policy stance) are prone to misinterpretation errors (e.g., simultaneous change in CRR and Repo rate in opposite direction). In such a situation it is difficult to understand whether the prescribed policy is contractionary, expansionary or neutral. The study applied principal components analysis to construct a statistically derived policy index. The study further compares the principal components index with an alternative narrative-based index. According to the study, the principal components index out performs narrative-based index in capturing the impact of monetary policy on risk-premia.

In addition to the empirical frameworks proposed above for identifying monetary policy impulse in the presence of multiple policy instruments and subsequent analysis of impact of monetary policy on key macroeconomic variables, a number of studies addressed the latter using traditional indicators of policy action. A number of such empirical studies directed toward Indian economy described below:

Bhattacharyya and Sensarma (2008) examine the effectiveness and robustness of alternative monetary policy instruments in transmitting policy signals and its impact on financial market behaviour for Indian economy. The study suggests, although the Bank Rate was the principal signalling instrument in the pre-LAF period CRR had a dominant impact on financial markets. In the post-LAF period, the reverse repo rate became the most important signalling rate of the RBI. Using a SVAR model, the study suggests, monetary policy shocks have an asymmetric impact on financial markets.

Sengupta (2014) assessed the relative importance of various transmission channels of monetary policy in the pre-LAF and post-LAF periods. The study found that the bank lending channel remains a vital means of transmission of monetary policy in India, but it has weakened in the post-LAF period relative to pre-LAF period. In addition to that, the interest rate and asset price channels have become stronger and the exchange rate channel, although weakened, showed a slight improvement in the post-LAF period.

3. Data and Descriptive Statistics

The study is confined to post introduction of Liquidity Adjustment Facility (Post-LAF), i.e., 2nd Quarter of 2001 to 1st Quarter of 2020. The study considered following monetary policy instruments used by RBI to construct the Monetary Policy Index (MPI): Bank Rate (BR), Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), Data on all the instruments are collected from the official website of Reserve Bank of India. Summary statistics in Table 1 to provide a brief idea about the distribution of the policy instruments during the study horizon. As reflected in the Table 1, all the policy instruments considered in this study varies substantially during the study period.

Table 1: Summary statistics of Policy Variables

	BR	Repo Rate	Reverse Repo Rate	CRR	SLR
Minimum	4.65	4.40	3.25	3.00	18.25
Maximum	10.25	9.00	7.50	9.00	25.00
Mean	6.76	6.93	5.70	4.99	23.21
Median	6.13	6.88	5.75	4.75	24.00
Standard deviation	1.19	1.13	1.01	1.18	2.15

In addition to variables specified above, a set of variables are included in the study to understand the impact of monetary policy on key macroeconomic variables:

1. Seasonally adjusted Real GDP growth rate (GDP_t^g), which represents growth of economic activity
2. Inflation (π_t), which is based on the CPI
3. Government Spending growth rate ($GOVEXP_t^g$), calculated using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (seasonally adjusted). It is used in the study to represent the fiscal policy shocks. Following Agnello et al. (2013), the study choose the government spending as the fiscal policy instrument instead of the government revenue.
4. The growth rate of broad money supply (M_t^g)
5. Growth rate of Crude oil price (OIL_t^g), which captures exogeneous supply side shock
6. Exchange Rate Return (ER_t^R), calculated out of exchange rate expressed as National Currency per SDR (End of Period)

Data are sourced from database of RBI, International Financial Statistics (IFS), OECD National Accounts (OECD.Stat) and Federal Reserve Economic Data.

The growth rate, change or return series are derived as the continuously compounded returns specified below:

$$R_t = 100 \times \ln\left(\frac{Y_t}{Y_{t-1}}\right)$$

Where, $Y_t = [\pi_t, GOVEXP_t^g, M_t^g, GDP_t^g, OIL_t^g, ER_t^R]$. The Continuously compounded return is preferred over simple return in any financial or macroeconomic modelling because of its two major properties: (1) frequency of compounding of the return does not matter while computing such return series and thus returns across assets can more easily be compared. (2) continuously compounded returns are time-additive. As a result, it is possible to simply add up the daily returns to obtain the return for the whole time period, even if the data contain missing observations. Table 2 & Table 3 represents the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between the variables respectively.

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Exogeneous and Endogenous Variables:

	π_t	$GOVEXP_t^g$	M_t^g	GDP_t^g	OIL_t^g	ER_t^R
Minimum	-0.54	-19.42	-0.70	0.16	-29.23	-2.85
Maximum	2.87	20.98	3.29	13.69	13.02	4.18
Mean	0.70	0.59	1.47	7.37	0.49	0.31
Median	0.79	0.05	1.33	7.39	1.81	0.25
Standard deviation	0.61	8.65	0.69	2.33	6.56	1.56

Table 3: Unconditional Correlation Matrix

	π_t	$GOVEXP_t^g$	M_t^g	GDP_t^g	OIL_t^g
$GOVEXP_t^g$	0.094				
M_t^g	0.062	-0.047			
GDP_t^g	-0.054	-0.038	0.112		
OIL_t^g	-0.288	-0.034	0.131	0.183	
ER_t^R	0.315	-0.063	0.066	-0.297	-0.120

4. Empirical Methodology

The empirical exercise proceeds in two steps: (1) estimation of Monetary Policy Indices using Principal Component Analysis and Factor Analysis and study its properties, and (2) examination of impact of monetary policy impulse on key macroeconomic variables (as specified earlier). The empirical methodology required to perform these two steps broadly consists of Principal Component and Factor Analysis, Unit Root test to understand the order of integration for the concerned variables and a standard Vector Autoregressive model.

The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has a number of different interpretations. It seeks linear combinations of the columns of a matrix (consists of number of variables, represented by its columns) with maximal (or minimal) variance. In other words, Principal component analysis (PCA) reduces the dimensionality of multivariate data. The first k principal components represent a subspace containing the 'best' k- dimensional view of the matrix. Note that, if just the first k principal components are extracted, this is the best k dimensional approximation of the matrix. The first few principal components are often useful to reveal structure in the data. In PCA the loadings are weights associated to the variables to construct each principal component, and the scores are the observations on the principal components. In this study estimated scores are going to be considered as the indices representing the monetary policy impulse. While choosing number of principal components, Scree plot play a very critical role. A Scree plot is a bar plot of proportion of variance explained by each of the estimated principal components. As an extension to PCA, Factor analysis seeks linear combinations of the variables, called factors, that represent underlying fundamental quantities of which the observed variables are expressions. Therefore, the objective behind the factor analysis is to represent a large number of variables by a small number of factors. Factors of factor analysis also known as latent variables. Eventually, to achieve a simple structure, it is necessary to perform factor rotations. It should be recognized that, rotated principal components are not principal components but are merely components. In this study, varimax rotation is used for ease of interpretation of the factors or components (representing monetary policy impulse). Finally estimated components are converted to index using the following formula:

$$Index = \frac{\left(C_t - C^{min}\right)}{\left(C^{max} - C^{min}\right)}$$

C_t, C^{min} and C^{max} represent the value of estimated component at period t, its maximum and minimum value respectively.

After estimation of the monetary policy indices and before performing VAR estimation it is necessary to check the order of integration for each of the concerned variables, i.e., to perform unit root test. The unit root test is used to find out the order of integration in order to know whether a series is stationary or not. Dickey and Fuller (1979 and 1981) have proposed a test statistic that is different from the conventional t-statistic for testing the presence of unit root in univariate series. The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test estimated in 3 different forms (without trend and drift, with drift and with trend and drift) are given as follows:

$$\Delta y_t = \pi y_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{k} \gamma_j \Delta y_{t-j} + u_t$$

$$\Delta y_t = \beta_1 + \pi y_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{k} \gamma_j \Delta y_{t-j} + u_t$$

$$\Delta y_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 t + \pi y_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{k} \gamma_j \Delta y_{t-j} + u_t$$

The term $\sum_{j=1}^{k} \gamma_j \Delta y_{t-j}$ is included in the model to remove the autocorrelation in the error component (u_t). The null hypothesis of the ADF test is the presence of unit root in y_t, against the alternative of stationary. Phillips and Perron (1988) and Perron (1988) suggested non-parametric test statistics for the null hypothesis of a unit root that explicitly allows for weak dependence and heterogeneity of the error process. Two test regressions considered in Phillips-Perron (PP) test is given as follows:

$$y_t = \mu + \alpha y_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

$$y_t = \mu + \beta\left(t - \frac{1}{2}T\right) + \alpha y_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

The critical values of the test statistics for PP test are identical to those of the ADF tests. The advantage of PP test over ADF test is that, PP test eliminate the nuisance parameters that are present in the DF statistic if the error process does not satisfy the independent and identically distributed assumption. Both ADF and PP tests are performed in this study to check the order of integration for the variables which are part of VAR estimation.

In the final step, a VAR model is estimated with $\pi_t, GOVEXP_t^g, M_t^g, GDP_t^g, OIL_t^g, ER_t^R$ and estimated policy index. Vector autoregressive models (VARs) were developed and popularized in econometrics by Sims (1980) as a natural generalization of univariate autoregressive models. A VAR system of equations can be considered as a simultaneous equation system which includes several endogenous variables with each endogenous variable is explained by its lagged or past values and lagged values of all other variables in the model. The VAR model is of the following form:

$$y_t = \sum_{i=1}^{p} A_i y_{t-i} + u_t$$

Estimation of VAR system of equations is done by using usual Ordinary Least Square technique. y_t is a $(k \times 1)$ vector of endogenous variables and u_t represents a spherical disturbance term of the same dimension. The coefficient matrices A_i are of dimension $(k \times k)$. In addition to that, a set of exogeneous variables, a constant intercept term, a trend component can be included as the VAR equation. The lag length of one for the VAR system was found appropriate after calculating the multivariate versions of the information criteria (such as, MAIC and MSBC) which are defined as follows:

$$\text{MAIC} = \ln|\hat{\Sigma}| + \frac{2K}{T}$$

$$\text{MSBIC} = \ln|\hat{\Sigma}| + \frac{K}{T}\ln(\text{T})$$

Where, $\hat{\Sigma}$ represent the variance-covariance matrix of residuals, T is the number of observations and K is the total number of regressors in all equations. The values of the information criteria are constructed for *0, 1, …, k* lags (up to some pre-specified maximum *K*), and the chosen number of lags is that number minimizing the value of the given information criterion.

The estimated VAR equations are further used for estimation of impulse response functions. Impulse response functions trace out the responsiveness of the dependent variables in the VAR to shocks to other variables. So, for each variable from each equation separately, a unit shock is applied to the error, and the effects upon the VAR system over time are noted. The way that this is achieved in practice is by expressing the VAR model as a vector moving average (VMA) model. The IRFs are used in this study to understand the effectiveness of monetary policy and dynamic relation between other key macroeconomic variables included in the model.

5. Results

The results of the principal components analysis and subsequent factor analysis are presented in Table 4. In addition to that, the Scree Plot and Biplot corresponding to the PCA are given in Figure 1. Left Panel of Figure 1 clearly suggest that, Component 1 and 2 accounts for almost 84% of variation in the observed variations in the policy instruments. Subsequently, VARIMAX rotation in factor analysis simplifies the interpretations of the two relevant components. As the Loading information in Table 4 post-rotation suggests, policy rates (Bank Rate, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate) and policy ratios (Cash Reserve Ratio, Statutory Liquidity Ratio) are represented in Component 1 and 2 respectively.

Figure 1: Visualization of Principal Components Analysis

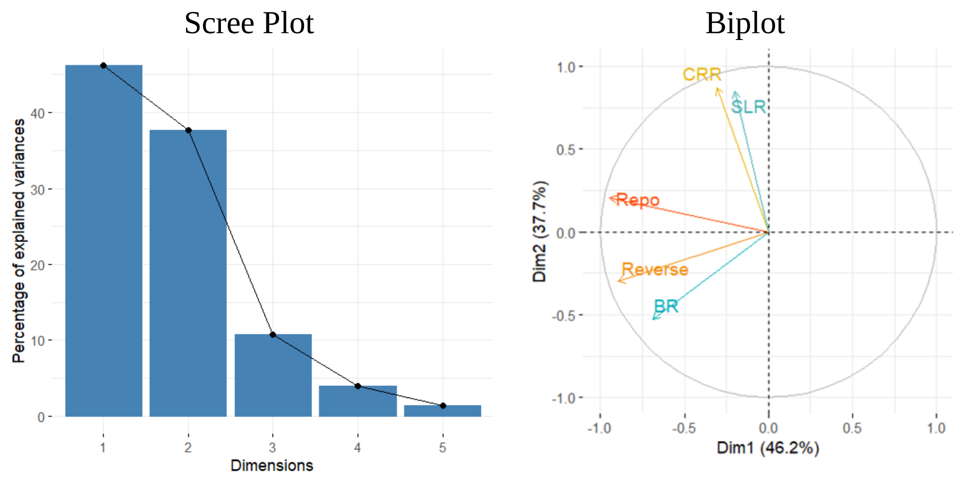
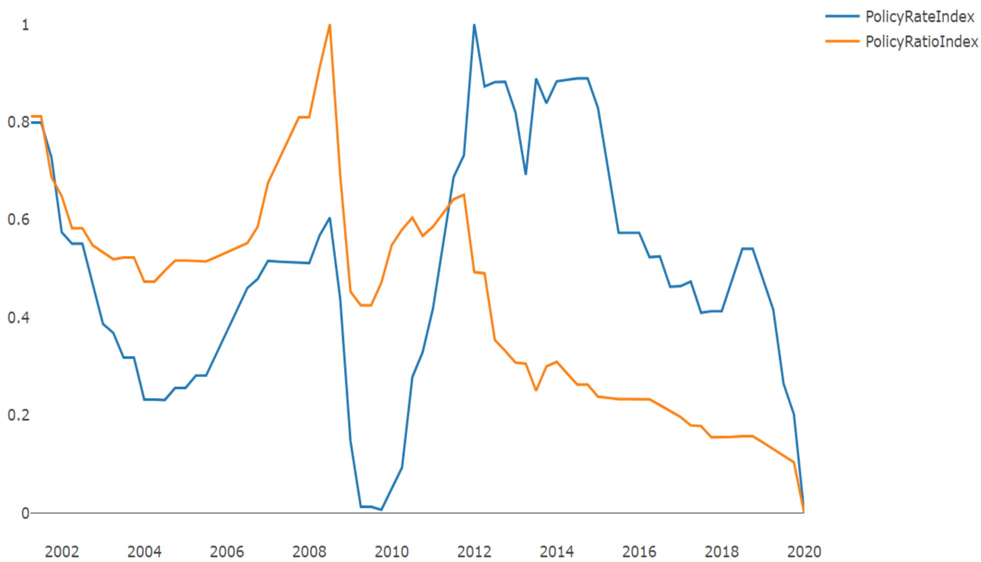


Table 4: Results of Principal Component Analysis

Importance of Components					
	Components				
	1	2	3	4	5
Standard deviation	1.519	1.373	0.733	0.446	0.266
Proportion of Variance	0.462	0.377	0.108	0.040	0.014
Cumulative Proportion	0.462	0.839	0.946	0.986	1.000
Loadings (Pre-Rotation)					
BR	0.454	0.383	0.594	0.543	
Repo	0.624	-0.150	-0.122	-0.296	0.697
Reverse	0.589	0.219	-0.352	-0.249	-0.647
CRR	0.201	-0.634	-0.342	0.657	
SLR	0.133	-0.617	0.625	-0.354	-0.292
Loadings (Post-Rotation)					
BR	0.816	-0.292			
Repo	0.840	0.484			
Reverse	0.944				
CRR		0.922			
SLR		0.869			

The graphical representation of two estimated Monetary Policy Indices computed out of Component 1 and 2 of PCI and factor analysis is given in Figure 2. As the diagram shows, both Policy Rate Index and Policy Ratio Index represent similar pattern over time. For example, during subprime mortgage crisis, both the indices exhibit sharp decline, representing monetary impulse for economic expansion. In this study, Policy Rate Index is being used to represent monetary policy impulse in the rest of the study because of three major reasons: (1) Component 1 explained maximum variation in policy instruments (i.e., 46%), (2) Component 1 purely loaded with policy rates and (3) the RBI currently use repo rate and reverse repo rate as the primary monetary policy instrument and all other policy rates are linked with them.

Figure 2: Estimated Policy Index



The unit root tests of key macroeconomic variables along with monetary policy impulse (represented by ΔMPI_t, i.e., change in MPI) is given in Table 5. As the result suggests, all the concerned variables are found to be stationary.

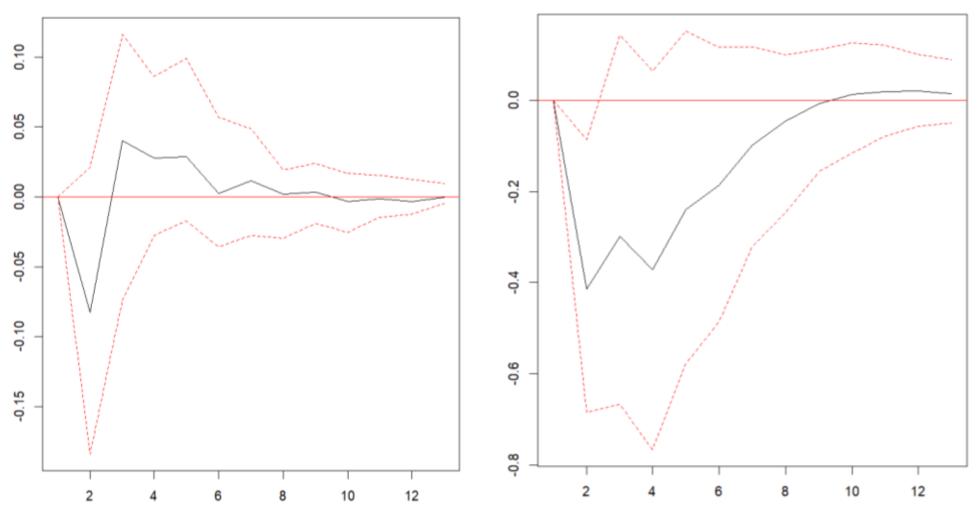
Table 5: Unit Root Test

Variables	Model Specification	Test Statistics		Critical values at 5% Level of Significance	
		ADF	PP	ADF	PP
π_t	drift	-7.605	-7.462	-2.890	-2.904
$GOVEXP_t^g$	drift	-11.341	-23.376	-2.890	-2.904
M_t^g	trend	-4.425	-11.135	-3.450	-3.475
GDP_t^g	drift	-3.347	-3.685	-2.890	-2.904
OIL_t^g	drift	-6.410	-7.214	-2.890	-2.904
ER_t^R	drift	-5.149	-9.089	-2.890	-2.904
ΔMPI_t	drift	-3.619	-5.735	-2.890	-2.904

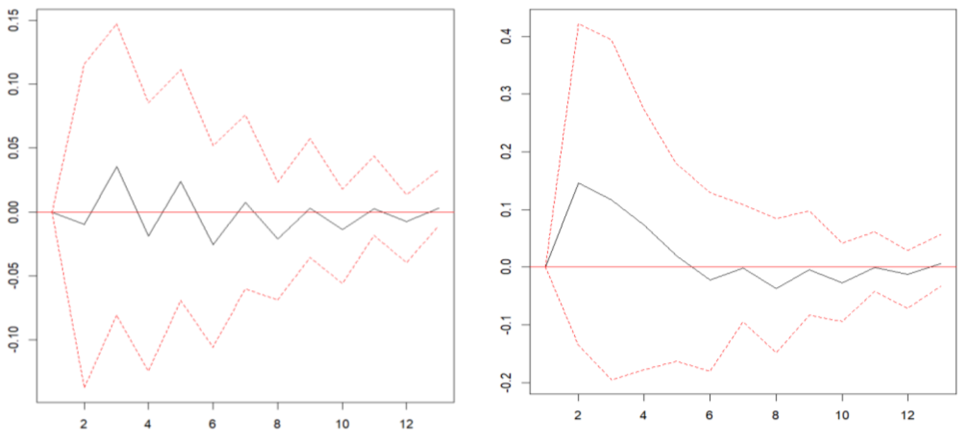
Therefore, further study to understand the dynamic relationships between these variables along with effectiveness of monetary policy can be performed using standard vector autoregressive model structure. The estimated VAR model with π_t, $GOVEXP_t^g$, M_t^g, GDP_t^g and ER_t^R as endogenous variables and OIL_t^g as external exogeneous shock variable is given in Table 6 (Appendix). The estimated impulse response functions (IRFs) from the estimated VAR model are given in Figure 4, 5 and 6.

Figure 3: Effectiveness of Monetary Policy

π_t $\qquad\qquad$ GDP_t^g



Panel (a) M_t^g | Panel (b) ER_t^R



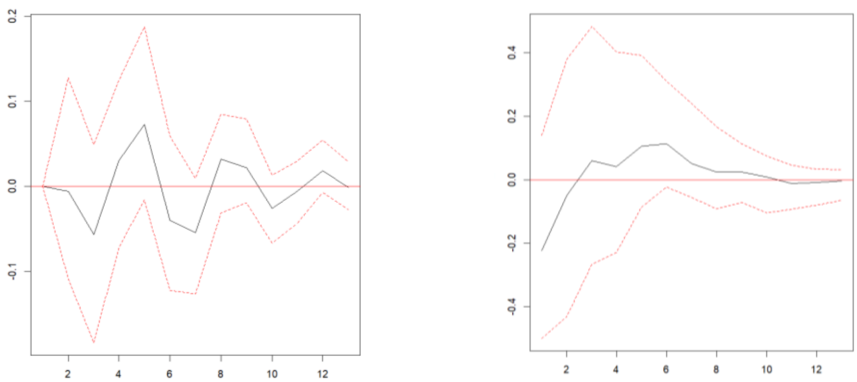
Panel (c) | Panel (d)

Orthogonal IRFs from ΔMPI_t

Figure 3 shows the effectiveness of monetary policy. Contractionary monetary impulse found to be effective in controlling inflation for a short span of time, whereas its impact on economic growth found to be relatively prolonged, as shown in Panel (a) and (b) in the figure. Therefore, monetary policy makes desired impact on inflation and output growth. In addition to that, Panel (d) suggests, contractionary monetary policy impulse cause depreciation of value of domestic currency. Finally, Panel (c) suggests, monetary policy has no significant impact on expansion of broad money.

Figure 4: Effectiveness of Fiscal Policy

π_t | GDP_t^g



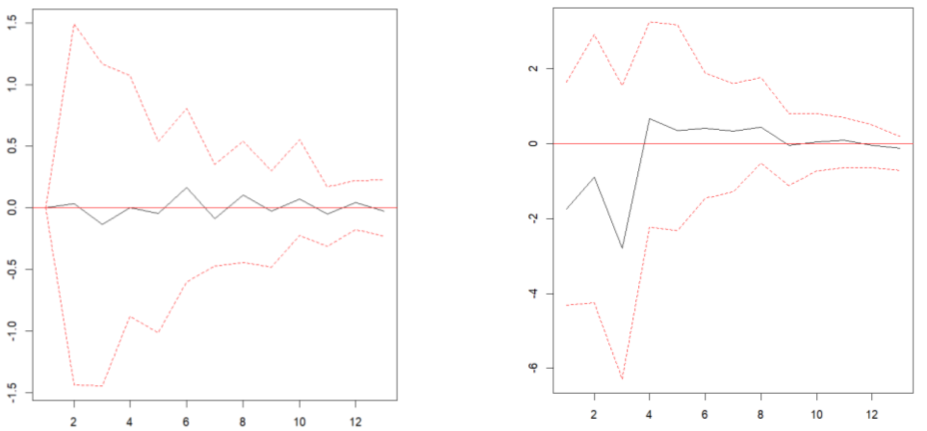
Panel (a) | Panel (b)

Orthogonal IRFs from $GOVEXP_t^g$

Figure 4 shows the effectiveness of fiscal policy. The IRF of fiscal policy impulse on inflation found to be oscillatory in nature. Therefore, the direction of impact of fiscal policy impulse on inflation is ambiguous in nature. On the other hand, Panel (b) of the figure suggests, expansionary fiscal policy impulse accelerate growth of economic activity with a lag.

Figure 5: Policy Interactions:

ΔMPI_t Impulse on $GOVEXP_t^g$ $GOVEXP_t^g$ Impulse on ΔMPI_t



Panel (a) Panel (b)

Orthogonal IRFs

Finally, Figure 5 shows the interaction between fiscal and monetary policy impulses. As the Panel (a) shows, monetary policy impulse has no impact on fiscal policy measure. In addition to that, fiscal policy impulse cause slight variation of monetary policy impulse for a short period of time. Therefore, from Figure 5 we may conclude independence of fiscal and monetary policy for Indian economy.

Conclusion

This study primarily attempts to address the multiplicity of monetary policy instruments problem for Indian context by estimating a set of indices to represent monetary policy stance. The study is confined to post introduction of Liquidity Adjustment Facility (Post-LAF), i.e., 2nd Quarter of 2001 to 1st Quarter of 2020. This set of monetary policy instruments incorporates a set of rates (i.e., Bank Rate, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate) and a set of ratios (i.e., CRR, SLR). In addition to construction of Monetary Policy Index (MPI), this study extends further to understand the impact of monetary policy impulse on a number of key macroeconomic variables (e.g., inflation, growth rate of real GDP, exchange rate variation, etc.). The results of the principal components analysis and subsequent factor analysis suggest that, two Component accounts for almost 84% of variation in the observed variations in the policy instruments. Subsequently, VARIMAX rotation suggests, policy rates (Bank Rate, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate) and policy ratios (Cash Reserve Ratio, Statutory Liquidity Ratio) are represented in Component 1 and 2 respectively. Both Policy Rate Index and Policy Ratio Index represent similar pattern over time. In this study, Policy Rate Index is being used to represent monetary policy impulse in the rest of the study because of three major reasons: (1) Component 1 explained maximum variation in policy instruments (i.e., 46%), (2) Component 1 purely loaded with policy rates and (3) the RBI currently use repo rate and reverse repo rate as the primary monetary policy instrument and all other policy rates are linked with them.

The unit root tests of key macroeconomic variables along with monetary policy impulse (represented by ΔMPI_t, i.e., change in MPI) is given in Table 5. As the result suggests, all the concerned variables are found to be stationary. The estimated impulse response functions (IRFs) from the estimated VAR model shows:

1. Contractionary monetary impulse found to be effective in controlling inflation for a short span of time, whereas its impact on economic growth found to be relatively prolonged. In addition to that IRFs shows, monetary policy makes desired impact on inflation and output growth.
2. Contractionary monetary policy impulse cause depreciation of value of domestic currency.
3. Expansionary fiscal policy impulse accelerates growth of economic activity with a lag.
4. Fiscal and monetary policy for Indian economy are found to be independent of each other.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 51-58

Predatory Journals: Issues and Challenges for the Research Community

Santosh Kumar Tunga[1]

Abstract

After the invention and popularity of open access journals, the production of predatory journals began. Predatory journals use various methods to attract authors, such as sending emails and claiming fast publication with rare rejections. The quality of published articles in these journals is questionable due to a lack of editorial board and peer review process, which may endanger in academic and research domain in order to publish the results of the research. This study provides a clear overview of the meaning, origin of predatory publishing and predatory journals and characteristics of them. Signs for identifying the predatory journals and worldwide initiatives for research and publication ethics are pointed out in this present study. The check list for the identifying of predatory journals is presented and a reference list is made to the efforts of the global campaign against predatory publications in general and predatory journals in particular.

Keywords: *Predatory Journals; Predatory Publishers, Predatory Publishing, Researchers, Research Community*

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1. Introduction

Jeffrey Beall, a librarian of the University of Colorado in Denver, first coined the term '*Predatory Journals*' that refer to journals and journal publishers whose main purpose seems to be exploit scholars and academics and their need to be publish the results of their research. Cabell's International launched a revised version of the list called Cabell's Blacklist which can be accessed for a free at the company's website. Predatory journals are also called fraudulent, deceptive, or pseudo-journals.

Apart from mandatory publications for career advancement becoming a major cause of the growth of predatory journals, there are a number of other reasons for publication of predatory journals are as follows (Demir, 2018):

- Fear of job loss and the "publish-or-perish" pressure.
- Failure to publish in journals indexed in world recognized databases.
- Rejection by standard/respectable journals due to inadequate research skills.
- Competition among colleagues; desire to score higher and gain respect.
- Lack of awareness among researchers and new faculty members.

Beall's (2012) criteria for identification of predatory are (i) Provides insufficient information or hides information about author fees, offering to publish an author's paper and later sending an unanticipated surprise invoice, (ii) No proper indexing, (iii) The name of a journal is unrelated with the journal's mission, (iv) The name of journal does not adequately reflect its origin.

2. Predatory publishing

Predatory Publishing is an exploitative academic publishing business model that involves charging publication fees to authors without providing the proper editorial and publishing activities. Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and / or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices.

2.1. Characteristics of Predatory Publications

A predatory publication refers to the systematic for profit publication of purportedly scholarly content in a deceptive or fraudulent way and without any regard for quality assurance (Rajeev, 2021). The following important characteristics of predatory publications are:

- No legitimate contact information and address of the publishers
- Claims false impact factor of predatory journals
- Provides false indexing information i.e. Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, etc.
- Extremely high acceptance
- Repeated instances of plagiarism
- Invite authors via aggressive e-mails for article submission
- Perform little editorial and publication practices or no editorial or peer review works
- Do not maintain editorial board or fake members in this editorial board
- Lack of quality peer review of articles by subject experts in that subject.

3. Predatory Journals

Predatory Journals are unscrupulous or counterfeit journals which usually surpass the standard scholarly publishing model mainly peer-review process. According to Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE 2019) "Predatory publishing is generally defined as for profit open-access journal publication of scholarly articles without the benefit of peer review by experts in the field or the usual editorial oversight of the journals in question."[2]Predatory journals are scholarly journals that are created with the sole purpose of making money. These journals do not follow the conventional peer-review process, and they often publish articles that are of poor quality in nature. Many predatory journals are created by companies that are not affiliated with any academic institution.

Characteristics of Predatory Journals

The important characteristics of predatory journals are presented indicated by Beall (2016), Rajeev (2021) as follows:

- Primary goal is to make money
- Have no peer review system and no editorial board
- Do not care about the quality of the work published (i.e. no little edition or peer review)
- Make false claims or promises (i.e. claims of impact factors and indexing)
- Engage in unethical business practices
- Fail to follow accepted standards or best practices of scholarly publishing
- Excessive use of words like scientific, academic and research
- Accepting articles quickly with little or no prior review or quality control
- Citing fake or non-existing impact factor

3.1. Check List to Identify Predatory/Fake Journals

- Are articles indexed services available?
- Do you recognize the editorial board?
- Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?
- Is the journal clear about the type of peer review it uses?
- Is it clear what article processing fees will be charged?
- Is the journal is indexed in DOAJ or included the DOAJ's list of journals?
- Is the publisher or the Journal a member of recognized organizations like COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) and OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association) etc.?
- Is the journal published by a well-known publisher e.g. Elsevier, Springer, Sage, Taylor and Francis, John Wiley, etc.?

- Does the publisher have a strangely similar name to another publisher?
- Is the journal really included in the various databases mentioned on its website?
- Is the journal has ISSN or eISSN and DOI?

3.2. Warning Signs for identifying the Predatory Journals

The important warning signs are listed below for identifying the predatory journals so that every researcher should know about the predatory journals:

1. ***Author Publication Charge***: Author publication charge for publication are not stated or not explained clearly on the journal's website.
2. ***Archiving:*** There is no electronic backup and preservation of access to journal content on journal's website or publisher's website.
3. ***Copyright and Licensing:*** Policies and services of copyright, publishing license and user license are missing or unclear.
4. ***Editorial Board:*** Information on editorial board is missing, misleading, false, or inappropriate for the journal; full names and affiliations of editorial board members are missing.
5. ***Editorial Team Contact Information***: Full names and their affiliations of journal's editors and full contact information for the editorial office are missing; the editor-in-chief is also the owner publisher; or the editor-in-chief is also the editor of many other journals, especially in unrelated fields.
6. ***Journal Website***: The journal's website contains misleading or false information e.g. impact factor, indexing, metrics, etc.
7. ***Name of Journal***: The name of journal is the same as or easily confused with that of another journal.
8. ***Ownership and Management***: Information about the ownership and/or management is missing, unclear, misleading or false.
9. ***Peer-Reviewed Process***: Peer review and peer review process are not mentioned, or manuscript acceptance or a very short peer review time is guaranteed.

10. ***Publication Ethics**:* There is no policies on publishing ethics e.g. authorship/ contributionship, data sharing, intellectual property, ethical oversight, conflicts of interest, corrections/retraction, etc.
11. ***Publishing Schedule***: Predatory publication is not indicated and/or the publishing schedule appears erratic from the available journal content.

4. Tips for Selecting Credible and Trusted Journals for Publishing Your Research

The most useful journal finder tools for publishing your research are discussed in below. It gives you a way to search for a suitable trusted journal for your paper according to your choice:

- ***DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journal):*** It is a useful tool for searching for fully open access journals. https://doaj.org/
- ***Journal finder***: Many publishers provide help to researchers to find and select the appropriate journal relevant to their topic of research. For example Journal Finder by Elsevier Journal Finder (https://journalfinder.elsevier.com), Springer Journal Suggester (https://www.springer.com), Wiley Journal Finder (https://journalfinder.wiley.com)
- ***Open Journal Matcher:*** It is a fully open source and interdisciplinary journal finder tool. In order to find relevant open access journals, you just paste the abstract, then the online journal matcher compares abstract with the abstracts from the DOAJ. https://ojm.ocert.at
- ***Think.Check.Submit***: This international, cross-sector initiative (members from COPE, DOAJ, OASPA, ISSN, etc.) helps researchers identify trusted journals and publishers for their research. https://thinkchecksubmit.org/
- ***Web of Science (WOS) Master List*****:** The Web of Science Master List contains a list of approximate 24,000 journals indexed by the WOS platform. The master journal list tool lets you find the right journal for your needs across multiple indices hosted on the WOS platform. https://www.mjl.clarivate.com

5. Worldwide Initiatives for Research and Publication Ethics

There are organizations worldwide which have set standards for publication ethics, research assessment, research metrics, and integrity of research. The prominent ones are (Nagarkar, 2021):

- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), UK.
- San Francisco declaration on research assessment (DORA).
- Leiden manifesto for research metrics.
- The metric tide.
- The Hong Kong principles for assessing researchers: Fostering research integrity.
- World Association of Medical Editors (WAME).

6. Conclusion

Predatory journals exist solely for profit without any commitment to publication ethics or quality of research. They not only damage the reputation of individual researchers or institutions, but more dangerously, they contaminate scientific and other disciplines. Thus, the authenticity and credibility of research is at stake (Nagarkar, 2021). It is very difficult to enumerate the exact number of predatory journals, but Cabell's blacklist of predatory journals in 2018 listed 13,900 journals. Predatory journals are more in number from developing countries (Seethapathy, *et al*., 2016) but few studies indicate some publishers from developed countries are also involved in predatory publications (Bohannon, 2013; Linacre, *et al*., 2019). Therefore, it is important that every individual researcher takes serious cognizance of all the pitfalls of publishing in predatory journals and remains worthy of the ethical ethos that is the foundation of true scientific and academic endeavour (Nagarkar, 2021).

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 59-71

Analysis of Mandatory CSR Spending of Maharatna Companies in India: A Study

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility was originated as philanthropic act over the past few decades but with the enactment of the new Companies Act, 2013 definition changes to responsibility for corporation towards its various stakeholders. The present study aimed at identifying the total CSR expenditure of Maharatna companies over the last eight years i.e. 2014-15 to 2021-22 and impact of ROE and PAT on the mandatory CSR spending. The study is purely based on secondary data which were collected from various sources such as annual reports of Maharatna companies and financial data from CMIE Prowess database. The study revealed that companies in the energy, oil and gas industry including NTPC (139.37%), ONGC (127.78%), and GAIL (126.52%) showed the highest percentage of spending on CSR. However, BHEL, member of the electrical equipment sector, displayed negative growth, i.e., was a loss-making company, but the company also average actual CSR spending of Rs. 393 Million for the research period. ONGC spent the highest amount on CSR overall during the study period, at Rs. 41,782.4 Million. The PAT has a significant positive relationship with CSR expenditure, but ROE has a negative correlation. The study highlighted the significant impact of ROE and PAT on mandatory CSR spending.

Key Words: *Corporate Social Responsibility, PAT, ROE, Maharatna, Companies Act, CSR Practice, Mandatory CSR.*

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1. Introduction

Over the past few decades Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) engagement has become an essential aspect of business activities. There are several reasons behind this development. Nevertheless, the CSR and its various dimensions remain to be a construct that is conceptualized from various perspectives. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined as a company's responsibility to its society and stakeholders to operate in a way that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. Companies are currently expanding their scale of operations and expanding beyond their domestic boundaries, and because they obtain resources from society, they are no longer expected to fulfill their ancient role of profit-making, but rather to fulfil their responsibility towards their stakeholders by incorporating ethical, social, and environmental concerns into their business operations and ensuring transparency and accountability in their reporting. The relation between Corporate Social Responsibility and firm performance has elicited much interest among researchers. A major theme a CSR literature is positive role of CSR in attaining economic goal and wealth generation (Garriga and Mele, 2004). However, findings of empirical studies reveal that there is no consensus on the relationship between CSR and financial performance. The rest of the paper is laid out as follows: The Regulatory framework of CSR in India is covered in Section 2. The literature review is covered in Section 3. The objectives of the study are covered in Section 4. Sample selection and methodology are covered in Section 5. The results of the analysis and conclusions are presented in section 6. The conclusions of the study with Section 7.

2. Regulatory Framework of CSR in India

In 2009, India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs announced Voluntary Guidelines on CSR for companies, emphasizing that companies must also take responsibility for demonstrating socially responsible business practices that assure profit distribution and the welfare of the communities in which they operate.

The Companies Act of 2013 was passed and implemented over time, with the first phase starting on August 31, 2013. Section 135 and Schedule VII of the Companies Act of 2013 went into force on April 1st, 2014, according to a notification the Ministry of Corporate Affairs released in

February 2014. Because of this, businesses looked-for to be aware of their CSR commitment in order to fulfill it for the 2014–15 fiscal year. All companies incorporated in India (Private, Public, Holding/Subsidiary or Foreign) are subject to this regulation and having one or more of the following circumstances.

- Have a Net Worth of ₹ 500 Crores (₹ Five Billions) or more.
- Net Profits of ₹ 5 Crores (₹ Fifty Millions) or more.
- Annual Turnover of at least ₹ 1000 Crores (₹ Ten Billions).

Once the above-mentioned requirement is met, the 2% of average net profits must be spent by the company falling under the purview of mandatory CSR expenditure during each three-year cycle. If they fail to do so, they will be required to provide the reasons for shortfall. Thus any company fulfilling any of the three threshold conditions is required mandatorily to spend 2% of the last three years average profit.

If a company spends more on CSR than is required, the excess can be adjusted from future CSR spending over the next three years.

3. Literature Review

CSR is a multidimensional construct. CSR studies are classified into a variety of categories, ranging from the conceptual aspects of CSR to the practical aspects of CSR. CSR reporting and its determinants, objectives, or drivers for doing so, as well as the significance of CSR in financial performance, such as market performance, are discussed. Our research is limited to the practices of Indian corporations in terms of mandated CSR spending and transparency.

Accordingly, we confine our Literature review on these studies are given below:

In their 2010 study, Choi, J.S., Kwak, Y.M., and Choe, C. studied the connection between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the financial performance of Korean companies during the years 2002 to 2008 that were listed on the KRX and for whom the KEJI index was accessible. The level of corporate social responsibility (CSR) was assessed using the KEJI index, and financial performance was assessed using ROA, ROE, and Tobin's Q.

According to the study, the stakeholder-weighted CSR index had a positive correlation with all three performance indicators while the equal-weighted CSR index only had a positive correlation with ROA. The study also showed that the stakeholder-weighted CSR index was positively impacted by the high degree of corporate financial success.

Mishra, Sing & Sarkar (2013) conducted an explanatory study with seven of India's largest public oil and gas corporations. The goal of this study was to provide more information on CSR practises used by Indian oil and gas corporations as well as the necessity of CSR spending in the performance of sustainability's three pillars: economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The study's foundation was secondary data. The study concluded that CSR is crucial for fostering sustainability and economic success.

Mukherjee, A., & Bird, R. (2016) explored the drivers that cause 223 organisations to take on CSR expenditure through a survey. It was determined from the study that the main driving was the strategic ambition of companies to separate themselves from competitors, ideally through ethical and moral motivations. Furthermore, it explained how a company's size, age, and form of ownership all have a significant impact on how they feel about investing in CSR.

Shyam (2016) investigated the CSR idea and examined its expansion in India. She draws attention to the laws governing CSR in India and presents examples of CSR initiatives in Indian businesses that involve SMEs. There are a number of challenges that CSR is encountering in India, and this article offers solutions to help the country's CSR programmes advance.

Mitra, Mukherjee and Gaur (2018) focus on the subtleties of this Act as they pertain to CSR and examine the potential strategic ramifications for Indian businesses. They evaluate the strategic opportunities and challenges related with obligatory CSR. Our in-depth examination also considers potential directions for future scholarly research in this field.

The effect of CSR reporting on the business performance of fifty Indian manufacturing companies was examined by Cherian, J. et al. in the year 2019. The outcome demonstrates a strong correlation between Indian businesses' performance and their CSR. Additionally, they stated that the company's social principles, reputation, and improvement in performance and profitability.

I conducted a review of the literature. Some studies have discovered a favorable and statistically significant association between CSR and corporate financial performance, while others have discovered a negative relationship or none at all.

4. Objective of the Study

The study's goals are as follows:

a) To analyze the regulatory framework of corporate social responsibility, including mandatory corporate social responsibility.
b) To know the total CSR spending and the percentage of expenditure over the study period.
c) To explore the Corporate Social Responsibility performance of sample companies by using suitable parameters,
d) To study the impact of ROE and PAT on the CSR expenditure of the companies.

5. Sampling Design & Methodology

The present study is descriptive cum-analytical in nature. The study includes the central public sector enterprises who have been awarded the status of Maharatna companies under the Guidelines of Maharatna Scheme for Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). I selected the 10 (all) Maharatna companies for this research. I used the latest accessible data from Annual Reports and CMIE Prowess data of the companies for the analysis, which spanned eight years from 2015-16 to 2021-22.

There were ten companies having Maharatna status and the following companies listed below are taken under study.

SL NO.	COMPANY NAME	INDUSTRY
1	Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL)	Electrical Equipment
2	Bharat Petroleum Corpn. Ltd. (BPCL)	Oil and Gas
3	Coal India Ltd. (CIL)	Mining

4	Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL)	Energy
5	Hindustan Petroleum Corpn. Ltd. (HPCL)	Oil and Gas
6	Indian Oil Corpn. Ltd. (IOCL)	Oil and Gas
7	National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd. (NTPC)	Electric utility
8	Oil & Natural Gas Corpn. Ltd. (ONGC)	Oil and Gas
9	Power Grid Corpn. of India Ltd. (PGCIL)	Oil and Gas
10	Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL)	Steel

Variables:

For this study, four variables are considered, out of which two are dependent variables, one is an explanatory variable and one is control variables-

Dependent Variables: Return on Earning (ROE) and Profit after Tax (PAT).

Independent Variable: Explanatory variable is Actual CSR Spending (ACSR) and a control variable is Price to Book ratio (P/B ratio).

The role of Actual CSR spending in a mandatory setting is analysed by descriptive cum-analytical in nature and as well financial performance variables viz., ROE and PAT separately. According I frame the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis

H_1: Actual CSR spending negatively affects ROE in a mandatory CSR regime.

H_2: Actual CSR spending negatively affects PAT in a mandatory CSR regime.

Research Design

For this study I have consider following three models to understand the role of actual CSR spending influencing the financial performance. The equations of the models which reflect the impact of CSR on financial performance are as follows-

Impact of CSR on financial performance measured by indicators of accounting:

$\mathbf{ROE_{it}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ACSR_{it} + \beta_2 PB_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$

$\mathbf{PAT_{it}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ACSR_{it} + \beta_2 PB_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$

Where:

ROE_{it} = Return of Earning of ith sample company in the year t;

PAT_{it} = Profit after Tax of ith sample company in the year t;

ACSRit = Actual CSR spending of ith sample company in the year t;

PB_{it} = Price to Book ratio of ith sample company in the year t;

ε_{it} = Error term.

Our study period covers eight years and pooled regression was used for empirical analysis. In next section I give empirical results and analysis of findings.

6. Analysis and Findings of the study

Section 135 of the Companies Act of 2013 became effective on April 1, 2014, and it controls CSR, Scheduled VII, and the Companies Rules. The CSR expenditure made by the Maharatna companies over the study periods is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Actual Corporate Social Responsibility Spending (Rs. in Millions) from 2014–15 to 2021–22

Name of Company	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total CSR Exp.	Avg.
BHEL	1020.6	662	267.8	73.6	378.4	506.3	144.2	91.1	3144	393
BPCL	339.5	1546.6	2182.1	1660.2	1779.4	3455.7	1449	1377.8	13790.3	1723.78

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CIL	247.2	732.6	1280.5	1187.1	273.3	1713.2	953.6	68.1	6455.6	806.95
G A I L	716.9	1605.6	1235.8	916.5	1192.9	1253	1476.7	2049.7	10447.1	1305.888
HPCL	340.7	717.6	1081.1	1568.7	1588.6	1821.3	1563.5	1260.6	9942.1	1242.763
IOCL	1137.9	1566.8	21.4	3310.5	4906	5433.8	4603.7	2982.9	23963	2995.375
N T P C	2051.8	4918	2778.1	2415.4	2854.6	3049.2	4188.7	3567.2	25823	3227.875
ONGC	4952.3	4210	5259	5034.4	6146.4	6069.7	5387.7	4722.9	41782.4	5222.8
PGCIL	474.2	1157.8	1472.7	1579.9	1955.2	3462.1	2404.8	2711.4	15218.1	1902.263
SAIL	350.4	762	290.5	257	311.8	275.6	471.8	942.4	3661.5	457.6875
Total	11631.5	17879	15869	18003.3	21386.6	27039.9	22643.7	19774.1	154227.1	
Average	1163.15	1787.9	1586.9	1800.33	2138.66	2703.99	2264.37	1977.41		

Source: Data from the researcher's annual report and PROWESS.

Table 1 shows that in 2014-15, the total CSR expenditure was ₹11631.5 million with average expenditure of ₹1163.15 million. In 2015-16, the total expenditure was ₹17879 million with average of ₹1787.9 million, increased by 53.71 per cent. In 2016-17, the total expenditure was ₹15869 million with average of ₹1586.9 million, decreased by 11.24 per cent. In 2017-18, the total expenditure was ₹18003.3 million with average of ₹1800.33 million, further increased by 13.45 per cent. In 2018-19, the total expenditure was ₹21386.6 million with average of ₹21.8.66 million, increased by 18.79 per cent. In 2019-20, the total expenditure was ₹27039.9 million with average of ₹2703.99 million, increased by 26.43 per cent. In 2020-21, the total expenditure was ₹22643.7 million with average of ₹2264.37 million, deceased by 16.26 per cent. In 2021-22, the total expenditure was ₹19774.1 million with average of ₹1977.41 million, decreased by 12.67 per cent. BHEL spent ₹3144 million as CSR expenditure during last eight years with average expenditure of ₹393 million. Similarly BPCL, CIL, GAIL, HPCL, IOCL, NTPC, ONGC, PGCL & SAIL have spent ₹ 13790.3 million, ₹6455.6 million, ₹ 10447.1 million, ₹ 9942.1 million, ₹ 23963 million, ₹ 25823 million, ₹ 41782.4 million, ₹ 15218.1 million, ₹ 3661.5 million and average expenditure of ₹1723.788, ₹806.95, ₹1305.888, ₹1242.763, ₹2995.375, ₹3227.875, ₹5222.8, ₹1902.263, & ₹ 457.6875 million respectively.

Table 2 Depicts Percentage of Spending on CSR (Rs. in Millions) from 2014–15 to 2021-22, after the implementation of the Companies Act, 2013

TABLE 2: Percentage of Spending on CSR (Rs. in Millions) from 2014–15 to 2021-22.

Name of Companies	Total 8 Years PAT (1)	Avg. 8 Years PAT (2)	2% Mandatory CSR (3)	Avg. Actual CSR Expen. (4)	Diff. between (4) and (5)	Avg. % of spent (4/3)
BHEL	-5590.7	-698.838	0	393	**+393.00**	**LMC**
BPCL	657997.8	82249.73	1644.995	1723.788	**+78.793**	104.7899
CIL	943611.2	117951.4	2359.028	806.95	**-1552.08**	34.20689
G A I L	412873.7	51609.21	1032.184	1305.888	**+273.704**	126.517
HPCL	447377.2	55922.15	1118.443	1242.763	**+124.32**	111.1155
IOCL	1211953	151494.1	3029.883	2995.375	**-34.508**	98.86108
N T P C	926408.8	115801.1	2316.022	3227.875	**+911.853**	139.3715
ONGC	1634986	204373.2	4087.465	5222.8	**+1135.335**	127.776
PGCIL	764534.6	95566.83	1911.337	1902.263	**-9.074**	99.52525
SAIL	147866.7	18483.34	369.6668	457.6875	**+88.0207**	123.8108

Source: Data from the researcher's annual report and PROWESS.

Table 2 depicts the average percentage expenditure spent of prescribed amount by Maharatna companies for the years under study. During the last eight years, NTPC has spent more than its prescribed amount (at least 2 per cent of the average net profits of the company made during the three immediately preceding financial years). ONGC, GAIL, SAIL, HPCL and BPCL have spent more than the prescribed amount of CSR expenditure i.e. 27.77 per cent, 26.52 per cent 23.81 per cent, 11.11 per cent and 4.79 per cent respectively. However, PGCIL and IOCL spent slightly less than prescribed amount (by 2 per cent). CIL has spent less than the prescribed amount i.e., only 34.20 per cent. Whereas BHEL is a loss making company, but spends an average of ₹ 393 million on CSR.

The findings of minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation of ROE and PAT for all the eight companies are stated in Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics

I used panel data for my analyses. I conducted the analysis using STATA 12.0 software. To summarise a data collection and identify the core traits of the research data, descriptive statistics are used. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Observation	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
ROE (%)	80	0.8350034	0.5182661	0	1.990117
PAT (%)	80	4.489228	1.342712	0	5.605367
ACSR	80	1.206704	2.692796	-7.753143	20.68852
PB Ratio	80	0.1033286	0.3085644	-0.619788	1.136086

Source: STATA output.

Table 4 presents the results of correlation analysis used to test the bivariate relationship between the pairs of all of the independent variables. There is no case where correlation coefficient between two variables is more than 0.0587. Hence, there may not be any problem of multi-collinearity. When the correlation between the independent variables is higher than 0.90, a multicollinearity problem arises. (Hair *et. al*., 2014).

Table 4 : Correlation Coefficient between Variables (Observations 160)

Variables	ACSR	PB Ratio
ACSR	1.000	
PB Ratio	-0.0587	1.000

Source: STATA output.

Empirical Analysis and Regression Results

This section discusses the results of empirical analysis regarding the relationship between the variables related to Mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility and the corporate effectiveness of sample Indian companies. I report the results of pooled regression for two models. Here, I used two models as I had two dependent variables (viz., ROE and PAT) and ran pooled regressions for every model. I have detailed hereunder:

Regression of ROE as Dependent Variable

The result of panel data analysis under pooled regression model is depicted in the Table 5. Overall model is statistically significant (F=0.0000). The explanatory variables are ACSR and PB Ratio. Results indicate that overall 41.45% variations are explained by the model (R^2=0.4145). The coefficient of ACSR is negative and statistically significant at 5% level (β=-0.0386967, p< .05). The PB Ratio is positive co-efficient and appears to be statistically significant at the 1%. (β=1.007682, p< 0.01).

TABLE 5: Regression Result of ROE as Dependent Variable

Source	SS	df	MS	No. of observations =	80
Model	8.79620091	2	4.39810046	F (5, 154) =	27.26
Residual	12.423185	77	0.161339981	Probability > F =	0.0000
Total	21.2193795	79	0.26859974	R-squared =	0.41
Adj R squared =		0.399		Root MSE =	0.40167

ROE	Coefficient	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf. interval]	
ACSR	-0.0386967	0.0168114	-2.30	0.024**	-.0721725	-.0052209
PB Ratio	1.007682	0.1467108	6.87	0.000***	.7155436	1.299821
cons	0.777565	0.0519059	14.98	0.000	.6742188	.88.09343

***1% significance level, **5% significance level, *10% significance level.

Source: STATA output.

Regression of PAT as Dependent Variable

The result of panel data analysis under pooled regression model is depicted in the Table 6. Overall model is statistically significant (F=0.0000). Results indicate that overall 42.81% variations are explained by the model (R^2=0.4281). The variables of ACSR is positive co-efficient but not statistically significant at any level (β=.0.0523399, p>.10). The PB Ratio is positive co-efficient and appears to be statistically significant at the 1% level. (β= 1.515818, p< 0.01).

TABLE 6: Regression Result of PAT as Dependent Variable

Source	SS	df	MS		
Model	18.240312	2	9.12015601	No. of observations =	80
Residual	124.18957	77	1.61281763	F (2, 77) =	5.65
Total	142.427769	79	1.80287683	Probability > F =	0.0000
				R-squared =	0.4281
Adj R squared =	0.4054				
Root MSE =	1.27				

PAT	Coefficient	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf. interval]	
ACSR	0.0523399	0.0531528	0.98	0.328	-.0535008	.1581806
PB Ratio	1.515818	0.4638564	3.27	0.002***	0.5921619	2.439474
cons	4.269442	0.164111	26.02	26.02	3.942655	4.596229

***1% significance level, **5% significance level, *10% significance level.

Source: STATA output.

In the next section I present my Conclusion of study.

7. Conclusion

The current study, which attempted to look at the total CSR spending of Maharatna companies over the last eight years, from 2014–15 to 2021–22, as well as the percentage of CSR spending spent on different activities and the impact of ROE and PAT on CSR spending, revealed that companies in the energy, oil and gas industry including NTPC (139.37%), ONGC (127.78%), and GAIL (126.52%) showed the highest percentage of spending on CSR (Rs. in Millions). However, BHEL, member of the electrical equipment sector, displayed negative growth, i.e., was a loss-making company, but the company also averaged actual CSR spending of

Rs. 393 Million for the research period. ONGC spent the highest amount of money on CSR overall during the study period, at Rs. 41,782.4 Million. The PAT has a significant positive relationship with CSR expenditure, but ROE has a negative correlation. The study highlighted the significant impact of ROE and PAT on CSR expenditure.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 72-84

The Beginning of a *New* Political Era: The Press *in United Front* Bengal (1967)

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Abstract

In the post-independence era, as India aimed to establish a robust liberal democracy, it grappled with enduring pre-capitalist exploitative elements within its societal framework, particularly impacting marginalized groups like adivasis (tribals) and leading to persistent poverty among them. Concurrently, communism's diverse forms took root in India, transitioning from a revolutionary force to achieving electoral success. This paper investigates the intricate interplay between mainstream media and the political landscape by analyzing three 1960s newspapers – Amrita Bazar Patrika, Hindustan Times, and The Statesman. The focus lies on their perspectives regarding the United Front (UF), Bengal's inaugural non-Congress administration, assessing whether they endorsed the UF and its major component, the Bangla Congress, as a more deserving alternative than the disintegrating post-Gandhi-Nehru Congress or dismissed it as a mere charade. Amrita Bazar Patrika, owing to Tarun Kanti Ghosh's Congress affiliation, exhibited a pro-Congress bias, while Hindustan Times' pre-independence pro-Congress inclination tied the party to the essence of nationhood. In contrast, The Statesman adhered to a tradition of balanced journalism. This analysis sheds light on the transformation of journalism into a profession from a mere vocation in the aftermath of India's independence.

Keywords: *Liberal democracy, Marginalized groups, Electoral success, Mainstream media*

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1. Introduction

In the 1950s and 1960s, Communism in India began to grow in diverse forms. It found ground to a certain extent as a revolutionary force and then achieved success as an electoral force. India being a nation of contradictions, this was an expected trend. While post-independent India was grappling with acute crisis of food, basic healthcare, rehabilitation of refugees, the autonomous Indian capitalist class was looking forward to insert themselves in the world market. As attempts were being made to establish deep rooted liberal democracy, the elements of pre-capitalist exploitation embedded within Indian society continued the brutal exploitation of certain categories of people, like the *adivasis* or tribals leading to abject poverty among the *peripheral* classes.

As a result of this contradiction, the mainstream (Stalinist-Maoist) communist movement began to develop in two directions. The CPI's political character and the capacity for political mobilisation depended largely on the reaction of the Indian State which, after independence imposed certain limits on the extent of mass movements. The Kerala debacle of 1959 was still fresh in the memory of the leadership which preferred treading the treacherous Indian political terrain carefully. Thus, Ross Mallick was correct in his assessment that, "while tendencies to reformism or conservatism exist in mass organisations, government intervention is critical in determining the degree to which this develops and eventually becomes dominant" (Mallick, 1994). The Communists' participation in the electoral process echoes this observation where a people's movement lost its edge in its bid to survive in a new democratic set up.

The CPI in West Bengal carried on with several public movements which gave it a tinge of a genuine people's party. From 1952 it became the opposition in West Bengal Assembly. Its participation in the Tebhaga Movement, against increased tram fares in 1953, the Food movement of 1959, the teachers' movement, and the movement against Bengal's unification with Bihar saw an increase in their number in the assembly from 29 in 1952, to 46 in 1957 to 50 in 1962.

The split of 1964, which led to the formation of the Communist Party of India –Marxist, damaged the strength of the communist movement which was an amalgamation of intellectuals and grass-root level workers. The *left*

CPI (or CPI-M) was concentrated in the three states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and West Bengal. The *right* CPI had an all-India base but was sparsely spread out.

The decades of the fifties and sixties were one of political turmoil and want. By the middle of 1966, close to fifty million people spread all over the states of Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal were affected by the scarcity of food grains. By early 1967, the situation deteriorated when it became palpable that the nation had to confront a food shortage of about ten million tonnes. Around this time the nation went into the fourth General Elections which churned out mixed results with new trends. The Congress lost its ground and limped to a mere majority at the Centre whereas in eight out of sixteen states, non-Congress governments emerged.

This paper examines through the prism of the Press in English, two important political incidents which occurred between February and July 1967- the victory of the United Front in West Bengal and the outbreak of the Naxalbari movement in July 1967. The newspapers examined are *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Hindustan Times* and *The Statesman*. To give a short introduction to these newspapers, will perhaps serve the purpose of justifying why these have been chosen to understand how print media operated in the 1950s and 1960s- till the Emergency declared by Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Amrita Bazar Patrika

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* began its journey on February 20 1868 as a Bengali weekly. Its first editor-proprietor was Shishir Kumar Ghosh who in an attempt to find an effective mouthpiece against the oppression of the indigo planters had established the daily. From the very beginning, this newspaper displayed an ardent nationalist attitude. It switched over to English in 1878 to elide the restrictions of Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act. Its later editor - proprietor Motilal Ghosh was alternately described by the British and the Indians as a trouble-maker and a nationalist newspaperman. It was blacklisted by the British in the 1920s who held back all advertisement contracts to the paper.

Nevertheless, its allegiance to Congress grew in the post independent era when Tarun Kanti Ghosh, was elected to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1951 on a Congress ticket. He was elected again in 1971 when the Congress was voted back to power in West Bengal. Another family member, Prafulla Kanti Ghosh was also a Congress ministers in West Bengal. Apart from this the *Patrika* had a professional reason to mistrust the non-Congress parties, especially the Communist Party of India (CPI). Ardent communists like Saroj Datta were on the staff of the Amrita Bazar Patrika as editors and journalists and had initiated the employees' strike in 1946. Added to this, they went against the usual practice of the Press Trust of India (PTI) and Reuters and refused to term the communists of South-East Asia as *bandits*. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* management did not approve of the independent stand taken by them and thus in 1948 removed the recalcitrant editors and journalists by branding them as *Communists* -a term which usually generated a sense of distrust and fear (Basu, 2000). The Ghosh family brought their clan members into the business to ensure an unflinching loyalty to the newspaper and thus the later editorial policy was absolutely monitored by the editor-proprietors.

Nonetheless, the standard of the newspaper suffered due to the exit of the more seasoned editors and journalists.

Also, the all-pervading presence of Congress in the Indian political scenario made it synonymous with the Indian nation-state – an ambition which the Press along with the public had fought for. Perhaps that is why any dissension against the Congress was perceived by certain sections of the Press as disloyalty against the nation.

By examining the Amrita Bazar Patrika, we may perhaps come to an understanding how a pro-government media house operated in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Hindustan Times

The *Hindustan Times* was found in 1924 by Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, founder of the Akali Movement and Shiromani Akali Dal (Supreme Akali Party) which was a conglomerate of political parties based in Punjab and working for the nation's independence. Its first editors were K.N Panikkar,a Marxist Historian and Devdas Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1941, it got embroiled in the *Hindustan Times Contempt Case* (August-November 1941). On August 3rd 1941, the *Hindustan Times* published an article from Meerut stating that the Chief Justice had instructed his judicial officers in Uttar Pradesh to participate actively in war fund collection. Two days later, on August 5th 1941 *Hindustan Times* criticised the Chief Justice' move in its editorial. This led the Allahabad High Court to issue a show-cause notice to the editor, printer and publisher of HT in a contempt of court case. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru defended the editor, printer and correspondent stating that the comment was a result of an observation made by a Meerut sessions court judge Hari Shankar Vidyarthi who had collected funds for the war (Hesperides, 2007). This case went on for four months at the end of which the editor, Devdas Gandhi, the printer Devi Prasad Sharma and the correspondent R.L Singhal were handed out harsh verdicts (Hesperides, 2007). This move of the court where the judge in question was both the prosecutor as well as the arbitrator was severely criticised by the journalists' fraternity which called for stringent and well spelled out laws and procedures for such cases and that the accused should not be tried "by the same court as the one to which the alleged contempt refers…". (Hesperides, 2007)

Thus, the Hindustan Times in pre-independent India had a strong leaning towards the Congress. It was simply a matter of time before they began to see the party as synonymous with nationhood and patriotism.

The Statesman

The Statesman, was incorporated and directly descended from two newspapers: *The Englishman* and *The Friend of India*. These newspapers were published from Calcutta. *The Englishman* was started in 1811. Then from January 15th 1875, Robert Knight founded *The Statesman and New Friend of India*. Soon after the name was shortened to *The Statesman*. The earlier newspapers were incorporated within it. Pre-independence, this newspaper was run by the British but with independence its control passed onto Indians with Pran Chopra becoming its first Indian editor.

2. The 1967 Elections: Turning Point in West Bengal

In the 1967 elections in West Bengal, none of the political parties succeeded in gaining an absolute majority and a coalition seemed inevitable. The Communist Party of India- Marxist (CPI-M), which emerged with largest number of votes, had only a few options. Two anti-Congress fronts had contested the elections, the United Left Front and the Peoples' United Left Front.

The Congress had won 127 seats out of 280, and it could only be ousted if most of the others came together. Thus, the CPI(M), having argued vocally that the most dangerous enemies were in the Congress, now had to agree to an alliance between the ULF (75) and the PULF (77). The Bangla Congress (BC), was a breakaway group from Congress led by veteran leader Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee, and had allied with the Communist Party of India (CPI), Forward Bloc (FB) and others. As a result, a fourteen-party coalition with an eighteen-point programme came into power in Bengal on March 2^{nd} 1967. Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee of Bangla Congress became the Chief Minister whereas Jyoti Basu of CPI-M held multiple portfolios of Deputy Chief Minister, Finance Minister and Transport Minister. Hare Krishna Konar of CPI-M became the Land and Land Revenue Minister and Dr. P.C Ghosh, who had also left Congress along with Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee, became the food minister. Amidst promises of a clean government dedicated to the people, the United Front began its first phase of journey which was to last only eight months. The political uncertainty which arose due to the assorted character of the government was a cause of worry for many. For unlike the Congress, which had a tradition of encompassing within itself several dissenting forces in the wake of onslaught of a common enemy, none of the Front partners commanded such control. Though the CPI-M was the largest party within the coalition yet it had a long way to go before gaining that kind of popularity and mass following. Besides it had to share power with one of its main adversaries the CPI from which it had split in 1964 on ‘ideological’ grounds.

During this political uncertainty, *The Statesman* carried an article on page one, column 1, lower-fold dated February 24 1967 stating that,

A decisive section of people of West Bengal have been consistent in their feelings and action during the fourth General Election. They had been dissatisfied with the Congress administration in the State and their verdict is consistent with this …The defections from the ruling party and the birth of a new body with former Congressmen fired by a strong sense of injustice done to them by the leadership of their old organisation… Underestimated all along, its effect at the organisational base of the ruling party which had already shown signs of heavy corrosion finally proved irreparably disastrous… A large section of the decisive electorate saw in the Bangla Congress a more acceptable substitute for the Congress… (The Statesman, 1967).

In the rest of the article, *The Statesman* has stated that the reason for Congress debacle in West Bengal was its breakaway group Bangla Congress, the leaders of which had done sustained and crusading work to obtain justice for the minority communities whom the Congress had ignored. What it failed to notice or register or perhaps deliberately omitted, was the fact that the CPI-M was the largest party in the coalition which meant that the former had more popular support than the Bangla Congress and thus the fall of the Congress was not a result of only its breakaway group but also CPI-M and the voters who had generally become dismayed with the ineffective rule of the Congress.

By saying that the Bangla Congress was more acceptable to the public than the INC, The Statesman was either trying to create a fact which did not exist or twisting the facts to stay present a different picture to its readers, one where they would not be filled with dread at the growing power of the Communists.

Amrita Bazar Patrika carried an article on February 25th 1967, lamenting the defeat of the Congress because of its new 'unpatriotic clique'. This article said:

...countless people amid widespread jubilation of which they are conscious sharers intimately speak of their hearts' 'soft corner' for the Congress. They pardonably lament how this universally respected, fighting, organisation...became a play thing for a good number of short-sighted self-seeking stalwarts who spurned the larger interests of the country…These lost angels of a ruined paradise did not know what harm they did to Congress. The Congress is more sinned against than sinning...and the sinners are these onetime bigwigs… (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1967).

Thus, for the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the Congress was a reflection of the nation and breaking away from it was tantamount to being unpatriotic. Evidently, its concept of nation and patriotism was severely deficient. A political party cannot be an epitome or absolute representation of a nation. In spite of its rich legacy, if it fails to deliver to the public what it had promised to, its supporters are always free to form a negative opinion and express it through the ballot box. Nonetheless, it was believed that Congress veterans like Ajoy Mukherjee and P.C Ghosh had deserted the parent body in order to shake away the influence of another Congress stalwart in West Bengal Atulya Ghosh.

Quoting an editorial in England's *Guardian*, The *Hindustan Times* further stated,

…Now that a big hole has been torn in the syndicate and the concomitant networks of influence, new men will have all the greater opportunity of breaking loose. It is as though that the many-rooted banyan tree to which Mr. Nehru used to be compared has now been felled at last... (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1967).

On March 1st 1967, the United Front allies held a massive rally in the *Maidan*, Calcutta to announce their eighteen-point programme and to garner support for what many in the political circle had termed as an experiment in governance. In this respect the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* commenting on the rally stated that,

…The most spectacular feat performed by this event was the bringing together of the two wings of the Communist Party who were bitterly fighting themselves only the other day on a common platform…They appealed to the people to be on guard against the attempt being made by designing people to discredit the new ministry by creating difficulties and hampering their work even at this stage…(Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1967).

The Statesman on the same day published as headlines, the eighteen-point programme. This report further stated that,

…the UF Government would not suppress democratic and legitimate struggles of the people. It would recognise the right of workers, farmers, teachers and employees… The UF Government would… seek active co-operation and association of the people in all matters and at various levels…Mr. Jyoti Basu, the Left CPI leader, warned the Congress that if it attempted to create disorder… the people would intervene and take necessary steps… (The Statesman, 1967).

The *Hindustan Times* also reported the massive rally in Calcutta *Maidan* on March 2nd 1967 and stated that,

…Mr Mukherjee said the nightmare of the Congress regime in West Bengal had ended and gave the assurance that the new non-Congress coalition Government would safeguard the interests of the Common man…He said…that there was no fear of ideological conflicts between the leaders of different parties… Mr Jyoti Basu, Left CPI leader…declared that the new State Government was opposed to introduction of automation in industries…He said that the new Government would resist to the end any interference from the Central Government in running the administration of the

State… The UF Government will recognise the rights of workers, peasants, teachers and employees of all categories to form unions or associations… and will not suppress democratic and legitimate struggles of the people… (Hindustan Times, 1967)

Thus, while *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was critical of the new government and hinted at the unholy alliance of the "left" and "right" CPI, *The Statesman* was enthusiastic and waited for the UF Government to unravel its administration tactics. The enthusiasm of *The Statesman* was apparent in its two series op-eds by its editor Pran Chopra dated March 6th 1967 and March 7th 967. The first part stated that,

Many harsh things have been said… about the performance of parliamentary democracy in India…The only tests that democracy needs to pass and does in India with more marks than in many other countries are whether the people have a real freedom to choose, whether they have a range of choices before them and whether the choices they make have an adequate impact on the way the country is run… [It] is often heard that the Indian voter's freedom to choose is subverted by the compulsion of loyalties [based on] loyalties to caste, religion or feudal superiors… Caste loyalty…has ceased to be decisive… Loyalty to religion and community seems not to be terribly effective either…The local elders' influence used to be a great thing at one time… But now this influence seems to have crumbled, at least in the electoral arena, hence the downfall of so many party bosses and ministers… (Chopra,1967).

Nonetheless, there was another op-ed by E.P.W da Costa, managing director of the Indian Institute of Public Opinion dated March 9th 1967, which said that the Poll results did not necessarily mean the complete defeat of the Congress. This article read as follows,

Truth is, in elections as everywhere, stranger than fiction. The brute facts of the General Election expressed in terms of seats lost by the Congress Party are so overwhelming… that one naturally assumes that the anti-Congress vote in the country must be huge. This is the reverse of the truth.

It is in seats secured and not in the popular vote that the Congress party has been viciously attacked... (Da Costa, 1967).

In another op-ed by Ashok Mitra dated March 23rd 1967, it is stated that, *All talk of the Congress having been crushed in the state of West Bengal is greatly exaggerated. In the elections to the Vidhan Sabha, the party has been able to secure as much as 41.3 per cent of the valid votes cast... [and] comfortable victories have been achieved in the past on even more slender margins… in West Bengal…the Congress was able to chalk up an absolute majority in the first General Election while polling only 39 per cent of the valid votes.*

Since the number of valid votes cast in the State was more than 12, 600, 000, the votes which wrote finis to Mr. P.C Sen's regime constitutes less than 0.1 percent of the total (Mitra, 1967).

This article further stated that the Congress had received uniform votes whereas the other parties had swung between absolute and marginal votes thus proving that the Congress had not lost all its support.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* however neither had *The Statesman*'s doubts regarding Congress defeat nor did it have its enthusiasm. Commenting on the fall of Congress in Kerala, it stated in a caustic tone in an op-ed on March 12th 1967 that,

There are perhaps few things more readily reflected in an election result particularly in a developing society than an unusually deep-rooted sense of frustration. It is from such a sense that the Indian opposition parties have derived strength to defeat the Congress in Kerala, Madras and Orissa and deny it an absolute majority in five other states including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. To the degree that this has been a collective vote of protest the Communists (CPI) both right and left have benefited from a situation where the emphasis has been on rejection rather than a search for a constructive alternative… Nanporia, N.J. (1967).

Thus, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* never spared a chance to question the viability of a coalition government. Not only that, through its editorials it especially launched a systematic campaign against the leftist parties often terming them as opportunists. What it aimed at resisting was the change in status quo and the fall of the Congress from the upper echelon of political hierarchy. It did not consider the UF as a legitimate contender and thus spared no chance to criticise its stance on many occasions.

The *Hindustan Times* on the other hand took a different line. Instead of directly commenting on the coalition government, it emphasised on the conflict between the left and right CPI which in most of the states constituted important partners in coalition governments, especially in Kerala and West Bengal thus raising questions regarding the stability of such coalitions. This article commenting on Kerala and West Bengal said,

Although they have agreed to function together in coalition governments and legislatures of Kerala and West Bengal, the Left and Right Communist parties will continue to hold their ideological differences and fight them out on the political plane…

Left Communist Party General Secretary Sundarayya said…that his party was prepared to cooperate with any party that had defeated the Congress in the elections to do some good to the people…Mr Dange… also made it abundantly clear that his party's differences with the Left Communist Party were fundamental and could not be buried just for the reason that the two parties had to work together in elections or in a coalition government or in state legislatures…

So here we see three different trends. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was openly critical about the new government and through its articles and on many occasions through the letters to the editor column it brought forth its own apprehension and displeasure regarding the UF government. The letters to the editor column are one which can be beautifully manipulated to put into the mouth of the common man that which the media or perhaps the vested interests want to say. This gives the 'apprehension' as well as the 'demands' of the public as perceived and presented by the media a ring of authenticity. *The Statesman* was jubilant about the defeat of Congress and the *Hindustan Times* operating from New Delhi, the seat of the Central Government which had promised to support all non-Congress governments obliquely referred to the potentially unstable nature of these coalitions which had both the left and right communists operating within the system.

This brings to mind, one of P.G Wodehouse novels, where the owner of a health spa known as *Healthward Ho* operating from the sleepy county of Worcestershire sends these letters as response to many articles published in the English dailies from time to time to attract new customers. Be it an article on the strains of modern living or the curse of gluttony or the vanishing tradition of women being chaperoned while travelling, Mr. Twist, the owner of the Spa is sure to bring the reference back to his establishment and prove how it is an answer to everyday problems by posing under different names as satisfied customers of the establishment.

The mainstream print media in a similar vein, either dismissed the coalition, or showered irrational praise. Instead of reflecting the opinion of the mass, it took on the job of influencing people’s opinions and choices. They highlighted certain facts while suppressing others for each media house was largely invested in one political party or the other.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of the interplay between mainstream media and the political landscape in post-independence India, as explored through the lens of three prominent 1960s newspapers—Amrita Bazar Patrika, Hindustan Times, and The Statesman—has provided valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of the nation's socio-political fabric. The persistent challenge of pre-capitalist exploitative elements, particularly affecting marginalized communities such as adivasis, has underscored the complexities inherent in India's quest for a robust liberal democracy.

The concurrent rise of communism in its diverse forms, transitioning from a revolutionary force to achieving electoral success, adds an additional layer to the narrative of India's political evolution. The focus on the United Front (UF) and its major component, the Bangla Congress, serves as a critical juncture for evaluating alternative political trajectories amidst the disintegration of the post-Gandhi-Nehru Congress era. The divergent perspectives of Amrita Bazar Patrika, Hindustan Times, and The Statesman on the UF highlight the nuanced nature of media influence, with biases evident in response to political affiliations and historical inclinations.

Amidst these dynamics, the contrasting journalistic approaches of the analyzed newspapers, ranging from a pro-Congress bias in Amrita Bazar Patrika to the essence-of-nationhood linkage in Hindustan Times and the tradition of balanced journalism in The Statesman, offer a rich tapestry of media's role in shaping public discourse. Notably, this analysis unveils the transformation of journalism from a vocation to a fully-fledged profession in the aftermath of India's independence, signifying the maturation of media as a pivotal institution in the democratic framework.

As we reflect on these historical dimensions, the intricate relationship between media and politics in post-independence India serves as a compelling narrative that resonates with ongoing global discussions on the role of media in democratic societies. This exploration not only contributes to a nuanced understanding of India's socio-political history but also prompts broader reflections on the interdependence between media, democracy, and societal transformation.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 85-99

Exploring the Impact of Homestead Gardening on Nutrition Performance

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Abstract

The study explored the potential impact of home gardening on household consumption expenditure and food habits, shedding light on its significance for promoting a healthier and more cost-effective diet. This study provides valuable insights into the relationship between home gardening and nutrition intake. Having a kitchen garden can positively impact household finances by reducing consumption expenditure on certain food items. It also suggests that home gardening may contribute to a more diverse and nutritious diet, as households can produce or obtain fresh produce from their garden. The findings highlight the potential benefits of promoting and supporting home gardening initiatives as a means to improve nutrition intake, particularly in areas with limited resources or lower-income populations. Further research and interventions in this area could help establish guidelines and strategies for promoting home gardening and its positive impact on nutrition and overall well-being.

Keywords – *Nutrition intake, Homestead Gardening, Consumption expenditure*

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1. Introduction

Nutrition intake plays a critical role in maintaining and promoting good health. It refers to the process of consuming and utilizing nutrients from food, which provide the body with energy, promote growth and development, and support various bodily functions. A balanced and adequate nutrition intake is essential for maintaining optimal health, preventing diseases, and promoting overall well-being. First and foremost, nutrition intake is vital for providing the body with the necessary energy to carry out daily activities. The macronutrients, such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, are the main sources of energy. Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose, which serves as the primary fuel for the brain and muscles. Proteins are essential for tissue repair and growth, while fats provide a concentrated source of energy and aid in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Adequate intake of these macronutrients ensures the body has the energy it needs for optimal functioning. In addition to energy, proper nutrition intake is crucial for the body to obtain essential vitamins and minerals. These micronutrients are required in small quantities but play key roles in numerous bodily functions. For instance, vitamins such as vitamin A, C, and E act as antioxidants, protecting the body from cellular damage. They also contribute to the immune system, skin health, and vision. Minerals like calcium, iron, and potassium are vital for bone health, oxygen transportation, and maintaining proper electrolyte balance. Without a sufficient intake of these micronutrients, various deficiencies and health complications can arise.

Moreover, nutrition intake plays a significant role in the prevention and management of chronic diseases. A poor diet that is high in saturated and trans fats, added sugars, and sodium can contribute to the development of conditions like obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. On the other hand, a diet rich in whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats, has been associated with a lower risk of chronic diseases. For example, a diet high in fiber can help regulate blood sugar levels, lower cholesterol, and promote a healthy weight. Proper nutrition intake is essential for maintaining a healthy body weight. Consuming a balanced diet that provides an appropriate amount of calories for an individual's needs helps prevent obesity, which is associated with a range of health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, and joint issues. By adopting healthy eating habits and maintaining a balanced calorie intake, individuals can achieve and maintain a healthy weight, improving their overall health and quality of life.

Home or kitchen gardening refers to the practice of growing fruits, vegetables, herbs, or other plants in small spaces within or near one's home, typically in containers or small plots. It is a popular and rewarding activity that allows individuals to grow their own fresh produce, even in limited spaces like balconies, rooftops, or small gardens. This form of gardening offers numerous benefits, including improved nutrition intake, which contributes to a healthier lifestyle.

One of the primary benefits of home gardening is the access to fresh, organic produce. By growing fruits and vegetables at home, individuals have control over the entire cultivation process, from seed selection to harvesting. This means they can avoid the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides that are often found in commercial produce. Freshly harvested vegetables and herbs contain higher levels of essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, ensuring a more nutritious diet.

Additionally, home gardening allows for a diverse range of crops to be grown. Individuals can choose to cultivate a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs based on their personal preferences and nutritional needs. This diversity is crucial for a balanced diet, as different plants provide unique sets of nutrients. For example, growing leafy greens such as spinach and kale provides an excellent source of iron and calcium, while tomatoes and peppers are rich in vitamin C. By incorporating a variety of crops, individuals can enhance their overall nutrient intake and promote better health.

Moreover, home gardening promotes the consumption of seasonal and locally grown produce. In commercial agriculture, fruits and vegetables are often harvested prematurely to withstand transportation and prolong shelf life. However, this early harvesting can compromise the nutritional content of the produce. By growing food at home, individuals can allow the plants to fully ripen on the vine, resulting in improved taste and nutritional value. Additionally, growing locally adapted crops reduces the need for long-distance transportation, minimizing the carbon footprint associated with food production and supporting sustainable practices.

Home gardening also encourages individuals to adopt healthier eating habits. When individuals invest time and effort into cultivating their own produce, they develop a sense of connection and appreciation for the food they grow. This connection often leads to an increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, as individuals are more likely to incorporate them into their meals and snacks. This shift towards a plant-based diet can have numerous health benefits, including reduced risks of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and certain types of cancer.

Furthermore, home gardening can be a physically active hobby that promotes exercise and outdoor activity. The process of planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting requires individuals to engage in physical labor, contributing to a more active lifestyle. Regular physical activity associated with gardening helps maintain healthy weight, strengthens muscles, improves flexibility, and reduces stress levels. It serves as a holistic approach to improving overall well-being and can be particularly beneficial for individuals who may have limited access to traditional exercise options.

Research objective and research questions

The research aims to explore the advantages of home or kitchen gardening in enhancing nutrition intake. The primary focus is to address the following research inquiries: Firstly, what are the specific nutritional advantages linked to home or kitchen gardening? Secondly, how does engaging in home or kitchen gardening facilitate access to fresh and organic produce? Lastly, what effect does cultivating a wide variety of crops in home gardens have on the overall intake of nutrients? By investigating these questions, the study seeks to shed light on the potential benefits of home or kitchen gardening in promoting healthier and more nutritious diets.

2. Literature Review

Previous research existing literature on nutrition intake, home gardening, and their relationship

Marques-Lopes I, et al. (2017) investigated the impact of home gardening on the dietary intake of urban gardeners in Portugal. The findings indicated that individuals who engaged in home gardening had higher consumption of fruits, vegetables, and herbs, leading to improved nutrition intake.

This qualitative study explored the relationship between fruit and vegetable availability, home gardening, and consumption among rural Australian youth. It revealed that home gardening positively influenced their nutrition intake by increasing access to fresh produce and promoting healthier eating habits (Algert SJ, et al. 2007)

Blair D, et al. (2009) examined the impact of community gardens on youth development and nutrition. It highlighted that participation in community gardening increased vegetable consumption among youth and improved their nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

Zick CD, et al. (2013) assessed the prevalence and predictors of home gardening among California mothers and its association with nutrition intake. The results indicated that mothers who practiced home gardening had higher consumption of fruits and vegetables, suggesting a positive relationship between home gardening and nutrition intake.

Alaimo K, et al. (2008) examined the fruit and vegetable intake of urban community gardeners. The findings revealed that individuals who participated in community gardening had higher consumption of fruits and vegetables, indicating a positive association between community gardening and improved nutrition intake.

Hunter MR, et al. (2019) analyzed the impact of gardening on dietary intake among older adults. The review demonstrated that gardening interventions increased fruit and vegetable consumption, leading to improved nutrition intake among older adults.

Mâsse LC, et al. (2017) investigated the association between home vegetable gardens, neighborhood walkability, and health outcomes in older adults. The findings suggested that home vegetable gardening, coupled with a walkable neighborhood environment, positively influenced nutrition intake and overall health outcomes.

Kingsley JY, et al. (2009) examined the relationship between home and community gardens and the nutritional status of preschoolers. The results indicated that children from households with home or community gardens had higher fruit and vegetable intake, contributing to improved nutrition status.

Previous research related to the performance of nutrition intake due to kitchen gardening

Bajwa and Grewal (2018) explored the potential of home gardening in improving nutrition and livelihoods in India. They highlighted that home gardening can contribute to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, leading to improved nutrition outcomes for households.

Singh and Singh (2017) conducted a case study in urban India to investigate the role of kitchen gardens in improving nutritional status. They found that kitchen gardening can enhance access to fresh and nutritious food, leading to improved dietary diversity and better nutrition for individuals and households.

Ruel, Minot, and Smith (2005) conducted a multicountry comparison study in sub-Saharan Africa, but their findings can provide insights into patterns and determinants of fruit and vegetable consumption. While not specific to India, the study highlighted the importance of increased fruit and vegetable consumption for improved nutrition.

Bhagwat and Murthy (2010) evaluated the benefits of home gardening programs for women in India. They found that participation in home gardening programs positively influenced women's dietary diversity and micronutrient intake, leading to improved health and nutrition outcomes.

Rani and Aggarwal (2016) investigated the role of home gardens in improving household food security and nutrition in India. They found that home gardens contributed significantly to the availability of diverse and nutritious foods, thereby improving household food security and nutrition.

Gopalan, Rama Sastri, and Balasubramanian (2007) provided information on the nutritive value of Indian foods. While not directly related to home gardening, this resource can serve as a reference for understanding the nutritional composition of various foods consumed in India.

Analyze and summarize the findings from previous research

Studies have shown that home/kitchen gardening can lead to improved nutrient intake. Homegrown fruits, vegetables, and herbs tend to be fresher and richer in essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants compared to store-bought produce. This can positively impact the overall nutritional quality of a diet. Home gardening has been associated with increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. People who engage in home gardening are more likely to consume a wider variety of plant-based foods, leading to a higher intake of key nutrients and phytochemicals. Home/kitchen gardening can contribute to a more diverse diet. Growing a range of fruits, vegetables, and herbs at home provides individuals with access to a wider array of food options, promoting a diverse and balanced diet. Home gardening can help improve household food security by providing a sustainable source of fresh produce. Growing food at home reduces reliance on external food sources and can mitigate the risks associated with food shortages or price fluctuations.

Many studies tend to examine the overall impact of home/kitchen gardening on nutrition intake without specifically analyzing the performance of individual nutrients. The current study could aim to address this gap by exploring the impact of gardening on specific nutrients like vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, or macronutrients.

The measurement of nutrition intake and gardening practices in existing studies often lacks standardization. This can lead to difficulties in comparing and synthesizing findings across different studies. The current study could aim to use standardized measurement tools for assessing nutrition intake and gardening practices to enhance the reliability and comparability of results.

While home/kitchen gardening can potentially improve nutrition intake, the socioeconomic factors that influence gardening practices and access to nutritious food are often overlooked. The current study could aim to explore the influence of socioeconomic factors, such as income, education, and access to resources, on the performance of nutrition intake through home/kitchen gardening.

3. Research Design

Sampling Strategy

Two types of households were included in the sample: those with home gardens and those without. A representative sample of 200 households was selected from each category, resulting in a total of 400 households surveyed. The use of a representative sample is appropriate for this study as it allows for insights and observations about the target population group.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire covers various topics, including socio-demographic information, home garden characteristics, landholdings, monthly consumption patterns, nutritional aspects, family diseases, and family assets. The survey schedule, which includes the complete set of questions, is provided in the Appendix.

Survey Schedule

The survey schedule follows a sequential structure. It begins by capturing basic details such as location, religious affiliation, and caste identity of the respondents. Subsequently, social demographic information is collected for each member of the participating family. The next stage focuses on gathering information about landholdings, followed by a section dedicated to home gardening details. The survey then proceeds to inquire about monthly consumption patterns to assess the nutritional aspects of the family, health status, and dietary habits to assess their influence on nutrition intake.

4. Results and Discussion

The data offers insights into the distribution pattern of households based on their monthly consumption of food items. The Table 1 displays the percentage of households falling into each expenditure range. Less than Rs. 500 category represents households whose per head expenditure on food items is less than Rs. 500 per month. These households account for 5.3% of the total surveyed households. Rs. 501 - Rs. 1000 category includes households with per head expenditure on food items ranging from Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000 per month. A significant proportion, 59.0% of the surveyed households, falls into this range. Above Rs. 1000 category represents households with per head expenditure on food items above Rs. 1000 per month. Approximately 35.8% of the surveyed households belong to this category. It highlights the proportion of households falling within each expenditure range, providing an understanding of the economic distribution of food consumption among the surveyed population. The cost of food for the families in this rural area of Jharkhand is much less because poor families are abundant there. The people in the surveyed areas depend on agriculture, most of their food supply comes from their farming.

Table 1: Distribution of Per Head Consumption Expenditure by Expenditure Range

Per head consumption expenditure	Percent
Less than Rs. 500	5.3
Rs. 501 – Rs. 1000	59.0
Above 1000	35.8

Table 2 shows the mean consumption expenditure for households categorized based on whether they have a kitchen garden or not. The mean consumption expenditure for households without a kitchen garden is 1012.01. This implies that, on average, households that do not have a kitchen garden spend this amount on their consumption expenses. Consumption expenditure refers to the amount of money spent by households on food items to meet their needs and wants. The mean consumption expenditure for households with a kitchen garden is 835.36. Having a kitchen garden might enable households to produce some of their own food, reducing the need to purchase certain items, which can contribute to lower consumption expenditure. This suggests that having a kitchen garden might help reduce the overall expenditure on food and related items, as households can produce some of their own food. It indicates that households with a kitchen garden might have an advantage in terms of saving money on their consumption expenses.

Table 2: Comparison of Average Per Capita Consumption Expenditure with and without Kitchen Gardens

	Average per capita consumption expenditure (Rs./month)
No kitchen garden	1012.01
Kitchen garden	835.36

Based on the results obtained, there seems to be a pattern where the average monthly consumption expenditure decreases as the number of household members increases. The average monthly consumption expenditure for households with up to 4 members is 1148.8. This means that, on average, households in this category spend this amount on their monthly consumption expenses. It implies that smaller households tend to have a higher average consumption expenditure compared to larger households. The average monthly consumption expenditure for households with 5-6 members is 942.1. This suggests that households in this size range spend, on average, this amount on their monthly consumption expenses. It indicates that as the number of household members increases, the average consumption expenditure tends to decrease. The average monthly consumption expenditure for households with 7 or more members is 736.1 (Table 5). This means that households in this category, which have a larger number of members, spend, on average, this amount on their monthly consumption expenses. It implies that larger households tend to have a lower average consumption expenditure compared to smaller households. This could be due to various factors, such as economies of scale and sharing of resources within larger households.

Table 3: Household with kitchen garden and monthly consumption expenditure (measured in Rs./month)

Household members	Monthly consumption expenditure (Rs./month)
Upto 4 members	1148.8
5-6	942.1
7 & above	736.1

The Table 4 represents a comparison of monthly consumption expenditure between male and female members. The number of men and female member in the household determines the monthly consumption expenditure. The results indicate that consumption patterns are not the same in male and female dominated households. If there are more men than women in the family, then the monthly consumption expenditure is more. On average, female members tend to spend more money on their monthly consumption compared to male members. The difference in expenditure suggests a potential gender-based discrepancy in spending patterns and consumption habits.

Table 4: Monthly Consumption Expenditure by Gender

Gender Comparison	Monthly consumption expenditure (Rs./month)
Male member > female member	904.5
Male member ≤ female member	960.9

The Table 5 provides information about the average monthly consumption expenditure in terms of rupees (Rs.) based on whether or not individuals have children. According to the table, individuals who have children have an average monthly consumption expenditure of Rs. 824.0. On the other hand, individuals who do not have children have a higher average monthly consumption expenditure of Rs. 993.7. This result suggests that having children may have an impact on one's monthly consumption expenditure. Individuals with children tend to have a lower average monthly consumption expenditure compared to those without children. There could be several factors contributing to this difference. For example, having children may lead to additional expenses related to childcare, education, healthcare, and other child-related expenses. These additional financial responsibilities might result in a lower disposable income for individuals with children, leading to a lower average monthly consumption expenditure.

Table 5: Household with kitchen garden and monthly consumption expenditure (measured in Rs./month)

Family Type	Monthly consumption expenditure (Rs./month)
Have children	824.0
No children	993.7

The Influence of Kitchen Gardens on Household Food Expenses

On average, households without a kitchen garden spend Rs. 1231.4 per month on rice, while households with a kitchen garden spend a higher amount of Rs. 1579.4. This suggests that households with a kitchen garden might rely less on purchasing rice since they can produce or obtain it from their garden, leading to lower expenditure. The average monthly expenditure on wheat is lower for households with a kitchen garden (Rs. 281.7) compared to those without (Rs. 431.2). This indicates that having a kitchen garden might contribute to a reduced need for purchasing wheat products. Both households with and without a kitchen garden spend a similar amount on pulses, with the average monthly expenditure being Rs. 203.4 and Rs. 230.6, respectively. Interestingly, households without a kitchen garden (Rs. 908.2) spend more on vegetables compared to those with a kitchen garden (Rs. 767.2). This might imply that households with a kitchen garden can produce or obtain a portion of their vegetable consumption, resulting in lower expenditure. In general, households without a kitchen garden spend more on meat, eggs, and fish compared to those with a kitchen garden. This could be because households without a kitchen garden need to purchase these items from external sources. The average monthly expenditure on other food items is higher for households without a kitchen garden (Rs. 971.9) compared to those with a kitchen garden (Rs. 324.5). This suggests that households with a kitchen garden might have lower expenditure on miscellaneous food items. The data suggests that households with a kitchen garden tend to have a lower average monthly expenditure on certain food items like wheat, vegetables, meat, fish, and other food items. On the other hand, households with a kitchen garden have a higher expenditure on rice, pulses, and eggs compared to those without a kitchen garden. This difference in expenditure could be attributed to the fact that households with a kitchen garden can produce some food items themselves, reducing the need for purchase and potentially lowering costs.

Table 6: Item wise consumption expenditure (measured in Rs./month)

	No kitchen garden	Kitchen garden
Rice	1231.4	1579.4
Wheat	431.2	281.7
Pulses	203.4	230.6
Vegetables	908.2	767.2
Meat	405.7	358.0
Egg	56.9	69.8
Fish	310.2	265.2
Other food items	971.9	324.5

Comparison of Food Consumption Patterns

The Table - 7 shows the percentage distribution of major food items in the consumption basket of households, categorized based on whether they have a home garden or not. The first column represents the percentage distribution of major food items in the consumption basket for households without a home garden. For example, 27.2% of their consumption is allocated to rice, 9.5% to wheat, 4.5% to pulses, and so on. The second column represents the percentage distribution of major food items in the consumption basket for households with a home garden. For instance, 40.7% of their consumption is allocated to rice, 7.3% to wheat, 5.9% to pulses, and so on. By comparing the two columns, we can observe the differences in the distribution of major food items between households with and without a home garden. Households with a kitchen garden allocate a higher percentage (40.7%) of their consumption to rice compared to households without a kitchen garden (27.2%). Households without a kitchen garden allocate a higher percentage (9.5%) of their consumption to wheat compared to households with a kitchen garden (7.3%). Households without a kitchen garden allocate a higher percentage (21.5%) of their consumption to other food items, which are not explicitly listed in the table, compared to households with a kitchen garden (8.4%). Based on the result, households with a kitchen garden tend to allocate a higher percentage of their consumption to rice, while households without a kitchen garden allocate a higher percentage to wheat. This suggests that households with a kitchen garden may rely more on their home-grown rice, reducing their need to purchase it, whereas households without a kitchen garden may have a higher reliance on purchased wheat. It's also interesting to note that households without a kitchen garden allocate a higher percentage to other food items, indicating a potentially broader variety of food choices or preferences.

Table 7: Percentage distribution of the major food items in the consumption basket of households (with home garden and without home garden)

Items	No kitchen garden	Kitchen garden
Rice	27.2	40.7
Wheat	9.5	7.3
Pulses	4.5	5.9
Vegetables	20.1	19.8
Meat	9.0	9.2
Egg	1.3	1.8
Fish	6.9	6.8
Other food items	21.5	8.4

5. Summary and Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between home gardening and nutrition intake in 400 households, categorized into those with and without kitchen gardens. The findings revealed that households with a kitchen garden had a lower mean consumption expenditure compared to those without, suggesting that home gardening can contribute to reduced food expenses. The study also highlighted that smaller households tend to have higher average consumption expenditure, while larger households tend to have lower expenditure. Additionally, there were gender-based differences in spending patterns and consumption habits. The data indicated that households with a kitchen garden relied less on purchasing rice, wheat, vegetables, and certain other food items, as they could produce or obtain them from their garden. Finally, the distribution of major food items in the consumption basket differed between households with and without a home garden, with households with a kitchen garden allocating a higher percentage to rice and households without a kitchen garden allocating a higher percentage to wheat.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between home gardening and nutrition intake. Having a kitchen garden can positively impact household finances by reducing consumption expenditure on certain food items. It also suggests that home gardening may contribute to a more diverse and nutritious diet, as households can produce or obtain fresh produce from their garden. The findings highlight the potential benefits of promoting and supporting home gardening initiatives as a means to improve nutrition intake, particularly in areas with limited resources or lower-income populations. Further research and interventions in this area could help establish guidelines and strategies for promoting home gardening and its positive impact on nutrition and overall well-being.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 100-116

Relevance of Gandhian Educational Philosophy in Contemporary Schools

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy offers a compelling alternative to the contemporary focus on standardized testing and academic achievement. This paper explores the continued relevance of Gandhian ideals in today's schools. Gandhi's vision prioritizes holistic development, nurturing students' intellectual, moral, and social well-being. It emphasizes practical life skills, self-reliance, and education for social justice, resonating with global movements for equality. Additionally, Gandhi championed mother-tongue instruction, promoting cultural preservation and fostering deeper understanding within communities. The paper explores a real-world example of a school in rural India that exemplifies Gandhian principles. Despite challenges, this school achieves success through vocational training, mother-tongue education, and a focus on practical activities alongside academics. Gandhian educational philosophy offers a framework for fostering well-rounded individuals who contribute meaningfully to their communities. Its emphasis on holistic development, social justice, and cultural preservation makes it a valuable resource for contemporary educators seeking to create more inclusive and empowering learning environments.

Keywords: *Gandhian education, Holistic development, Mother-tongue instruction, Social justice*

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1. Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy presents a convincing alternative in a society where academic accomplishment and standardized testing are the focus of rising attention (Kumar, 2020). As educational institutions across the globe grapple with issues of inequality, student disengagement, and the overemphasis on rote learning, Gandhi's vision presents a holistic approach that prioritizes the development of the whole person - intellectually, morally, and socially (Makhdoom, 2017). Gandhi's educational philosophy, deeply rooted in his broader principles of non-violence, self-reliance, and community living, challenges the modern emphasis on competitive academic environments and the narrow focus on cognitive development (Jha, 2018). This paper explores the continued relevance of Gandhi's vision for education in contemporary schools. It explores into the core doctrines of Gandhian education, which advocate for the nurturing of students' moral and ethical sensibilities alongside their intellectual growth. The central to Gandhi's philosophy is the idea of holistic development, where education extends beyond the confines of the classroom to include character building, physical labor, and the integration of practical life skills (Makhdoom, 2017)..

Moreover, Gandhi's insistence on mother-tongue instruction emphasizes the importance of cultural and linguistic identity in a child's education (Kumar, 2020). By advocating for education in one's native language, Gandhi sought to preserve cultural heritage and ensure that learning was accessible and meaningful to all students, irrespective of their socio-economic background. His emphasis on self-reliance through vocational skills further emphasizes the need for an education system that equips students with practical abilities, fostering independence and a sense of purpose (Jha, 2018)..

Next, we'll examine how difficult it is to put these principles into practice in the current educational environment and consider some possible 21st-century modifications. The current educational environment, characterized by technological advancements and global interconnectedness, presents unique obstacles and opportunities for integrating Gandhian principles. Issues such as resource constraints, policy inertia, and the pervasive influence of global education standards will be critically examined. The paper will also highlight real-world examples of schools incorporating Gandhian principles and discuss the global applicability of his philosophy. By showcasing innovative educational models and practices inspired by Gandhi's ideas, we aim to illustrate the practical viability and transformative potential of his educational philosophy in diverse contexts.

By examining the enduring value of Gandhi's ideas, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about creating a more well-rounded and socially just education system for all. Gandhi's vision, with its emphasis on ethics, self-sufficiency, and community engagement, offers timeless insights that are particularly relevant in addressing contemporary educational challenges. As educators and policymakers seek to reform and enrich educational experiences, revisiting and revitalizing Gandhian principles could pave the way for a more inclusive, equitable, and human-centered approach to learning.

2. Core Gandhian Ideals in Education

2.1 Holistic Development

The education system Mahatma Gandhi envisaged went beyond rote memorizing of data and facts. He advocated for a holistic education that nourished a child's mental, physical, and spiritual development to produce well-rounded people who could make significant contributions to society, an idea remarkably aligned with current demands for an education that is more than merely intellectual. Gandhi's vision of holistic development encompassed intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth, advocating a comprehensive approach that addresses the mind, body, and soul (Jha, 2018). He emphasized academic learning alongside critical thinking and real-world application, exemplified by his "Nai Talim" or basic education concept, which centered on practical skills and local crafts (Kumar, 2020). This method aimed to blend academic knowledge with practical application, such as integrating mathematics with carpentry projects to foster a deeper understanding of geometric principles. In terms of physical development, Gandhi stressed the importance of fitness and manual labor, seeing activities like spinning yarn and carpentry as vital for developing strength, discipline, and an appreciation for manual work (Makhdoom, 2017). His approach to physical well-being is particularly relevant today, addressing concerns about childhood obesity and the need for physical activity in school curriculums. Additionally, Gandhi's educational philosophy was grounded in spiritual development, nurturing the inner self and instilling moral values such as truth, non-violence, and social justice. This aligns closely with contemporary social-emotional learning

(SEL) movements, which emphasize emotional intelligence, empathy, and responsible decision-making, aiming to cultivate well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society.

Gandhi's Vision of Holistic Development

Gandhi's vision of holistic development encompassed intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. While he recognized the importance of academics, he emphasized critical thinking and the application of knowledge to real-world problems through his concept of "Nai Talim" (basic education), which centered education around practical skills and local crafts, fostering intellectual curiosity alongside practical application. He placed a strong emphasis on physical fitness and manual labor, advocating activities like spinning yarn (charkha) and carpentry not only as vocational skills but as means to develop strength, discipline, and an appreciation for manual labor. This focus on physical well-being resonates with contemporary concerns about childhood obesity and the importance of integrating physical activity into the school day. Furthermore, Gandhi believed true education nurtured the inner self and instilled moral values such as truth, non-violence, and social justice, cultivating empathy and compassion in students to become responsible and ethical citizens, aligning with contemporary movements for social-emotional learning (SEL) that emphasize developing emotional intelligence, empathy, and responsible decision-making.

Aligning with Contemporary Education Calls

Aligning with contemporary education calls, the current educational landscape increasingly recognizes the limitations of a purely academic approach. Gandhian principles resonate with these calls, highlighting the importance of a more well-rounded education. The emphasis on 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability in Gandhian education aligns perfectly with the growing focus on these skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Furthermore, the focus on values, character development, and social responsibility mirrors current initiatives to integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum, preparing students to navigate complex social situations and become responsible citizens. Additionally, the importance of physical activity and mental well-being in Gandhian education resonates with contemporary concerns about student health and the need to address issues like stress and anxiety in schools.

Challenges and Adaptations

While the core principles retain relevance, implementing them in contemporary schools with standardized testing and academic pressures presents challenges. Potential adaptations include project-based learning, where activities combine academics with real-world applications and social responsibility to nurture intellectual, physical, and social development simultaneously. Strengthening integration with arts and physical education within the curriculum can foster creativity, physical well-being, and a sense of self-expression. Additionally, character education programs that explicitly teach values like empathy, respect, and social justice can help cultivate the spiritual aspect of development.

2.2 Mother Tongue Education

Mahatma Gandhi championed education in the mother tongue, believing it to be the foundation for true understanding and intellectual growth. This perspective resonates deeply in today's multilingual societies, where debates about language of instruction continue to rage.

Gandhi's Emphasis on Mother Tongue Education

Gandhi emphasized the importance of education in one's mother tongue, highlighting several advantages: He believed that complex concepts are grasped more readily when explained in the language a child is most comfortable with, fostering deeper comprehension and intellectual curiosity rather than rote memorization in a foreign language. This approach makes education more accessible to a broader population, particularly marginalized communities who may not be fluent in the dominant language, thus promoting educational equity and empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, learning in one's mother tongue allows students to connect with their cultural heritage and identity, fostering a sense of pride in their native language and an appreciation for their cultural background.

The Ongoing Debate on Language of Instruction

The issue of language of instruction remains contentious in multilingual societies. Advocates of using the dominant language argue that it aligns with economic opportunities and globalization, providing students with a competitive edge in the job market and preparing them for higher education, which is often conducted in that language. However, implementing mother tongue education in highly diverse societies presents significant logistical challenges, as developing resources and training teachers for each language can be resource-intensive.

Finding Common Ground

Despite ongoing debates, there is growing recognition of the importance of mother tongue education in early childhood development due to its numerous benefits. Studies suggest that initial education in the mother tongue enhances cognitive development and academic performance in later years, even when students transition to another language. Additionally, research indicates that bilingualism offers cognitive advantages such as improved problem-solving skills and enhanced multitasking abilities, with mother tongue education serving as a crucial stepping stone to achieving bilingualism.

The Path Forward

Finding common ground between promoting mother tongue education and preparing students for a globalized world is essential. Implementing multilingual education models that integrate mother tongue instruction in the early years with the gradual introduction of the dominant language can provide a balanced approach. Additionally, investing in teacher training programs that equip educators to teach effectively in multiple languages is crucial, ensuring that students receive quality education that honours their linguistic and cultural backgrounds while also preparing them for broader opportunities in a globalized society.

2.3 *Education* for Self-Reliance

Mahatma Gandhi's vision of "Nai Talim" (basic education) challenged the colonial education system in India. Nai Talim emphasized self-reliance by cantering education around vocational skills – a concept with surprising relevance in today's world of automation and the ever-evolving job market.

Nai Talim: Education for Self-Sufficiency

Nai Talim aimed to equip students with practical skills relevant to their local context, including traditional crafts like spinning, weaving, carpentry, and agriculture. These skills fostered self-reliance while instilling the dignity of labour, as Nai Talim emphasized the value of manual work and dismantled social hierarchies that often devalued skilled crafts. Furthermore, learning a trade empowered students with an entrepreneurial spirit, enabling them to become self-employed and contribute to their local economies. The practical application of knowledge in Nai Talim also honed problem-solving skills and adaptability, crucial for navigating an uncertain future.

Relevance in the Age of Automation

In the Age of Automation, while the rise of automation may threaten some jobs, it also creates new opportunities that require a different skill set, making the principles of Nai Talim increasingly relevant. The focus on adaptable skills in Nai Talim, which emphasizes practical skills and problem-solving, prepares students to navigate the evolving job market and continuously acquire new competencies throughout their careers. Additionally, Nai Talim's encouragement of critical thinking and creativity fosters the ability to think critically and apply knowledge innovatively - skills that are essential for success in an automated world. Moreover, by emphasizing self-reliance, Nai Talim nurtures an entrepreneurial spirit and the capacity to innovate, enabling individuals to create new opportunities in a rapidly changing landscape.

Challenges and Adaptations

Implementing Nai Talim in today's world requires adapting it to contemporary needs, such as updating vocational skills to align with modern industries like technology and renewable energy. Integrating these skills with core academic subjects can create a well-rounded learning experience, ensuring students are prepared for both practical and intellectual challenges. Additionally, incorporating modern pedagogy, including project-based learning and technology integration, can enhance the effectiveness of vocational education, making it more relevant and engaging for today's learners.

By incorporating the core principles of Nai Talim while adapting to the needs of the 21st century, schools can prepare students for a future where automation is a reality. Equipping students with a combination of practical skills, adaptability, and critical thinking will empower them to thrive in this ever-changing world.

2.4 Education for Social Justice

Mahatma Gandhi viewed education as a powerful tool for promoting social justice and dismantling the rigid social hierarchies prevalent in his time, particularly the caste system in India. This emphasis on education as a driver for equality resonates deeply with contemporary movements for social justice and inclusion in education.

Gandhi's Vision of Education for Social Justice

Gandhi envisioned education as a powerful tool for social justice, believing it could challenge entrenched social norms by equipping students with diverse perspectives and critical thinking skills to question hierarchical structures. He advocated for equal access to quality education for all, irrespective of caste, gender, or socioeconomic status, to promote equality of opportunity and create a more equitable society. Furthermore, he emphasized that education fostering empathy and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds could play a vital role in dismantling prejudice and discrimination, thereby fostering a more inclusive and compassionate community.

Alignment with Contemporary Movements

The fight for social justice and educational equity remains a crucial struggle in the 21st century, with movements like Black Lives Matter and #MeToo underscoring the need for education systems to address issues of race, gender, and class inequality. Emphasizing inclusion and culturally responsive education, there is a growing focus on creating learning environments that cater to diverse backgrounds and learning styles, ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Challenges and Adaptations

Implementing Gandhi's vision for social justice education requires thoughtful approaches to overcome significant challenges and necessitate meaningful adaptations. Addressing implicit bias is essential; teacher training and curriculum development must actively work to uncover and mitigate biases that could perpetuate existing inequalities. Ensuring equity in access and resources is also crucial, demanding that quality education and adequate resources be made available to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, employing culturally responsive pedagogy is vital; teaching methods that acknowledge and value the diverse experiences of students can foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity in classrooms, thus promoting a more just and equitable educational environment.

By acknowledging the power of education to promote social justice and taking concrete steps towards inclusivity, schools can become catalysts for positive change. These steps can include integrating social justice themes into the curriculum to address issues of human rights and power structures, engaging with local communities to create learning environments that reflect the diversity of the student population, and building inclusive school cultures that promote respect for diversity and foster empathy among students. By harnessing the power of education to promote social justice, schools can empower future generations to build a more equitable and inclusive world.

3. Challenges and Adaptations

3.1 Balancing Ideals with Modern Realities

Mahatma Gandhi's vision for education offers a compelling alternative to the pressures of standardized testing and competition prevalent in contemporary schools. However, implementing his ideals presents challenges that require thoughtful adaptations to make them work in the modern context.

Challenges of Implementing Gandhian Ideals

Implementing Gandhian ideals in education faces several challenges, particularly in systems emphasizing standardized testing, which often prioritizes rote learning and test preparation over the holistic development of students, thereby clashing with Gandhi's vision of nurturing intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. The competitive educational landscape further complicates this implementation, as the pressure for college admissions and career prospects often leads schools to focus on academic achievement at the expense of creative exploration and social-emotional learning, both of which are central to Gandhian education. Additionally, a significant investment in teacher training and the development of curriculum materials that incorporate vocational skills, social justice themes, and project-based learning is required to shift educational practices toward Gandhian principles, posing a substantial resource and logistical challenge.

Potential Adaptations for the Modern Context

Despite the challenges, several adaptations can bridge the gap between Gandhian ideals and contemporary realities by integrating vocational skills with core academic subjects, such as applying math and science lessons to projects involving carpentry or renewable energy technologies. Implementing project-based learning allows students to apply academic knowledge to real-world problems while fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Additionally, integrating technology can enhance learning by providing access to diverse materials in different languages and facilitating collaborative projects with students from other schools. Explicitly teaching social-emotional learning skills like empathy, communication, and conflict resolution aligns with Gandhian ideals and helps students build resilience in a competitive world. Educators can also explore alternative assessments that go beyond standardized tests to measure progress based on critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities fostered through Gandhian methods.

Finding the Balance

Finding the balance between preparing students for future success and nurturing their holistic development is pivotal. Educators and policymakers can drive change by advocating for educational reforms that prioritize well-roundedness and social-emotional learning alongside academic achievement. Schools can take the initiative by developing pilot programs or initiatives grounded in Gandhian principles, showcasing their efficacy and facilitating broader implementation. Furthermore, fostering community engagement with parents and stakeholders who align with Gandhian ideals can establish a robust support network for implementing these transformative changes within educational institutions.

3.2 Teacher Training and Role

Mahatma Gandhi envisioned teachers as facilitators of learning, not simply dispensers of knowledge. In Gandhian education, the teacher's role emphasizes self-reflection and fostering a student-centered learning environment. Adapting teacher training programs to prepare educators for this approach is crucial for realizing Gandhi's vision in contemporary schools.

The Gandhian Teacher

The Gandhian teacher embodies a holistic approach to education, envisioned by Gandhi himself. They are self-reflective practitioners, perpetually examining their biases, teaching techniques, and impact, with the aim of nurturing every facet of a child's development. Embracing Gandhi's philosophy, they are lifelong learners, committed to their own intellectual growth, understanding that their curiosity fuels inspiration within their students. Central to their practice is the facilitation of student-centered learning, fostering an environment where inquiry thrives, and students are empowered to explore their passions and curiosities, thus embodying the essence of Gandhian education.

Benefits of a Student-Centered Approach

A student-centered approach to education offers numerous benefits in line with contemporary educational paradigms. It promotes critical thinking and problem-solving by nurturing exploration and discovery, thereby empowering students to develop these vital skills. Furthermore, through collaborative group projects and discussions, it cultivates strong collaboration and communication abilities essential for success in today's interconnected world. Moreover, by actively engaging students in their learning process, it sparks intrinsic motivation, fostering a sense of ownership over their education and driving them to excel.

Adapting Teacher Training

Teacher training programs can be adapted to effectively prepare educators for modern pedagogical approaches by integrating elements such as the philosophy and pedagogy of Gandhian Education, emphasizing Gandhi's educational ideals and principles of student-centered learning. Furthermore, incorporating reflective practice and self-assessment techniques can aid teachers in evaluating their teaching methods and fostering continuous improvement. Additionally, programs can provide practical skills in collaborative and project-based learning to empower teachers in designing dynamic and interactive educational experiences. Moreover, integrating technology into training can equip educators with the tools and knowledge needed to create engaging and personalized learning environments that cater to diverse student needs and preferences.

Challenges and Support

Shifting to a student-centered approach presents challenges for educators accustomed to traditional teaching methods, but supporting teachers in this transition is essential. Mentorship and professional development programs offer avenues for teachers to implement Gandhian principles effectively. Establishing collaborative learning communities within schools fosters a culture of sharing best practices and mutual support among educators. Additionally, engaging parents and guardians in understanding the benefits of student-centered learning creates a supportive environment for teachers and students alike. By providing teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and ongoing support to serve as facilitators of student learning, teacher training programs can play a pivotal role in realizing Gandhi's vision of education in contemporary schools.

3.3 Technology Integration

Technology offers a powerful tool for supporting Gandhian ideals in education. However, it's crucial to acknowledge both the potential benefits and drawbacks to ensure responsible integration that aligns with Gandhi's vision.

Harnessing Technology for Gandhian Education

Harnessing technology for Gandhian education entails leveraging its capabilities to create and disseminate accessible learning materials in various languages, thereby promoting mother tongue education and catering to diverse student populations. Furthermore, online platforms and collaborative tools enable project-based learning, fostering collaboration among students from different locations and transcending geographical boundaries. Additionally, technology provides access to vast resources and information, empowering students to engage in independent research, self-directed learning, and exploration of their interests. Moreover, it can be utilized to raise awareness about social justice issues and connect students with global movements promoting peace and social change, thus aligning with Gandhian principles of non-violence and social justice.

Potential Drawbacks and Responsible Use

While technology offers numerous advantages, it's essential to acknowledge potential drawbacks and practice responsible use. The digital divide presents a significant concern as uneven access to technology can widen educational disparities, particularly if students lack the necessary resources or connectivity for active participation. Additionally, technology can serve as a double-edged sword, potentially leading to distractions in the classroom and necessitating educators to implement strategies for responsible technology use and effective time management. Moreover, an over-reliance on technology poses a risk as it may undermine the importance of face-to-face interactions and hands-on learning experiences, which are essential for fostering holistic development in learners.

Strategies for Responsible Integration

To responsibly integrate technology into education and maximize benefits while minimizing drawbacks, schools must prioritize equity by ensuring all students have access to technology and necessary training. Educators should curate online resources that align with Gandhian principles, promoting critical thinking skills. It's crucial to balance technology with traditional learning methods, utilizing it strategically to enhance rather than replace valuable classroom interactions and hands-on activities. Additionally, integrating digital literacy skills into the curriculum empowers students to use technology responsibly, critically evaluate online information, and safeguard themselves from cyberbullying or online threats.

4. Case Studies and Real-world Applications

Mahatma Gandhi's vision for education continues to inspire educators around the world. Here are some contemporary schools and initiatives that incorporate Gandhian principles, along with analyses of their successes and challenges:

4.1 A Model of Gandhian Education in Rural India

Located in Shikshanagar, Tamil Nadu, India, this rural school exemplifies Gandhi's philosophy of education in action (Kumar, 2020). It fosters self-reliance among its students through vocational skills such as organic farming, carpentry, and pottery, echoing Gandhi's emphasis on practical life skills (Jha, 2018). The school prioritizes mother-tongue education, ensuring cultural preservation and accessibility of learning for all students, irrespective of their background (Kumar, 2020). Further aligning with Gandhian principles, academics are intertwined with hands-on practical activities, promoting holistic development that extends beyond the classroom (Makhdoom, 2017).

Despite facing challenges in replicating its model in urban settings and encountering difficulties in securing resources and trained teachers for vocational education, this school has achieved remarkable success. It boasts high student enrollment and academic achievement. Its students not only acquire practical skills but also develop a strong work ethic, contributing to their self-sufficiency and overall growth, mirroring the core tenets of Gandhian education.4.2 Sevagram Ashram School, Wardha, India:

4.1.1 The Schumacher College, Dartington, UK

Located in Dartington, UK, Schumacher College stands as a beacon for international education, championing sustainability, ecological thought, and social justice. Its unique approach intertwines academic study with hands-on practical work experiences and active community engagement, fostering a holistic learning environment. This approach cultivates critical thinking among a diverse student body around pressing environmental and social concerns. However, Schumacher College grapples with some challenges. The high cost of attendance can be a barrier for some students, limiting accessibility. Additionally, maintaining a delicate equilibrium between academic rigor and experiential learning necessitates meticulous planning and execution.

4.1.2 The PeaceTrees Vietnam Program

The PeaceTrees Vietnam Program works to equip Vietnamese educators with the tools to cultivate a more peaceful and inclusive learning environment for their students. Their focus lies in training educators in conflict resolution, social-emotional learning (SEL), and fostering empathy, ultimately aiming to promote critical thinking skills and peaceful dialogue among students (PeaceTrees Vietnam, 1995). These efforts have demonstrably reduced classroom violence and fostered a more inclusive learning environment for students. However, scaling up the program to encompass a wider range of schools presents challenges. Integrating the program effectively into existing curriculums necessitates collaboration with policymakers to ensure a smooth and sustainable implementation (PeaceTrees Vietnam, 1995.).

4.2 Global Relevance: Adapting Gandhian Education for Diverse Contexts

Mahatma Gandhi's vision for education transcends geographic boundaries and offers valuable principles applicable in various cultural contexts around the world. However, successful implementation requires thoughtful adaptation to address local needs and challenges.

4.2.1 Universal Applicability of Gandhian Ideals

Gandhian ideals possess a universal applicability evident in their promotion of holistic development, advocating for the nurturing of intellectual, physical, and spiritual dimensions within individuals, thereby preparing them for well-rounded lives transcending cultural boundaries. Emphasizing education for self-reliance, these principles advocate for equipping individuals with practical skills tailored to their local context, fostering self-sufficiency and empowering them to actively contribute to their communities. Additionally, the emphasis on education for social justice, central to Gandhi's philosophy, resonates with ongoing global movements for equality, urging the dismantling of social hierarchies and the promotion of fairness and inclusivity. Furthermore, Gandhi's advocacy for mother-tongue education underscores the importance of preserving cultural heritage and fostering deeper understanding, irrespective of geographical location, thereby strengthening bonds within communities and promoting cultural continuity.

4.2.2 Adaptation for Local Contexts

Ensuring effectiveness across cultures involves several key considerations. First, vocational skills must be contextualized to meet the demands of the local economy and job market. Secondly, incorporating indigenous knowledge and cultural practices into the curriculum enriches the learning experience, fostering cultural relevance. Additionally, addressing local social issues through tailored approaches to social justice promotes equity and inclusivity. Finally, implementation should be conducted with respect for existing cultural practices and beliefs, recognizing their importance within communities.

5. Conclusion and Future Directions

In today's world, where standardized testing and competition often dominate the educational landscape, Mahatma Gandhi's vision for education offers a compelling alternative. His emphasis on holistic development, nurturing the mind, body, and spirit, resonates with the growing call for well-rounded education. Gandhi believed education should be more than just academics, and that practical skills, physical fitness, and moral values are essential aspects of learning. This aligns perfectly with the current focus on 21st-century skills, social-emotional learning, and student well-being.

However, implementing Gandhi's ideals requires adaptation. Project-based learning, for example, can integrate academics with real-world application and social responsibility. By embracing Gandhi's vision, schools can create holistic learning environments that prepare students for more than just tests.

Another powerful aspect of Gandhian education is its focus on education for self-reliance. Gandhi's concept of Nai Talim, or basic education centered around vocational skills, equips students with practical tools to be self-sufficient and contribute to their communities. This concept is surprisingly relevant in today's world of increasing automation and the need for adaptable skillsets. While automation may threaten some jobs, it also creates new ones requiring different skillsets. The focus on practical skills and problem-solving in Nai Talim prepares students to adapt to changing job markets and learn new skills throughout their careers.

Furthermore, Gandhi viewed education as a tool for promoting social justice and dismantling social hierarchies. His belief in education as a means to level the playing field and create a more equitable society aligns with contemporary movements for social justice and inclusion in education. Schools can address issues of social justice and inclusion by integrating social justice themes, employing culturally responsive teaching methods, and fostering a culture of respect for diversity in classrooms.

There are, of course, challenges to implementing Gandhian ideals in contemporary schools. Standardized testing and intense competition for college admissions can create pressure to prioritize rote learning and test preparation over holistic development. However, there are ways to bridge this gap. Advocacy for educational reforms that emphasize well-roundedness and social-emotional learning alongside academic achievement is crucial. Additionally, developing pilot programs and collaborating with parents and communities who share Gandhian ideals can pave the way for wider adoption of these methods.

The key lies in finding a balance between preparing students for the future and nurturing their holistic development. Teacher training also plays a vital role. Gandhi envisioned teachers as facilitators of learning, not simply dispensers of knowledge. Adapting teacher training programs to emphasize self-reflection and student-centered learning is essential for realizing Gandhi's vision.

Technology can also be a powerful tool for supporting Gandhian education. Technology allows for creating accessible learning materials in various languages, promoting mother-tongue education and reaching diverse student populations. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential drawbacks, such as the digital divide and technology addiction. The key is to use technology responsibly and strategically to enhance learning, not replace valuable interactions and hands-on activities in the classroom.

Examples from around the world showcase the enduring relevance of Gandhian ideals in education. The Shikshanagar school in India emphasizes self-reliance through vocational skills and promotes mother-tongue education, while the PeaceTrees Vietnam program trains educators in conflict resolution and social-emotional learning. These initiatives highlight the importance of adapting Gandhian principles to local contexts and the need for ongoing collaboration and advocacy to bring his vision of education to life for a wider range of students globally.

In conclusion, Gandhi's philosophy of education offers a valuable framework for creating a more just and equitable world. By continuing to explore the applicability of Gandhian education in diverse contexts, conducting research on its impact, and developing innovative implementation strategies, educators can empower future generations with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to thrive in the 21st century.

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LOOK EAST
Vol. 8, No. 1, December 2022, pp. 117-131

A Critical evaluation of Multi-source Performance Appraisal Model for the faculty members followed by the Higher Academic Institutions in West Bengal

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the instrument/design/form of the Performance Appraisal in higher academic institutions that is assumed to be connected with the satisfaction and performance of the faculty members. The study consisted of 110 faculties from various private, public and deemed Universities across West Bengal. The present Research highlights the challenges that higher learning institutions face in inspiring staff to improve the quality of university education, as staff are a source of resources and resources for a company and the core of any enterprise that is considered a significant factor in the development of nations in their strategic, technical, society, economy and culture. It also carefully investigates the various latest practices followed in Higher Academic Institutions in measuring the performance of employees. It demands a detailed and careful comprehension of the work of academics and administrators. In past years, the academic institutions to improve society and the economy has grown enormously, so the way to influence man's power is to analyze performances in a timely manner, in order to take account of the progress or development plans needed to maintain human resources in the desired output. The literature review approach was utilized to examine the current practices, trends and challenges of the University's performance management system. The researchers also try to find out that weather the current appraisal system is really helping respondents for the better future or not.

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Keywords: *Performance Appraisal, Faculty Satisfaction, Faculty Performance, Higher Academic Institutions, West Bengal*

1. Introduction

Performance appraisal (PA) is a formal and systematic process whereby staff members of an organization are evaluated by managers in relation to their performance against a set of certain pre-determined measures in order to ensure and maintain accountability and the quality of institutional operations. In higher education institutions, PA is normally conducted for academic staff in line with the individual institution's mission, vision, and core values. PA offers opportunities for both management and staff to identify, observe, measure, and develop human resources in organizations (Cardy & Dobbins, 1993, as cited in Park, 2009, p. 60).

PA can also help highlight the sustainable professional development (SPD) needs of staff to sustain strengths and overcome weaknesses in order to improve performance and to meet the growing demands of the constantly changing academic world. According to Brown, Hyatt and Benson (2010), many empirical studies have suggested that PAs often produce an increase in employee performance and productivity derived from employee identification with and commitment to the objectives of the organization. Employees, with low performance, are normally identified during the PA and given timely feedback on how to improve.

Measuring and evaluating the PA of teaching staff in higher education institutions does not seem an easy and straight forward process, given the changing role of staff in advancing the knowledge of students (Guruprasad, Sridhar & Balasubramanian, 2016, p.1). However, different higher education institutions have different models of performance appraisal. These models reflect the main principles and guidelines set by national and/or international quality assurance and academic accreditation organizations. PA has significant ramifications on staff retention or dismissal. Institutions often use the appraisal outcomes to reward, promote, renew, or even terminate contracts. Accordingly, PA has both developmental and judgmental consequences. The former is viewed as a positive practice that reflects the institution's good intention and keenness to retain its staff by continually evaluating their performance and identifying their performance deficiencies and needs with the aim of providing them with the necessary and relevant training and professional development programmes that can maximize and sustain their performance. The latter, however, often suggests an institutional practice that does not care about staff retention and CPD. This could lead to an organization losing out on recruiting and retaining employees. Indeed, if employees with low appraisal scores are not helped out professionally, they are more likely to be subject to job dissatisfaction, lack of organizational commitment, which might ultimately lead them to quit the job (Brown etal., 2010). The critical issue is the extent to which individual organizations can strike the balance between the judgmental and developmental nature of performance appraisal in order to maintain and sustain high-quality performance management. Focusing on the West Bengal Higher Education context, the current study aims to investigate faculty members experiences about PA systems and their implementation mechanisms in their relevant institutions with the view to further improving performance management practices and broadening academic staff understanding of PA, as well as to exploring the extent to which current PA practices reflect a multi-source, comprehensive, fair, unbiased and transparent model. The study is intended to propose recommendations that could help improve performance appraisal practices in the context of the study and beyond in other similar contexts. The study primarily addresses three main research questions: how do university faculties perceive their existing performance appraisal practices? To what extent do these practices reflect the principles of a multi-source performance model? And, what could be done to improve the existing performance appraisal practices?

2. Performance Appraisal in Indian Higher Academic Institutions

During the British Rule in India, in the year 1940, the Annual Confidential Report system was introduced. It is still prevalent in some of the public sector organizations (Stafyarakis and Eldridge, 2002). The process lacks employee's active participation and does not helps in employee's learning and development rather can be responsible for communication gap and biased feedback of an employee. Best to worst ranking of employees helps in analyzing poor performers whereas self appraisal should be carried out carefully. The respondent should be honest, prepared and have a positive attitude.

In 2002, as a part of the administrative reforms measure, some higher educational institutions in Pakistan had introduced the Tenure track system with an idea to enhance the quality of higher education in public sector universities of the country by attracting qualified people for a fixed period of time having assigned targets for improving the performance of academic faculty of higher educational institutions **(**Khan and Jabeen 2011).

Along with India, Pakistan also got independence in August 1947. Manpower requirements and economy of newly born countries were largely impacted because of poor state of education. This has severely impacted the social and cultural developments. University Grant Commission was established by the Government of India in 1953 to regulate and maintain education system.

To improve the quality of teaching staff, UGC had been executing various programs for their learning and development, for instance training programs, scholarships and modified pay scale, HRDC etc. In return of these initiatives and facilities provided to teachers, Department of Higher Education, Govt. of India is expecting perfection from them in their occupation with honesty and loyalty to the organization. There is a necessity of a system that can serve as a tool for senior teachers who must have potential to check the discipline and control. Department of Higher Education, MHRD, UGC assesses the faculty performance through evaluation criteria. This will provide the foundation for taking administrative decisions such as allotment of responsibilities, compensation, promotion, training and expansion requirement as well as dismissal.

Conventionally, developing countries like Kenya, Poland, Romania, Russia, India etc. have unorganized and inappropriate appraisal processes that are largely based upon personal bias and instinctive and incorrect or inadequate data (Wanzare, 2002).

Evaluation of faculties was not a new concept or phenomena. It was always present in various forms and has many faces like casual observation by the students or assessment of a faculty according to his research papers and publications. Various types of performance appraisal processes like evaluation by superiors, peers, students or sometimes combination of all or some are being adopted globally. (Kahn, 1993; Stronge, 2006).

In India, faculty performance evaluation system had recently gained significant attention. Higher educational institutions in India still depend on the interview method, sporadic scrutiny, and inspection of directors. The evaluation of teacher's performance is by and large dependent on head of department and students (Peterson, 2000).

Today majority of educational intuitions lack a systematic evaluation of performance of teachers. The University Grants Commission recently issued a circular with the recommendations of forming a Task Force for 'Developing a process of evaluation of the performance of teachers and designing of formats of guidance on systematic evaluation of performance of teachers. Process of appraisal documentation circulated by the University Grant Commission consists of self-appraisal followed by the further approval and verification off actual data by an authorized person. It was anticipated that the data for the evaluation of performance of the teachers will be archived by the institutions and this will be used as the basis for recognition of excellence in performance. Also the same would be useful in improving the overall efficiency of the institutions and, in succession, the system of education in the country (Shirma, 2002).

Recognizing the need for performance appraisal of teachers in Universities and Colleges in India, UGC has introduced the system of Performance Based Appraisal System (PBAS) in India in its UGC Regulations 2010. Thus, through this system, UGC has tried to quantify the performances of its teachers in terms of teaching and research.

Several regulations were formulated and implemented by the University Grant Commission (UGC) for faculties of higher academic institutions. UGC recognized these guidelines concerning minimum qualifications for appointment of faculties in universities and colleges in the year 1956 from the Ministry of Finance and later in the year 2000 it was again revised in the year 2008. The Gazette was formally issued in 2010. These guidelines clarify qualifications for applicants and eligibility for recruitment and promotion to higher positions and under Career Advancement Scheme.

These qualifications are related to the head of institutions, faculties, officers, sports staff and librarians of higher academic institutions.

In 2010 the API was protested widely by Teachers unions on account of various drawbacks present in the system. According to them this appraisal promotes discrimination in selections. Thus, in 2013 to overcome the protest, UGC introduced capping method to calculate API total score. This score helps to claim direct recruitment and Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) for promotions of different sub-categories in the Category III of PBAS. These subcategories consist of books, research guidance, research papers, research projects and seminar and conferences attendance.

Though, it evidently states that the capping will be calculated in relation to the total API score claimed by the applicants. The study found that in capping method, publication in journals has higher capping than the publication of books that may further create discrepancies among various disciplines of universities. The Science stream was favored more as compared to other streams like language and humanities. Due to this, further discrepancies were created by using common standards for all the streams including teaching institutes and research Centre, irrespective of whether they are policy or practice oriented, or whether they are engaged in lab or field work. Application of capping compelled the faculties to give-up their hard earned points in their own areas of strength.

The study also found that after discussion with faculties of higher academic institutions research projects undertaken by the faculties have a higher capping than the research guidance.

This capping system damages faculties interests quite often since many of them started running behind obtaining the funds from the funding agencies.

The result of which was that the Union Government of India started slashing down the budget on research grant and diverted it for other academic activities. (Ishaq, 2015).

Thus, from 1956 until year 2008, the emphasis on higher education was to have uniform qualification throughout all types of academic institution for equality of pay and quality dissemination. But from the year 2010 onwards the commission recognized to formally introduce the API and PBAS so as to enable motivation and enthusiasm in faculties for their work which could help them attain their personal growth as well as growth for both the institution and the society.

3. Critical issues in performance appraisal in HEIs

PA practices tend to have several issues that could potentially undermine the validity and reliability of the whole process. Among these issues is the rating inflation which is the tendency of appraisers to give appraisees higher ranking than they realistically deserves. This seems to be a serious problem with PA as it could make it difficult to discriminate an average performance from an outstanding one (Martin & Bartol, 1998). On the other hand, severity, as opposed to leniency, is considered as one of the common errors where appraisers give appraisees lower ratings than they actually deserve. Another concern is when appraisers choose the middle point in any range of the scale to play safe, but this may not effectively illustrate the actual performance. Yet one more serious issue is what is known as "Hallo effect", which is the tendency to judge the appraisee's performance by only one particular aspect (Boachie-Mensah et al., 2012., Prowse & Prowse, 2009;To, 2007). Additionally, another commonly known issue is stereotyping: the pre-judgment of a person's performance on the basis of general beliefs about characteristics such as gender, age, race, and nationality. Some appraisers also have the tendency to negatively view all behaviors or actions of a subordinate because the superior dislikes a particular behavior or action of the appraise (Lefkowitz, 2000, Boachie-Mensah et al., 2012). Finally, the error of strictness is another issue that occurs when appraisers give unfavorable or poor appraisal regardless of the actual performance level of the appraisee. In the view of Tziner and Kopeman (2002, as cited in Boachie-Mensah et al., 2012), the main reason for this practice is that the appraisers may be uncomfortable with that successful appraisees may replace them in the future. It is also they want to create the impression that they are hard and strict in their evaluation.

Furthermore, another major critical issue with PA, is the key role given to student ratings to measure instructors' teaching performance and effectiveness has been an important but controversial tool in the improvement of teaching quality during the last past decades (Spooren, Mortelmans & Thijssen, 2012).

The use of student evaluations of their teachers to measure their performance has become extremely popular in many universities around the world (Becker &Watts, 1999). However, there are a number of concerns regarding the use of student evaluations for managing staff performance. Student evaluations of teachers might divert teachers from activities that have higher learning content for students and concentrate more on classroom entertainment to please their students and thus gaining high teaching ratings (Braga, Paccagnella & Pellizzari, 2014). Features of a good teacher evaluation system should reflect, among other things, the clarity of the purposes and criteria of the evaluation system, perceived fairness and accuracy of the evaluation system, teacher satisfaction with their performance and the evaluation process such as the credibility of the evaluators, the relationship between the evaluator and the teachers, and the utility of the feedback (see e.g, Holi, 2013).

4. Important factors considering while appraising The Performance of the faculty members

At the time of apprising the performance of the faculty members what factors to be considered by the institutes is very much important. So to understand in this regard the researcher is interested to find out the important factors that institutes is considering while apprising the performance of the faculties in the institutes. For this purpose researcher wants to understand the opinion of the respondents about the important factors that the institutes is considering while appraising the faculty members performance.

Here the researcher has mentioned the eight important factors and respondents are asked to give their opinion about the important factor considering while appraising the performance of the faculty members that done by the institutes. The responses is taken on five point Likert Scale 5 – Very Important, 4 – Moderately Important, 3- Neutral, 2 – Slightly Important, 1 – Not Important.

Sl. No	Factors considering performance appraisal of the teachers	Mean	SD
1.	Qualification	4.2	0.695
2.	Academic & Research Experience	4.2	1.063
3.	Interpersonal relationship with colleagues	4.3	0.947
4.	Relationship with Higher Authority	4.2	0.626
5.	Research publication and seminar presentation	4.3	0.815
6.	Cooperative & Student friendly behaviour	4.2	0.707
7.	Subjective Expertise	4.5	0.896

8.	Perform academic task i'e set question papers, invigilation duties, examine answer scripts etc.	4.3	0.785

The above analysis indicates that the above mentioned factors are most important while apprising the faculty members in higher academic institutions in West Bengal that are Qualification, academic & research experiences, Subject expertise, Research Publications and seminar presentation, Relationship with colleagues, Relationship with authorities, Cooperative & student friendly behaviour with other faculties, perform assigned academic duties with the high mean score.

5. Objective of the Study

The present study aims to explore the

1. Efficiency and effectiveness of the existing performance appraisal system followed by the HAI in West Bengal
2. Perception of the faculty members on student's involvement in teacher's performance appraisal process.

6. Research Methodology

A total number of hundred ten (110) participants agreed to take part in this study through well structured close ended questionnaire survey. All participants were University teachers working in different Public and Private Universities in West Bengal with different ranks and years of experience in the profession. Their ranks ranged from assistant to associate professors with a minimum of five and a maximum of fifteen years of experience in the field of Social science. They comprised both State and Private Universities, coming from diverse national, educational, and cultural backgrounds. They all have gone, at different times, through the experience of staff performance appraisal.

Being an exploratory in nature, the study adopted a qualitative methodology with well structured close ended questionnaire containing 14 questions being the principal method of data collection.

The present study has carried out in selected Private and Public Universities throughout West Bengal State. There are 7 Universities covered in the study. Researcher has selected the Census Population for the present study. To select the respondents from the Universities researcher has selected all permanent faculty members from the Universities.

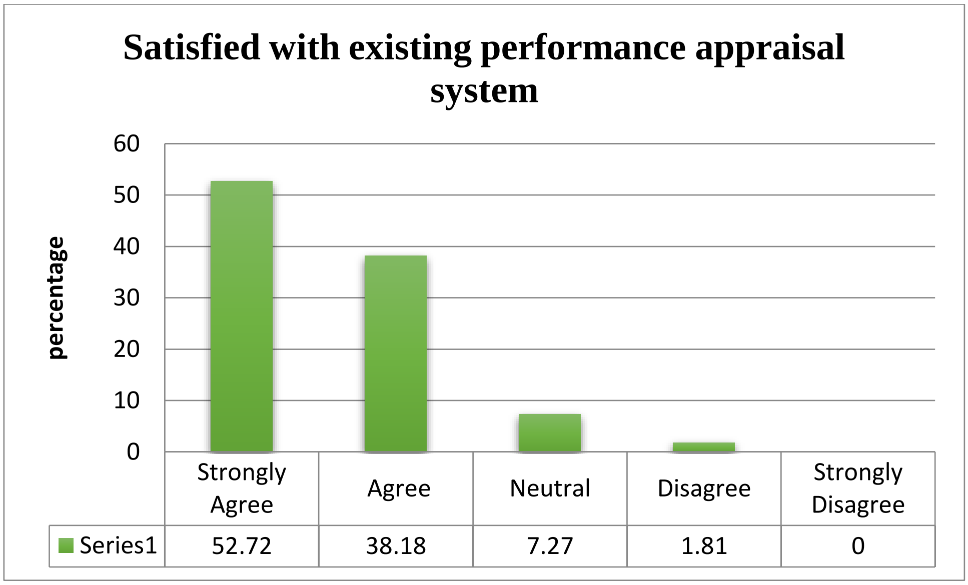
7. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

This section reports the key findings of the study. Participants expressed their views in regard to seven key elements in performance appraisal namely, efficiency and effectiveness of the existing performance appraisal system, satisfaction of faculty members on existing performance appraisal system, perception of faculties regarding students participation on teachers evaluations, peer-ratings, and faculty involvement in developing appraisal tools and mechanisms.

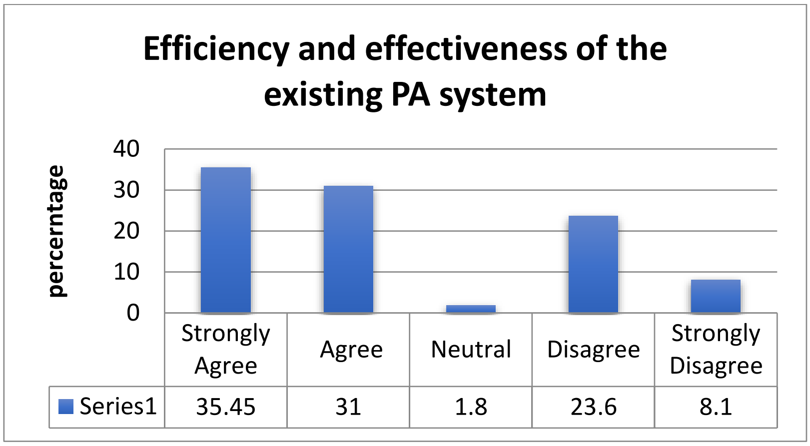
7.1 Satisfaction on existing performance appraisal system

As per Satisfied with existing performance appraisal system concern 52.7 % respondent said that they are strongly agree about this statement, then 38.1 % respondents said that they are agree about this statement, 7.2% respondents are neither nor disagree about this statement, then 1.8 % respondents said that they are disagree about this statement and only no respondents said that they are strongly disagree about this statement.

From the above analysis it is clear that faculty members are satisfied with the existing performance appraisal system followed by the institute. Good sponsorship for faculty for participation in various academic and research oriented activitiese. Institute's performance appraisal systems gives clear cut ideas to faculties about what is expected from them by administration. The appraisal system provides an opportunity for self-review and reflection on which Respondents are strongly agreed than other things about performance appraisal system.



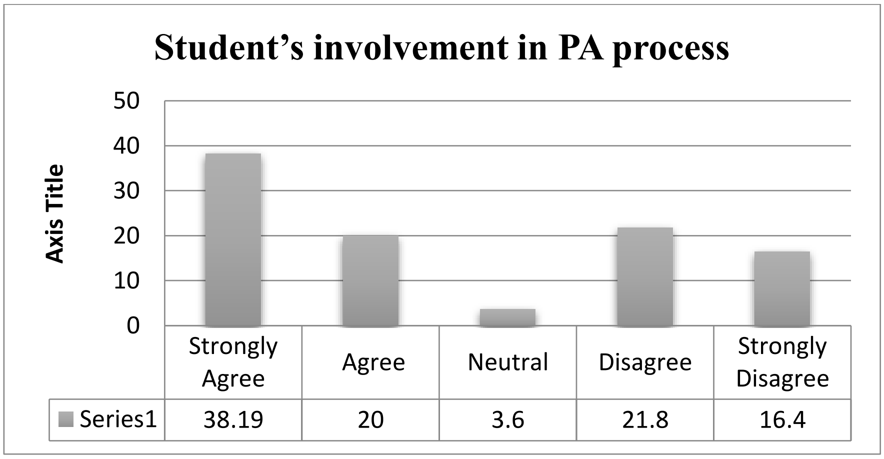
7.2 Efficiency and effectiveness of the existing PA system



Participants acknowledged the importance of having a performance appraisal system in place, and they appreciated the value of such a system in developing and monitoring their professionalism, while aspiring for further improvement.

It was found that majority (66%) of the faculty members were of the opinion that, intentions of performance appraisal are good. The objective of PA is to improve the overall situation, teaching, learning, research, community service. And it is linked with the performance. So, without the performance appraisal system, faculty member themselves will not know where they stand, their strength and weakness especially their weak areas where they need improvement. They viewed that the appraisal should be developmental rather than judgmental. Some modification also needed in various areas to enhance the effectiveness of the performance appraisal.

7.3 Student's involvement in PA process

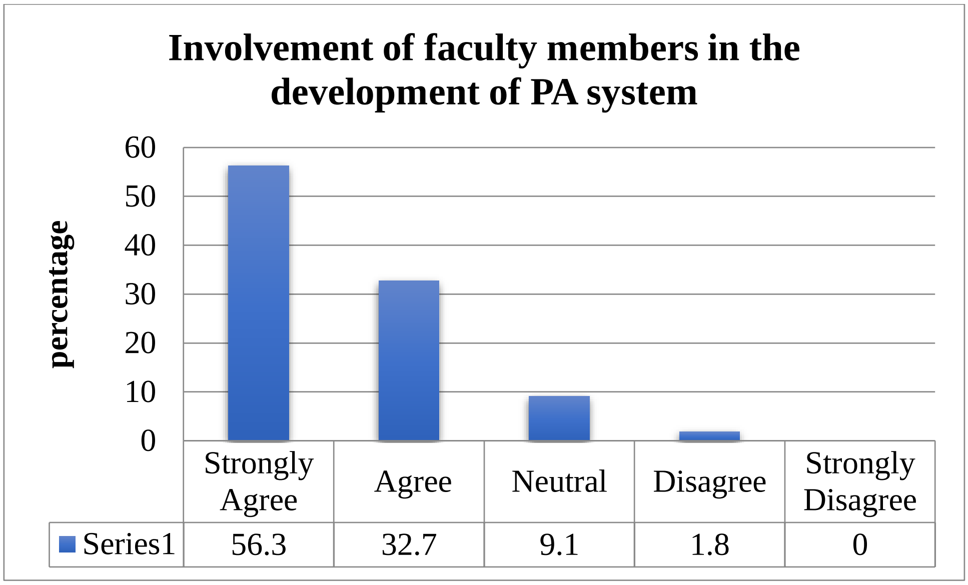


Faculty members have mixed views with regard to the role of students in performance appraisal process. While it is generally acknowledged as the students are one of the important stakeholders, some teachers, however, questioned the students' ability to accurately judge and evaluate the teaching performance.

Some faculty members contested the prime role given to students as evaluators of their teachers' performance, critiquing the high weight given to student evaluations, among other elements, in the teaching part of the appraisal system. In the same vein, teachers also voiced their concerns about the student ability to accurately evaluate and judge their performance in the teaching.

Moreover, on the other hand, almost half of the faculty members (respondents) were also of the view that the best people to judge teaching and learning are the students who see and who form creating impressions about their teachers. So teachers and the students; this is mutual.

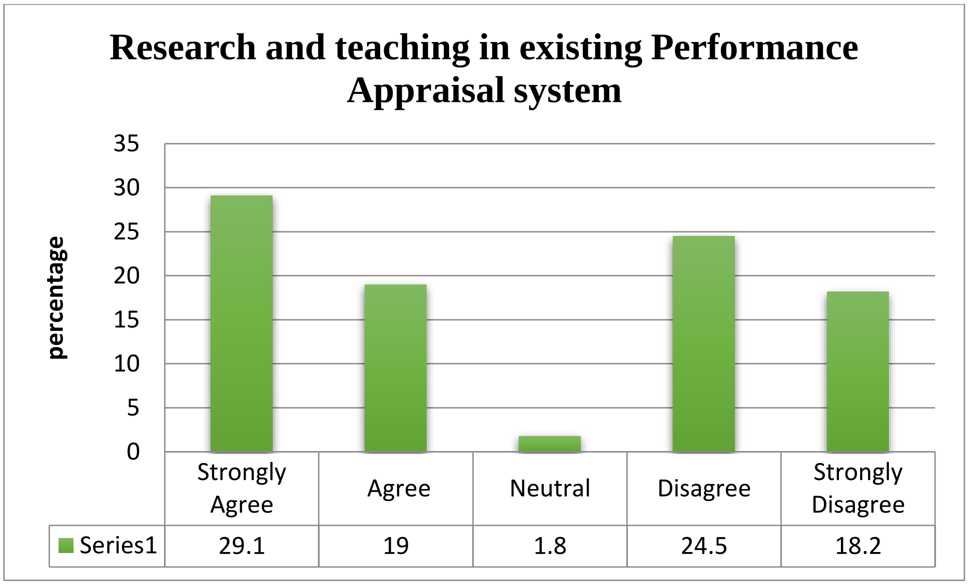
7.4 Involvement of faculty members in the development of PA system



Participants articulated deficiencies in the current performance appraisal system with regard to the lack of faculty involvement and participation in the design and implementation of the system. It's also very much important to make sure that all the aspects or everybody involved in the teaching, learning, research or serving the community should be involved somehow in the appraisal system.

These findings confirmed what was suggested in the previous relevant studies in that staff participation and involvement in the design and development of performance appraisal systems are more likely to make them more reliable and effective than those which are solely developed by administrators and supervisors (Cox, 2000). Staff participation in the appraisal process could also yield positive effects on them and foster their motivation. Moreover, this participation should be preceded by adequate training for both appraisers and appraises to help minimize any potential problems and errors with the appraisal process.

7.5 Research and teaching in existing Performance Appraisal system



Data showed that participants had some concerns with regard to the overemphasis placed on the research component in the Performance Appraisal system. Participating teachers expressed their views about the current appraisal process with regard to publications by questioning the research weightage and the validity of information in the appraisal system. They believed that the institution should offer time and professional development activities with regard to research before incorporating it as an integral component in the faculty performance appraisal.

It is also suggest that without considering the focus of the institutions whether being a research or teaching-oriented nor considering the existing facilities and time allocated to individual staff to produce quality research, the research component in the performance evaluation should be considered with caution to avoid underestimating other relevant rating sources. They also suggest that neither teaching nor research can be overemphasized. Equal consideration should be given to these two issues.

8. Conclusion & recommendations:

This is a relatively small-scale exploratory research that focused on a single context with only hundred and ten participants across west Bengal, so some caution should be taken when interpreting the findings and implications. However, we hope that the study has provided some enlightening and useful insights to inform both academics and administrators in developing, implementing, monitoring, and managing PA in a more effective manner in higher education institutions. There is clear evidence that PA practices operate in a complex web of academic and social factors, and the evaluators have a range of concerns regarding the validity and reliability of the performance appraisal models and its implementation process.

Based on the overall objectives and the research questions addressed in the study, and in the light of the study findings, a number of recommendations can be offered to improve performance appraisal practices in West Bengal higher academic institutions, and beyond in similar contexts.

As for student evaluation, it should be taken with care and should not be given higher weight age in the appraisal process at the expense of other sources. Students should be properly trained on how to rate their teachers to reduce the impressionistic effects and also need to be encouraged to separate the quality of instruction from the grade they expect to receive in class. Balancing and weighting items within the survey questionnaires or checklists could affect rating. Moreover, at the same time training is equally important for raters and appraisers on how to rate others and carry out performance appraisal efficiently. There is evidence that not all faculty members are actively involved in the design and development of performance appraisal tools. Involving faculty in the process may reduce doughts and improve the validity and reliability of the performance appraisal systems. PA system should be based on a multi-source model in order to become more comprehensive, unbiased, fair, representative, and acceptable.

As for the choice and selection of peer appraisers, there should be clear, rigorous, and well- articulated criteria as well as effective mechanisms within the system to minimize any potential subjectivity and errors in the performance appraisal process. There should also be realistic performance appraisal for faculty members, taking into consideration the job descriptions. For instance, a staff member whose job is only teaching should not be apprised against any research measures. Given that the research component is often highly valued in the PA process, HEIs in West Bengal should strive to allocate enough time, resources, and funds for staff in order to produce high-quality research and publications not only for appraisal purposes, but also for the continuing professional development. Additionally, given the scarcity of empirical research in the context of the study, it is expected that the findings of the study could motivate researchers and serve as a basis for further empirical studies in this field.

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