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FOREWORD

It gives me immense pleasure to unveil the seventh volume of ***Edusearch***, a Peer Reviewed Bi-lingual Multi-Disciplinary National Level Annual Research Journal. This has been a modest attempt of the Research & Development Cell of our Nabinchandra College, Badarpur, to publish the quality research works of eminent scholars, academicians and faculty members of different colleges and universities across the country since 2014-15. We believe this noble work will enhance research activities among the faculty members of various disciplines of our college in particular and other higher educational institutions in general. The journal, with its broad scope of bridging literature, social sciences, pure sciences, commerce and management, is dedicated to a challange of achieving academic excellence of the college.

Established in 1969 with less than 100 students in Arts stream, Nabinchandra College, Badarpur, made a slow but steady progress towards the present enviable status of a four stream college with around 4000 regular students in Arts, Commerce, Science and B.voc (IT). It is in recent years, the college has made remarkable progress both in its infra-structure as well as in its academic sphere. As of now, it is the only institution in Assam offering B.Sc. honours in Ecology & Environmental Science and only College affiliated to Assam University Silchar, offering B.voc in Information Technology. In regards to academic excellence, every year a good number of students achieve outstanding results securing ranks and Goldmedals. Besides, the involvement of students in extracurricular and social activities is highly appreciated. The role of NCC and NSS Units of the college in this regard is remarkable. Moreover, coaching for IAS, ACS and other competitive examinations organised by the Career Counselling & Placement Cell of the college has been proved very much effective for the students in regards to their placement.

The Research & Development Cell of the college is a platform for the faculty members, scholars as well as students to promote their research activities. Publication of the annual national journal ***Edusearch*** is one of the best efforts of the Cell to encourage participation of the faculty members and the students in research endavours and exchange of ideas. Moreover, the Research & Development Cell of the college has also been playing a vital role in publishing good quality Annual Megazine of the students "Nabin Jyoti", Wall Megazine of each department and also in preparing Seminar Papers by the students for departmental seminars.

The present volume of ***Edusearch*** explores thematic ideas and empirical findings in relevent issues of Economics, Commerce, Management, Political Science, History, English literature, Bengali literature as well as Persian literature. It consists of as many as fourteen number of research papers and articles contributed by the eminent scholars and faculty members of various colleges and universities across the nation. A good number of selected papers have been contributed by the faculty members and scholars of different colleges and universities, indicating ***Edusearch*** a hub of attraction of the scholars for publishing their research works. It is pertinent to mention that all the papers selected for publication in this volume have been throughly tested for plagiarism through 'Turnitin plagiarism checker' and reviewed by the concerned members of Peer Review Team consisting of high profile academicians.

This seventh volume of ***Edusearch*** was supposed to be published in January 2022, but due to covid-19 pandemic followed by repeatation of devastating floods in Assam, it was not possible to work out in time. However, our solid determination and sincere efforts of all concerned made it possible to publish the present volume in June, 2022. I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the esteemed members of the Peer Review Team, the Research & Development Cell, the Editorial Board, the contributors and all who supported the process of publishing this journal. I hope ***Edusearch*** will continue to come out in the month of January every year with better and better quality in all aspects of a national level research journal.



Dr. Mortuja Hussain
Principal
Nabinchandra College, Badarpur

EDITORIAL

Research in diverse field of education is very imperative for knowledge driven growth of an economy. In the globalized world of competition, intensive works of research generates noval and innovative ideas which help a country to build up its own credibility in the international level. Expanding knowledge and outlook of a chosen discipline outside the classroom education become very essential to face global competition by the knowledge aspirants. In this arena, quality of research is very pertinent to improve teachimg-learning in the higher educational institutions, which really benefits the students, the teachers, the society and the country at large. Promotion of research activity in a large and diverse economy like India will pave the way to evolve as a knowledge reservoir in the globe. Hence, research activity in an academic institution is significant for its sustainability and development which contribute largely in the country's knowledge reservoir. But the quality research is one of the major constraints faced by many academic institutions in India. In this perspective, Nabinchandra College, Badarpur through its Research & Development Cell has been working to encourage quality research works among the academicians of various disciplines through its modest attempt of publishing the Peer Reviewed Bi-lingual Multi-disciplinary National Level Annual Research Journal '***Edusearch'***.

The present volume of the journal contains as many as fourteen number of research papers, of which eleven papers are in English section and three papers are in Bengali section. In English section, the first paper exposes how sustainable mobility as a concept has been conveniently ignored for a long time which has now turned into an imperative rather than a choice. The authors in the second paper empirically delineate how the timely services with trust worthy behaviour of the bank employees and their personal relation with customers largely affect the bank selection and retention of the customers. This has wide relevance in the present day's competitive business in banking sector. The third paper draws the attention to the impact of covid-19 on India's stock market indices, which interestingly reveals that although covid-19 had certain influence on the stock market indices Nifty and Sensex as well as on the exchange rate between US dollar and Indian rupee, the effect was not significant as it could have been. The fourth paper focused on changes in agrarian relations during the British rule highlighting the fact that with the accession of British rule in 1830 the Barak Valley of Assam was continued with tea plantation in hilly region and crop cultivation in plain region, attracted huge Bengali migrants and fortune-seekers to this valley, which in turn changed

the picture of agrarian structure of the valley. This has great historical relevance of the valley's economy.

In investigating the micro enterprise performance in Barak Valley of South Assam the author of the fifth paper empirically reveals that business experience of the entrepreneurs is relatively stronger, while education of the entrepreneurs is relatively weaker determinant of the micro enterprise performance, delineating the fact that skill of the entrepreneurs is more important than their education to perform better in business activity. These findings have great policy implications for the development of micro enterprises in face of ongoing agricultural crisis in the valley. The sixth paper is an attempt to understand the nature and extent of people's participation in Gram Sabha meetings, which exposes that Gram Sabha is not functioning as effectively as it is required and is often gets dominated by the ruling elite in the villages, who excludes and deters popular participation in the body. It has implications in the success of democracy and decentralization of power. The seventh paper explores the concepts and scope of CSV- Creating Shared Value, reveals that CSV has evolved into an alternative that pushes the boundaries of CSR-Corporate Social Responsibility, and it is a groundwork for creation of economic value while addressing social exigencies. The concept of CSV has received a lot of attention from researchers and businesses. The author in the eighth paper draws attention to the influence of Persian culture on Rabindranath Tagore, which has great value in the study of literature. The paper nicely presents some glimpses from the life of Tagore and shows the impact of Persian culture in his thoughts and literature directly and indirectly. It is the ninth paper which exhibits the challenges and remedies of primary Islamic education in urban areas due to the rapid changes in lifestyle of the people. The study observes that parents are no longer in a position to follow the traditional system of educating their children in primary Islamic education without having any concrete substitute, and so it suggests the remedies for getting proper education. The tenth paper deals with the study of cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants as source of profit generation and employment opportunities. It reveals that although a large section of rural population in North East India depends on biodiversity for their better health and life, certain anthropogenic activities are identified as the main causes of losing the medicinal plants diversity, for which appropriate measures are the need of time to save the ecosystem. The eleventh and last paper exposes very articulately how speech analytics has colossal scope in the business domain and is poised to grow in a non-linear fashion, as evidenced by a case study. The analysis has high relevance in business endavour as well as teaching-learning methodology.

In Bengali section, the first paper deals with the use of obscene words in folk society. The author in the second paper analyses the milestone of female apprehensions of Ashapurna Devi's squatting, that dwell on Bengali literature. The final paper exposes the Sathpurush dotcom of Sadhan Chattapadyay which is a literary depiction of renewed erection of time in Bengali literatue.

We are pleased to announce the seventh issue of 'Edusearch' with a belief that research papers contained in this issue would serve the interest of the readers, students, teachers, scholars, academicians and researchers of various disciplines, as well as the socio-economic activists and business entrepreneurs. We also hope that the coming issues of this journal would be more exhaustive and intensive in their research works. The Editorial Board would like to extend its sincere appreciation and thanks to the honourable member of the Peer Review Team, the Research & Development Cell, the contributors and all who supported the process of publishing this journal. We expect continuous support from all the research aspirants and other stake holders to extend their sincere co-operation to place 'Edusearch' one of the most successful journals in multi-disciplinary research endavours.



Dr. Nazim Uddin Khadem
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Contents

Dr. Mrinmoy Bhattacharjee & Anmol Dhanesh **13**
Sustainable Mobility for Lower Middle-Income Markets:
The Case of Sun Mobility India

Prof. Jaynal Ud-din Ahmed & Mehbooba Sultana **28**
Perceptions of Bank Employees on Customer Relationship Management:
Evidence from India's Private Sector Banks

Prof. Abhigyan Bhattacharjee & Dipankar Das **43**
Exchange Rate Fluctuations and Sectoral Implications of Indian
Economy in the midst of the Covid-19

Chondrima Sen **66**
Changes in Agrarian Relations During the British Rule
with Special Reference to Barak Valley

Dr. Nazim Uddin Khadem **76**
Micro Enterprise Performance in Barak Valley of South Assam:
Determinants and Impact Study

Dr. Nazmul Hussain Laskar **92**
Gram Sabha Meetings and People's Participation:
A Study of Cachar District, Assam

Dr. Ahmed Hussain Barbhuiya **104**
Influence of Persian Culture on Tagore

Dr. Sanchita Choudhury **112**
Creating Shared Value:
A Paradigm Shift in the Relationship between Business and Society

Mokbul Hussain Laskar **119**
Challenges and Remedies of Primary Islamic Education in Urban Areas:
A Study of Silchar Town and It's Adjoining Areas

Dr. Jamal Uddin **126**
Cultivation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants as Source of Profit Generation
and Employment Oppurtunities: A Look into India with Special Reference
to North Eastern Region.

Dr. Mrinmoy Bhattacharjee & Jyotsna Das **132**
Assessing the Potential of Cloud Based Speech Analytics in Enhancing
Customer Experience through Refined Communication:
With Special Emphasis to Ozonetel Communications, India

ড° বিষ্ণু চন্দ্র দে **153**
লোক-সমাজে অশ্লীল শব্দের বহুল প্রয়োগ

ড° রুণা পাল **164**
আশাপূর্ণা দেবীর 'জবর দখল': নারীচেতনার মাইলস্টোন

ড° রূপদত্তা রায় **179**
সাধন চোট্টোপাধ্যায়ের 'সাতপুরুষ ডট কম': সময়ের নবনির্মাণ

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Sustainable Mobility for Lower Middle Income Markets: The Case of Sun Mobility, India

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Abstract

Sustainable mobility as a concept has been conveniently ignored for a long time which has now turned into an imperative rather than a choice. Stakeholders of businesses are concerned about sustainability as an agenda like never before. The burgeoning environmental activism is forcing enterprises to jettison their tone-deaf response towards sustainability. Today, it is one of the most essential area of focus to accelerate the speed of achieving the broader objective of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is estimated that by 2030, there will be a 50 per cent increase in the passenger traffic, exceeding 80,000 billion passenger-kilometres ([i]), and a 70 per cent increase in volume of freight, globally, for which India and China together would be responsible for 54% of global surface freight demand([ii]),which makes mobilising of people and goods a herculean task requiring synergistic efforts from all to find solutions for it and implement it.

In 2018 India and China (two of the most populated nations in the world) both showed a growth of 6.8% and 7.1% ([iii]) respectively with an aim of shifting towards dynamic, low-carbon economies. India moved on track to exceed the renewable target of 2022 by accelerating the wind and solar installation. Both the nations are witnessing unparalleled growth in urbanisation with megacities of inhabitants of more than 10 million. Both the nations have taken sustainable urbanisation and development seriously. Transport provides a crucial link to reinforce economic and social developments which becomes essential to reach the SDGs. China is the largest EV manufacturer and India has also pledged to sell electric vehicles by 2030.

Transport is the primary consumer of fossil-fuel energy so it is a critical link to achieving the goal of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG 7). It enables the building of resilient infrastructure (SDG 9) making sustainable human settlements and cities (SDG 11). Like in other sectors, technology will also set the future of the mobility sector. Autonomous vehicle technology which will be integrated into a bigger system would be used to optimize roadway utilization and would help save tons of money in future infrastructure expansion. The world bank at the global level is providing help to the transport sector by bringing together a high-level group of stakeholders who pledge to transform mobility, including the UN bodies, non-governmental organizations, academia, government donors, multilateral development banks, and global civil society. The world bank group has also included the vision of sustainable mobility in its transport lending.

Awareness on sustainable mobility has improved and fostered in the past few years with initiatives like the *"One planet city challenge mobility"*([iv]) programme coordinated by the World wildlife fund's (WWF's) global cities team in Sweden, taking actions in China, India, Mexico, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, Malaysia and South Africa during 2016 and 2017. India has worked on sustainable mobility but has still got a long way to go from building high quality paid rapid transit and development in walking and cycling infrastructure, to catering to 200 million (expected by 2030)([v]) new urban population, with efficient mobility and reducing GHG ([vi]) emissions.

The Chicken and the Egg Problem in Developed Markets:

Sustainable mobility, particularly electric car adoption, is confronted with challenges in the west too. The share of EV sales in US is only two to three percent of total auto sales, so far. People are unwilling to buy more electric cars in absence of adequate charging infrastructure, and start-ups and utility companies, on the other hand, are also reluctant to install charging stations investing half to one million dollars without enough EVs running on the roads. Hence, this turns out to be a typical chicken and egg problem. So far, only Tesla has been partially successful in installing coast to coast charging infrastructure, which again is hit by the roadblock, high upfront costs of buying an electric car.

So, "the biggest hurdle ahead is consumer acceptance", as commented by Jessica Caldwell, an analyst at auto-data firm, Edmunds[1]. However, tax incentives to bridge the price difference between combustion engine cars and electric cars can accelerate the adoption rate in United States.

China's Story

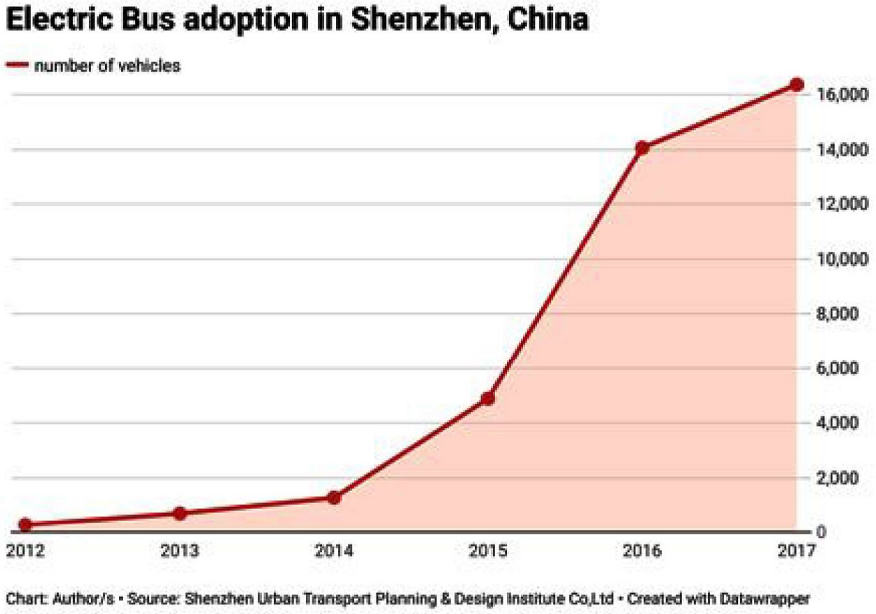
China, known for its early adaptability of newer technology has proved itself

as a pioneer in this space as well. Shenzhen, China is the first city in the world to fully electrify its bus fleet. They have focused on technological innovation in upcoming niches like renewable energy, next-generation telecommunication technology, advanced nuclear energy etc. According to the statistical data, China has been behind only the United States in R&D by measures like the share of GDP spent on research and development R&D, number of academic research papers etc. But they have surpassed these limits in 2016 proving to be the best country in terms of R&D. The data from the World Bank shows [viii] the payments made by China for intellectual property in 2015 were 22 times more than in other countries. They have managed their best to exploit the huge market size they possess to cover up the costs of either acquiring foreign technology or making progress in the field of learning to compete with foreign technologies.

In Asia, China tops the list of top ten cities of "Kantar's transforming cities index" for the region with its 3 cities in the list. In its five-year plan (2016-2020), China focused intensively on green and low-carbon transportation initiatives, and covered areas like public transport, efficiency in transport, new energy vehicles, alternative fuels, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and upcoming green technologies in transport. In its plan for "Shanghai 2035" intense investment was allotted for extending the subway network to 1000 km by 2035 ([ix]).

How did Shenzhen reach a 100% electric bus fleet ?

Shenzhen (China's first special economic zone) has 16000 electric buses and 22000 electric taxis[4], and this was not the case before, people were used to waiting for diesel buses at the stations with rattling engines. But now the buses are more power-efficient and produce zero noise, for which people have requested adding artificial noise to the bus as stated by the deputy general manager at Shenzhen Bus Group (largest of the three main bus companies in the city) - Joseph Ma. But the shift of these diesel buses to electric buses are not just restricted to reducing noise pollution but is also expected to reduce C02 emissions by 48%([5]) and eliminate pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and non-methane hydrocarbons. In discrete numbers, Shenzhen Bus Group estimates that they have conserved 1,60,000 tonnes of coal per year and reduced annual CO2 emissions by 4,40,000 tonnes, and have also made a huge jump in their finances by reducing their fuel bills to half.



Generous subsidies by the local and central government have been the reason for such fast implementation at this scale. For operations, if the company runs a distance of 60,000 km, they get 5,00,000 yuan (approx. 57,22,396,56 INR) from the local government, leading to more than half of the cost of these buses being subsidised by the government. There are around 40,000 charging piles in the city with a major depot in Futian which can accommodate around 20 buses at once. In one charge the buses can travel up to 200 km per charge and are charged (in 2 hours) daily overnight.

Problems that still persist.

Shenzhen has the advantage of having a flatter surface which made 100 percent electrified public transit reasonable for both government and providers, but with the government reducing its subsidies([xii]), initiating electric buses elsewhere could be very expensive. Geographical changes like the hills near Hong Kong have created problems for these electric vehicles in the trial phase, northern parts of China which gets extremely cold in the winters causes a reduction in the power generating capacities of the batteries.

In Shenzhen, the problem of charging infrastructure is still persistent for the taxis and has been considered to be a bottleneck to the strong growth of EV adoption by many experts in China.

What can be done to solve it ?

With the growing trend of increasing investments by the public and private funds in the EV charging infrastructure in China and around the world,

the efficiency and effectiveness of the deployment of these investments would be crucial.

An ideal effective charging deployment would include the following measures:

1. Agile operations and user friendly

The charging infrastructure should be able to cater to the diverse demands of charging and fast speed so that more and more vehicles can be charged to keep up with the whole ecosystem. Electric logistics vehicles (ELV's), taxis, buses, etc. Will have their pattern of charging and needs which the infrastructure should be able to serve. Responsiveness and agility would also play big roles to maintain the growing pace of this segment. Passenger EV's can afford longer charging patterns and needs but this is not possible with commercial vehicles.

2. Optimised based on the charger usage

Optimisation plays an important role in the charging infrastructure. The lesser the frequency of vehicles recharges, the better for serving a larger pool of vehicles. The system should understand the amount of charging which will be required in a day so that fixed costs of installing more and more chargers go down and the revenue generation increases. This will not only make the whole concept sustainable but also economical. Target can be set on the high-use vehicles segment such as taxis, buses and ELV's (the three highest-use vehicles segment in China) which would foster a sustainable charging environment.

3. Sleeks the tricky soft costs

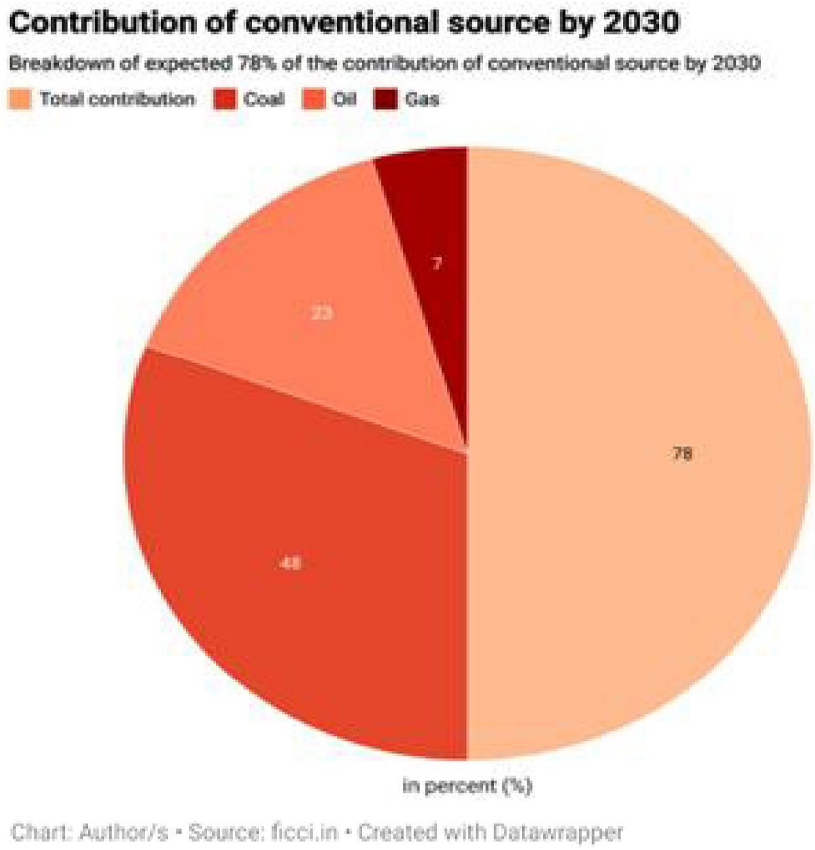
Major attention to the cost reduction focuses on the high fixed costs incurred by software, hardware, grid hosting capabilities etc. so that a much more cost-efficient system can be developed. But there are "soft costs" which can amount to up to 60% of the hours ([xiii], 2020) during the development process of the stations, which needs to be reduced. These costs include permitting delay, utility interconnection requests, reengineering of a project because of optimisations done based on incorrect information, conformity with a balkanized framework of regulations ([xiv]) etc., which have proved to be significant cost drivers in the United States. Hence special attention to this cost will extricate nuanced financial constraints.

4. Make full use of the government support

Sustainability comes in the long run but government support like subsidies acts as a catalyst to overcome initial problems and attain sustainability. Providers should make full use of help like preferential utility rates, which limits the cost of electricity to the operators and subsidies for construction costs which combined helps the charging stations to attain break-even faster than the normal market conditions. Shenzhen is a good example where a charging station requiring 60 kW and needs to work for 8.3 percent of a day required only 7 percent ([xiv]) of these supportive policies which made a big difference between a system of low investment and the one which requires capital support in abundance.

Taking all of the measures into account, "Sun Mobility", an Indian joint venture between the SUN group and the Maini group has come up with a different approach of separating batteries from vehicles and creating a "pay-as-you-go" model. The company is co-founded by Chetan Maini(co-founder and chairman) who is in the field of sustainable mobility since 30 years and is best known as the pioneer in electric vehicles for building REVA, India's first electric car (sold inover 24 countries([9])), Udey Khemka (co-founder and vice chairman) also the promoter of Sun group with an experience of over three decades as an entrepreneur and an advocate of clean energy, and Ajay Goel (co-founder and executive director) having experience of 12 years in turning around and scaling innovative companies. He has also led Tata Solar's turnaround as president and brought out varieties of innovative ideas. He is currently leading the commercial aspects of Sun Mobility. The vision of the company is to create a network which is universal and inter-operable infrastructure to give boost to the mass adoption of sustainable electric mobility.

The total energy consumption in India with conventional sources is approximately close to 692 MMtOE, whereas the expected rise in this consumption is approximately 1440 MMtOE by 2030 ([10]), and the transport sector is a major energy consumer which emits 13% carbon emission from the energy sector. The Indian government has been active in planting a decarbonised resilient transport which will help implement the Paris Agreement on climate change within the transport sector to support net zero-emission, and climate-resilient economy as quickly as by 2050.



But according to Maini, affordable EV's in the Indian markets are far away from the near future, hence to speed up the adoption and to bring down the overall cost of EV's in the short-term, innovative models around battery swapping and leasing have to be developed. Recently even the Indian government has also focused on making India 100 percent capable([11]) of making lithium-ion batteries because of the abundance of lithium with an aim of fostering the "Make in India" initiative. The idea of building a business around batteries came into the mind of Maini when he reflected on the reasons for the failure of mass deployment after being a part of the EV industry for 20 years, even though the technology was up to the mark, four times more efficient than fossil fuels and sustainable. He came up with the following finds of the Indian market:

1. Price plays an important role in the Indian market, and although technological advancement has taken huge leads and the prices of electric vehicles are still sky-high compared to conventional vehicles, 30% - 50% of the overall price

([xviii]) was coming from the batteries themselves. To give an overview of how it affects the overall pricing he gave examples of prices of rickshaw which cost Rs 1.5 lakh (conventional variant) to jump up to Rs. 3 lakhs (electric variant), a Rs. 60000 scooters (conventional variant) to jump up to Rs. 1.2 lakh (electric variant), has kept the buyers hesitant.

2. Anxiety over the range has been another key issue and to tackle it producers can come up with better and more varieties of range but again it comes down to piling up more costs.

3. Timing of refuelling is a hurdle in an impatient market like India where people are accustomed to 5 minutes refuelling time, whereas conventional charges approximately take 5-8 hours of charging and even fast charges take a minimum of 1 hour. And in the Indian market where every single customer is a source of livelihood, especially public transporters like rickshaw drivers can't spend an hour in the gas station to recharge.

Recognizing these 3 key issues, sun mobility found out that separating the batteries from these EV's and the auxiliary systems can bring EV's to cost the same as the conventional internal combustion engine vehicles. Then swapping these batteries as fast as a couple of minutes which is faster than filling petrol, they can solve the problem of charging time, and finally as the charging time is fast the range anxiety would be less. This idea of Sun Mobility was awarded "the Michelin International Mobility Award at the Blue Ocean Awards" ([13]) for bringing innovative solutions to the unexplored and uncontested market space.

After coming up with the idea they had to design a kiosk-like station that would allow the deployment of infrastructure quickly, which theymanaged to do and deployed 10 of them in NCR where over 100000 e- rickshaws with lead-acid batteries are prevalent, with a charging time of 6-8 hours and a range of 70km a day and weighing over 30kg. Comparatively, sun mobility's batteries weigh about 13kgs and are swappable which can run up to a range of 140 km a day, indirectly doubling the income. They made full use of technology and made the stations air-conditioned (increasing battery life), fully automatic and computer-controlled. With this the company is focusing on the commercial EVs because of the huge opportunity of shared mobility (like food and goods delivery) in the coming future, and also a huge chunk of Indian companies like Zomato, Swiggy and Flipkart are focusing on making their deliveries through EV's being cost-effective.

To scale up the business, the company has partnered with industry leaders like **Ashok Leyland**, helping them pursue a three-pronged strategy ([xx]) for electric mobility starting with intra-city buses and gradually adding deliver trucks (12 tonnes), **Bosch** (26% stake in sun mobility ([xxi])) to cater diverse powertrain technologies and provide electrification to combustion engines, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd **(IOCL)** for expanding the coverage to immediate swapping stations at nearest fuel pumps providing instant charging services to EV owners, **Piaggio** providing electric vehicles which will be using sun mobility's swappable batteries, **Zyngo** helping them to extend services to e-loaders/carriers which provides support to last-mile delivery service, and **Uber** which will be leveraging sun mobility's energy infrastructure platform providing a mass-market to the company.

Solutions provided by Sun Mobility for Buses, 2 wheelers and 3 wheelers

1. Smart Battery - A lightweight long-lasting Lithium-ion battery optimised with Intelligent Battery Management System ensuring high level of safety. It is equipped with 30 onboard sensors and GPS tracking system which ensures safety against theft/ misuse. The design of the battery is kept modular, pondered to the future usage, specially to the Indian conditions. For example, 1 battery for one 2-wheeler, 2 batteries for an e-rickshaw and 3 batteries for an e-auto.





2. Quick interchange station - A compact station which has the capacity to cater vehicles from 2-wheeler to a "sub-one-tonne" micro truck, strong enough to provide 2 minute swapping time and going upto 200 battery swaps per day. While charging these batteries the charging station has air conditioning to keep temperature under control. It is also enabled with key fobs which use RFID, helping not only in protecting the system but also enables digital payments for the energy consumed.





Plug and Play Docks - These docks are software enabled which makes them integration enabled for OEMs. The company has also kept cost and time into consideration and created a plug-and-play concept which enables customization and ability to provide service to 1,2or 3 docks as per the need. It is also equipped with a locking mechanism which mitigates the risks associated with misuse or theft.



The company also has a smart network of agents, drivers and partners. The agents have the agent app which helps them access vehicle wallets with credits and swap assists. For the drivers the driver app helps them be updated with the state of charge, range of distance to empty, nearest quick interchange station (QIS) etc. And the company has a portal which will help the dealers to cater the customers and map vehicles to each of them.

Challenges ahead :

Though the model seems to be promising for lower middle-income markets like India, however, the road to total adoption wouldn't be easy. The scalability of this model demands technological, social, and administrative collaboration. In a federal structure like India, it turns out to be extremely challenging in diffusing innovation, particularly, when it challenges the existing status quo of multiple participants in auto business.

The National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020 provided a vision and roadmap for the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (hybrid and) Electric vehicles in India (FAME India) in the country. It was launched in phases, the first phase (2015) focused on promoting the manufacturing of hybrid and electric vehicles and ensuring sustainable growth in India. And the second phase with a massive budget outlay of Rs 10,000 crore in April 2019 to foster the initiative, but the dream of creating a demand-side pull for EVs is a distant dream in the present context, hence the government has extended the second phase of FAME by two years to March 31, 2024 ([xxii]). Even efforts like Production Linked Incentives (PLI) ([xxiii]) scheme were not enough to improve the conditions and forcing regulations to adopt EVs would lead to severe resistance from customer end. Also, drastically restructuring tax policies to accelerate adoption may not be feasible for India considering the state of fiscal health.

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Synopsis :

In 2018 India and China (two of the most populated nations in the world) both showed a growth of 6.8% and 7.1% respectively with an aim of shifting towards dynamic, low-carbon economies. With unparalleled growth in urbanisation, transportation has become a crucial link to reinforce economic and social developments as well as attainment of Sustainable development goals (SDG's). The case goes through China's story of achieving a 100 % electric fleet in Shenzen and the problem that still persists for them. It then covers the unique solution and idea of the "pay as you go" model of tackling the problems, provided by Indian joint venture "Sun Mobility". This model helps the Indian public transit system to reduce charging time, range anxiety, and pricing of the EV system in "Lower Middle-Income Markets" to increase the adaptability of Electric vehicles.

Learning objectives :

The case lays out an opportunity of comprehending the concept of consumer behaviour in the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) and emerging markets, strategic marketing and management.

Going through the case students will understand the following :

1. Importance of transportation in building a growing sustainable market.
2. Diffusion of innovation and challenges in technology adoption.
3. Importance of pricing, convenience, and strategic management in lower-middle-income markets.
4. Business model and technological innovation at Bottom of the pyramid and emerging markets

Position in the course :

The use of this course is in a post-graduate level marketing program on strategic management, consumer behaviour in BOP and emerging markets and marketing strategy.

Relevant readings :

Assignment questions :

1. What was the reason for the 100% EV fleet in Shenzen and the potential risk in coming years for the Chinese market.
2. What is unique about the solutions provided by Sun mobility that can be adapted to grow and strategically position in the global market.
3. What is the Chicken and the Egg problem in developed markets discussed in the case study ?
4. What is the potential risk which lies ahead of sun mobility?

5. What is essential to know for a strategic marketer when it comes to "Lower Middle-Income Markets"?

Teaching plan :

The teaching note is designed for a 100 minutes session. The suggested time allocation is as follows:

Discussion point	Time (minutes)
Case outline	5
Concept of Sustainable mobility for Lower Middle-Income-Markets	15
The Chicken and the Egg Problem in Developed Markets	10
China's growth story	10
How did Shenzhen reach a 100% electric bus fleet ?	10
Problems that still persist and solution to it	15
Case of Sun Mobility	10
Strategy of scaling up the business and products of sun mobility	15
Challenges ahead	10

Case Analysis :

The instructor can commence with the background of the case and ask students to introduce the case to the forum. The initial discussion would focus on sustainability as a critical agenda and need to address the imminent existential threat which could erase human race from the planet. Next, the instructor can emphasise the importance of adopting sustainable mobility to mitigate the major carbon emission caused by transportation industry, contributing significantly to global warming.

Diffusion of innovation theory by Everett Rogers
Chasm theory by Geoffrey Moore

Everett M Rogers theory of diffusion of innovation is a widely read concept in business studies and behavioural science. The model is very relevant in the context of technology products and services. Rogers is one of the prime contributors to the theory of innovation- diffusion. His work primarily focused on four elements, which he described to be the linchpins in the process of

diffusion. The elements he identified were *innovation* itself as an entity and primary reason for acceptance or rejection of it, the *channels of diffusion* which carry the concept and acts as vehicle for diffusion, the *time period*of diffusion process and the individuals in a *social system* to whom it is targeted.[i]

Rogers's narrative of effective innovation has become a bedrock for all future research in this field. His clarity, based on keen observation and research, has unearthed immensely insightful facts on why and how people adopt new innovations. According to Rogers's, for any innovation to be successful, it is imperative for it to have high *relative advantage* for individuals in a society. It is also vital for the innovation to fit appropriately into the existing cultural value system, norms and regulations, which he termed as *compatibility*. The diffusion of any innovation is essentially accelerated by simplicity i.e., the lesser *complicated* it is, more probability of higher adoption. *Trialability* is also linchpin in the process of adoption as, this reduces the uncertainty and anxiety in adopting something new. He also proposed *observability* as one of the vital characteristics of innovation, the capability of the innovation to demonstrate its adoption more visibly usually leads to faster adoption. He further identified *heterophily* as a deterrent in effective communication of any innovation, as it quite natural for individuals who are like each other to listen to each other. He presented the process of innovation diffusion in five stages, namely, *knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation*and *confirmation*. He also Classified individuals in a society into five different segments depending on the degree of risk that they are willing to take while adopting any innovation. The highest risk takers are called as *innovators*, representing only 2.5% of the population. Innovators are followed by *early adopters* who represent 13.5% of the society. Early adopters are followed by *early majority* with 34%, followed by *late majority*, again representing 34% of the population and eventually followed by *laggards* who represent 16% of most skeptical and dogmatic individuals in a society[ii]. He asserted that the adoption of any innovation is catalyzed by opinion leaders and change agents.

However, Rogers's theory was refined by Geoffrey Moore[iii], who proposed the concept of *Chasm*, a deep pit in the process of adoption of any new behavior, which appears immediately after adoption by *innovators (2.5%)* and *early adopters (13.5%)*. He narrates that many innovation or social projects fail in early stages as, the orchestrators of those projects are unable to discern the specific reasons for which different categories of individuals, mentioned by Everett Rogers, show willingness to adopt the behavior. The

reasons are distinctively different from one category to another. Hence, there is a need for strategic calibration to make the agenda relevant for each category.

C K Prahalad 12 principles of Bottom of the Pyramid focuses on paradigm shift in the way value creation takes place for customers. The deprived or low-income markets are very different from developed markets and hence, the principles of adoption of any product or technology are fundamentally different. The twelve principles are :

1. Quantum jump in price-performance
2. Innovation with hybrid solution
3. Scalable and transportable operations, across cultures and countries
4. Sustainable development-Reduced resource intensity – eco-friendly.
5. Radical product redesign from the beginning
6. Process innovation is key
7. De-skilling of work
8. Educate Customers
9. Rugged Products to work in hostile environment
10. Specific Distribution methods
11. Challenging existing Assumptions

(Endnotes) :

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Perceptions of Bank Employees on Customer Relationship Management : Evidence from India's Private Sector Banks

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Abstract:

The intricacy in reckoning relationship approaches for commercial banks requires a stimulating foundation of clients' friendly services. In the present context, the banking business experienced difficulty in defining the relationship power, as the banks are persuaded by the value proposition of the products offered and the quality of services provided to the customers. The understanding of these impetuses would perceptibly subsidize towards attaining suitable strategies for relationship building. Indian banks have been caring that the key to achieve the feat in a feasible and viable environment is to emphasis on building and upholding a relationship with the customers. The main purpose of this paper is to examine the perceptions of bank employees on CRM in the banking sector particularly private sector commercial banks operating in Goalpara District of Assam.The research design consists of exploratory in nature whereby different aspects with regards to CRM in the banking sector have been extracted from literature review and tested on a sample size of 24 number of employees working in the banks selected, taking 3 each (one manager and two front office employees) from 8 number of branches. Based on BSQ scale, variables were selected and analysed through Garret ranking technique. The study indicated that bank personnel's involvement is very essential for building CRM. The important factors influencing the customers for selecting a bank is timely services with trust worthy behaviour of the employees. Personal relation of the employees with their customers matters a lot for selecting the bank and retaining the customers.

Keywords: *Private Sector Banks,CRM,Perception, Bank Employees*

Introduction:

Customer relationship management (CRM) is a dominant fragment of business organisations. CRM is the arrangement of organizational information systems that empower the organizations to offer services for customers, analyse customers information and manage their relationship with clients successfully (Khodakarami and Chan, 2011).Therefore, the relationship marketing got added attention from researchers and experts during the last decade of 20thcentury because it assists and involves the organization for generic service characteristics. The CRM has appeared as an essential marketing action for businesses in a competitive situation. The statistics suggest that businesses devote more to obtain new clients than to hold the existing ones (Mehra, 2000). Hence, business firms are now giving more overhaul to their relationship with the customers to retain them and intensify their share for customers purchases. The CRM embraces that the key driver of company's viability is the collective value of the company's customer base (Kotler, 2003). Berry (1983) viewed relationship marketing as identifying, acquiring, developing and retaining customers. Christopher (1992) viewed relationship marketing as a means to crack existing and new customers into regularly buying clients and then gradually move them through being supporters of the company and its products. Sheth and Parvatiyar (2001) defined CRM as a "comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the company and the customer". Osunde (2014) defined CRM as a prerogative of one-to-one communication for effective marketing and responding to the different clients for their queries raised. It is a management tactic that empowers the organizations to recognize, to persuade, and to intensify the quantum of holding the lucrative customers by managing proper relationships with the customers and purposefully recognising the most important customers. Hence, understanding the perception of employees/officials of the organisation is essential for evolving effective CRM strategies.

Review of Literature:

The aim of reviewing the findings of the previous studiesis to emphasize the relatedness of the subject explored that follows the path of the problem undertaken in the present study. Rootman et al. (2007) conducted a study on variables influencing the CRM of banks in South Africa through structured questionnaires. The items considered for the study were related to the three independent variables viz., attitude, knowledgeability, and two-way communication, and the dependent variable viz., CRM. The findings of the study revealed that the variables- knowledgeability and attitude of bank personnel have a significant influence on the success of the CRM strategies of

the banking sector in South Africa. Popli and Rao (2009) reviewed CRM in Indian banks and found that the private sector commercial banks are implementing the CRM practices more successfully than that of public sector commercial banks. The study indicated the innovative nature of the private banks in understanding and consequent relationship-building strategies with their customers. Kumar and Velu (2011) attempted to study the CRM in Indian retail banking industry and found that the absence of cognizance with the bank employees as well as embracing of CRM packages offered in the market are the major hurdles to the implementation of CRM. The study recommended that the execution of a proper CRM package might be accomplished if the bank generates the precise atmosphere, culture, philosophy, and attitude of the employee which aims to assist the customers in the right method with the appropriate technique. Ganguli and Roy (2011) identified four common dimensions in the technology-based banking services viz., customer service, technology security and information quality, technology convenience, and technology usage reliability to assess the impact on customers' satisfaction and loyalty. The study found that customer service and technology usage reliability have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty indicating customers' inclination towards better services and reliability of technology use. Singh and Kaur (2011) attempted to explore the factors impacting customer satisfaction in select Indian universal banks and found that customer satisfaction is influenced by seven important factors namely, employee responsiveness, the appearance of tangibles, social responsibility, services innovation, positive word-of-mouth, competence, and reliability.
Chary and Ramesh (2012) in a study examined the CRM in the banking sector based on primary data collected from a sample of 120 customers taking 60 customers from SBI and 60 customers from HDFC bank of Warangal District of Andhra Pradesh. The study concluded that if the banks attended to the needs of the customers through CRM activity without any time delay, it could create more customer responsiveness and a significant customer base. The study experienced that SBI has been much more cautious in implementing CRM strategies than the HDFC bank. The HDFC bank has not been doing at par with the SBI in many aspects like data base management, responding to the customers, and the other services as projected by the customers. Fatma (2014) studied the CRM practices of retail banks in India from the customer perspective and revealed that in the present situation, structuringa permanent partnership with their customers is the key to retail banking success in India. The study recommended that the CRM practices can be worked out and employed to develop a continuing dialogue with the bank customers and combined across the entire contact ideas.Vasanthagopal

and Darli (2016) examined the CRM practices in the retail banking sector in Kerala and concluded that concentrating on customer feedback and grievances would help banks to win back customers who have a strong customer background.

Bhat and Darzi (2016) conducted a study on determining the role of employee's perception towards CRM practices and customer retention. The study revealed two prominent CRM practices ie, customer acquaintance and customer positioning have significant positive impact on the customer retention. The study indicated that the banks were able to understand their customers and manage customer information properly to prevent customer defection.
It is evident from the review of earlier studies that customer relationship management particularly in banking sector has not been given much attention so far. In the context of ever compounding competition in the banking industry, comprehending the perceptions of bankers as regards the components contributing to relationship building is of paramount importance so that value delivery can be maximized. The customer relationship management-based services provided by banks to their customers are to be studied in-depth to unravel the effectiveness of the banking strategies. Moreover, the studies relating to the subject considered remained un-researched in the private sector banks in the area under study.

Problem Statement:

The strength of competition in the banking business is increasing day by day making the banking operations more challenging and complex. In the present framework of the ongoing competitive environment, the bankers are performing with almost homogeneous services. In this panorama, the bank customers have numerous choices to switch over from one bank to other banks in pursuit of better services accessible. Nevertheless, the banks necessarily have to perform their banking operations in such a way so that the possibility of risk of the customer switching over at any given point of time is minimised, otherwise, banks will have to take the obligation of losing the required market share and thereby declining revenue (Dash, Pattnaik and Rath, 2016). In order to reduce the option of customer refraction; banks have to take appropriate strategies and be equipped with customer-centric decisions. These environments lure the review in promising CRM practices which would offer a podium for retaining existing customers as well as attracting new customers. The banks have therefore comprehended the datum that CRM is a commanding means to reach success in their business and is an activation key for the bankers to gain new customers and to hold the existing customers (Blery and Michalakopoulos, 2016). Hence, the strategies in building the relationship between banks and their customers need sorting of customers'

perceived service quality which needs to be inducted into the employees serving the customers.

Network of Private Sector Banks in the study Area:

The banking network improves financial exposition and business decisions. The network can strengthen the viable position of banks in the distributing process by refining quality and accumulating novelty to the banking products and services.The Goalpara district of Assam is having a network of 19 number of banks with 56 number of branches of banks; of which 41 number of branches of commercial banks (33 branches of public sector banks and 08 branches of private sector banks), 12 number of branches of RRBsie, Assam Gramin Vikash Bank and 03 branches of cooperative Apex Bank (Lead Bank Office, 2021). The network of private sector banks in the district under study is shown in table-1.

Table 1: Private Sector Banks Operating in Goalpara District as on 31.03.2020

Private Sector Banks	No. of Branches
a) Axis Bank	01
b) HDFC Bank	02
c) ICICI Bank	01
d) IDBI Bank	01
e) Bandhan Bank	01
f) North East Small Finance Bank	02
Total number of branches	08

Source: *Lead Bank Office (UCO Bank), 2021, Goalpara District, Assam.*

Necessity of the study:

The study essences on the perceptions of bank employee relating to factors influencing CRM practices of banks. The banking sector has been confronting numerous complications in appealing to new customers and upholding the existing customers to sustain the banking business. The technological development leads to educated and well-informed customers, resulting which customer satisfaction and faithfulness are facing a downward inclination. The specific strategies for swelling the bank's market saturation are to the quintessence of obtaining new customers and maintaining the existing customers. The CRM isa stratagem for information trailing about the preceding communication of the customers and is a powerful tool for bankers to endure in the present competitive world. The present study is an attempt to diagnose the factors influencing CRM and to develop appropriate strategies to boost the efficacy of CRM in private sector commercial banks.

Objective of the study:

The objective of the study is to examine the perceptions of bank employees on CRM in the banking sector particularly private sector commercial banks operating in Goalpara District of Assam.

Research Methodology:

A sample of 24 number of bank employees from the 08 number of branches of private sector commercial banks under Goalpara District were selected for the purpose of the study. With the help of the structured questionnaire specially developed for the employees, data were collected to analyse the perception of bank employees on CRM. The study mainly used the primary source of data. The set of questionnaires was circulated to managerial level and front office employees of the banks. Convenience sampling procedure was followed to collect the desired information. The statistical techniques like descriptive statistics and Garret Ranking were used to analyse the data.

On the basis of literature review and CRM models, the researcher has considered the variables to examine the perception of bank employees towards CRM practices. In this respect, variables considered are Knowledge and ideas about CRM; Training and skills of the employees; Handling customers' grievances; Providing special incentives; Understanding business benefit; Functional boundaries; Top management involvement; Effective measurement and reward system; Attention to customers; Expectation of customers; Cross functional working system; Making personal calls. Besides these, 36 factors which influence customers on their selection of banks, and the banker customer relationship, have been considered based on Bank Service Quality (BSQ) scale as proposed by Bahia and Nantel (2000). These factors have been grouped under three heads;bank products related variables; bank services related variables and personnel related reasons.

Analysis and Discussions:

1. Demographic Characteristics

The demographic evidence provides data concerning research participants and is necessary for the determination of whether the respondents in a particular study are a demonstrative sample of the target population for generalization purposes. Understanding the demographic profile of respondents in a study of perception of bank employees on CRM is essential. Table-2 presents the demographic profile of the sample respondents.

Table 2: Respondents Profile of Sample Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	20 - 30 years	5	20.83
	30 - 40 years	10	41.66
	40 - 50 years	6	25
	50 years and above	3	12.5
Gender	Male	15	62.50
	Female	9	37.50
	Prefer not to say	0	0
Marital Status	Single	10	41.67
	Married	14	58.33
	Others	0	0
Education	Graduate	13	54.17
	Post Graduate	8	33.33
	Others	3	12.5
Experience	Less than 2 years	5	20.83
	2 - 6 years	9	37.5
	6 - 10 years	7	29.17
	10 years and above	3	12.5
Level of Management	Front Office	16	66.67
	Manager	8	33.33

Source: *Self calculation by the researchers*

It is depicted from the demographic profile of the respondents that out of the total number of 24 respondents, 41.66 percent falls under the age category of 30-40 years, 25 percent belongs to 40-50 years, 20.83 percent comes between 20-30 years, whereas only 12.5 percent comes under 50 years and above. It can be visualized from the age-wise analysis of the sample that 62.49 percent of the respondents are youngsters. While analysing the gender of the respondents, it is found that 62.50 percent are male and 37.5 percent are female. With respect to marital status, 58.33 percent of the total respondents are married while 41.67 percent are single. Out of the total respondents, majority of them i.e., 54.17 percent are graduates, 33.33 percent of the respondents are post graduates and only 12.5 percent are having other degrees. With respect to years of experience, 37.5 percent of respondents are having 2 - 6 years of experience, whereas 29.17 percent are having 6 - 10 years of experience, 20.83 percent of them having less than 2 years of experience and only 12.5 percent belongs to the experience category of 10

years and above. A sample size of 66.67 percent belongs to front office level, whereas 33.33 percent are coming under managerial level. The analysis of this demographic profile indicates a proper representation of respondents have been pinched from various cluster to draw appropriate research conclusion.

2. Perception of Bank Employees: Garrett Ranking Technique

In order to find out the most significant factors which influence CRM practices, the Garrett ranking technique is used. This technique offers the change of orders of influences into numerical scores. The advantage of this technique is that the factors are ordered based on their severity from the point of view of respondents. Hence, the same number of respondents on two or more factors may have given different ranks. As per this method, respondents have been asked to allot the rank for all factors and the results of such ranking have been transformed into score values with the help of the following formula-

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

where,

R_{ij} = Rank given for the i^{th} variable by j^{th} respondents

N_j = Number of variables ranked by j^{th} respondents

With the help of Garrett's Table, the percent position is estimated and consequently, it is converted into scores by stating to the table given by Garrett and Woodworth (1969). Then for each factor, the scores of each respondent are added together, and then the total value of scores and mean values of the score are calculated. The factors having the highest mean value is considered to be the most important factor.

2.1 Bank products influencing the perceptions of bank employees

Bank products means any service or facility extended to an obligor by the bank or any member of the bank. In order to analyse the perception of bank employees relating to the influence of customers on selection of banks, Garret ranking technique has been used on the banks product related variables based on BSQ scale as proposed by Bahia and Nantel (2000). The following table-3 depicts the ranking analysis of bank products influencing customers in their selection of banks.

Table 3 : Ranking Analysis of Bank Products influencing customers in their selection of banks - Bank employees' perception

Sl No	Bank Products	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 6	R 7	R 8	R 9	R 10	R 11	R 12	Total of GS	Aveg. of GS	GR
1	ATM Facility	0	10	5	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1599	66.6	2
2	Demat Facility	0	0	0	0	10	2	1	0	0	2	6	3	1093	45.5	7
3	Service Variety	3	0	2	13	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1520	63.3	3
4	Ambience	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	11	5	4	0	992	41.3	9
5	Parking Facility	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	4	1	9	0	0	1080	45.0	8
6	Loan Facility	21	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1971	82.1	1
7	Interest Rates	0	12	0	0	1	3	4	2	2	0	0	0	1472	61.3	5
8	Safety Vaults	0	0	0	2	2	3	1	0	3	1	0	12	940	39.2	12
9	Bank Image	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	6	3	2	979	40.8	10
10	No. of Branches	0	0	5	1	0	1	2	2	6	0	6	1	1120	46.7	6
11	Debit/ Credit Card Facility	0	1	10	5	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1493	62.2	4
12	Advertisement	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	2	1	1	5	6	957	39.9	11

(R = Ranks, GS = Garrett Score, GR= Garrett Rank)

Source: *Self calculation by the researchers on the basis of response of the sample respondents.*

It is observed that thebank employees'perception across all the eight bank branches and found that the loan facility has appeared as 1st rank, ATM facility in 2nd rank, service variety in 3rd rank, debit/credit card facility in 4th rank and so on. Hence, considering the respective order of importance, loan facility and ATM facility along with service variety are foundas the major factors influencing customers in selecting a bank. Hence, in order to evolve a sound customer relationship management, branches of banks have to bounce preference to provide loan facility and should be equipped with appropriate ATM outlet to integrate with various services with their existing arrangements.

2.2 Bank services influencing customers in their selection of banks

Banks provide various services to attract customers such as giving loans, providing credit and debit cards, digital financial services and door to door services to its customers. An attempt has been made to analyse the perception of bank employees, Garret ranking technique has been used on the banks service-related variables based on BSQ scale as proposed by Bahia and Nantel (2000). The following table-4 depicts the ranking analysis of bank services influencing customers in their selection of banks.

Table 4 : Ranking Analysis of Bank Services influencing customers in their selection of banks - Bank employees' perception

Sl No	Bank Services	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 6	R 7	R 8	R 9	R 10	R 11	R 12	R 13	R 14	Total of GS	Aveg. of GS	GR
1	Location	6	0	0	0	3	0	6	0	3	0	0	5	1	0	1361	56.7	6
2	Banking Hours	0	4	0	0	0	3	0	7	0	2	0	0	5	3	1137	47.4	10
3	Holiday Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	4	13	793	33.0	14
4	Door to Door Service	5	1	0	3	0	0	6	3	3	0	0	0	1	2	1387	57.8	5
5	Speedy Operations	0	7	13	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1636	68.2	2
6	Simplicity in Procedures	0	0	1	9	7	1	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1401	58.4	4
7	Computerized Services	0	0	1	0	9	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	6	1	1161	48.4	9
8	Quality of Services	9	3	6	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1768	73.7	1
9	Bank Charges	3	3	0	0	0	11	4	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1444	60.2	3
10	Internet Banking	1	6	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	3	0	8	0	2	1198	49.9	8
11	Mobile Alerts	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	8	1	11	0	0	0	1101	45.9	11
12	Handling Complaints	0	0	2	6	0	1	0	7	1	1	3	3	0	0	1244	51.8	7
13	Security Secrecy	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	6	7	1	2	5	0	1045	43.5	12
14	Ttransparency	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	8	6	2	2	3	964	40.2	13

(R = Ranks, GS = Garrett Score, GR= Garrett Rank)

Source: *Self calculation by the researchers on the basis of response of the sample respondents.*

The variables relating to bank service facilities as reported by the bank employees have been calculated by Garrett Rank method and is presented in table - 4. As per bank employees' perception across all the eight bank branches, it is found that quality of services placed in the 1st rank followed by speedy operations (2nd rank), bank charges (3rd rank) and simplicity in procedures (4th rank) and so on. This indicates that good quality of services with speedy operational practices and low bank charges are the decisive factors influencing the customers for selecting his or her branches. In other words, quality of service alongwith procedural simplicity and convenience is the most important factor for evolving an effective CRM practice.

2.3. Personnel Related Reasons influencing customers in their selection of banks

In the same measure, an attempt has been made to analyse the bank employees perceptions on personnel related reasons relating to the influence of bank

customers on selection of banks, The following table-5 depicts the ranking analysis of personnel related reasons influencing customers in their selection of banks from bank employees' perspective.

Table 5: Ranking Analysis of Personnel Related Reasons influencing customers in their selection of banks - Bank employees' perception

Sl No	Bank Services	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 6	R 7	R 8	R 9	R 10	Total of GS	Aveg. of GS	GR
1	Personal Touch	8	0	1	8	0	3	1	2	1	0	1470	61.3	2
2	Attentivesness	0	1	4	1	6	8	4	0	0	0	1244	51.8	5
3	Responsiveness	0	2	0	2	8	5	1	5	1	0	1163	48.5	6
4	Courteous Service	0	2	1	6	0	1	5	1	6	2	1055	44.0	7
5	Trust Worthiness	0	7	4	0	1	4	4	3	1	0	1291	53.8	3
6	Replying to Queries	0	0	1	2	7	0	0	0	13	1	938	39.1	9
7	Experienced Personal	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	13	789	32.9	10
8	Timely Service	12	4	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1747	72.8	1
9	Keeping up Promises/ Time Schedule	0	5	1	2	2	0	0	5	1	8	986	41.1	8
10	Reliable	3	0	5	3	0	3	5	5	0	0	1269	52.9	4

(R = Ranks, GS = Garrett Score, GR= Garrett Rank)

Source: *Self calculation by the researchers on the basis of response of the sample respondents.*

The bank personnel relationship facilities of the bank reported by the bank employees have been calculated by Garrett Rank method and is presented in above table-5. As per bank employees'perception across all the eight bank branches, it is observed that the timely service has appeared in 1st rank, personal touch in 2nd rank, trust worthiness in 3rd rank, and so on. This indicates that bank personnel's involvement is very essential for building CRM. The important factors influencing the customers for selecting a bank is timely services with trustworthy behaviour of the employees. Personal relation of the employees with their customers matters a lot for selecting the bank and retaining the customers.

2.4 Reasons for customers switching banks - Bank Employees' perception

The bank employees' perception on reasons for customers switching have been calculated through descriptive statistics i.e. mean and standard deviation. The following table-6 presents the reasons for customers switching banks.

Table 6: Reasons for customers switching banks - Bank Officials' perception

Sl No	Problems	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
		Valid	Missing		
1	Problematic ATM Debit Credit Card Facility	24	0	4.96	.204
2	Limited variety in service	24	0	4.58	.504
3	Poor Ambience	24	0	3.25	.944
4	Poor Parking Facility	24	0	3.04	1.268
5	Limited Number of Branches	24	0	4.21	.721
6	Undue Banking Hours	24	0	3.83	.702
7	Lack of Holiday Service	24	0	3.54	.658
8	Slow Operations	24	0	4.96	.204
9	Poor Service Quality	24	0	5.00	.000
10	Lack of Secrecy Security	24	0	4.96	.204
11	Discourteous Service	24	0	4.71	.464
12	Unreliability	24	0	4.71	.464
13	Poor Attention	24	0	4.75	.442
14	Poor Response	24	0	4.71	.464

Source: *Self calculation by the researchers on the basis of response of the sample respondents.*

From the analysis of mean scores and standard deviation, it is observed that out of 14 reasons listed from the literature review, bank officials' perception towards poor parking facility (Mean score-3.04, standard deviation- 1.268), poor ambience (mean score- 3.25, standard deviation – 0.944) and lack of holiday service (mean score- 3.54, standard deviation-0.658) influences most in customers switching from one bank to another. Hence, bank has to ensure adequate parking amenities with comfortable atmosphere to lure the customers. Besides, the appropriate services during banking hours and the holiday services to the customers may attract more number of customers to gain the competitive advantages.

2.5 Perceptions of bank employees on CRM

Bank employees need to work with CRM and success of the bank and its survival entirely depends on the ways in which it is properly adopted and used by these **employees.** In order to know the perception of bank employees on CRM, mean and standard deviationhave been calculated and presented in table-7.

Table -7. Perception of Bank Employees on CRM

Sl No	Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
		Valid	Missing		
1	Knowledge and ideas about CRM	24	0	4.67	0.637
2	Training and skills of the employees	24	0	4.79	0.415
3	Handling customers grievances	24	0	4.96	0.204
4	Providing special incentives	24	0	4.04	1.268
5	Understanding business benefiit	24	0	4.88	0.338
6	Functional boundaries	24	0	4.58	0.584
7	Top management involvement	24	0	4.46	0.588
8	Effective measurement and reward system	24	0	4.38	0.711
9	Attention to customers	24	0	4.88	0.448
10	Expection of customers	24	0	4.96	0.204
11	Cross functional working system	24	0	4.29	0.751
12	Making personal calls	24	0	4.88	0.338

Source: *Self calculation by the researchers on the basis of response of the sample respondents.*

The above table describes the statements on CRM to know the perception of bank employees. It is observed that out of 12 statements for understanding respondents' perception, the mean score for providing special incentives is 4.04 with standard deviation value 1.268, mean score of cross functional working system is 4.29 with standard deviation 0.751, and mean score of effective measurement and reward system is 4.38 with standard deviation 0.711, depicts the maximum difference in understanding CRM as per the perception of bank employees. Hence, banks need to give more attention on special incentives, functional work system and effective reward for evolving CRM for acquiring, retaining and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the banks and the customers.

Conclusion:

It may be concluded that there are certain loop holes in the existing CRM strategies applied in the banks. The study found that the loan facility and ATM facility along with service variety are found as the major product related factors influencing customers in selecting a bank as perceived by the bank employees. The quality of services along with procedural simplicity and convenience is the most important service-related factor for evolving an effective CRM practice. Moreover, bank personnel's involvement is very essential for

building CRM. The study identified the personnel factor influencing the customers is timely services with trust worthy behavioural atmosphere of the employees. The personal relation of the employees with their customers matters a lot for selecting the bank and retaining the customers. The study indicated the importance of bank employees' perception on factors influencing customers in their selection of banks and the reasons for customers switching from one bank to another. It is suggested that effective CRM practices is the need of the hour for acquiring the customers and retaining the existing customers to create superior value for the banks and the customers.

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Exchange Rate Fluctuations and Sectoral Implications of the Indian Economy in the Midst of the Covid-19

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the economic instability that the Indian economy has faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Various metrics can be used to fairly measure a country's economic status. In our research, we looked at how indicators such as stock indices and dollar-to-rupee exchange rates were influenced by the rising number of Covid-19 reported cases. The performance of two important Stock Indices were tested- SENSEX and NIFTY during the period between March 25th and May 29th, 2020 and Dollar-Rupee exchange rates between March 25th and May 31st, 2020. The results of the study unveiled that COVID-19 had an influence on the stock market indices NIFTY and Sensex, as well as the exchange rate between the US dollar and the Indian rupee, however, the effect was not as significant as it could have been.

Keywords : Covid-19, Exchange Rate, Indian Economy, Sectoral Implicattions, Stock Market.

Introduction :

The global pandemic, also known as COVID-19, has caused widespread anxiety and an unbalanced situation around the world. The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was discovered in Wuhan, China, and has affected nearly 85 thousand people in China and two million people worldwide (Wang et al. 2020; Thomola, 2020; Sohrabi, et al., 2020). Patients infected with COVID-19 have been experiencing mild symptoms such as a dry cough, sore throat, fever, bone pain, and breathing difficulties, which can lead to pneumonia (Haleem, Javaid & Vaishya, 2020). The number of confirmed cases worldwide had reached 2.2 million as of April 20, 2020, with 155,124 people reported dead (WHO, 2020). COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic and emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 due to a rise in the number of patients worldwide (Kumar, Thombare & Kale, 2020). With stock price fluctuations, high risk, high volatility, demand and supply gaps, and other effects, the virus has impacted not only the health but also the financial situation around the world. Though the virus allows people to practice self-isolation and social distancing in order to escape containment, if it is not controlled immediately, it will affect the global economy as a whole.

Among the economic implications are major swings in European and Asian stock markets, global recession, economic downturn, the United States stock market undergoing circuit breaker processes four times in ten days, and the United Kingdom's main index falling more than 10% since its establishment in 1987, making it the worst of all (Zhang, Hu & Ji, 2020; Dev & Sengupta, 2020).

Our study focuses on the current economic situation with a focus on India.

Review of Literature:

Covid-19 is a new phenomenon, and collecting literature on the subject is difficult. So, in order to portray the swift impact of Covid-19, the researchers consulted various published research papers, online newspaper posts, and blogs accessible on various platforms to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the Indian economy as a whole.

The absence of imported components has been found to have a significant effect on industries such as vehicles and pharmaceuticals. Due to COVID-19, companies such as BHEL (Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited), Hero MotoCorp, Maruti Suzuki, and Castrol India have declared partial shutdowns. The total expense of the shutdown is projected to be about $ 120 billion, with GDP expected to fall from 4.5 percent to 2.5 percent.

If the situation worsens both in India and globally, aggressive stock selling will occur, resulting in lower GDP growth and the economy entering recession (Mugdill, 2020). The International Air Transport Association (IATA) projected passenger revenue ticket losses from the COVID-19 outbreak to be between $ 63 billion and $ 113 billion, and airline share prices have plummeted by about 25%, which is more than the loss from the SARS virus in 2003. The number of people booking airline tickets has dropped by 15 to 20%. (Dhamija, 2020). The outbreak will affect the car industry because India imports more than 10% of its raw materials from China (Lidhoo, 2020). With a volatile and cautious investor attitude created by COVID-19, the most common indices such as the Nifty 50 and S&P BSE Sensex lost over 4,846 points and 16,393 points, respectively, between January 20, 2020 and March 23, 2020. (Bhuva, 2020). The continued and resulting travel ban has had an impact on the hotel industry, which has seen a substantial drop in sales. "His firm missed the target revenue by 20%, and there was a sharp decline in occupancy from 95 percent to 65 percent at the beginning of February 2020," says the Managing Director of Sarovar Hotels and Resorts (Datta, 2020). India exports 94 percent of its diamonds to Hong Kong and China, a total of 45000 crores per year. The export of diamonds will suffer as a result of the lockout and travel ban, and capital will be blocked, causing liquidity problems (Bhuva, 2020). Since most of the parts and goods used in the manufacturing of electronics come from China, the impact of the Chinese lockdown has had an impact on the consumer electronics industry in India. For example, Xiaomi, a well-known Chinese smartphone manufacturer, raised the price of its Redmi Note 8 handset due to a scarcity of inputs and raw materials from China (Sen, 2020). In the Middle East and North America (MENA), the COVID-19 has generated a negative supply shock and negative demand. The negative supply shock was directly caused by a labor force reduction and indirectly caused by the travel ban.

We find only a few research papers on Covid-19 and the resultant influence in the economy. As a result, other disruptors such as the Global Financial Crisis, Asian Financial Crisis, H1N1, Ebola Virus, SARS, and others have also been reviewed in the current work.

According to Samsi, Cheok, and Yusof (2019), the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) has hampered ASEAN-5 countries' economic growth more than the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). They explored the effects of the GFC on ASEAN-5 countries in a related study and concluded that the financial market and banking system had been impacted by the crisis. The stock market and the banking system are two parameters that show the economic

development of developed countries to a greater degree and should be monitored. According to Joseph (2009), the global financial crisis was one of the factors that slowed India's GDP growth to 6.7 percent in 2008-09, down from 9% the year before. The impact of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) on the Indian stock market can be seen in the degree of disinvestment by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) across all emerging markets to meet their liquidity needs. Muthukumaran, Raja, and Palanichamy (2015) addressed the effect of the Global Financial Crisis on the Indian Stock Market; stock prices dropped by 60% during the crisis, and the benchmark indices, the Sensex and Nifty, both posted negative returns during the crisis. Furthermore, events such as a dramatic drop in foreign institutional investment have had a significant impact on the Indian stock market. Aswani (2017) investigated the effect of the US Global Financial Crisis on a network of 14 Asian Stock Markets, finding that there is inter-linkage between stock markets, especially during the crisis period compared to the pre- and post-crisis periods. As a consequence, volatility in one stock market will cause problems in other markets. Mandal and Bhattacharjee (2012) investigated the effect of the Great Recession of 2007 on the conduct of the Indian Stock Market (SENSEX), finding that regular returns differed before and after the recession. When observed, it was discovered that stock market volatility had risen significantly, and that there was a clear correlation between SENSEX returns and market volatility with other world indices following the recession. As shown by Nippani and Washer, it is inaccurate to say that unanticipated events often result in chaos (2004). Except for China and Vietnam, they concluded that the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak had no impact on stock indices covering Canada, Hong Kong Special Administrative Area of China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The mean missing days rose by 0.04 days per person per month during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, a 700-800 percent rise over non-pandemic years, resulting in a $16 million reduction in labor productivity (Durate, Kadiyala, Masters, & Powell, 2016). According to Kostova et al. (2019), outbreaks affect not only neighboring countries, but also non-adjacent countries, as demonstrated by the United States' decreased merchandise exports to Ebola-affected countries during the West African Ebola epidemic outbreak.

Many empirical studies observed that there is a considerable effect of the outbreak in an economy, whether it is an epidemic[1] or a pandemic[2]. In this context, Delivorias & Scholz (2020) recorded an increase in administrative and operational expenditure due to the outbreak of pandemics and epidemics.

They also noted that such a situation results in significant losses in private sector development, declining agricultural production, which poses a threat to food security, and difficulty in cross-border trade due to current restrictions.

As a result of the negative demand situation caused by the disruption of the global supply chain and lower consumption levels, as well as a drop in oil consumption due to lockdowns, the world's economies witnessed a severe jolt. Reduced air and road transport are only a few of the factors that have contributed to the drop in oil consumption. COVID-19's long-term implications would include unemployment, financial sector illiquidity, and household and corporate bankruptcies, both of which would have long-term consequences for the economy and society (Arezki & Nguyen, 2020). The COVID-19 crisis will be worse than the global financial crisis of 2009, causing the global economy to enter recession (Bluedorn, Gopinath & Sandri, 2020). The economic implications, as seen in the United States in recent weeks, where almost 10 million people applied for unemployment insurance previously unseen. Almost all countries, with the exception of China, saw a decrease in industrial activity and external demand in February, with a marginal increase in March. As is obvious, the epidemic will send the global economy into a tailspin, and resuming the integrated global economy after the pandemic will be difficult (El-Erian, 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 on the twenty-one leading stock market indices was studied by Lie, et al. (2020). It was apparent that the virus epidemic had impacted virtually every stock market, resulting in abnormal returns for investors. Furthermore, the ourbreak has had a greater impact on Asian countries than on other countries among the countries considered for the report. Following COVID-19, a new scenario is expected to emerge, focusing more on deglobalization and deregionalization, redefining the global chain of supply and consumption.

[1]An epidemic is a rise in the number of case of disease that has to heighten out of control and ultimately affects a community, geographical areas, and several countries whereas [2]pandemic is a situation which affects the entire country or the whole World. An epidemic becomes pandemic when it spreads exponentially and affects a larger population (Caceres, 2020; Torrey, 2020; Brabaw, 2020).

The Theoritical Underpinning:

In recent decades, the relationship between financial development and economic growth has been extensively researched. The subject is not new in economic literature, and it stems from a proposal made by Joseph Schumpeter in 1911. In his seminal work, Schumpeter explored the role of financial sector creation in fostering economic growth. Debreu (1959), Arrow (1964), and

Patrick (1965) have all written about the relationship between financial sector development and economic growth. Goldsmith (1969) empirically tested it in his work by using cross-country data to show the relationship between financial development and growth. Patrick (1966) investigated the role of financial sector growth in the 'demand following' and 'supply leading' approaches. The causality exists from financial development to economic growth in the 'supply leading' role, and from economic growth to financial development in the 'demand following' role. The importance of these studies in economic literature is often questioned. It's crucial for policymakers to understand which way causality runs between financial sector development and economic growth; for example, if causality runs from financial sector development to economic growth, this has direct policy implications. A more efficient financial system will always allow an economy to increase its real GDP growth, as evidenced by established literature. Given this, policymakers will devise policies aimed at reducing market failures by requiring services that promote transactions, mobilize resources, and practice corporate governance, all of which will contribute to economic development (Sinha and Macri, 2001). By mobilizing funds and converting them into an asset, the financial system plays an important role in meeting the needs of investors (Ndikumana, 2001). In this way, an effective financial system effectively allocates capital through its financial intermediaries, who ultimately determine the most attractive investment opportunities. According to Abu-Bader and Abu-Qarn (2005), the path of causality in Egypt runs from financial development to economic growth, either through increased investment efficiency or increased investment capital. Higher economic growth can be driven by a financial system that is stronger, wider, and more well-functioning (King and Levine 1993a & 1993b). Earlier research in developing economies (Robinson, 1952; Kuznets, 1955; Friedman and Schwartz, 1963) found evidence that economic growth leads to the creation of the financial sector. Other empirical studies by Demetriades and Hussein (1996), Luintel and Khan (1999), and Arestis et al. (2001) indicate that causality works both ways, with financial progress causing economic growth and vice versa. The research of Goldsmith (1969) shows that there is a connection between financial development and economic growth. In contrast, Ram (1999) found no correlation between financial development and economic growth in his cross-country data analysis.

It is a well-known fact that the financial sector reflects the overall health of the economy and the stock market is one of the most important facets of the financial sector (Paramati and Gupta, 2011; Castelli, 2018). This

point was supported by Schumpeter (1911), who argued that expanding the financial sector would improve a country's economic growth by channeling savings into productive channels, more efficiently allocating resources, enhancing risk management, and reducing information asymmetry, all of which would promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

Taking into account the foregoing statements, we analyze Schumpeter's theory and apply it to more recent India-centric data to see whether financial measures (stock indices) can be used to forecast economic health during the current Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Research Gap:

By synthesising the current literature, it was discovered that the majority of studies have recorded the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on various industries, such as revenue loss, disruption in demand and supply mechanisms, increasing unemployment, difficulty in cross-border trade, and so on. The literature review reveals that none of the studies are directly relevant to the Indian economy, especially in terms of how the Covid-19 disrupted the stock market and exchange rate mechanism. As a result, this paper aims to portray the Indian stock market's responsiveness and exchange rate volatility during the pandemic.

Objectives of the Study:

The principal objectives of the study were to examine the influence of COVID-19 on Indian Stock Market and Dollar Rupee Exchange Rate. Thus, the study more specifically intended to :

a) reflect upon the current status of different sectors of the Indian economy on account of the COVID-19.

b) examine the association between the performance of Stock Indices and number of COVID-19 confirmed cases.

c) inspect the relationship between the movement of the exchange rate between U.S. Dollar and Indian Rupee with the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases.

Hypothesis:

According to studies, the outbreak of COVID-19 caused turbulence and impacted almost every segment of the economy. According to the literature, previous financial crises, such as the Global Financial Crisis, the Asian Financial Crisis, and the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) outbreak, have all had an impact on the economy. As a result, the following hypotheses has been proposed.

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: There is a significant relationship between the number of coronavirus cases and stock indices.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is a significant relationship between the number of coronavirus cases and exchange rate fluctuations.

Methodology:

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of COVID-19 on the Indian economy. Analyzing the overall effect of COVID-19 on the Indian economy, on the other hand, would be a time-consuming task involving several variables. Only stock indices and exchange rates were used in our analysis to assess the state of the Indian economy during the COVID-19 era. During this process, we attempted to determine the overall effect on various industries, as well as how the number of COVID-19 reported cases affected stock market indexes such as the Nifty and Sensex, as well as the exchange rate movement between the US dollar and the Indian rupee. Nifty was chosen from two major indices because it accounts for more than 95 percent of all trading on the NSE and the remainder on the BSE. Both the Nifty and Sensex indices have been included to provide more concrete data. Since the stock market is thought to be an indicator of an economy, the study concluded that the stock market index would be an excellent indicator of the country's economic situation during a pandemic. On the other hand, the Dollar-Rupee Exchange Rate has been taken into account due to the fact that any economic instability, such as rising oil prices, inflation, the passage of new laws in the country, and adjustments in tax slabs, has an effect on the exchange rate. The data was gathered from secondary sources such as Investing.com, Excelrates.com, and MoHFW. The research was carried out between March 25th and May 31st, 2020. The explanation for this is that Lockdown 1.0 began on March 25, 2020 and ended on May 31, 2020, with unlock 1.0 starting on June 1, 2020. However, since the stock market is only open on weekdays, the study only used data from March 25, 2020 to May 29, 2020. The relationship between the rising number of COVID-19 reported cases and the exchange rate between the US dollar and the Indian rupee was investigated using data from March 25, 2020 to May 31, 2020. Pearson Correlation Coffeicent was used to test the hypothesis. Correlation analysis, on the other hand, can only provide details about the relationship between variables; it cannot clarify the dependence of one variable on another. To answer this, a simple linear regression approach was used to determine how

often the dependent variable (Nifty, Sensex, and Dollar-Rupee Exchange Rates) is explained by the independent variable (COVID-19).

Sectoral Implications of COVID-19 pandemic in India:

The authors have addressed the harm that has been done to the Indian economy in general in this section. This segment is an attempt to depict the effect of the pandemic on various industries in order to achieve objective number one. Some of the priority sectors listed by the study include banking and insurance, financial markets, including the stock market, tourism, export and import, crude oil, and so on.

Banking and Insurance:

The banking sector had been affected by the economic downturn triggered by COVID-19. According to Dev & Sengupta (2020), the NPA level would rise as most corporate companies would be unable to repay their debts due to the country's shutdown and lack of revenue generation. People in the country have started withdrawing money to make their pockets liquid in order to escape the lockdown. To add insult to injury, the banking sector's NPA level increased by ₹ 50,000 crores, owing primarily to the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise) segment, which is currently non-operational (Jha, 2020). According to Nayak (2020), since most important purchases require cash, banking institutions saw withdrawals of 53,000 crores in 15 days, a 16-month high. Because of the massive increase in money withdrawals, there will be concerns about the bank's liquidity during periods of financial market instability, which will have an impact on the economy. According to SBI Cards, a payment solution provider, there has been a sharp decrease in expenses in areas like airlines, travel agents, hotels, railways, entertainment, and dining (Karthik, 2020). The situation is similar when it comes to the insurance industry. According to Panda (2020), modern life insurance company businesses have seen a 32 percent drop in premiums. Life insurance companies' latest market premiums in March 2020 were 25,409 crore, down from 37,459 crore in March 2019. In March 2020, new business premiums for private players fell by 34.21 percent to 8,342 crore, down from 12,682 crore in March 2019.

b. Financial markets:

Despite the fact that the pandemic began in China, India was hit hard by stock market instability. Between February 1 and April 9, the market lost about 26% in dollar terms, which is very high when compared to their counterparts, namely, the European stock market lost 20%, the US stock

market lost 14%, and China was the worst hit at around 3% during the same time (Sharma, 2020). The country's most common indices, the Sensex and Nifty, were also affected by the outbreak, resulting in the market entering a "bear phase"; Nifty experienced its sharpest quarterly fall since 1992, while the Sensex experienced its sharpest quarterly fall since 1992 from January to March 2020. (Wadhwa & Korgaonkar, 2020). Furthermore, on the National Stock Exchange, all sectoral indices were trading in the red zone, and equity investors were hit with a similar shock, resulting in a wealth loss of 3.31 lakh crore (''3 lakh crore gone, 2020"). Because of the stock market's instability, there is an increase in demand for gold traded instruments, as investors see it as a safe haven that can compensate for declines in other financial instruments. Surprisingly, jeweler sales have slowed as jewelry has been designated as a non-essential commodity (Robert, 2020).

c. Tourism:

The Indian Association of Tour Operators predicted that the aviation and tourism industries will lose around 85 billion dollars as a result of the global travel restrictions, with a job loss of about 38 million people, or 70 percent of the total workforce (Maker, 2020; KPMG, 2020). The Indian tourism and aviation industries are also facing survival problems, according to KPMG, as the current situation is worse than 9/11 and the global financial crisis of 2008-09. (Radhakrishnan, 2020). According to the Confederation of Indian Industry, branded hotels face a loss of around 1.10 lakh crore, online travel agencies face a loss of around 4312 crore, tour operators face a loss of around 25000 crore, adventure tour operators face a loss of nearly 19000 crore, and cruise tourism faces a loss of around 419 crore. The number of international tourists visiting India has decreased by 6.6 percent, from 1.08 million in February 2019 to 1.01 million in February 2020, as the global economy is facing lockdown and travel bans (Goel, 2020).

d. Import and Export:

Due to the halt in manufacturing operation in China, Europe, the United States, and other parts of Asia, India's diamond exports have suffered a major setback, as the country exports nearly 36% of its diamonds to China. Despite this, it is estimated that diamond exports will drop by 20% as a result of the current pandemic scenario (Chaudhary & Jha, 2020). Tea is one of the most common export products that has been hindered by the outbreak of COVID-19 in the major exporting destinations of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan (Rakshit, 2020). According to Sridhar (2020), the government's decision to extend the lockdown will result

in a $1.5-$2 billion drop in pharmaceutical exports, as the government has banned 26 APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) and formulations. In addition, due to the global trade embargo, India's imports fell by 8% in 2019-20. (Chakroborty, 2020).

e. Crude oil:

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the suspension of economic activity, there has been a sharp drop in global oil demand. The production of crude oil in March 2020 dropped 5.5 percent and natural gas 14.38 percent when compared equivalent period in 2019 (Jacob, 2020). Similarly, the consumption of major petroleum products was also severely affected (Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell [PPAC], 2020) when compared with the preceding year. These are Petrol (MS) (-16.4%), Diesel (HSD) (-24.2%), Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) (-32.4%), Petcoke (-22.2%), Bitumen (-41%), Lubes & greases (-34.9%), Furnace Oil/Low Sulphur Heavy Stock (FO/LSHS) (-10.3%) and products categorized under 'others' category (-5.7%)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

"Table 1 about here"

Table 1 shows the number of Covid-19 reported cases over time, as well as the output of stock indices such as the Nifty and Sensex, as well as the movement of exchange rates. We attempted to view correlation analysis of Covid-19 reported cases with stock indices and exchange rates using the table above (Table 1). Later, basic linear regression was used to assess how often independent variables affect dependent variables.

"Table 2 about here"

To comprehend the correlation matrix in Table 2, we must look at the third row, which depicts how cases are related to stock index (Nifty and Sensex) and exchange rate results. Stock indices have a moderate positive correlation with the number of COVID-19 reported cases, as seen in the above matrix. On the other hand, there was a moderate negative association between the exchange rate and the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases. So both the hypothesis found to be true as association found between the variables considered for the study. Global institutional investors selling their stakes to label themselves safe during a pandemic and escape cash shortage, rising crude oil prices in the international market, inflation, trade deficit, and other factors have all contributed to the depreciation of the Indian currency. Though there was a correlation or relationship between stock index performance and the number of cases, regression analysis revealed that the dependent

variable NIFTY is only 19 percent explained by the independent variable cases, and the Sensex is only 14 percent, which is very poor. In a similar vein, the regression analysis revealed that the independent variable cases describe 13% of the dependent variable exchange rate.

To conclude, while COVID-19 had an influence on the stock market indices NIFTY and Sensex, as well as the exchange rate between the US dollar and the Indian rupee, the effect was not as significant as it could have been. The explanation for this may be that we only looked at the short-term effects of the pandemic, when in fact, the impact can be better understood when looking at it over a longer period of time. Despite the fact that the number of COVID-19 cases is growing on a daily basis, NIFTY and Sensex output has been positive. This may be attributed to the government's stimulus plan, as investors tend to spend further while the economy is inefficient in order to benefit from abnormal returns. Previous research has also shown that the uncertainty does not always have a significant impact on the country's stock market, as Sharma and Seth (2015) and Nippani and Washer (2004) have pointed out.

Discussion:

The outbreak of COVID-19 slowed the growth of all industries, resulting in an immediate drop in the country's GDP. The outflow of foreign investment from India's stock exchange, for example, would almost certainly have a greater effect on the economy. The banking structure in India will change as a result of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) liberal decision on moratorium periods and non-performing assets (NPAs), which will have an effect on bank liquidity. When most sectors are under lockdown, unemployment has hit an all-time high, putting the workforce out of jobs. The demand for crude oil and production have been impacted by an inflationary situation plagued by instability in the supply chain system, as well as a transportation ban imposed during the lockdown. Premium collections have declined for insurance firms. The outbreak has also impacted two common stock market indices, the Sensex and Nifty, causing them to join the "bear phase." Nifty has not experienced a sharp quarterly fall since 1992, while the Sensex has experienced a sharp quarterly fall of 28.6 percent from January to March 2020. As the outbreak spread across China, it had an effect on diamond exports, as India exports the majority of the precious stone to China. As the main exporting destinations – the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan – contend with the outbreak of COVID-19, tea, one of the major export products, has seen a decline in its trading. During the lockdown, only the selling of vital commodities is allowed, with the sale of jewelers coming to a halt because it is considered a non-essential item.

COVID-19 tends to have a long-term influence around the world. According to the IMF's Leader, the year 2020 will see the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s, with a catastrophic negative effect on the GDP of 170 countries. All of the country's major sectors, especially the MSME sector, which is the country's backbone, need to be revived with a financial package. The government's decision to prolong the lockout, which is already in its third phase, would be painful for the economy. Furthermore, the bulk of the population will face a financial crisis because cash availability will be limited or non-existent.

Conclusion:

This study explores the effect of Covid-19 on the movement of exchange rates as well as the efficiency of the NIFTY and Sensex during the lockdown. Both the indices have experienced growth when Covid-19 cases was increasing. So, the affect was not strongly felt by the stock market as of now. In contrast, the exchange rate between the US Dollar and the Indian Rupee correlated negatively which means with the increase in the number of cases the Indian Rupee also appreciated against Dollar. However, with the inception of the pandemic, Indian Rupee depreciated to great extent but managed to recovered very quickly.The key explanation for the depreciation of the Indian rupee is the lockdown and shutdown of economic operations, as well as other factors mentioned in the preceding section. So, although the NIFTY and Sensex indices are not affected as much as the exchange rate, the exchange rate has been in a state of flux.

Policy Implications:

The paper will be useful in determining the economic impact of COVID-19 on various sectors of the economy, as well as adjustments in exchange rates during the outbreak's pre-and post-phases, and in calculating growth forecasts produced by various bodies around the world. This paper would be useful to policymakers in assessing the magnitude of the economy's influence as a result of the outbreak and identifying the most volatile sectors for further revitalization. Furthermore, investors conclude that any unknown case, such as Covid-19, will often affect the stock market, but the truth is very different. This paper will assist prudent investors in understanding that uncertain events are not only negative, but may also be an opportunity to gain an abnormal return due to the market's inefficiency.

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Tables:

Table-1: Covid -19 confirmed cases and performance of Stock Indices in India from 25th March to 29th May, 2020 and Exchange rate between US dollar and Indian Rupee in India from 25th March to 31st May, 2020

Date	Cases	Stock Indices		Dollar-Rupee Exchange Rates	Date	Cases	Stock Indices		Dollar-Rupee Exchange Rates
		NIFTY	SENSEX				NIFTY	SENSEX	
25-Mar-20	606	8317.85	28535.78	76.3822	28-Apr-20	29974	9380.9	32114.52	75.8683
26-Mar-20	694	8641.45	29946.77	75.1612	29-Apr-20	31787	9553.35	32720.16	75.6516
27-Mar-20	834	8660.25	29815.59	75.4938	30-Apr-20	33610	9859.9	33717.62	75.0375
28-Mar-20	918	**	**	75.4938	01-May-20	35365	**	**	75.0375
29-Mar-20	1024	**	**	75.4938	02-May-20	37776	**	**	75.0375
30-Mar-20	1251	8281.1	28440.32	75.6752	03-May-20	40263	**	**	75.0375
31-Mar-20	1397	8597.75	29468.49	75.6649	04-May-20	42836	9293.5	31715.35	75.6598
01-Apr-20	1834	8253.8	28265.31	76.4451	05-May-20	46711	9205.6	31453.51	75.7572
02-Apr-20	2069	**	**	76.4038	06-May-20	49391	9270.9	31685.75	75.8596
03-Apr-20	2547	8083.8	27590.95	76.2318	07-May-20	52952	9199.05	31443.38	75.8309
04-Apr-20	3072	**	**	76.2318	08-May-20	56342	9251.5	31642.7	75.5893
05-Apr-20	3577	**	**	76.2318	09-May-20	59662	**	**	75.5893
06-Apr-20	4281	**	**	75.5645	10-May-20	62939	**	**	75.5893
07-Apr-20	4789	8792.2	30067.21	76.2331	11-May-20	67152	9239.2	31561.22	75.8463
08-Apr-20	5274	8748.75	29893.96	76.3113	12-May-20	70756	9196.55	31371.12	75.1455
09-Apr-20	5865	9111.90	31159.62	76.3113	13-May-20	74281	9383.55	32008.61	75.2943
10-Apr-20	6761	**	**	76.3113	14-May-20	78003	9142.75	31122.89	75.6042
11-Apr-20	7529	**	**	76.3113	15-May-20	81970	9136.85	31097.73	75.9293
12-Apr-20	8447	**	**	76.3113	16-May-20	85940	**	**	75.9293
13-Apr-20	9352	8993.85	30690.02	76.1598	17-May-20	90927	**	**	75.9293
14-Apr-20	10815	**	**	76.5055	18-May-20	96169	8823.25	30028.98	75.8341
15-Apr-20	11933	8925.3	30379.81	76.8782	19-May-20	101139	8879.1	30196.17	75.6653
16-Apr-20	12759	8992.8	30602.61	76.4793	20-May-20	106750	9066.55	30818.61	75.6192
17-Apr-20	13835	9266.75	31588.72	76.4793	21-May-20	112359	9106.25	30932.9	75.5041
18-Apr-20	14792	**	**	76.4793	22-May-20	118447	9039.25	30672.59	75.868
19-Apr-20	16116	**	**	76.4793	23-May-20	125101	**	**	75.868
20-Apr-20	17656	9261.85	31648	76.5594	24-May-20	131868	**	**	75.868
21-Apr-20	18985	8981.45	30636.71	76.9364	25-May-20	138845	**	**	75.8868
22-Apr-20	20471	9187.30	31379.55	76.5331	26-May-20	145380	9029.05	30609.3	75.5599
23-Apr-20	21700	9313.9	31863.08	76.0676	27-May-20	151767	9314.95	31605.22	75.7392
24-Apr-20	23452	9154.4	31327.22	76.2648	28-May-20	158333	9490.1	32200.59	75.7657
25-Apr-20	24942	**	**	76.2648	29-May-20	165799	9580.3	32424.1	75.5231
26-Apr-20	26917	**	**	76.2648	30-May-20	173763	**	**	75.5231
27-Apr-20	28380	9282.3	31743.08	76.133	31-May-20	182143	**	**	75.5231

Source : Investing.com; Excelrates.com;MoHFW.Note**indicates no trading either because of holiday declared by the exchange or weekend (as there is no trading on Saturday and Sunday

Table 2: Correlations					
		NIFTY	SENSEX	Cases	Exchange Rate
	Pearson Correlation	1	.995**	.438**	.338*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.004	.029
	N	42	42	42	42
	Pearson Correlation	.995**	1	.369*	.371*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.016	.015
	N	42	42	42	42
	Pearson Correlation	.438**	.369*	1	-.361*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.016		.019
	N	42	42	42	42
	Pearson Correlation	.338*	-.371*	-.361*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.015	.019	
	N	42	42	42	68
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

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Changes in Agrarian Relations During The British Rule with Special Reference To Barak Valley

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Abstract

India is predominantly an agricultural country. An overwhelming majority of its people depend on agriculture for sustenance. Till 18th century, there was a strong relation between agriculture and cottage industries in India. The British ruined the handicraft industry in the country while unleashing far-reaching changes in the country's agrarian structure by introducing ruthless systems of land tenures and policies of revenue collection. The British policies revolved around getting maximum income from land without caring much about the interest of the cultivations. The rigid land revenue system adopted by the British in India shook the stability of Indian villages because it did not consider environmental conditions and the farmers lives turned miserable if crop failed in any given year. The land settlements introduced a market economy, removed customary rights and the land tenure system sharpened social differentiation. After their advent, the British principally adopted three types of land tenures, namely, Permanent Settlement / Zamindari System, Ryotwari System and Mahalwari System. But the Barak Valley was continued with the native revenue system even after the accession of British rule in 1830 though introduced with some new types of land relations. Putting hilly region for tea plantation and plain region for crops cultivation and inviting peoples from neighboring districts with easily granted lands and employments attracted huge Bengali migrants and fortune-seekers to this valley, thus changing the picture of agrarian structure of this valley and its various dynamics. The paper discusses these agrarian relations in detail and highlights its socio-economic effects in the Barak Valley.

Introduction to Agrarian Relations:

"Agrarian Relations' refer to production relations in agriculture. Land being the primary means of production in agriculture, the nature of land ownership and land tenure determine the agrarian relations. These relations change as conditions of land ownership and land tenure change.

Though the terms 'agrarian relations' and 'land relations' are often used interchangeably, there is a subtle difference between them. While 'land relations' just depicts the land tenure system and ownership, 'agrarian relation' is a much broader term including credit and marketing facilities apart from land relations.

Agrarian relations are largely determined by land tenure (ownership, tenancy and labour relations) and agrarian structure (the structural conditions for agricultural production and for livelihood and social situation). the agrarian relations existing at a ponit "of time reflect the influence of historical, political, social and economic factors. therefore, the discussion on agrarian relations in this paper takes a broader view comprising important aspects of both agrarian structure and land tenure in rural areas during the British rule with special emphasis on Barak Valley.

Agrarian Relations in Indian Context:

Agriculture in general and agrarian relations in particular is an ensemble of India's history, geography and political economy, Agrarian structure and its various dimensions and dynamics such as land reforms, Green Revolution and agriculture labour have been the major concerns of Indian social scientists.

The term 'agrarian structure' denotes a framework of social relationships in which all agricultural activities such as production, marketing and consumption are carried out. The institution or the framework of social relationship determines how and by whom land is cultivated, what kind of crops can be produced and for what purpose, how food and agricultural incomes can be distributed, and in what way or in what terms the agrarian sector is linked to the rest of economy or society.

In a predominantly agrarian country like India where an overwhelming majority of its population lives in villages and almost an equal percentage depend on agriculture for sustenance, if the crop is good, prosperity prevails otherwise it leads to famine and starvation. Almost 70% of India's population is directly or indirectly linked with agriculture as a means of livelihood. Unfortunately enough, monopolies over rural land and asset ownership still continue along with the worst forms of caste discrimination and oppression.

The monopoly over land, credit and markets are vested with a few individuals leading to a social formation characterised by a rigid class or status structure linked to land and land realations, where the hierarchy of land ownership corresponds to the hierarchy of political power.

Agrarian Structure in India During British Rule:

The British colonial rule introduced many measures to reorganize the agrarian society in a framework that claimed to make governance easy and manageable. These colonial measures introduced 'more intensive and systematic exploitation' and forced the peasants to become increasingly involved with the market, even when they did not have the capacity to produce surplus. Needless to say, these measures brought about major changes in the agrarian structure.

Till 18th century, there was a strong relation between agriculture and cottage industries in India. India was not only ahead in the field of agriculture than most other countries but it also held a prominent place in the world in the field of handicraft production. The British destroyed the handicraft industry in the country while unleashing far-reaching changes in the country's agrarian structure by introducing new systems of land tenures and ruthless policies of revenue collection. This resulted in creation of 'agricultural labourers', formation of land market, rising rents, indebtedness, layers of intermediaries, frequent famines and impoverishment. With the introduction of new land revenue system, of course, right to alienation of land revenue was fixed at a particular amount irrespective of level of output, but bad crops forced the peasants to borrow from the money-lenders. Once trapped in the clutches of money-lenders with hardly any opportunity to free themselves from debt, the peasants had no other option but to mortgage or part with their land. This, in addition to commercialisation of agriculture, led to the pauperisation of poor peasants and concentration of land in a few rich landlords. However, there were some variations across regions in the nature of agrarian relations. Punjab, for instance, witnessed some growth in output during this period. On the other hand, Bengal witnessed a decline in agricultural output.

After their advent, the British principally adopted the following three types of land tenure and land revenue systems :

a. The Permanent Settlement / Zamindari System

Introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1973 through Permanent Settlement Act which was planned by John Shore, this settlement brought approximately 19% of the total area under the British rule, viz., Bengal, Bihar, Orrisa, Varanasi, division of the Northern Western Provinces and northern Karnataka, under its control.

The salient features of the Permanent Settlement were as follows :

** The intermediary zamindars (the tax collecting officials in earlier regime) were granted ownership right over land from which they previously only had the rights to collect revenues. They were recognised as the owners of land as long as they paid the revenue to the East India Company regularly. This settlement however took away the administrative and judicial functions of the zamindars. The ryots (cultivators) became tenents since they were considered the tillers of the soil.

** The amount of revenue that the zamindars had to pay to the Company was firmly fixed and would not be raised under any circumstances. To be precise, the East India Company got 89% leaving the rest to the zamindars.

The Permanent Settlement was bitterly criticised on the point that it was adopted with 'undue haste'. The flagrant defect of this arrangement was that no attempt was made ever either to survey the lands or to assess their value. The assessment was made roughly on the basis of accounts of previous collection and it was done in an irregular manner.

The effects of this system both on the zamindars and ryots were disastrous. As the revenue fixed by the system was too high, many zamindars defaulted on payments. Their property was seized and distress sales were conducted leading to their ruin. The rich zamindars who led luxurious lives left their villages and migrated into towns giving birth of Absentee Landlordism. They entrusted their rent collection to agents who exacted all kinds of illegal taxes besides the legal ones from the ryots.

This resulted in a great deal of misery amongst the peasants and farmers. Baden Powell remarked, "The zamindars as a class did nothing for the tenants". Though initially the Company gained financially, in the long run the Company suffered financial loss because land productivity was high, income from it was meagre since it was a fixed sum.

b. The Ryotwari System

Introduced by Thomas Munro in Madras on 1820 during the term of Lord Hastings, the Ryotwari System covered about 51% of the area under British rule comprising part of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, Assam and certain other parts of British India like Berar and Coorgh provinces.

Some salient features of this system were :

** The actual land tillers were given formal property rights over the land.

The ryot was a tenant of the state, responsible for paying revenue directly to the state treasury.
** There was no intermediary like a zamindar between the ryot and the government. As long as the ryot paid the revenue in time, he could not be evicted from the land. Besides, the land revenue was fixed for a period of 20 to 40 years at a time.
** The revenue rates of Ryotwari System were 50% where the lands were dry and 60% in irrigated land.

Though every ryot was held personally responsible for direct payment of land revenue to the Government, in the end, this system also failed because the settlement failed to collect revenue in a systematic manner. The revenue officials indulged in harsh measures for non-payment or delayed payment. Even though the position of cultivators became more secure, but the rigid system of revenue collection forced ryots into the hands of moneylenders.

With the government itself turning into a powerful zamindar, it had rights to enhance the revenue at will. The cultivators were left at the mercy of the collecting officers.

C. The Mahalwari or Malgujari System

Introduced in 1833 during the period of william Bentick, the Mahalwari Settlement was administered in about 30% of the total area under British rule i.e., in major parts of the North Western Provinces, Central Provinces, Agra, Gangetic valley and Punjab with some variations.

Following are some important features of this system :
** The Mahalwari system had many provisions of both the Zamindary System and Ryotwari System.
** In this system, a basic unit of revenue settlement was 'Mahal' or 'Village'. The land was divided into Mahals. Each Mahal comprised one or more villages.
** Ownership rights were vested with the peasants. Though an individual peasant in a village was made owner of the land, the villagers were asked to pay the revenue collectively. A member of the dominant family of the village was generally given the responsibility of collecting the revenue.

Though the Mahalwari system eliminated middlemen between the government and the village community and brought about improvement in irrigation facility, yet its benefit was largely enjoyed by the government. Since the government revised the revenue periodically, the peasants did not have much benefit of elimination of middlemen between the government and the village.

Impacts of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Systems During British Rule:

Following are a few major impacts that could be observed :

i) Commercialization of Agriculture
There was shift in the agrarian economy from production for consumption (food crops) to production for market (cash crops). The demand of raw materials in British industries and the manifold increase in the land revenue compelled the peasantry to shift to cash crops. One obvious consequence of this shift in cropping patterns was a significant increase in the vulnerability of local population to famines.

ii) Commodification of Land
Due to colonial policies, land began to acquire the features of a commodity. The moneylender, who until then lent keeping a peasant's crops in mind, began to see his land as a mortgageable asset against which he could lend money.

iii) De-industrialization of the Indian economy
The influx of cheap goods from England after the industrial revolution hastened the process of de-industrialization by ruining the village artisans and resulted in massive pressure on cultivatable land.

iv) Land Alienation
It was a pan-Indian phenomenon irrespective of the system of revenue settlement : Zamindary, Ryotwari, or Mahalwari. In the past the professional moneylenders generally did not evict the peasants from their land but made them tenants if they could not pay back the debt, whereas the landlords evicted them from the land and made him landless. Thus tenancy and landlessness grew significantly.

v) Increased social differentiation
The land tenure system sharpened social differentiation. While rich had access to the courts to defend their properties, the poor didn't have any resources.

Changes in Agrarian Relations in Barak Valley During British Rule:
The Barak Valley, a heterogeneous mix of both high and low lands and level plains stands at the extreme south-east corner of Assam in north-eastern region of the country. The present Barak Valley consists of Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts. In the pre-colonial era, Karimganj was a sub-division of Sylhet district. Cachar was under the princely regime till 1832

and had its own land system. In 1832, Cachar was annexed to the British dominion and placed under Captain Thomas Fisher, who became the first Superintendent of Cachar later in 1833. Fisher continued the native revenue system, because that any drastic change might injure the sentiment of the people and incur huge workload for the Government.

It must be stressed here that the land revenue system in Cachar, even after annexation was materially, as Zamindari system was not extended to Cachar and it was similar to the Paik or Khel system of Ahom kingdom. For all practical purposes, the Ryotwari system instead of Zamindari system was prevalent in Cachar as per the recommendation of Fisher. But that was not in the case of Karimganj.

Captain Fisher had high hopes about the revenue prospect of Cachar but found that the receipt could hardly meet the expenses of the establishment. He made a rough survey of the cultivated land under his charge and introduced a few changes. Putting hilly region for tea plantation and plain region for crops cultivation, he exempted tea plantation land from assessment. Fisher also realized that without the increase of population, there could not be any improvement in the revenue of Cachar. To secure settlers from other populous districts like Sylhet, Dhaka, Tripura and Mymensingh, Ishtehar were issued through their respective district officers to declare that the district of Cachar had been permanently annexed to the British dominion, that the tax there would be fixed at the rates analogous to that in Sylhet, that they would get good jungle lands rent free and after settlement would be brought under cultivation and the holder would acquire a proprietary right as a Talukdar or Zamindar, Inviting people from neighboring districts with easily granted lands and employments attracted huge Bengali migrants and fortune-seekers to this valley, thus changing the picture of agrarian structure of this valley and its various dynamics.

Though many people flocked to Cachar, the revenue fell too pressingly on the people of Cachar who were not so much resourceful as those in Sylhet and the newcomers were generally from the poorer class. Above all there ensured a series of unusually wet seasons added with terrible inundation in 1834, which caused great miseries to the people, and huge arrears in revenue.

Some remedial measures were adopted but not in plenty. For the collection of revenue, Fisher followed the system where Mukhtars were appointed to collect the state dues. The most noteworthy feature of Captain Fisher's revenue settlement was the abolition of ill treatment and confinement

of the revenue defaulters by the Mukhtars with the appoinment of Superintendent, whose approval was made compulsory for attachment of defaulter's property with Government Nazirs.

P. Mainwarring succeeded Fisher in 1835. He abolished the Mukhtar system finding it expensive and inefficient. It was replaced by the Tahsildari system in 1836 and Cachar was divided into Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah Tahsils with a salaried Tahsildar appointed at each Tahsil. The Tahsildari system saw a considerable decline in revenue and the arrears were heavy due to absence of mutual understanding between Tahsildars and the Mirasdars (the hereditary owners of the land). The Government Piadas were held guilty of oppressions and the Mirasdars prayed before the Superintendent to restrict the conduct of these unscrupulous officials by bringing Mukhtars to their service. A sort of silent protest emerged from the people a new settlement had to be made.

Major J.G. Burns succeeded P. Mainwarring as Superintendent of Cachar on April 1836. He effected a five year settlement in 1838. Burns conducted a detailed study of the situation in various parganas and on May 1837 proposed the restoration of the Mukhtari system. Just like Fisher, Burns also took initiative in attracting new settlers in Cachar. He found during his settlement that large areas of uncleared lands were possessed by the Talukdars who had no power or the means to undertake clearings and he issued an Ishtehar to lease such uncleared lands.

The outcome of the low rate of revenue of Burns's settlement did not find favour the highest authority. The Government understood the reality as Major Burns's settlement was based on Captain Fisher's imperfect survey and so this settlement proved unsatisfactory. The Government then entrusted the task of complete survey of Cachar to General Thuillier in 1841. The survey was conducted only to the cultivated fields and the lands bordering the principal rivers and streams were actually measured and divided into mounts. For the rest, arbitrary lines were cut through the jungle and the tract included within these lines were marked on the map as dags. The tea grants for most parts were beyond the preview of Thuillier's survey which subsequently surveyed was constituted as an independent mouza. Thuillier reduced the number of parganas for effective survey and made a classification of the parganas on the basis of its quality, viz., Awwal or first quality, Duam or second quality and Siem or third quality. Thuillier showed greater innovations on the evolution of revenue survey and settlement and his survey became the basis of two other settlements in Cachar to extened its covering of adjoining lands and harvest.

In the meantime, E.R. Lyons succeeded Burns on June 1839. The second settlement was undertaken by E.R. Lyons in 1843-44. He found the work of Mukhtars decidedly bad and objected to the system stating that the Mukhtars forwarded small amount of the revenue to the Tahsils and offered him inadequate assistance. During 1855-56, Major Verner, the then in charge of Cachar effected a settlement of some tracts of jungle land for a period of 15 years at varying rates. In that work different Superintendent performed different role up to 1866. Then the rule of Deputy Commissioner followed to bring further change.

Conclusion:

As discussed in the earlier sections, Colonial rule in India witnessed many changes in the land systems. From the study of the revenue settlements undertaken by the then and subsequent revenue administrators, one thing became clear that, from the very beginning the administrators were interested in increasing the revenue from the resources in Cachar. With the enhanced assessment of land revenue, unrest started prevailing among the peasantry and social tension in the rural areas became a constant feature. The administrators used to increase local tax without caring or considering the low productivity of the soil. The peasant could not pay their dues at such high rates, their arrears kept increasing which paved the way to rural indebtedness. The non-realisation of taxes forced the ryots to sell their land and other possesions. The money lending classes had established themselves as neo-Zamindars. This Mahajan class would grab vast amount of land through usury. By 1937, majority of the peasants of Barak Valley fell into the vicious circle of indebtedness. To give relief to the peasants the Government of Assam constituted a debt conciliation board. But the situation did not improve.

The peasants of Barak Valley fought against this illegal exaction which came first in the form of unorganized protest and representation but with the cooperation of both communist and non-communist activities it gradually assumed the character of an active protest movement. One of the distinguishing feature of the agrarian unrest was that it was throughout marked by a rare combination of unity among the Hindus and Muslims.

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Micro Enterprise Performance in Barak Valley of South Assam: Determinants and Impact Study

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Abstract

The development and performance of micro enterprises in the economies like India immensely contribute to strengthening the economic framework through job creation, poverty alleviation and revenue generation. The northeast India is a backward region featuring geographical isolation, agriculture dominated, little industrialization, low productivity, low capital formation, etc. In the situation of ongoing agricultural crisis and little industrialization, micro enterprises in the region play dominant role to enhance the level of income and employment, as the region is gifted with plenty amount of natural and human resources. In view of this, an attempt has been made in this paper to investigate the business performance of micro enterprises and the major determinants of such performance in the Barak Valley of South Assam in Northeast India. The study is mainly based on primary data collection through field survey on the basis of Stratified Purposive Sampling design. The study uses multi-variate regression models to estimate the relative strength of the factors determining micro enterprise performance in the valley. It is found that production and employment levels have positive and significant impact on business performance of the micro enterprises, but the level of employment is relatively weaker in determining such performance. Interestingly, the study confirms that business experience of the entrepreneurs is relatively stronger and statistically significant determinant of the micro enterprise performance in the valley. Although training is found to be relatively stronger than education and experience, it is not statistically significant. Apart from this, education of the entrepreneurs is found to be relatively weaker determinant of the micro

enterprise performance, delineating the fact that skill of the entrepreneurs is more important than their education level to perform better in business activity. The study suggests the responsibility of the government to ensure sufficient financial, technical and other functional support to the micro enterprises along with the required infrastructural facilities, so that the very objective of employment generation and poverty alleviation can be achieved in the area.

Introduction :

Experiences of many countries reveal that microenterprises have significantly contributed towards national economies all over the world and are treated as engine of growth not only in developing countries but in developed nations too (Srivastav-Syngkon, 2007). Microenterprises in the most developed economy like USA act as an instrument of poverty alleviation. Such enterprises in US are mostly under sole proprietorship providing job opportunities both for the owner as well as other member in the family (Krishna, 2008). Micro and small enterprises have crucial role to play in the UK's economy with small businesses accounting very high percentage of all businesses (Tarka, 2008). Mexico a less developed country has more than 50 per cent of its employed people engaged in micro enterprises (Krishna 2008). Small and micro enterprises take critical part in Palestine due to massive unemployment in the country (Madhoun et al,. 2003). The micro and small enterprises together contribute to about half of their employment in many African nations (Chao et al., 2007). In Indonesia, the combination of micro, small and medium enterprises constitute about 90 percent of total non-agricultural firms (Tambunan, 2007). China being an emerging economy witnessed a high presence of micro and small enterprises in its economy (Eversole, 2004). In India micro and small industries contribute about 40 percent of industrial production and 35 percent of total exports (Srivastav-Syngkon, 2007).

The development and performance of micro enterprises in the economies like India immensely contribute to strengthening the economic framework through job creation, poverty alleviation and revenue generation and also play vital role in social and political betterment. Steps towards the growth and expansion of micro enterprise activity especially in an agro based backward economy have the potential of transforming its socio-economic conditions. Such enterprises featuring largely informal sector of an economy provides avenues for income earnings and means of livelihood where there is hardly any social security for the most fragile segment of the population. Micro enterprises in India constituting a large part of its informal sector has emerged

as a highly vibrant and dynamic sector due to its crucial role in employment generation at relatively lower capital cost. Through its operation in rural areas it also helps in rural industrialization as an alternative to agricultural crisis ensuring more equitable distribution of income and wealth and thereby reducing regional imbalances. Moreover, microenterprises in our economy act as complementary to large scale industries contributing much to our socio-economic development.

The chronic low productivity in agriculture coupled with the existence of large scale disguised unemployment has led to the serious agricultural crisis across the country, barring the states of Punjab, Haryana and some parts of Uttar Pradesh to some extent. In the face of this ongoing agricultural crisis microenterprises under informal sector can play vital role in creating alternative sources of livelihood of the rural masses and by absorbing surplus labourers of agricultural sector it can address the problems poverty and unemployment. The significance of microenterprises as an informal sector gained momentum during seventies by realizing the fact that development of formal sector could not address the problems of growing unemployment and poverty. In turn, promotion of microenterprises has been regarded as an alternative strategy for rural development and received the attention of policy makers in India (Chadha, 1993).

Engaging the rural population in micro enterprises can be a part of the solution to the problem of poverty and unemployment in a country like India. But due to the differences in socioeconomic backgrounds of the population and geographical conditions of different parts of the country the performance of micro enterprises may not be equated everywhere. A combination of the differences in social, economic and geographical parameters can play significant role in determining market conditions, which lead to the differences in business performance and entrepreneurial efficiency of micro enterprises. The enterprise performance of any local economy has certain impact upon its levels of production, employment and exports, which definitely contribute to its economic growth. Moreover, the factors determining business performance of micro enterprises vary from location to location depending upon its socio-cultural, economic and geographical bases.

The Northeast India is a backward region featuring geographical isolation, agriculture dominated, little industrialization, low productivity, low capital formation, low standard of living etc. The region has been lagging far behind from the main stream in terms of its income and employment generation, posing serious degree of regional imbalance. In this perspective and in the situation of ongoing agricultural crisis, micro enterprises in the region play dominant role to enhance the level of income and employment, as the region is

gifted with plenty amount of natural and human resources. The major problem associated with the micro and small enterprises in the region are geographical isolation, lack of entrepreneurial skill and efficiency and market limitation (Srivastav- Syngkon, 2007). Despite the region has earned favourable environment like high literacy rate, rich natural resources and marked degree of entrepreneurship, these are not properly accompanied with suitable investment, marketing and market infra-structure as well as performance, efficiency, and accountability.

In view of this, the present study aims at investigating the business performance of micro enterprises and the major determinants of such performance in the Barak Valley of South Assam in Northeast India. The valley's economy has been a backward agricultural economy with little industrialization having enough scope for micro enterprise growth in terms of increasing production, employment and exports to enhance economic growth. The main findings and policy prescription would have implication to attract the attention of the Government towards formulating necessary and urgent policies for minimizing the difficulties associated with the entrepreneurial performance and efficiency, as well as difficulties involved in the promotion of such enterprises. It may also suggest taking necessary steps in creating favourable environment for faster and commercial development of micro enterprises in the area, through expansion of trade not only outside the State of Assam but also outside the country, in order to reap the full advantages of liberalized trade regime.

Objectives of the Study:

Keeping the above in view the present study has set the following main objectives:

1. Investigating the business performance of micro enterprises in Barak Valley of South Assam during the last ten years of post reform period from 2008-09 to 2017-18.

2. Identifying the major internal and external factors determining the business performance of micro enterprises in the area.

3. Estimating the relative strength of the factors determining micro enterprise performance in the valley.

Hypotheses:

Keeping the objectives in view the present study has framed the following null hypotheses to be tested through the following multi-variate regression models:

Hypothesis - I: Business performance of the micro enterprises has no association with their levels of production, employment and exports.

Hypothesis- II: Business performance of the micro enterprises has no relationship with the levels of education, training and business experience of the entrepreneurs.

Methodology:

Coverage: The study area covers the entire Barak Valley of South Assam which is named after the river Barak. The valley is situated in the south of the State of Assam which is about 190 KMS long and 96 KMS wide (ESA, 2003-04). It is surrounded by hills on its three sides, mainly comprises of flat plain areas of the districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. Microenterprise sectors, viz., Food Processing, Livestock, Forestry, Bars & Restaurants, Manufacturing, Jewelry, Furniture, Textiles, Repairing and Trade & Services have been operating in large scale across the geographical territory of the valley's economy. Hence the present study covers the above ten sectors of micro enterprises in the valley which are representatives among many other sectors.

The study is based on the coverage of time series data for the period from 2008-09 to 2017-18 of the post reform period. Besides, it also covers the behavioural study of enterprise performance with respect to the entrepreneurs' education, training and business experience based on the cross-sectional data of 2017-18. The study mainly uses primary data covering the above mentioned periodicity, which are collected through field survey on the basis of sampling design made for it.

Sampling Design : In order to obtain primary data the study designs its sampling as stratified purposive sampling considering the existing spread of micro enterprises over the three districts of the valley. Based on their nature of operation the enterprises have been stratified into ten different stratas or sectors as Food Processing, Livestock, Forestry, Bars & Restaurants, Manufacturing, Jewelry, Furniture, Textiles, Repairing and Trade & Services. As many as 10 number of microenterprise units have been selected purposively from each of the micro enterprise sector. Thus a total of 100 microenterprise units of ten different sectors across the Barak Valley of South Assam have been selected for the purpose of the study.

Data Collection: With a view to achieve the objectives and to test the hypotheses our present study is mainly based on primary sources of information. Primary data have been obtained from the field survey with the help of sampling design as mentioned above. For this purpose direct personal interview method has been adopted to collect primary data and information from the

microenterprise owners or entrepreneurs spread over the entire valley, through well-devised Schedules.

Data Analysis: Main findings and conclusion have been drawn through the tabular analysis using common statistical tools like ratio, percentage variation, average etc. as well as through regression analysis. In order to identify the major determinants, their effectiveness and the relative strength of the factors determining micro enterprise performance multi-variate regression models have been developed and applied in the study.

The micro enterprise performance is expressed by business performance of the firms in terms of their sales revenue. It is assumed that the enterprise performance is influenced by both the internal and external factors to the firm. The internal factors are captured by the entrepreneur and enterprise characteristics, while external factors include the market level and business environment including government policies in the area. The entrepreneur characteristics are considered mainly as education, training level and business experience of the firm owners.

In order to assess the combined impact of production, employment and exports on the micro enterprise performance and to estimate the relative strength of the factors determining such performance, the following multi-variate regression model has been developed.

$$Ri = \alpha i + \beta i\, Pi + \gamma i\, Mi + \delta i\, Xi + \varepsilon i$$

Where,

R_i = Sales revenue to the ith micro enterprises of all sectors

P_i = Production level of the ith enterprises of all sectors

M_i = Employment level of the ith enterprises of all sectors

X_i = The level of exports of the ith micro enterprises of all sectors

$\alpha i,\ \beta i,\ \gamma j,\ \delta j$ = Estimated parameters

ε_i = Error term

For the purpose of assessing the combined impact of the entrepreneurs' education, training and business experience on the micro enterprise performance as well as for estimating their magnitude of association, the following multi-variate regression model has been developed.

$$R_j = \alpha_j + \beta_j Ed_j + \gamma_j T_j + \delta_j Be_j + \varepsilon_j$$

Where,

R_j = Sales revenue to the micro enterprise in the jth sector
Ed_j = Education level of the entrepreneurs in the jth sector
T_j = Training level of the entrepreneurs in the jth sector
Be_j = Business experience of the entrepreneurs in the jth sector
$\alpha_i, \beta_i, \gamma_j, \delta_j$ = Estimated parameters
ε_i = Error term

Econometric Analysis:

With a view to achieve the objectives and to test the hypotheses designed for the study, the present work has employed the multi- variate regression models as specified earlier. The regression models so specified has been estimated by employing the primary data related to enterprise and entrepreneurial characteristics obtained through field survey, using the SPSS tool. The analyses help us to identify the major determinants of the micro enterprise performance as well as the relative strength of the factors determining enterprise performance in Barak valley of South Assam.

The study has undertaken regression analyses with t- test of significance for testing the null hypotheses framed for the study. The null hypotheses which have been so far designed and tested are :

Hypothesis-I: Business performance of the micro enterprises has no association with their levels of production, employment and exports.

Hypothesis-II: Business performance of the micro enterprises has no relationship with the levels of education, training and business experience of the entrepreneurs.

In order to test the hypothesis- I and to assess the association of business performance with the levels of production, employment and exports of micro enterprises in the area, data in the following table - 1 have been employed to the multi- variate regression model-1 and estimated.

Table- 1

Year- wise Business Performance of Microenterprises of all the Sectors in Barak Valley of Assam (2008-09 to 2017-18)

(Mean Figures)

Variables / Year	Sales Revenue (Rs. in lakhs)	Production (Rs. in lakhs)	Employment (Size in Number)	Exports (Rs. in lakhs)
2008-09	4.171	2.878	3.09	0.582
2009-10	4.505	3.531	3.61	0.642

Variables / Year	Sales Revenue (Rs. in lakhs)	Production (Rs. in lakhs)	Employment (Size in Number)	Exports (Rs. in lakhs)
2010-11	5.506	4.034	4.04	0.552
2011-12	5.371	3.942	4.40	0.647
2012-13	5.571	4.287	4.73	0.640
2013-14	5.850	4.429	5.12	0.694
2014-15	6.294	4.733	5.59	0.731
2015-16	6.877	4.964	6.39	0.800
2016-17	7.721	5.917	7.53	0.882
2017-18	7.905	5.820	8.82	0.901

Source: Field Survey

In order to assess the degree of association between the business performance (sales revenue) and the levels of production, employment and exports, as well as to identify the relative strength of production, employment and exports in determining the business performance of micro enterprises in Barak valley, the following multi-variate regression model has been estimated.

$$R_i = \alpha_i + \beta_i P_i + \gamma_i M_i + \delta_i X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

The regression results and the estimated equation are given as under.

Particulars	**Results(In value)**
R- square	0.988
Standard Error of the Estimate	0.167793
Intercept (Constant)	1.372
β Coefficient	0.870
γ Coefficient	0.317
δ Coefficient	-1.356
t- statistics for β, γ & δ Coefficients	3.945, 1.969, -.850
F- value	162.185
Critical Value	1.96
Significance Level	5%

**Significant at 5% level*

Based on this table, the equation for the regression line is:

$$R_i = 1.372 + 0.870P_i^* + 0.317M_i^* - 1.356X_i$$
$$(1.836) \quad (3.945) \quad (1.969) \quad (-.850)$$

The estimated regression equation reveals that the variability in business performance (sales revenue) of the micro enterprises is explained by their levels of production, employment and exports together is positive to the extent of 0.988 (R square= 0.988). This implies that more than 98 per cent of the variation in sales revenue is due to the variations in the values of production, employment and exports of the micro enterprises. That is, business performance of the micro enterprises has very high degree positive relationship with the combined levels of production, employment and exports in Barak valley of Assam.

The regression result shows that the intercept- value is positive (1.372) and the value of βcoefficient shows that the marginal propensity to sales revenue with respect to production level is 0.870. This implies that with every increase in production level sales revenue is increased upto 87%, which is also found to be statistically significant judged by t- statistic at 95% confidence interval. So, it can be deduced that the production level has positive and significant association with the business performance of the micro enterprises and it has significant positive impact on the micro enterprise performance in the valley.

The value of γ coefficient is also positive (0.317) showing that the marginal propensity to sales revenue with respect to employment level is 0.317, which indicates that with every increase in employment of labour units sales revenue of the enterprises is increased by only 31%. This reveals that the level of employment has little impact on the sales revenue of the micro enterprises. This is, however, statistically significant judged by t- statistic at 95% confidence interval. Hence, the employment level of the labour units has positive and significant association with the business performance of the micro enterprises although it has little impact on the enterprise performance. Interestingly, it is found that although both production and employment have significant positive impact on the business performance, the production factor is relatively much stronger than employment factor in determining the business performance of the micro enterprises in the area.

However, the value of δ is found to be negative showing that the marginal propensity to sales revenue with respect to exports level is -1.356. This implies that with every increase in the level of exports sales revenue decreases by more than 100%. But, this is not statistically significant judged

by t- statistic at 95% confidence interval, since t- value ((-.850) is less than its critical value (1.96). Hence, it can be deduced that exports level has only negative and insignificant relationship with business performance and it does not have any impact on the micro enterprise performance in the valley.

With a view to test the hypotheses- II and for estimating the relationship between the business performance and the entrepreneurs' levels of education, training and business experience, data in the following table- 2 have been employed to the multi- variate regression model-2 and estimated.

Table- 2

Sector-wise Entrepreneur Characteristics and Business Performance of Microenterprises in Barak Valley of Assam (2017- 18)

(Mean Figures)

Variables / Sector	Sales Revenue (Rs. in lakhs)	Education (Years of Schooling)	Training (Years)	Business Experience (Years)
Bars & Restaurants	7.122	11.50	0.00	8.00
Food Processing	8.529	11.00	1.50	9.25
Furniture	11.548	12.00	2.00	12.50
Forestry	8.939	9.50	0.00	12.00
Jewelry	7.473	10.00	1.75	11.00
Livestock	7.893	12.50	0.00	11.75
Manufacturing	6.927	8.50	1.25	9.00
Repairing	6.106	7.50	0.75	8.25
Textiles	7.457	9.50	1.50	10.50
Trade & Services	7.052	9.00	0.50	9.75

Source: Field Survey

For the purpose of estimating the magnitude of association between the business performance of micro enterprises and the entrepreneurial characteristics, as well as to assess the impact of the entrepreneurs' education, training and

business experience on the enterprise performance the following multi-variate regression model has been estimated.

$$R_j = \alpha_j + \beta_j Ed_j + \gamma_j T_j + \delta_j Be_j + \varepsilon_j$$

The regression results and the estimated equation are given as under.

Particulars	Results(In value)
R- square	0.713
Standard Error of the Estimate	0.994049
Intercept (Constant)	-1.251
β Coefficient	0.360
γ Coefficient	0.567
δ Coefficient	0.489
t- statistics for β, γ & δ Coefficients	1.557, 1.295, 2.063
F- value	4.966
Critical Value	1.96
Significance Level	5%

**Significant at 5% level*

Based on this table, the estimated equation for the regression line is:

$$R_j = -1.251 + 0.360Ed_j + 0.567 T_j + 0.489Be_j^*$$
$$(-.501) \quad (1.557) \quad (1.295) \quad (2.063)$$

The estimated equation reveals that the variability in business performance (sales revenue) of the micro enterprises is explained by the entrepreneurs' levels of education, training and business experience together is positive to the extent of 0.713 (R^2= 0.713). This signifies that as much as 71 per cent of the variation in sales revenue is accounted for by the variations in the levels of entrepreneurs' education, training and experience. That is, the combined levels of education, training and business experience of the micro entrepreneurs have high degree positive association with the business performance of the micro enterprises in Barak valley of Assam.

The intercept value is negative (-1.251), indicating that micro enterprises cannot generate revenue at zero education, training and experience of the entrepreneurs. The value of β_i coefficient is positive to the extent of 0.360, implying that marginal propensity to the sales revenue with respect to

the entrepreneurs' level of education 0.360. This reflects that with every increase in entrepreneurs' education level sales revenue increases by only 36%. This degree of association is not statistically significant judged by t- statistic at 95% confidence interval, since t- value (1.557) is less than its critical value (1.96). Hence, it can be deduced that although education of the entrepreneurs has positive association with their business performance it is not statistically significant. Interestingly, the level of entrepreneur's education does not have any significant impact on the micro enterprise performance in the valley.

The value of γ coefficient is also positive showing that the marginal propensity to sales revenue with respect to training level of the entrepreneurs is 0.567. This indicates that sales revenue of the enterprises increases by more than 56% with every increase in training level of the entrepreneurs. But this positive relationship is not statistically significant judged by t- statistic at 95% confidence interval, as the t- value ((1.295) is less than its critical value (1.96). Thus, the entrepreneur's training level has positive but insignificant relationship with the business performance of the micro enterprises. Although it is found that training level of the entrepreneurs has good positive impact on the business performance of the micro enterprises in the valley, it is not statistically significant.

The equation also reveals that the value of δ coefficient is positive too, showing that marginal propensity to sales revenue with respect to business experience of the entrepreneurs is 0.489. This implies that with every increase in business experience of the entrepreneurs sales revenue increases by around 49%, which is statistically significant judged by t- statistic at 95% confidence interval, since t- value (2.063) is greater than its critical value (1.96). It is, thus, revealed that although business experience of the entrepreneurs has low degree positive association with their business performance, it is statistically significant. Hence, the entrepreneurs' business experience has positive and significant impact on the micro enterprise performance in the area.

From the estimated equation it is also confirmed that out of the three entrepreneurial factors, viz., education, training and experience, business experience of the entrepreneurs is relatively stronger and statistically significant determinant of the micro enterprise performance in the valley. Although training is found to be relatively stronger than education and experience (based on their coefficient values) in determining micro enterprise performance, it is not statistically significant.

Moreover, education of the entrepreneurs is found to be relatively weaker determinant of the micro enterprise performance, delineating the fact

that skill of the entrepreneurs is more important than their education level to perform better in business. Therefore, it is not education but business experience of the entrepreneurs which plays significant role in determining the micro enterprise performance in the valley. Besides, it is not simply training but the effective training of the entrepreneurs which may crucially influence the micro enterprise performance in the area.

Conclusion:

The study, therefore, reveals that more than 98 per cent of the variation in business performance (sales revenue) is explained by the combined variations in the levels of production, employment and exports of the micro enterprises. That is, the degree of association between the business performance and the production, employment and exports together of the micro enterprises is very high in Barak valley of Assam. It is confirmed that production level has positive and significant impact on business performance of the micro enterprises which is a significant determinant of micro enterprise performance in the valley. Although the level of employment is found to have positive and significant impact on the business performance its impact is negligible on such performance. Hence, the labour employment is not a strong determinant of micro enterprise performance in the area. Interestingly, it has been realized that although both production and employment have significant positive impact on business performance, the production factor is relatively much stronger than the employment factor while determining the business performance of the micro enterprises in the valley. However, the level of exports is found to bear a negative and insignificant impact on business performance of the micro enterprises and it does not work as a determining factor of the enterprise performance in the valley. This may be because of the reason that the growth level of exports is found to be scanty in relation to the growth level of sales revenue where many sectors of the micro enterprises recorded zero exports.

The study of the business performance with respect to entrepreneurs' characteristics of education, training and business experience through the estimation of multiple regression model reveals that as much as 71 per cent of the variation in business performance (sales revenue) is explained by the variations in the levels of entrepreneurs' education, training and experience. This reflects that business performance has high degree of association with the levels of education, training and business experience of the micro entrepreneurs in Barak valley of Assam.

It is revealed that although education of the entrepreneurs has positive association with their business performance it is a low degree positive

association which is not statistically significant. Hence, the level of entrepreneurs' education does not have any significant impact on business performance of the micro enterprises and so it is not a significant determinant of the micro enterprise performance in the valley. Interestingly the study observes that although training level of the entrepreneurs has good positive impact on business performance of the micro enterprises it is not statistically significant. Hence, the entrepreneurs' training is found to be not a significant determinant of the micro enterprise performance in the valley. Moreover, it is delineated that business experience of the entrepreneurs has positive and significant association with their business performance. Thus, the entrepreneurs' business experience has positive and significant impact on business performance of the micro enterprises and it is found to be a significant determinant of the enterprise performance in the valley.

Interestingly, the study confirms that out of the three entrepreneurial factors (education, training and experience) business experience of the entrepreneurs is relatively stronger and statistically significant determinant of the micro enterprise performance in the valley. Although training is found to be relatively stronger than education and experience while determining micro enterprise performance, it is not statistically significant. Apart from this, education of the entrepreneurs is found to be relatively weaker determinant of the micro enterprise performance, delineating the fact that skill of the entrepreneurs is more important than their education level to perform better in business. Therefore, it is not education but business experience of the entrepreneurs which plays relatively a significant role in determining the micro enterprise performance in the valley. Besides, it is not simply training but the effective training of the entrepreneurs which may influence the micro enterprise performance in the area crucially.

Based on the main findings, the study has realized that micro enterprises in Barak Valley of Assam need support to spur innovation, enhance managerial skill and develop new strategy to capture the emerging market situation. In the face of global competition in local markets the micro enterprises in the area are not viable with traditional and obsolete methods of production and hence their survival is in threat. Moreover, due to capital dearth and lack of the entrepreneurs' education, effective training, managerial skill and updated business experience the working entrepreneurs are not able to find out the ways for enhancing their development in competitive market. Survival and growth of micro enterprises is the need of the time to absorb growing workforce in the valley, as an alternative source of employment generation, in absence of other industries and agricultural crisis in the area on the one hand,

and to enhance local economic development on the other. The study therefore suggests that since micro enterprises in Barak Valley are facing the problem of capital dearth coupled with the lack of skill and updated technology, it becomes the responsibility of the government to ensure sufficient financial, technical and other functional support to the micro enterprises along with the required infrastructural facilities, so that the very objective of employment generation and poverty alleviation can be achieved in the area through the enhancement of micro enterprise performance, in the face of ongoing agricultural crisis and absence of wide scale operation of other industries in the area. For development of marketing and market infrastructure, ensuring a total access of the micro enterprises to the current market information and other support services, Government may think for setting up a separate Market Development Board especially for the micro enterprise products and services in Barak Valley of Assam. The Board may include policy makers, non-government organizations, consultants and entrepreneurs to ensure proper implementation of the government policies related to market development, as well as to ensure uninterrupted access to business information and marketing.

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Gram Sabha Meetings and People's Participation: A Study of Cachar District, Assam

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Abstract

The role of Gram Sabha is crucial for rural development. India is a country in which around seventy per cent of its population still live in rural areas. It suggests that the story of India's growth cannot be realized without systematic development of rural India. Here comes the importance of Gram Sabha and the significance of the study. An effective Gram Sabha is an automatic guarantee of rural development. It is also indicative of successful decentralization of power and strengthening of the process of democracy. It ensures people's total involvement in the functioning of the panchayat institutions. In fact, people's participation in the grassroots governance means their full involvement with its programmes and activities. In the present scenario, People's participation has emerged as a popular political slogan as it has become the precondition for development. But unfortunately Gram Sabha is not found to be functioning as effectively as it is required. It often gets dominated by the ruling elite in the village who excludes and deters popular participation in the body.

The study is undertaken in Cachar district and the rationale behind this selection is to cover the maximum socio-economic and cultural divergence of the state. In this study, an attempt is made to understand the nature and extent of people's participation in Gram Sabha meetings with special reference to the Cachar district of Assam.

Keywords: Gram Sabha, Participation, Cachar, Development, Government.

Introduction:

The 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution, 1992 for the first time created the institution of a legally empowered Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha implies a body of all persons registered in the electoral rolls of a village falling within the jurisdiction of a village panchayat. It is designed to ensure participation of people in the three stages of planning i.e. plan formulation, plan implementation and plan evaluation at the grass root level. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts have provided an opportunity for the persons registered as voters in the village to directly participate in the decision making process. Gram Sabhas thus serve as the basis of decentralised planning and help to ensure a transparent and accountable administration through Gram Panchayat. The Assam Panchayat Raj Act 1994 also empowered the Gram Sabha to discuss, plan and formulate policies for rural development. Gram Sabha provides an ideal forum for participation of any ordinary villager in the process of development. It is the ideal manifestation of decentralised planning by which the people at the lowest rung of our democracy may ventilate their hopes and aspirations. It ensures sustainable development and finds solutions to the problems of poverty and under development in rural India.

Broadly speaking, people's participation in the panchayati raj institutions means their full involvement with its programmes and activities. In the present scenario, People's participation has emerged as a popular political slogan as it has become the precondition for development. The real participation of people in a democracy can be secured only by devolving power and resources to grass root political institutions[1].

Participation is a comprehensive concept. The participation of the people could be as diverse as follows:

i. Responding to the programme, accepting the process and adapting technology and innovation,

ii. Extending moral support,

iii. Participation in the process of decision making, cooperation in execution, monitoring and evaluation activities,

iv. Contribution of time, money and energy,

v. Taking initiative, mobilising people and resources,

vi. Assuming leadership and ownership of project[2].

According to Jagannathan, involvement may be more appropriate and acceptable concept than participation. He states that, while participation implies sharing, involvement connotes a sense of belongingness[3].

Cohen and Uphoof describe participation as people's involvement in decision making process about what would be done and how; their involvement in implementing programmes and decisions by contributing various resources or cooperation in specific organisations or activities, their sharing in the benefit of development programmes; and/or their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programme. Taken together, these kinds of involvement appear to encompass most of what would generally be referred to as participation in development activities[4].

Again, participation is viewed as a broader sense as well as restricted sense. In the broader sense, the term participation in used to refer to all those actions taken by people to participate in the process of social change. In a restricted sense, participation is a specific action by which the people endeavour to achieve a limited goal. However, in broader sense, the citizen does not confine himself to express an opinion on specific measures, but directly participates for achieving the objectives[5].

Participation as defined in a UNESCO document[6] is collective and sustained activity for the purpose of achieving some common objectives, specially a more equitable distribution of benefit of development.

Moulik[7] opines that participation in developmental process implies stimulating individuals to take the initiative and mobilising people to work for overall societal development.

However, participation differs from popular mobilisation. The former one is spontaneous and self guided or inspired volition, whereas mobilisation has 'an element of force or compulsion wherein the mobiliser assumes power to give direction to the people and expect them to follow the same without questioning it'[8]. People's participation means involvement of the people in the developmental process voluntarily and willingly. Such participation cannot be coerced[9].

People's participation at the grassroots level in India has revealed three major deficiencies: (a) conflicts and rivalries in terms of caste, income and power are not uncommon among the poor and the underprivileged, (b) due to lack of education, the level of awareness among the villagers is very

low. As a result, the social workers or government officials feel it necessary to mobilise local people even for the articulation of their own demands[10]. (c) People in the village are so poor that they show greater interest in earning their livelihood.

Gram Sabha under Assam Panchayat Act,1994

The structure, power and function of the Gram Sabha in Assam as per the Assam Panchayat Act,1994 are as follows:

1. Subject to the general orders of the Government-

(i) the Gram Sabha shall meet from time to time but a period of three months shall not intervene between any two meetings;

(ii) the Gram Sabha shall consist of persons registered in electoral rolls of the panchayat.

2.The Gram Panchayat shall give importance to the recommendations and suggestions of the Gram Sabha.

3.Every meeting of the Gram Sabha may be presided over by the President.

4.The meeting of the Gram Sabha shall be convened by the Secretary of the Panchayat.

5. Quorum-

The quorum for a meeting of the Gram Sabha shall be one-tenth of the total members or one hundred voters of the village whichever is less.

6. Functions: The basic functions of the Gram Sabha are-

(a) Mobilizing voluntary labour and contribution in kind and cash for the community welfare programmes.

(b) Identification and selection of beneficiaries for the implementation of development scheme pertaining to the village.

Research Methodology:

The present study was based on an intensive analytical survey of both primary and secondary data. However, importance was mainly given on the primary data collected through field survey. The data was collected through intensive

fieldwork. For sampling, purposive sampling method has been adopted. The study is undertaken in Cachar district and the rationale behind this selection is to include the maximum socio-economic and cultural divergence of the state. In Cachar district there are fifteen development blocks namely- Sonai, Narsinghpur, Rajabazar, Silchar Udarbond, Salchapra, Lakhipur, Borkhola, Katigorah, Binnakandi, Banskandi, Palanghat, Borjalenga, Tapang and Kalain. Under fifteen development blocks, there are 163 Gram Panchayats. For the present study, two Gram Panchayats were selected by the technique of simple random sampling. The two Gram Panchayats selected for the case study are Meherpur Gram Panchayat in Silchar Development Block and Barjatrapur Gram Panchayat in Salchapra Development Block. The data have been collected through structured interview schedule containing both fixed alternative and open-ended questions. There were two sets of interview schedule covering elected members as well as ordinary villagers.

In order to understand common perception about the Gram Sabha meetings, a purposive sampling of 200 respondents in each Gram Panchayat has been drawn under the study. Altogether, responses of 400 respondents have been recorded keeping in mind the proportion of age, sex, caste, education, religion and occupation in the sample Gram Panchayats. In addition to these primary sources, secondary data for the study were collected from Election Office, Block Development Offices, District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA), District Institute of Rural Development (DIRD), Directorate of Economics and Statistics, District Economics and Statistical Branch, Zilla Parishad Office, Gram Panchayats , books, journals, magazines, Newspapers, Census, Handbook, periodicals, Internet and other published and unpublished sources.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the nature and extent of people's participation in the Gram Sabha meetings.

2. To analyse the factors that deters people's effective participation in the Gram Sabha meetings.

Research Outcome:

To examine the ground reality regarding participation of the people in the Gram Sabha meetings, various questions related to the functions of the Gram Sabha were asked to the Panchayat members and common villagers

interviewed in course of field visit. In Meherpur Gram Panchayat, all members including the Panchayat President admitted that although meetings had been organized periodically but the participation of people was very low. The average attendance of the members of Gram Sabha in the meeting was approximately two percent only. In Barjatrapur Gram Panchayat, the average number of people participated in Gram Sabha meeting was less than four percent. Again, attendance of women in both the Gram Panchayats was less than one percent. In fact, having interaction with the panchayat representatives, it is learnt that, in spite of their full efforts they could hardly mobilize more people in the meetings. The representatives of both the Gram Panchayats have cited following reasons for poor participation of the people in the Gram Sabha meetings.

(a) Poor farmers and daily wage earners do not attend the meeting due to the loss of their working day. They give priority to bread-earning activities.

(b) Due to lack of adequate knowledge and awareness about the functioning of panchayat raj system many people could not take active part in the functioning of the Gram Sabha.

(c) As panchayat has limited resources for public distribution, people do not find much interest in panchayat activities.

Moreover, having interaction with the respondents it was found that, most of the time, only the date, time and venue of the meeting was informed and the main issues of the Gram Sabha meetings were not informed to the people. As a result people did not take much interest in attending the meeting. Furthermore, some of the members of the opposition parties were of the opinion that, as the benefits of the panchayats are distributed on consideration of political affiliation, so most of the members who were participated were largely supporters or members of some political party and those who did not belong to any political party, they generally kept away from the meetings.

In the present survey, out of 400 respondents in both the Gram Panchayats under study, only 40 (10 per cent) respondents told that previously at least once they had attended their respective Gram Sabha meetings. Again out of total 200 women respondents in both the Gram Panchayats, only 7 (3.5 per cent) women respondents earlier attended the Gram Sabha meetings. The field survey reveals that only 15 respondents attend the meetings regularly. The data also show that the respondents belong to the age group of 18-50 were more participatory than the age group of above 50. Again, it is also found that the attendance of lower caste respondents is very low. In the present

survey, occupationally, attendance of the respondents belong to the categories of farmers and unskilled job were found maximum and on the other hand, attendance of the respondents belong to the categories of government job and skilled work were minimum. It is observed that, people from business and employed family do not attend the meetings because they do not find any tangible benefit, as they are not eligible for financial support under various poor centric schemes like IAY, MGNREGS, SGSY etc.

In order to estimate the level of awareness and extent of people's participation in Gram Sabha meetings, following questions were asked to the selected respondents.

Table 1.1 Respondent's views regarding Gram Sabha meetings

Questions	Barjatrapur		Meherpur		Total Yes	Total No
1. Do you get information of Gram Sabha meeting in time ?	Yes	No	Yes	No	202 (50.5%)	198 (49.5%)
	92	108	110	90		
2. How many days before the gram Sabha meeting, do you get information	Well Advance "A"	On the Day "B"	Well Advance "A"	On the Day "B"	All together "A"	All together "B"
	89	111	107	93	196 (49 %)	204 (51 %)
3. Do you get information about the agenda of meeting ?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total Yes	Total No
	44	156	38	162	82 (20.5 %)	318 (79.5 %)
4. Do the women members get information to attend meeting	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total Yes	Total No
	36	164	51	149	87 (21.75 %)	313 (78.25 %)
5. Do you think Gram Sabha & Gram Panchayat is same ?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total Yes	Total No
	121	79	110	90	231 (57.75 %)	169 (42.25 %)
6. Do you know the functions of Gram Sabha ?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total Yes	Total No
	33	167	57	143	90 (22.5 %)	310 (77.5 %)
7. Do you think decisions are made only by GP members and party leaders ?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total Yes	Total No
	127	74	112	88	238 (59.5 %)	162 (40.5 %)

8. Do you think caste, religion, gender, socio-economic status retard participation	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total Yes	Total No
	28	172	15	185	43 (10.75%)	357 (89.25%)

The table 1.1 shows that most of the respondents had no clear idea about the purpose of Gram Sabha. It was found that those who attend the meeting hardly give any suggestion or initiate any decision in the meetings. They attend only to fulfill the quorum. Hence, they act as mere audience to whatever the panchayat President or any other panchayat members say or read out. Many villagers are unaware of the existence of the Gram Sabha as an independent institution as it is clearly reflected from the responses of the respondents. Out of 400 respondents in both the GPs, it is found that 231(57.75 per cent) respondents replied that Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats are identical. Some common people allege that they do not find interest in attending the Gram Sabha meetings as their voices are not heard in the meetings. Altogether 238 (59.5 per cent) respondents in both the sample GPs said that decisions are made mainly by the Panchayat representatives and party leaders. Hence, the voices of common people are not given due importance while taking key decisions in the Gram Sabha meetings. Advertisement of the meeting is sometimes inadequate and therefore is a reason for the poor attendance. As the above data reveal that, all together 204 (51 per cent) respondents said that they only got information on the day of the meetings. Again 318 (79.5 per cent) respondents stated that they did not get details about the agenda of the Gram Sabha meetings. While public announcement, only date and venue of the meeting is informed without giving the purpose of the meetings. It is because of this reason many people do not take interest in attending the meetings. From the field data it is observed that participation of women in the meetings is very less. Here it is imperative to mention that dissemination of information to the women is not given due importance as the data reveal that only 87 (21.75 per cent) respondents were of the opinion that women get information regarding Gram Sabha meetings. Moreover, due to lack of knowledge about Gram Sabha many people do not take much interest in attending the meetings. It is noticed that only 90 (22.5 per cent) respondents replied that they have knowledge about the functioning of the Gram Sabha and a vast majority of 77.5 per cent respondents had no idea about the function of the Gram Sabha. Indeed, it is found that artificial factors like caste, religion, status, gender etc do not retard participation of people. The data show that only a handful of 43 (10.75 per cent) respondent had of the opinion that caste, religion, status etc retard participation of people.

Furthermore, it is observed that, only development schemes of the government are still pre-dominant in the agenda of the meetings. It is also noticed that in many Gram Sabha meetings, participants demanded new programmes for their area. The choice of specific locations within a panchayat area for construction and repairing of village road; construction of market and community hall; construction of bridges, embankments, guard wall, lane, drain and culverts; installation of tube well and ring well for drinking water; construction of dwelling houses under IAY etc were important subjects of discussion in several Gram Sabha meetings. It was observed during the course of field survey that villagers were divided on the question whether the work should be undertaken in one or other part of the village. Criticism of the past performance was also noticed in most of the Gram Sabha meetings.

Suggestions:

After all these data analysis and interpretation we have come to the conclusion that Gram Sabha has been facing many serious problems mainly because of the poor and ineffective participation of the people in the Gram Sabha meetings. Based on the findings of the present study, field experience and discussions, following suggestions are given.

To make the Gaon Sabha more vibrant and functional, resolutions taken in the Gaon Sabha meetings should be given due importance by the panchayat representatives and the government officials. By doing so more interest could be generated among the common villagers. They would certainly feel that matters that are discussed in the Gram Sabha can be executed. Gram Sabha should not be confined as merely a platform for debates and discussions rather it should perform the role of a decision making body at the local level.

Efforts to be made in the Gram Sabha meetings to ensure that the voices of the common men are heard. While making plan for any development works or in the execution or selection of beneficiaries for various schemes under rural development, opinion of the common villagers must be taken into consideration. As in the present study it is found that panchayat representatives and party leaders dominate in the decision making process. Planning process from the below will drastically minimise the gap between the people's needs and the activities carried out through various development schemes in villages, if the plans and proposals mentioned by the common people in the Gram Sabha meetings are properly considered in the annual plan of the panchayat.

The success of the Gram Sabha largely depends on the effective participation of the people in the Gram Sabha meetings. Hence special efforts must be taken to maximise attendance of the people and more particularly women and people from other backward sections of the society. As the quorum for conducting meetings of the Gram Sabha is one-tenth of the total members, it is equally important to fix the same quota of attendance for women and members of other backward communities of the Gram Sabha. In this regard the government should amend the existing rules and enhance the quorum of the Gram Sabha meetings. Further in order to motivate the panchayat raj institutions to mobilise more number of people for Gram Sabha meetings and to achieve communal harmony and fellow feeling by involving all sections of the people for rural development works, a special incentive scheme could be considered like giving more funds and schemes to those Gram Sabhas which ensure maximum attendance of Gram Sabha members in the meetings. In the similar way special allowance can also be provided to those Gram Sabhas which guarantee maximum participation of women and members from the backward communities in the Gram Sabha meetings. Moreover, it was found that many poor farmers and wage earners do not attend the meeting due to the loss of their working day, hence some incentive can be given to them for attending the meetings.

To make the system more transparent, all the activities carried out by the panchayats and rural development agency should be clearly written on the notice board of the panchayat including the details of fund allocation and utilisation. Moreover, before submitting the income and expenditure statement and proposal of various rural development schemes and projects to the Gram Sabha, it should be made public before the starting of the Gram Sabha meeting.

In the present study, it is found that due to lack of adequate knowledge and awareness about the functioning of panchayat raj system many people could not take active part in the Gram Sabha meetings. Hence a mass awareness programme has to be initiated to change the attitude and mindset of the villagers and the leaders about the working of the Gram Sabha with regard to socio-economic and political change in the society. For creating awareness among the people different strategies like public awareness camp, wall posters, street play, seminars, workshops, debate etc have to be taken. In this regard, services of the NGOs , NSS volunteers, and SHGs have to be fully utilised.

It was seen that the methods of giving information to the Gram Sabha members regarding the Gram Sabha meetings were not satisfactory. Although Gram

Panchayat conducts publicity for convening the Gram Sabha meetings but having interaction with the respondents it was found that, most of the time, only the date, time and venue of the meeting was informed and the main issues of the Gram Sabha meetings were not communicated to the people. As a result people did not take much interest in attending the meeting. Hence, information about the Gram Sabha meeting- venue, date, time and the agenda should be made reachable to every members of the Gram Sabha through the media. In this regard, Gram Panchayat can organise public announcement and distribute leaflets in the market place. Moreover in every village a common place can be fixed for displaying information of the Gram Sabha meetings.

To increase more involvement of common people in the Gram Sabha meetings, Gram Sabha should not confine its role only in the formal list of business that are assigned by the government rather various community related issues and problems like poverty, unemployment, marriage, divorce, education, sports, cultural activities and so on need to be presented in the Gram Sabha meetings. Moreover, for making Gram Sabha meetings more transparent and effective, initiative must be taken to introduce video recording of the whole programme.

It is noticed that in some of the Gram Sabha meetings President speedily present the income and expenditure statement of the Gram Panchayat and informed the Gram Sabha members about the various rural development works carried out by the panchayats and later on asked the Gram Sabha members to give their approval immediately. No time was given to understand and discuss the matter thoroughly. Thus, Gram Sabha members were bound to give their approval in hurry. Hence this method of getting approval of Gram Sabha members needs to be rectified. Gram Sabha members must be given sufficient time and space to grasp the matter properly before giving their approval.

Concluding Remarks:

On the basis of the above findings, it can be concluded that people do not have the required level of awareness and education about the functioning of Gram Sabha and its importance. It was found that although villagers are free to attend and discuss matters in Gram Sabha meetings, but in case of decision making, opinion of the common people is ignored. In fact, for deepening and strengthening the process of decentralisation, wider and active participation of people is badly needed. Although, Gram Sabha provides a platform for participation of common men but it is still required to be strengthened to be representative in nature.

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Influence of Persian Culture on Tagore

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was one of the towering personalities of all the ages. He was certainly an exceptional poet and writer, one of the greatest in the history of literature. Tagore's Gitanjali contains best-known spiritual observations as well as spiritual understanding of poet mystic. Tagore has said Hafiz is the leader of my father (Debendronath Tagore) and Debendronath was the spiritual guide of Tagore. In the writings of Tagore, we found numbers of Persian words like dastakhath, parwana, baki, chadar, rong, amir, ishara etc. Persian poet, Rumi started his marvellous book Masnavi with the songs of flute: 'Listen to the flute what does it narrate and what does it complain against the separation'. Likewise Tagore also started his famous book Gitanjali in the songs of flute: 'This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales,…' In this present discussion, some glimpses from the life of Tagore with his family background and influence towards the Persian are discussed following a discussion about his thoughts and using of Persian words in his literary activities where the impact of Persian culture in the thoughts and literature of Tagore are found directly or indirectly.

Keywords: *Persian; Mysticism; Culture; Devotion; Spiritualism etc*

Introduction:

Tagore, a poet mystic of India flourished in nineteenth century. He was a great thinker, mystic poet and founder of Visva Bharati University. At the age of 41 in 1901 he came under the influence of spiritualism and submitted himself to God which got reflected in his writings. Tagore is a renowned icon of spiritualism in literature. His words of poetry inspire human souls to work for the betterment of society. He was the first Asian who was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913 for his Gitanjali (English)[1]. Gitanjali in its theme & content is undoubtedly a unique master piece of literature. Tagore was a lucky person that he was born in a family where Persian culture was thought with respect and they used this culture at their day to day life. Tagore was a mystic

poet and this was the complete influence of his father who is called Hafiz-e-Dewan-e-Hafiz[2]. The ideology of Tagore linked with ideology of Islam in many occasions. The Persian words that Tagore used in his writings are naturally adopted in his mind due to influence of rich culture and heritage of his family and a close communication with Islamic heritage. Moreover, he loved Arabic & Persian too.

Persian Culture in Tagore's family:

Tagore did not know Persian language but his ancestors had more inclination towards Persian language and literature. Amongst his ancestors were Ratan Nath, Garbnath Mazumder and his de-scenders Raja Mazumder, Aviram Mazumder, Harkishor Mazumder, Gopinath Tagore and other's. Gopinath Tagore was considered to be one of the renowned Persian scholar at his time. Other than Persian, he knew Sanskrit, Portuguese and French. He was also considered as a spiritual and religious Master of that time. He was called Tagore owing to respect and honour. Gradually, Mazumder title changed to Tagore. Tagore's grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore was well versed in Arabic and Persian language and literature. Tagore's father, Debendranath Tagore was a pious man and was called Maharshi for his piety and austerity. He was called Hafiz of Devan-e-Hafiz. He used to start his daily life by reciting some verses from the Upanishad and Dewan-e-Hafiz. It is said that he used to read Masnavi of Moulana Rumi and Dewan of Hafiz.

It is mentioned in the book *Parosho Jathri* written by Tagore that when Devendronath Tagore recited the poem of Hafiz with rhyme and meters before Tagore, Tagore listen it carefully and did murmur. When father explained the meaning of that poem, Tagore became astonished. Devendronath Tagore's inclination and madness towards Hafiz was so much so that even at the time of his death, he wanted to listen poem of Hafiz. As a result, at the ending of poem of Hafiz, his soul became separated from mortal body. Following couplets of Hafiz was like a Tasbeh (Reciting recurringly) of Debendronath Tagore.[c]

هرگز نقش تو از لوح دل و جان نرود
هرگز از یاد من آن سرو خرامانی نرود

(Never your picture will go from the board of my heart and soul
Never from my memory that cypress and delightness will go)

[B] Dewan means in English Collection of poetry, so, Dewan e Hafiz means poetric book of Hafiz Siraji.

[C] Maghrebi Bangal (A special issue on Rabindranath Tagore),vol.no.57,May 1-July 15,2010,p.106.

Tagore says in his book *'Parosho Jathri'*, "Persia's introduction came to me when I was a boy. It was that of the ideal Persia, the Persia of the Poet, the Persia which sends her welcome in songs to strangers across all barriers of geography. My father was a great scholar. Hafiz was a leader of my father. He was intoxicated with Hafiz verses. When I was a boy I often used to listen to his recitation of those poems, and he translated them to me with fervour of enjoyment that touched my heart." [D]

Friendship of the cultured family of Tagore, particularly that of his father with the civilization and mysticism of Iran, especially the ghazals of Hafiz, inevitably led Tagore to come into close contact with Iranian philosophy and literature. To recognize deeply the Islamic Culture and Philosophy, Tagore visited Muslim countries like Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia etc. He visited Iran in 1932 and in 1934 he revisited Iran to participate in the Firdausi Millennium celebrations. He loved Iran. He had sweet memories associated with his visits to that country. This visit of Tagore to Iran proved very fruitful in strengthening the cultural relations and promoting the age old friendship between the two nations of India and Iran. In his first visit to Iran he was shown many places of Iran specially tomb of Sa'adi and Hafiz. After visiting Hafiz tomb, Tagore gave his famous remark to Mr. Khalili saying:-

"Verily the entire period of my poetical career may be placed on one side, and this short period of poetical reflection in Shiraz on the other. I do not know my spiritual and eternal attraction there is in this land that has capitivated my heart." [E]

Tagore was born in a period when Bengal was passing through Renaissance under the leadership of Raja Ram Mohan Ray. He was the founder of Brama Samaj and well versed in English, Arabic and Persian. He wrote *'Tuhfatul Muwahiddin'* (Gift of followers of oneness of God) in Arabic and Persian language. This book was taught in Madrasas of Indian-Subcontinent long time. Devendranath Tagore was the follower of Raja Ram Mohan Ray so he followed the rules and regulations of Brama Samaj. The central theme of Brama Samaj is oneness of God. This Brama Samaj and Baisnabism have been influenced by Islamic equality and spiritualism.[F]

During 18th and 19th century, Persian literatures, especially which of Sa'adi, Hafiz and Rumi were deeply taught among Bengali educated Hindus in Bengal. Tagore's cultured

[D] . Tagore, Rabindranath (1392) (Bengali Year),Parosho Jathri (A traveller to Persia), Kolkata: Visva-Bharti Publication.page no.109 & 130.

[E] Maghrebi Bangal (A special issue on Rabindranath Tagore),vol.no.57, May 1-July 15,2010,p.105.

[F] .Rabindronath o Islam; M. Monirujjaman, Lekha prokashoni,Kolkata-2011,page no-66-82

family and his liberal religious ideology and universal writings appeal led him to become world poet. In the writings of Tagore we see the mixture of Persian literary influenced as well as his innovative ideas. Prof. Amarta Sen rightly point out that Rabindronath recognised his Bengali family as a centre of three cultural; Hindu, Muhammadan and British. So, Tagore's song and poetry are the influenced by the Sufism and Sufi poet like Sa'adi, Hafiz and Rumi directly or indirectly.

I shall mention here some examples of writings of Rumi and Tagore where one can find that tremendous influence of Persian poet Rumi on Tagore. Persian poet, Rumi started his marvellous book Masnavi with the songs of flute: *"Listen to the flute what does it narrate and what does it complain against the separation"*. Likewise Tagore also started his world recognised book, *Gitanjali in the songs of flute* :-" *This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dale…"*

Rumi says in his Masnavi:

"A certain man came and knocked at a door: his
friend asked him, "Who art thou, O trusty one ?"
He answered, "I," The friend said, "Be gone, it's not the time (for
Thee to come in): at a table like this there is no place for the raw."
Save the fire of absence and separation, who (what) will cook
The raw one ? who (what) will deliver him from hypocrisy ?
The wretched man went away, and for a year in travel(and)
In separation from his friend he was burned with sparks of fire.
That burned one was cooked: then he returned and again
Paced to and fro beside the house of his comrade.
He knocked at the door with a hundred fears and respects,
Lest any disrespectful word might escape from his lips.
His friend called to him, " who is at the door?" He answered,
"Tis thou art at the door, O charmer of hearts,"
"Now," said the friend, "since the art the I, come in, O myself:
There is not room in the house for two I's"[7].

Similar to above mentioned poem of Rumi, Tagore has said in his Gitanjali

"The time that my journey takes is long
And the way of it long.
I came out on the chariot of the first gleam of
Light, and pursued my voyage through the wildernesses
of worlds leaving my track on many a star and planet.
It is the most distant course that comes

Nearest to thyself, and that training is the most intricate
Which leads to the utter simplicity of a tune.

[G] Nicholson,R.A, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi(Trans.)*,Vol-I, Alfa Publishers & Distributors, Srinagar, 2004.Pp-167-168

The traveller has to knock at every alien door
To come to his own, and one has to wander
Through all the outer worlds to reach
The innermost shrine at the end.
My eyes strayed far and wide before
I shut them and said 'Here art thou!'
The question and cry 'Oh, where?'
Melt into tears of a thousand streams and deluge
The world with the flood of the assurance 'I am!'" [H]

The resemblance of thoughts or literary thoughts exchange between Iran and India that has been discussed above is not only instance of its kind in this study. The vast and rich Persian literature is full of concepts that bear ample similitudes with the thoughts of Tagore. In fact, the close cultural ties between India and Iran became manifest in mysticism and ethics of the two ancient civilizations and further blossomed in varies forms in the literature produced in India and Iran. For example, the ideas of Tagore in his book "Sadhana" reveal complete ideological resemblance to the thoughts of Rumi in his Masnavi. Sadhana is significant as far as genius of human mind is concerned. The cause of the birth of evil which is one of the subject matter of Sadhana, Rumi sees eye to eye with Tagore and frankly admits that evil is unavoidable in human life :

"A painter made two kinds of pictures-beautiful
Pictures and devoid of beauty.
He painted Joseph and fair-formed huris, he
Painted ugly afreets and devails.
Both kinds of pictures are (Evidence of) his
Mastery: those (ugly ones) are not (evidence of)
His ugliness; they are (evidence of) his beauty.
He makes the ugly of extreme ugliness- it is
Invested with all possible ugliness-
In order that the perfection of his skill may be
Displayed (and that) the denier of his mastery may
Be put or shame.
And if he cannot make the ugly, he is deficient (in skill)

Hence, He (God) is the creator of (both) the
Infidel and the sincere (faithful).
From this point of view, then (both) infidelity and
Faith are bearing witness (Him) both are
Bowing down in worship before His
Lordlines",[I]

Persian words used in Tagore's Literature:

Fort William College of Kolkata deleted Arabic-Persian words from the bengali literature by the supervion of Oriantalist, Tagore condem to point out this history saying It -

[H]. Tagore, Rabindranath,*Gitanjali* (English), UBS Publication and Distributor Pvt. Ltd,New Delhi,2010.p-25

[I] . Nicholson,R.A, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi(Trans.)*, vol-IV, Alfa Publishers & Distributors, Srinagar, 2004.pp-218-219.

was murder of Arabic –Persain [10]. Scholar of Tagore studies, Dr. Usman Gani mentioned in his book that Tagore used in his writings Arabic –Persain words whom are the part of Bengali language.

A brief discussion of Persian words is mentioned below; those which are used by our beloved poet Tagore in his vast writings that got wide circulation in the Bengali as well as dialects of Bengali language. Study of the *writings of Tagore*, reveal hundreds of Persian words. As per assessment of Dr. Abdul Gani, famous Tagore scholar he has mentioned in his book that Tagore used more than six hundred Arabic- Persian words in his writings. As stated earlier Tagore was man of high thinker and broad minded, he says in his book Gitnjali that "Debay ar nebay melibay melabay jabena feray – ai baroter moha manober sagar teray"(Give and take, match, match. Can't go back. This is the great man of India on the beach). According to renowned scholar of Persian, Dr. Reza Mustafa Sabjawari, " For us, Tagore is a symbol for spiritual movement and holy aspiration which goes as a long way to crate awakening among the nations of the world…"[11]. Tagore used Persian words in his writings like dastakhath, parwana, baki, chadar, rong, amir, ishara, izzath, *Amir, Ishara, Darkhast, Dervesh, Daraj, Dildaraj, Rong, Tallash, Tamasha, Tahbil, Takath, Tarjama, Trikh, Talab, Jahir, Jaliati, Janab etc.* I shall furnish below some of the examples wherein Tagore used Persian words in his writings :

Megar kunay rong /رنگ doresay,
Dekheni keo chyee. (Gitanjali, p-106)
Tura sunisneeke/ شنیدن sunisni tar
Payer Danni ? (Gitanjali, p-98)

Chalbo ami nesithratay Tumar hawar isaratay/ اشاره

Tumar bosangando boron koraychee

Az ai bosantoshomiray(Gitbitan,p-46)

[J] Kalam weekly(Idd Special Issue), Edited by Ahmed Hasan Imran,45 Eliot Road,Kolkata,2010,p.130.

[K] Husain Dr. S. Akhhtar, "Tagore and Iran". Danish, Quarterly Journal(Spring & Summer), Published by I.R.I, Islamabad, Pakistan, 1992, Pp-I-2.

Conclusion:

Tagore was a lucky person that he was born in a family where Persian culture was thought with respect and they used this culture at their day to day life. Tagore was a mystic poet and this was complete influence of his father who is called Hafiz-e- Dewan-e- Hafiz [12]. We can see in many of places that the ideology of Tagore marge with ideology of Islam. The Persian words that Tagore used in his writings is naturally adopted in his mind due to influence of rich culture and heritage of his family and also Tagore's song and poetry are the influenced by the Sufism and Sufi poet like Sa'adi, Hafiz and Rumi directly or indirectly. Moreover he loves Persian culture. I conclude this paper by mentioning the verse of one of the renowned scholars of Arabic, Saikh Muhammad Reza Alkhalis Alkazimi :

تلک آثارنا تدل علینا * فانظروا بعدنا الئ الاثار

(These are our works, these works our souls display; Behold our works when we have passed away.)

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Creating Shared Value: A Paradigm Shift in the Relationship Between Business and Society

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Abstract

This literature review-based paper explores the concepts and scope of CSV-Creating Shared Value based on the available literature. CSV has evolved into an alternative that pushes the boundaries of CSR-corporate social responsibility. Creation of Shared Value is a groundwork for creation of economic value while addressing social exigencies. Looking at the CSV-literature, it is easy to understand that the concept of CSV has received a lot of attention from researchers and businesses, but it is still unpopular in terms of its application and acceptance.

Keywords: *Creating Shared Value (CSV), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Charity*

Introduction:

Business and society are interdependent and have a great impact on the rise and fall of the other. The existence of the former is possible only by assuming the latter. Therefore, it is the company's moral responsibility to share some of its profits with a society that can exist by fulfilling some obligations that contribute to the formation and development of society. This is how the concept of social responsibility was born decades ago. It emphasized the charity of the company, which is a charity for social, cultural, and religious purposes, and showed that the company has a social responsibility beyond making a profit. Companies are accountable not only to shareholders, but to all stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers, competitors, governments, and societies.

The essence of CSR is to give back to the community and not to benefit from these activities. This raises the question among scholars and entrepreneurs why private companies engage in philanthropy and spend nothing on society, rather than on something that benefits both

the company and society in a common way. In fact, the idea was born that a company can take care of all its stakeholders, create economic and social value as a concurrency process, and create value which could be shared with all the stakeholders including the society.Creating Shared Value has emerged as an alternative to address the limitations of Corporate Social Responsibility.

The genesis of shared value creation (CSV) was from a paper published by Michael Porter and Mark Kramerin the year 2011 where they communicated it as the policies and practices that would uplift the economic and concurrently, the social status of the communities in which they operate while improving the market share of the company.Thus, creation of shared value is a groundwork for creation of economic value while addressing social exigencies.

Objectives:

This article focuses primarily on the following objectives :

1) Understanding the concept of CSV against the background of existing literature

2) Recognizing the difference between CSV and CSR

3) Examining the scope of CSV practice in India

Literature Review:

Shared value concept is importantor both researchers and companies.There were two different groups of thinkers. The first idea was to be a supporter of CSV Porter & Kramer, 2011; (Aakhus & amp; Bzdak, 2012; Crane et al., 2014;; Orr & amp; Sarni, 2015; Bockstette et al., 2015; Dembek et al., 2016; Alberti & Belfanti). , 2019; Visser, 2013; Moon & amp Pfitzeretal., 2013; Wójcik, 2016) Includes enemies (Beschorner, 2014; Corazza et al., 2017; Strand & Freeman, 2015; Strand et al., 2015) ; ; Parc, 2019;TheCSV concept was introduced in a 2006 publication by Porter and Kramer in an article entitled "Strategy and Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility." The term "creating shared value" was officially defined five years later as "policies and practices that make companies more competitive and improve the social and economic conditions of the communities in which they do business." (Porter & amp; Kramer, 2011. The first group of thinkers agree that while maximizing economic gains, businesses can create value for society, improve opportunities, increase productivity and provide sustainable competitive advantages. (Michelini & Fiorentino, 2012; Bergquist & amp; Bergquist & Lindmark, 2016; Eriksson, 2019; Porter & Kramer, 2006, 2011; Strand & Freeman, 2015).

One significantly notable paper is related to it, titled "An Extension of Porter and Kramer's Creating Shared Value (CSV): Reorienting Strategies and Seeking International Cooperation" published in 2011, attempted to reproduce the concept of shared value creation, aninnovativepath to accomplish economic objectives, originally introduced by Porter and Kramer. The study divided corporations into the following categories-Stupid firms, Selfish firms, Good firms, and Smart firmsgrouped with relation to corporate and social benefits, and projected that the objectiveof the companies should be to frame the ethics and strategy of the business in such a way that fosters value creation. It further provided four remarkable strategiesfor more effectivecreation of shared value based on the three fundamental strategies proposed by Michael Porter and Mike Kramer: stating core competence; reimagining and understanding comprehensive targets; restating productivity in the value chain; and advocating for local or global cluster development.

Creation of Shared Value is a new concept that allows businesses to add economic value by solving social problems (Moon et al., 2011; Smith, 2016; Kullak et al., 2020. Lopez, 2020).The argument put forward by the critics is that Creation of Shared Value is a paraphrase of existing theory, and Porter and Kramer do not show the citation of the research work done by previous scientists (Crane et al., 2014; Strand & Freeman, 2015). CSV is directly related to existing frameworks and has been criticized for representing management with no empirical evidence (Crane et al., 2014;Beschorner, 2014; Dembek et al., 2016; Jones & Wright, 2018; Strand & Freeman, 2015). Beschorner (2014) and Dembeketal. (2016) CSV claims to be a jargon rather than a concrete concept. A fewresearchers have further argued that CSV is effectively blocking metamorphicinnovation. (Crane, 2014)which is due to Michael Porter's influence and his efforts to break previous individual discussions on CSR, social entrepreneurship, social innovation, and the "bottom of the pyramid." (Crane et al., 2014, p.133). They also did claim that creation of shared value has some drawbacks. For example, the idea is not original, it is based on the superficial notion of the role of a company in the society and does not consider existing cynicism about corporate practices within the community (Beschorner, 2014; Crane et al., 2014). Kaplan, 2020). Proponents respond to critics by claiming that creation of shared value is a more powerful yet multifaceted and transformable model, and that scholars are confused with existing and available theories because of its narrow relevance (Porter & Kramer). , 2014). Dembeck et al. (2016) To analyze its ontological and epistemological characteristics, the researcher has conducted a literature review of articles

using the term "shared value" in various contexts. It was found that the concept was inconsistent in terms of definition, measurement, and field use. Depending on these findings, it was claimed that CSV is a management buzzword rather than a noble and valuable research concept. In my opinion, the conclusion of Dembek et al. (2016) By assessing the use of the term "shared value" in irrelevant articles in the first part of a review using text mining techniques. More specifically, their discussion is based on the initial review, which includes 403 articles. 2 Strandand Freeman (2015) outlines the same concerns. CSV is not a new concept, but a paraphrase of the long-standing community of interest in stakeholder theory. (P. 65) Many industry practitioner sand academic scholars have expressed their apprehensions about the concept, as it is foundational and based on existing paradigms, deficient of empirical proof and deter transformative and radical innovation (De los Reyes, Scholz, & Smith, 2019; Dembek, Singh, & Bhakoo, 2016). Notwithstanding the apprehension, sizable volume of theoretical and empirical work on shared value has been carried out (Menghwar & Daood, 2021), with scholars extending and augmenting versions of the SV framework (Moon, Parc, Yim, & Park, 2011). Without focusing on mining organisations, empirical evidence on potential and effective strategies to implement CSV has begun to emerge (Alberti & Belfanti, 2019; Menghwar & Daood, 2021).

However, the question remains, if the concept of "creating shared value" make sense for multinational firms ?

A paper published recently (Nandi & Sindhi, 2022) in Society and Business Review attempts to answer this question. This paper supported business model of MNCs to convert social challenges into business opportunities in two contextually heterogenous international markets. This paper used the shared value framework to establish that examination of business models in varied societal contexts might be able to illuminate the corporation-societal needs. The paper carried out a comparative content analysis of the model of a businessof an international brand of a threewheeler design and manufacturing company – Piaggio Ape – in Italy and India since its launch right after World War II. The matter for qualitative analysis was discovered using the Nexis Uni database. The findings of the work reveals that shared valuedirects the strategy for firms to integrate societal concerns uniquely into their business models, rather than solving them isolated manner.

Conceptual deduction from the literature reviewed:

Michael Porter & Mike Kramer presented the concept of creating shared value (CSV) by progressive and innovative organizations in Harvard Business

Review in 2011 and proposed creation of shared value to promote policies and practices to ameliorate corporate competitiveness while augmenting the economic and social values in the society. They vouched for shared value creation by telling that it has the potential to transform conventional business ideas to provide sustainable solutions for overcoming challenges and serving the needs of the society. This new CSV concept has attracted the attention of industry- practitioners, executives,and managers as well.

They proposed three main methods of CSV. First, create new, affordable products or services that meet the needs of poorly serviced groups. Second, it achieves efficiency and cost savings while reducing waste and disruption in the value chain. Third, develop the resources and skills of local suppliers and dealers.

Porter and Kramer further discussed important differences between the concepts of CSR and CSV. First, the core value of CSR is to do good, but the core value of CSV contributes to economic and social benefits compared to cost. Second, while CSR tends to focus on the concepts of philanthropy, citizenship and sustainability, CSV appears to create shared value through collaboration with businesses, communities and the environment. Third, CSR tends to be separated from profit maximization, while CSV is integrated with profit maximization. Fourth, while the main impact of CSR is limited to the corporate footprint and internal CSR budget, the main impact of CSV seems to be readjustment of the corporate budget. Regarding the adoption of CSV in India, it was found that many Indian companies are creating shared value by redefining the way of markets, products and businesses are, thereby creating social and economic progress. I did. Hindustan Unilever Limited, Laris India Limited & amp; Mother Daily are some of the companies that have seized the opportunity to reach out to parts of a poorly serviced society. In areas such as healthcare, agriculture and financial services, companies are innovating to bring their products and services to new markets, revolutionizing the value chain to reduce costs, improve products and do business. We are strengthening the competitive environment to do.

Conclusion:

This study focuses on the development of the concept of Creating Shared Value which has a strong connection with CSR. In fact, Creating Shared Value is one of the few innovative strategic ideas of the last two decades to help build a sustainable competitive advantage. Looking at the CSV literature, it's easy to see that the concept of CSV has received a lot of attention from

researchers and businesses, but it's still unpopular in terms of its application and acceptance. CSV is not a synoptic idea that will solve the various problems between business and society. Further investigation is needed to determine the relevance of CSV in current and future contexts.

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Challenges and Remedies of Primary Islamic Education in Urban Areas : A Study of Silchar Town and Its Adjoining Areas

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Abstract

In the urban areas, the lifestyle of the people are changing very rapidly. In this changed context, the primary Islamic education has been facing great challenges. The parents are not able to follow the traditional system of sending children to the mosque early in the morning for getting primary Islamic education. At the same time, no concrete substitutes developed to replace the primary education in the mosque. The present research work is undertaken to find out the challanges and suggest remedial measures to help Muslim community to find out a way so that Muslim children may get proper primary Islamic education.

Keywords: Primary Islamic education, parents, development, culture, awareness.

Introduction:

Religious life has been found to have a positive effect on well- being. Religion provides an all inclusive set of meanings and values for the ordering and interpretation of different events of our life. The religious communities have established norms that provide its adhering members with an above average healthy life[1]. Strong and fully internalised religious beliefs and values are very useful to face traumatic events and stressful situation. A bad events can be overcome if it is attributed to the will of God.

Childhood is the right time to acquire such belief and values. When a child is young, he is the most impressionable and swallow knowledge just as how it is taught. Imam Al- Ghazali said, "A child is a trust in the hands of his parents, and his pure heart is an unblemished precious stone, free of any engraving or form"[2] A child absorb information like a sponge. So the young age is a very crucial time to taught primary religious education.

Objectives of the Study:

The study has the following objectives -
(a) To find out the challenges faced by the Muslim children to get primary Islamic education in urban areas.
(b) To suggest remedial measures so that Muslim children may get proper primary Islamic education.

Methodology:

The following methods and tools have been used for the study to reach at a feasible and meaningful conclusion
(a) The present study covers Silchar town and its adjoining areas of Cachar district of Assam.
(b) **Sources of Data -** Both primary and secondary data have been used for the present study. The primary information, required for the present study, has been obtained through direct personal interview method. For this purpose, 170 households have been selected randomly from Silchar town and its adjoining areas approached with structured questionnaire. The secondary data have been collected from various books, journals and publications.
(c) **Framework of Analysis -** Primary and secondary data collected from various sources have been analysed empirically.

Table- 1

Household profile of the sample household

Sl. No.	Particulars	Numbers
01	Number of family living permanently in town	100
02	Number of family living temporarily in town	70
03	Total number of sample household (1+2)	170
04	Numbers of Chilren below 15 years in serial No. 1	280
05	Numbers of children below 15 years in serial No 2	112
06	Total children (4+5)	392

***Source** : Primary data collected through field survey.*

The above 170 (100+70, permanent and temporary resident respectively) households were selected randomly from Silchar town and its adjoining areas. Out of 392 children, 280 children belong to the families residing permanently and 112 children belong to the families residing temporarily.

Table -2

Status of primary Islamic education of the sample household

Sl. No.	Particulars	Receiving primary Islamic education formally in mosque	Receiving Primary Islamic education informally	Not Receiving primary Islamic education
01	Family living permanently in town	43.4%	54.6%	2%
02	Family living temporarily in town	% (Nil)	92.3%	7.7%

Source- *Field survey.*

The above table shows the way the children are getting primary Islamic education.

Parents Consciousness for primary Islamic education in comparison with other form of education.

Table 3.1

% of children out of total population transferred for better primary Islamic education	% of children out of total population transferred for better primary education of school
0% (NIL)	59.8%

Source *– Field survey.*

Table – 3.2

% of sample household shifted their location for better primary Islamic education	% of sample household shifted their location for better school education
0% (NIL)	35.2%

Source- *Field survey.*

Table 3.3

Parents awareness about the qualification of teacher engaged for primary Islamic education	Parents awareness about the qualification of teacher engaged for general education of school
2.5%	99.2%

Source *– Field survey.*

The above tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 are used to show the parents consciousness of primary Islamic education in comparison with other form of

general left education. Table 3.1 shows that 59.8% children were transferred from one school to another for better general education of school whereas no children were transferred for better Islamic education. Table 3.2 shows that 35.2% parents shifted their family location for better general education of children whereas no family shifted anywhere for better Islamic education. Table 3.3 shows that 99.2% parents are well aware about the qualification of teacher who is engaged for teaching general subjects. But only 2.5% parents are aware about the qualification of teacher who is engaged for teaching of primary Islamic education.

Findings of the Study:

(i) In the present study, it is found that 43.4% children of the families living permanently in town are getting formal primary Islamic education in the mosque. But 54.6% children are not getting formal education. Instead they are getting Islamic education informally like private tuition or from the parents. 2% children are not getting any primary Islamic education.

(ii) No children of the families living temporarily in town are getting formal primary Islamic education. They are totally depends on private tuition. 92.3% children are getting primary Islamic education through their private tutors. 7.7% are not getting any Islamic education.

(iii) Parents are not crazy for better primary Islamic education of their children. But the same parents are crazy for better general primary education of school. 59.8% parents transferred the school of their children in different occasions for better and quality education. But not a single parent has taken such a step in case of primary Islamic education.

(iv) 35.2% parents shifted their family location in different time so that their children may get better primary education of school. But they even never thought such step is necessary for primary Islamic education whereas the scope of better Islamic education is limited compared to school education.

(v) 2.5% parents are aware about the qualification of the tutor who is teaching Islamic education. Remaining 97.5% are not aware and they just need a person who dressed like moulavi (saint). But this does not mean that the same parents always neglected the qualification of the tutor. In case of tutor who taught general subjects like Mathematics, Science, English, English Grammar, 98.2% parents are well aware. They are always eager to assign their children with more qualified teacher. Fees would never be a matter in such cases.

(vi) A general trend has been observed that the students once reaching to class IX or X, they try to avoid primary Islamic education due to the increasing pressure of their school education. Such students and their parents never thought about the course of primary Islamic education. Once the students

left Islamic education without completing the basic course, they never complete the same course in their lifetime. Thus, they lacked basic Islamic knowledge required for Salat and other Islamic activities.

(vii) During the study it is observed that primary Islamic education facing great challenges in urban areas in comparison with semi-urban and village areas. The growing trend to follow the urban lifestyle among the semi-urban and village people indicate that the challenges which primary Islamic education facing in urban areas is going to face in semi-urban and villages.

Remedial Measures:

Proper Parenting - The famous maxim 'charity begins at home' indicate that all kinds of education begin at home. Parents need to realise their role. Any teacher or institution gets students around 4 hours out of 24 hours. Modern child psychology tells us that a child is born without a conscious mind and learn from the acts of the parents. Parents should be aware about the child psychology so that they can act properly. The parents should not give too many instructions to the children allow them to learn from their manner rather than lecture[3].The school of parenting, seminar, workshop, debate and discussion on the role of parents should be arranged. Even the subject parenting should become the part of course and curriculum of school, college and madrasa for which appropriate authority should be approached.

Supplementary Institutions: The trend of imparting primary Islamic education through mosque should be modified. To meet the challenges of new lifestyle supplementary institutions should be established in village and urban areas. Supplementary institutions may be of three types -

(a) Centre for primary Islami education like kindergarten school.

(b) Coaching centre

(c) To approach already existed private schools to start primary Islamic education for Muslim children.

Individuals should be encouraged to come forward and establish such institutions. To attract students private institutions will offer flexible timetable like more class hours in the weekend, vacation etc. Such institutions will also help to aware the importance of primary Islamic education

Registration of Supplementary Institutions Under the Board- all supplementary institutions including the mosque should be registered under the Board run by different organisations. In case of registration, the institutions should be given certain criteria. All the registered institutions should be checked through periodical inspection. Parents should be encouraged to admit their children in the registered schools so that they may get proper primary Islamic education.

Effective Review of Curriculum- There is a need to critically review the effectiveness of curriculum from psychological perspective and reconceptualize curriculum. The provision of appropriate textbooks is useful for the teachers from a pedagogical point of view and relevant to the students[4]. Course curriculum should be made interesting. Children should look forward to go such institutions or mosque rather than disliked obligation made compulsory by parents. All these institutions and mosque should have an element of fun integrated in curriculum to keep children engaged. Research demonstrates that developmentally appropriate play and fun is a singular opportunity to promote the social-emotional, cognitive, language and self regulation skills that build executive function and prosocial brain[5] The effective review of all these activities will ensure religious values among the children.

Teacher Training- In a research report of Institute of Education Sciences, Department of Education, United States shows that students achievement can improve by as much as 21 percentile points as a result of teachers' participation in well designed professional development programs[6] Teaching philosophies should be designed as per the norms of child psychology. Teacher should come out of their traditional military style, disciplined approach and be approachable friends for their students. Pressure of excessive memorization should be avoided. According to Maulana Maududi, based on memorization, the madaris were not providing relevant education to the Muslim society.[7] Focus should made on development of character and infusing a spirit of life-long learning. Teachers and policy makers should be informed about each others activities and perspectives.

Social Awareness for Formal Primary Islamic Education - All the Muslim organisations, institutions and individual should aware the parents about the importance of formal education. During the study it is observed that majority (54.6%) students receiving primary Islamic education informally. It indicates that they are not following particular course, evaluation process etc. Parents should be aware about the limitations of informal education. Social awareness may lead such large number of students to formal sector.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research:

In India, though the social norms and family structure changing rapidly but still not broken because the people possess religious values. Primary religious education is the very genesis of such values. It has been observed religious education as subject that deals with the religious ethical attitude and values that strengthen individual choice, health and behaviour such as relationship, social policies and practices[8]. Thus, religious education has proved its significance on children and society. To avail such advantages of religious

education how different communities imparting religious education to the people of different faith and its social, cultural and political impact would be an important area to explore.

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Cultivation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants as Source of Profit Generation and Employment Opportunities: A Look into India with special reference to Northeastern Region

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Abstract

Cultivation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants is an excellent source of employment and profit generation. A large section of rural population in Northeast India depends on biodiversity for their better health and life. But certain anthropogenic activities are identified as the main causes of losing the medicinal plants diversity. Here, appropriate measures are in need of time to save the ecosystem.

Introduction:

With ever growing demand for natural products in food, pharmaceutical, perfumery, flavor and cosmetic industries, cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants has now become popular and economically viable (Khanuja, 2004). Medicinal and aromatic plants, natural source of raw material for industrial products offer a great scope to receive net higher return and scoe for larger employment opportunities in recent times. The cultivation of such plants now form an important place in global international agricultural business with an estimated growth rate of about 6 to 12 percent (Economic Review, 2006). The Menthol mint (menthe arvensis) in Indo- gangetic plants damask rose in the plains and hilly areas of north India, lemongrass (cymbopogon flexuosus) in southern Indian plants, geranium (pelargonium, graveleons) in southern and northern part of India, citronella (cymbopogon winteriams) , neem, pudina, tulsi acodo, kani pata in north eastern regions are some of the valuable industrial raw material aromatic plants are collected from forests, their systematic cultivation has now started in different parts of the country.

Sarpagandha (rauvolfia serpentine), periwinkle (catharanthus roseus), safed musli, isabgol (plantago ovate), senna (cassta senna) and aloe vera are some of the important medicinal plants that are being cultivated on a large scale the regular supply of raw materials for upcoming pharmaceutical industries (Botanical Survey of India).

However, there has always been problem of obtaining equitable genus raw materials in good quantities from the natural sources. Indiscriminate environmentally unfriendly assemblage has resulted in limited supply of some important herbs resulting in adulteration or substitution. Furthermore, the compatible quality of herbal raw materials collected from indigenous sources cannot be ensured due to cross reaction resulting in variability. Thus systematic cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants involving High Yielding verities (HYVs) producing quality product maintaining the regular supply of raw materials at desired good qualities has therefore become essential for the growing user industries.

Role of Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants:

Taking into consideration the upcoming and rising demand for medicinal and aromatic plants' products in both domestic and global market the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) has taken initiatives to develop technology packages in cultivation and for the potential growth of medicinal and aromatic plants in different parts of India. Genotype yielding products such as, ayurvedic medicines, natural food products, natural health care perfume, and chemicals are recently popularized developed in different environmental viable region, particularly in forest zone. The raw materials of them are highly demanded and acceptable both for domestic and international markets. Systematic and scientific interventions put together the product like menthol mint becomes most popular crop of marginal and small farmers across the country. The cultivation of menthol is now increasingly replacing opium. For the farmers, the production of menthol oil has become a cottage industry. Because of higher return the quality product of High Yielding Verities of Himalayan products are released by CIMAP got wide acceptability among the farmers and demand of raw materials in industries are increasing day by day due to the quality. In fact, geranium bio-village programme in Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh sensitized growers for cultivation of excessive priced crops for still higher returns (Singh, 2004). The research are initiated by the CIMAP for new anti- cancer, anti- ageing, anti-virus, malaria, dyrihia, anti-obesity, anti-hypertension, diabetic medicine and hepatic-protective molecules from various plants is on.

Employment Opportunities:

Medicinal and aromatic plants, once brought under cultivation would be required both skilled and unskilled labour since the very beginning cultivation to processing, improved processing and delivery of an active ingredient in convenient and useable form. All these activities involved labour intensive come up with huge range for employment opportunities and generate it and helps in eradicate poverty of rural mass people. Cultivation, processing and trade through value addition of harvested products from medical and aromatic plants give higher profit to the cultivators and a good approach for self employment of farmers and master plan of sustainable agro-economic growth. With medicinal and aromatic plants , the potentiality for self employment is also enormous e.g. the total chain from seed or propagate to the product requires manpower for cultivation, generating planting materials and processing or distillation, technical manpower for value addition and product formulation and personnel involvement in marketing. There is ample scope for employment in each and every stage from beginning to last.

However, among basic needs of human being, food is the first choice and hence cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants does guide us to replace the food crops production. Therefore, it is obvious that medicinal and aromatic plants cultivation to be integrated with food from horticulture crops. Higher extent of net yielding can be expected by integrating the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants with rice cultivation .For example, mints to be integrated with rice –wheat, rice-potato rotation. Similarly, co-cultivation of onion with mint, garlic with geranium and mints with sugarcane may increase the amount of profit from a small unit of area under cultivation. Most of these crops can also be homogenized with plantation crops or orchards, e.g, patchouli can be cultivated in orchards of coconut and coffee plantations similarly, a pineapple can be grown in banana plantation. This provides an additional yield /profit without affecting the profitability of main crops'. Thus the mission statement of CIMAP towards "green technologies for better health and life" is to be reflected towards societal improvement through medicinal and aromatic plants integrated with food crops and will generate more employment.

The raw materials and value added produce from cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants are increasingly demand in day by day and safety and efficacy of plants based drugs and importance of natural aroma chemicals in perfumery, cosmetics and flavours. There is a sufficient scope to export these products to USA, Europe and other global markets. The production of quality raw materials therefore is bound to fetch higher prices

and thus higher profits (Swaminathan, 2001). However, some kind of traditional plants, menthol mint among one which did not gain much popularity initially mainly because of lack of HIVs producing good quality, now completely replaced that prevalent cultivated poor genotype after using HIVs seeds. Plant transplanted technology and early maturing varities enabled farmers to obtain good quality can earn more profits and now many small to marginal farmers are adopting this crop. At present this crop covers more than 1.5 lakh hectares (Chada, 2002).This has improved the socio-economic status of the poor farmers. Similarly, cultivation of menthe arvensis on large scale has also generated enormous employment and strengthened the business of related industries and promoting entrepreneurships in backward region. It is estimated that in each employment benefits from mint business of about Rs 420 cr. accrued to about 3 lakh persons. Now, menthe arvensis is considered a major cash crop in North India plains contributing 75-80 percent global menthol mint oil production and exports to other countries earning valuable foreign exchange (GOI, 2006).

A Look into North-Eastern Region of India:

The Northeastern region of India, earlier called seven sister states of Northeast India endowed with vast natural resources. The whole Northeast Region is located within the IUCN, recognized by Himalaya Hotspot and considered to be very good birth place of some valuable medicinal and aromatic. The zone, for instance, plants possessed plenty in distinct variety of herb, distillation, creeping plants which are important prospective therapeutic utility of local health giving physician along with medical practitioner. More than 900 varities of medicinal plants with different species are existed in wide hilly areas of Northeastern region. Among them most popular and widely practiced of some commercially valued products such as; Sarpagandha, Nayantera sarpagandha,Dhatura,Chalgoch, Java citronella, Agnisikha,Haldhi, Dalchira, Tulsi, Tejpata Pudina Omita, Rauvolflia, Mekuri Kendu, Tankuni patha, patorkuchi neen ,etc, are some of the important industrial medicinal and aromatic plants are still collected from forest (Baishya, Begum, 2013). Although, the scientific and systematic cultivation of them are started now they are being cultivated on a large scale on traditionally for continuing the regular supply of raw-materials for pharmaceutical industries.

However, with a huge wealth of biological diversity of plants and agro-climatic zone possessed by North-East are capable of supporting the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. With vast manpower resources and varied agro-ecosystem, NE region of India has a scope to play a major

role in production of medicinal and aromatic plants. MAPs related business opportunities are enormous and are visibly on rise due to the diversified uses that plants derived molecules and compounds are finding in perfumery, pharmaceutical, cosmeceutical and agro- chemical industries. The valuable molecules from the plant sources that may have utility in wide ranging applications such as antibacterial, antifungal ant protozoan, anti cancer, anti insect, ant depressants cardiovascular and nerving stimulants, growth promoters, post harvest potentiating or bio enhancer (Kameshwara Rao,2004). With an excellent natural resource base, large gene pool, undoubtedly and both skilled and unskilled manpower, the NR region may look for achieving higher quality produce and product from medicinal and aromatic plants and may an ideal method for achieving economical security besides increasing employment potential especially in rural sector and income generation.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

Summarizing the above issues it is observed that indiscriminating destruction of forests, together with unscientific extraction of the plants and over exploitation for export purposes etc, have led to the extinction of many valuable medicinal and aromatic plants. Formation of Self-help Groups (SHGs) at different levels, though exist, involving representatives of ayurvedic medicine manufactures, farmers, NGOs, agronomists, professional raw-drug collectors etc. will facilitate demand based cultivation with a buy-back arrangement. The SHGs should take care of imparting technical know- how to the cultivators, supplying genuine planting materials, establishing medicinal plants nurseries and seed banks for propagation collecting requirements from various Pharmaceutical companies and marketing the produce at reasonable price. Moreover, areas rich in medicinal plants can be developed in to herbal sanctuaries, so that this unique biological wealth can be safeguarded and conserved well for posterity.

Secondly, there is need to expand facilities for a continuous updating of skills and information in relation to all aspects of medicinal production, processing and marketing among producer. For this, it will be useful to establish in every district the Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants with merge of Krishi Udgyon Kendra. It is also desirable to develop region as herbal bio-region. The infrastructure that are necessary for seed multiplication including tissue culture facilities, establishment of nurseries of elite materials, validation and certification and producer-oriented marketing and other centralized facilities efficient decentralized production will have to be provided in the herbal bio-region.

Thirdly, the Government of India should review the current policy regulation of medicinal and aromatic plants and adopt intensive programmes and policies for promotion of MAPs cultivation. The Department of Horticulture, Government of India should provide incentives to the farmers for taking up of MAPs by demonstrations to the grower, assistance for the establishment of herbal garden, oil extractions including processing, drying and storage unit. The training and workshop involving professional local ayurvedic kabiraj and like that is also required.

Lastly, a massive awareness and education programme should be launched on medicinal and aromatic plants involving not only the public, but also the media and more importantly the Governmental agencies responsible for formulation and implementation of massive plan.

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Assessing the Potential of Cloud Based Speech Analytics in Enhancing Customer Experience through refined communication- With Special Emphasis to Ozonetel Communications, India

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Abstract

The term "speech analytics" is often associated with word spotting or keyword searches, but with its continuous usage and rising importance it has become much more than just spotting certain words or phrases. It is an important tool now which gives a way to manage customer relationship, take certain strategic decisions, implement and assess the quality management and also form the business intelligence, which is an imperative now-a-days. Speech analytics has colossal scope in the business domain and is undoubtedly poised to grow in a non- linear fashion in coming time. The present paper is a case to fathom and convey the power of speech analytics.

Keywords: Speech, analytics, business, efficiency, Ozonetel

Introduction:

The growth of technology has captured new aspects of value creation which were relatively ignored or else given less importance in the past. One such

aspect is the importance attached to voice of customers, the actual telephonic interaction a customer has over call or any digital medium with an agent. For any organization to thrive in this world of digital democracy, it is imperative to understand its customers well, build relevancy and inculcate a system in its business intelligence which can help in giving seamless experience through all channels and provide Omni-channel interface, one of which is speech analytics. This exploratory research is inspired from the growing need of visualizing the data collected form each customer and company interaction. As we know that most of the customer care centers used to collect the recording and manually convert and locate specific keywords, feedback etc. However, due to this, most of the data has gone untapped,to the extent of about 50%, as suggested in few reports. The field of speech analytics focuses on analyzing customer sentiment through the whole duration of a call, quality and performance-based metrics to link it with quality training, evaluation purpose and also develop means to address the specific service gaps the organization is trying to bridge.

Background of Speech Analytics:

The term "speech analytics" is often associated with word spotting or keyword searches, but with its continuous usage and rising importance it has become much more than just spotting certain words or phrases. It is an important tool now which gives a way to manage customer relationship, take certain strategic decisions, implement and assess the quality management and also form the business intelligence, which is an imperative now-a-days. Some of the other supported activities of speech analytics are trend analysis, customer risk analysis, quality assurance, first-call resolution, call volume reduction, self-service IVR utilization improvement, training needs analysis, product branding and brand management, identifying operational deficiencies, fraud detection, script compliance validation and competitor information gathering, to name a few.

There are fundamentally two ways to automate and monitor the voice traffic namely, voice-to-text speech analysis, which, as the name suggests require an intermediate manual or automated transcription to perform the search of words or phrases residing in the developed dictionary and maintaining it. This technology has been used from long.The second being phonetic speech analysis which monitors the voice without any intermediate step, it utilizes few dozens of phonemes or speech sounds, which has been used since 90s and has improved since.An enhancement on this is the cloud platform based which not only reduces the installation costs and is effective in improving operational efficiency but also helps in implementing it across all customer communication

channels. This can be either implemented based on certain enterprises solutions or as software as service (SaaS) platform and paid as per the login as well as for the whole organization connecting all the verticals.

Industry Overview:

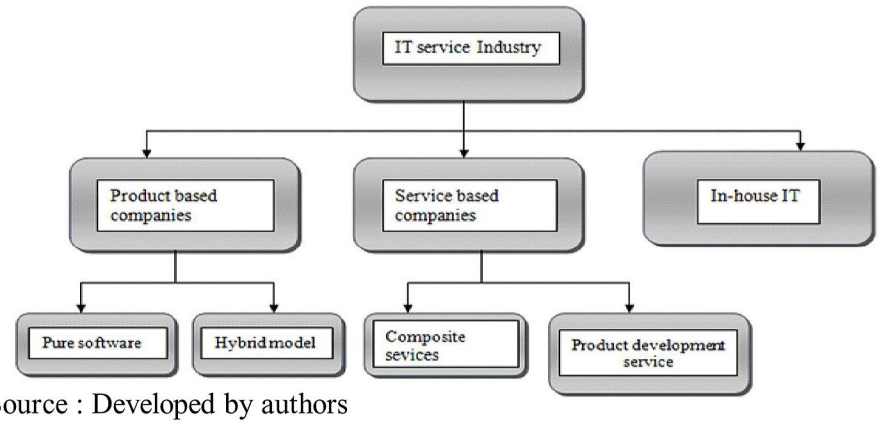
Information Technology services industry is a broad term which was used to describe the use of computers to do data storing, retrieval, transmission and manipulation and its usage in business context. It additionally includes design, development, implementation and management of computer based systems (hardware & software). In the backdrop of these information, IT organizations can also be broadly classified into three categories as below:

A Product Based Companies- Companies which are working on specific products to serve specific use for any particular type of or customer so they can either be pure software product companies (Adobe systems) or hybrid in nature eg. Google, Ozonetel. Around this idea, revolves thousands of startup companies who want to become major players in the near future.

Service Based Companies- Companies which are specialized in providing services to some specific product companies or IT services to customers like system support, network maintenance and bespoke application development e.g. IBM.

In-house IT Organizations- IT functions for some of the largest organizations might be larger than the standalone IT companies so it functions like the cost centre providing IT services to the core business e.g. IRCTC.

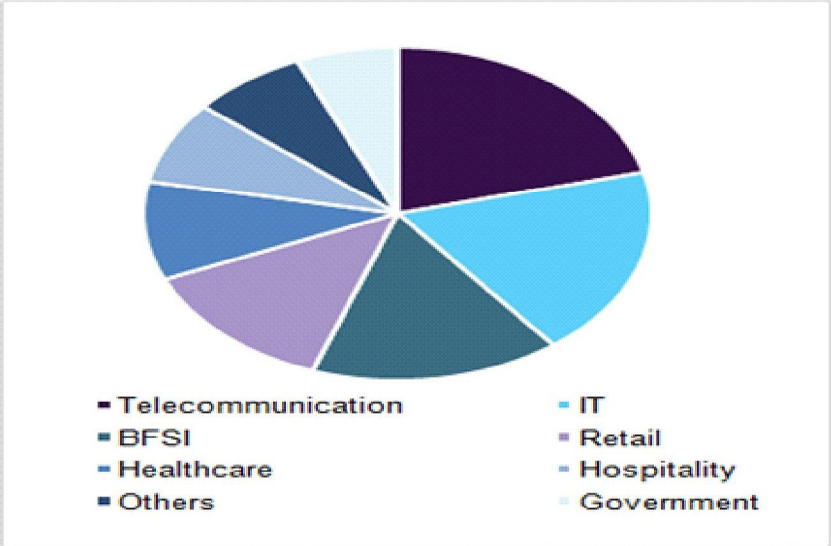
All of these aim to make their core business more efficient and nearly, face similar challenges while trying to achieve it. Below is a rough sketch of the kind of structure under which various enterprises can fall in IT sector and hence depicted in the diagram.



Source : Developed by authors

Speech Analytics as an aid for various industries:

The market for this is extensive and it can offer solutions for various segments. As per reports,the use of speech analytics in the service sector is expected to grow by CAGR 8%. The on-premise deployment of the system, which is considered to be the costliest, is the one accounting for about 50% of the total revenue. As per reports from 2015, it is majorly used by the IT sector compared to its cloud based counterpart which has its demand growing ever since 2015 and is expected to grow at non-liner rate in coming years. Due to the cloud based deployment, other sectors such as telecom, BFSI, Media & entertainment to name a few; have also benefitted. Some firms are providing SMEs with cost effective solutions on the same. Below is a sector wise pictorial representation to give a better idea about the same:



Source: *grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/*

As the technology is advancing and new ways of fathoming data from the words, dialects, responses, browsing etc are developed, here is how few of the listed industries can benefit out of it:

*** Telecom :** Telecom holds an important part in the utility services which involves communication over channels, though in the past few years there has been many improvements related to the service overheads but in the recent times with the inclusion of speech analytics customers can simply speak and verify various services. Instead of app based, it can now be voice based and the entire workflow can be assigned based on speech based information obtained.

*** Healthcare :** This area is still under development; In the near future things like caller identification and the health report of person completely based on calls, wellbeing and state of mind can be identified with this technology.

*** Hospitality :** This is one industry which have tedious work process and dynamic deals. Here the use of this technology can be plentiful starting from automatic booking to identification of customer tastes and cultural preference and customized suggestions. This technology can particularly prove helpful in making the voice of customer to reach far and wide and also from companies to get closer and know there customers in much better way.

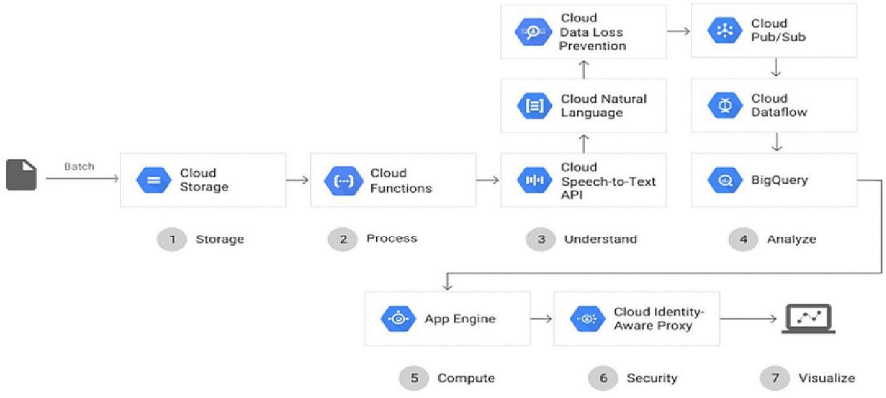
*** Banking :** The critical concern of financial sector which has large consumer bases and requires maintaining strict protocols, can be effectively addressed with this technology. Whether it is credit processing or day to day interaction sessions with agents, deploying this technology can be win-win for both the consumer to prevent from fraudulent and also the company to have no compromise on consumer data.

*** Retail :** This is the sector which can benefit the most by reducing the cost borne during service calls. Also, the raw data obtained during such interactions can be analyzed appropriately to draw insights. With these data converted and visualized, the enterprises can assess the service quality and other feedbacks more accurately than before.

The Research Problem Definition:

The present study is a case on cloud based speech analytics firm called Ozonetel India. It aims to identify the rationale behind cloud based speech analytics integrated software platform and the possible service gap which can be addressed by deploying the same. The study also attempts to explore the growth of cloud based speech analytics.

Fig. 3: *Architecture of cloud based Speech analytics system*



Source: "cloud.google.com/solutions/visualize-speech-data-with-framework"

Review of Literature:

The absence of abundance of literature on the topic because of little more than embryonic stage of growth of the particular technology, poses challenge towards conducting conclusive research. Hence, this study is exploratory in nature.

Avaya Customer Effort impact conducted by Harris Interactive (2013) showed that in spite of increase in text based communication, voice interaction was still dominant and most preferred. The paper *"Speech Analytics: Key to Unlocking Voice of the Customer for Business Transformation Across the Enterprise"* highlighted the colossal loss of opportunity to provide better customer experience and optimizing cost because of inability of the firms to mine customers voice. The figure below represents the same.



Fig Source:-Speech Analytics: Key to Unlocking Voice of the Customer for Business Transformation Across the Enterprise

In another publication by McKinsey&Company *"Customer First: Personalizing the customer-care journey"* in Jan 2019, showed that digital care channels early adopters benefit far more than that of late adopters and laggards. Also the same publication highlights the benefits of adopting such technologies for enriching customer journeys, as it helps in better categorization of customers as well as clear understanding of competitions and grey areas to address.

A white paper publication by OpenText *"20 Speech analytics use cases to help you succeed"*

Focuses on the most important concepts such as, improving the customer journey and overall experience, driving employee engagement and coaching and turning compliance insights into action.

The study takes into account the various use cases addressed individually by the use of speech analytics. The ultimate goal of each organization is to address the customer concerns in the most effective manner, increase the

level of satisfaction and ultimately address the service gap that tend to exist due to delay in addressing problems, repetitive complaints, emergence of new problems and so on.

Here is a figure from the publication *Key to Unlocking Voice of the Customer for Business Transformation Across the Enterprise"* which specifies clearly the sweet spot of engagement between customers and the organizations.

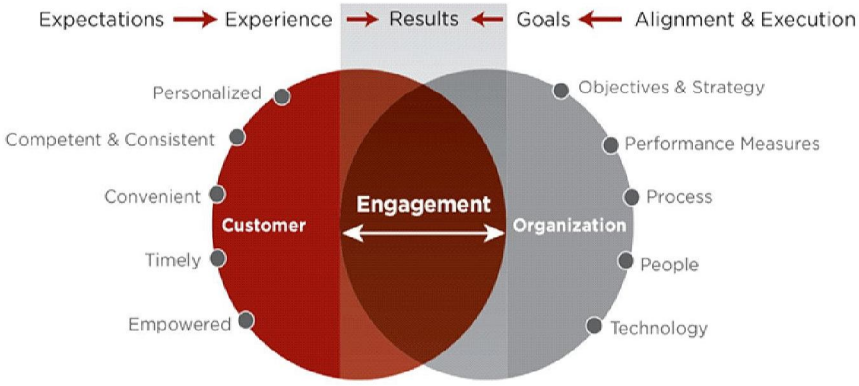


Fig Source : - *Speech Analytics: Key to Unlocking Voice of the Customer for Business Transformation Across the Enterprise*

The above literature conveys the idea about how different forms of speech analytics over time has evolved and has been integrated in some verticals for particular industries.

Also, with time, speech analytics as a software has evolved into SaaS and is now, based out of cloud platform. The research also attempted to identify the deficiencies addressed by the use of cloud based speech analytics and the service gap, in particular, for the clients of Ozonetel.

The research also intends to embark into a study on the future of cloud based speech analytics and how can it be integrated to make the business more intelligent.

Objectives Set:

i) Identifying the various methods of implementing speech analytics based on enterprise size, requirements etc.

ii) The core problems addressed by using speech analytics.

iii) The future scope of the current technology and various areas of implementing it more effectively.

Methodology:

The present paper, being our first study in this area, would primarily focus on extracting information and developing a holistic idea on the application of cloud based intelligent speech analytics

The research has been carried out with assistance from Ozonetel Ltd. As of now, we have focused on data from secondary sources, which has been collected from the company database, white papers and research articles.

The research includes preliminary rounds of interactions with Ozonetel Ltd. Employees as well as the end customers. For judging the precision and authenticity of secondary data,Google trends matching has been done with the data collected from company database. For better insights, we have also done digestive analysis of articles which have conducted similar studies in the field in past few years as well as reviews shared online by the company clients and the data from across industry.

About Ozonetel:

Ozonetel, as a cloud based speech analytics platform based out of India, is a perfect fit for cloud based telephony solutions, which can reduce the handle times and also enable effective business communications across all channels such as: social media, SMS, emails etc. The company not only provides call management tools but also analytical tools to help monitor and track inbound and outbound customer interactions. The platform provided by it can also be used by marketers to run various marketing campaigns customized over different channels.

Though the company provides a lot of products for the huge client base they cater to, one particular product which is the focus of this research is the AI Solution based speech analytics which is based on cloud platform.

AI-Based Speech Analytics : This platform is used to convert the large volume of unstructured data which for a call centre can prove to be of huge importance and can hold a lot of insights. The cloud based solution provided by Ozonetel helps in ensuring the analysis of every call, sentiment analysis and even monitoring so as to prevent escalations even before it occurs.

All these data analysis from speech analytics can help a company to:

** Add marketing insights which they might be lagging currently

** Provide proper training to improve agents performance

** The quality can be accessed properly each single time

** It prevents escalations and thus improve overall company and brand image

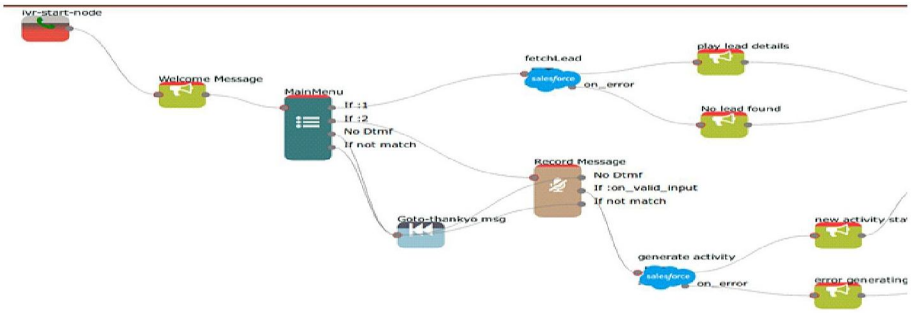


Fig Source: g2.com/products/ozonetel-cloudagent/

Above is the internal architecture of the AI based speech analytics which connects throughout the sessions and below is a diagram which shows how the dashboard looks like with the complete analytics being displayed for an ongoing call.

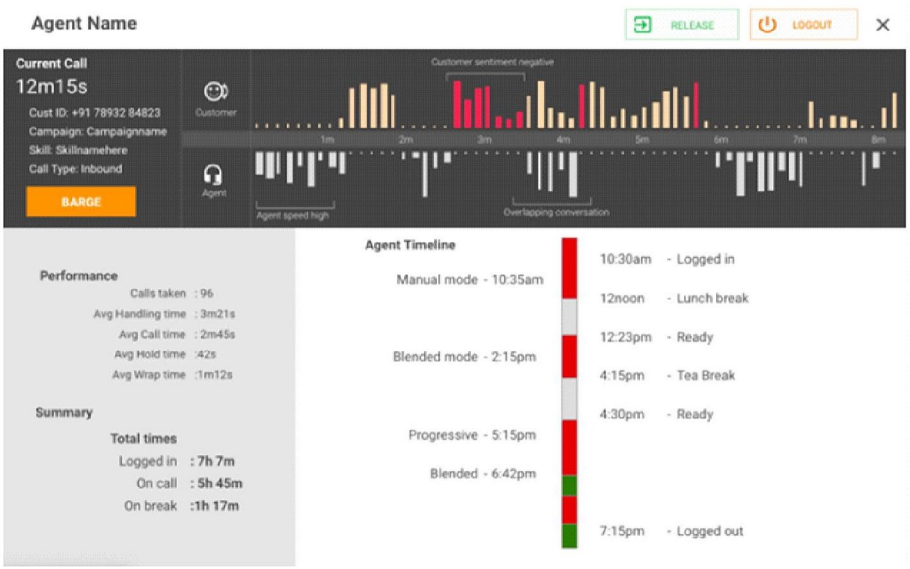


Fig Source : *ozontel.com*

The system here is as discussed above; hosted on cloud which transcribes the audios creating a pipeline of the workflow displaying the analytics for the transcribed audio files and then visually representing the data. It does this with the help of various speech analysis frameworks and the proprietary cloud based APIs for each node of action performed. The overall goal of this SaaS is to :

** Help in determining the overall call sentiment during interaction
** Sentence by sentence analysis of the sentiments
** The various quality metrics analysis to give better insights pertaining to the agents this might comprise of the call silence, agent speaking time, call durations and even sentence heat maps.
** It helps in providing answer to the most important question of reducing the call volume; by providing certain keywords used most often in the transcribes during the whole conversation.

4 P's of marketing w.r.t Ozonetel



Data Collection (about the product) :

These are the data collected by two sources namely Capterra and G2 which has collected the primary data from end user or the clients who have used the product of Ozonetel i.e. AI based speech analytics and below are the some benefits identified by the cliental.



Fig Source:capterra.com & g2.com

The below listed features offered by the Speech Analytics being the most noted one:

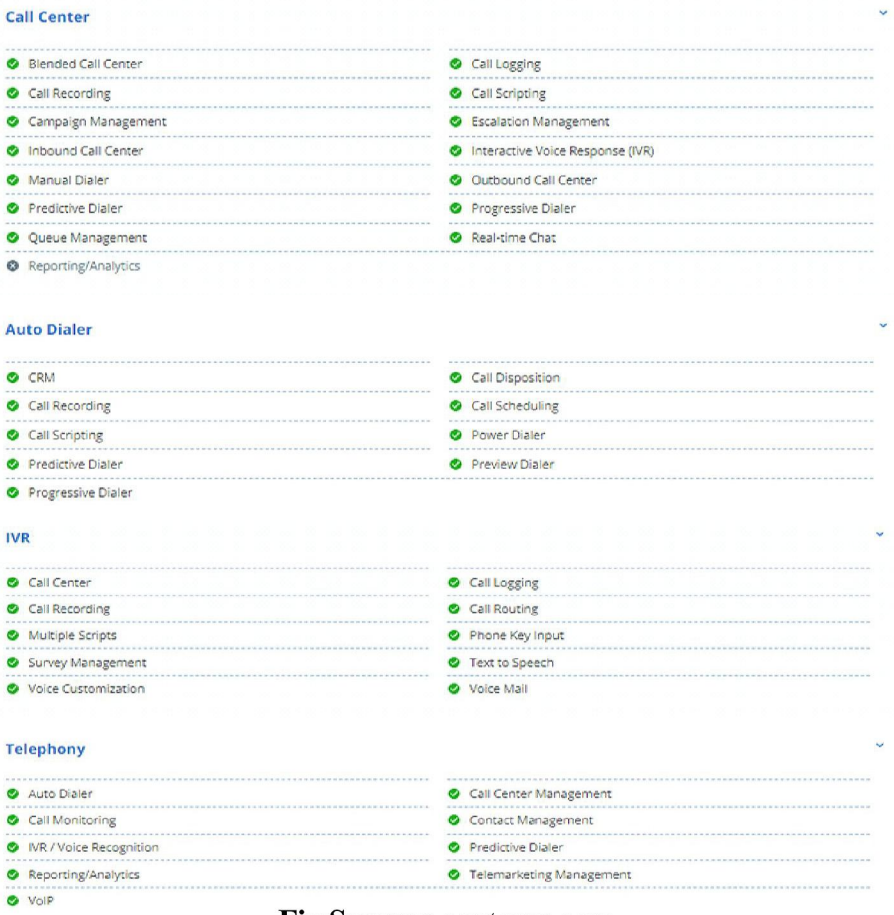


Fig Source: *capterra.com*

The working of the system while tracking all the calls and the generated data can be visualized as below :

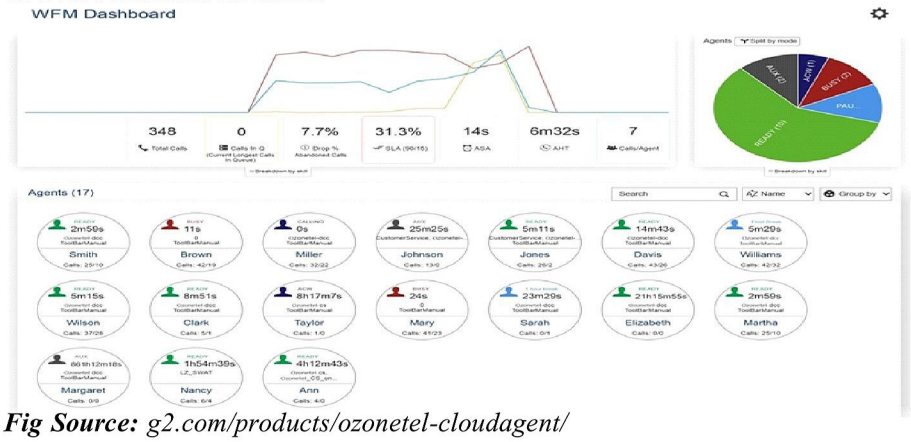


Fig Source: *g2.com/products/ozonetel-cloudagent/*

Data Comparison and analysis from former research:

The previous researches, cited before, conducted to answer few of the questions similar to us turned out to be a serendipity. They helped us in conducting an analytical study to check through the data collected so far from the primary and secondary means. Some of those relevant data are presented below.

The adoption of this technology has been seeing an upward trend from 1.5 Bn USD to 3.8 Bn USD by 2025 growing at a rate of CAGR 20.2% as per reports published on Marketsandmarkets.com.(Published date: Oct 2020, Report Code: TC 2259).

Fig. 12

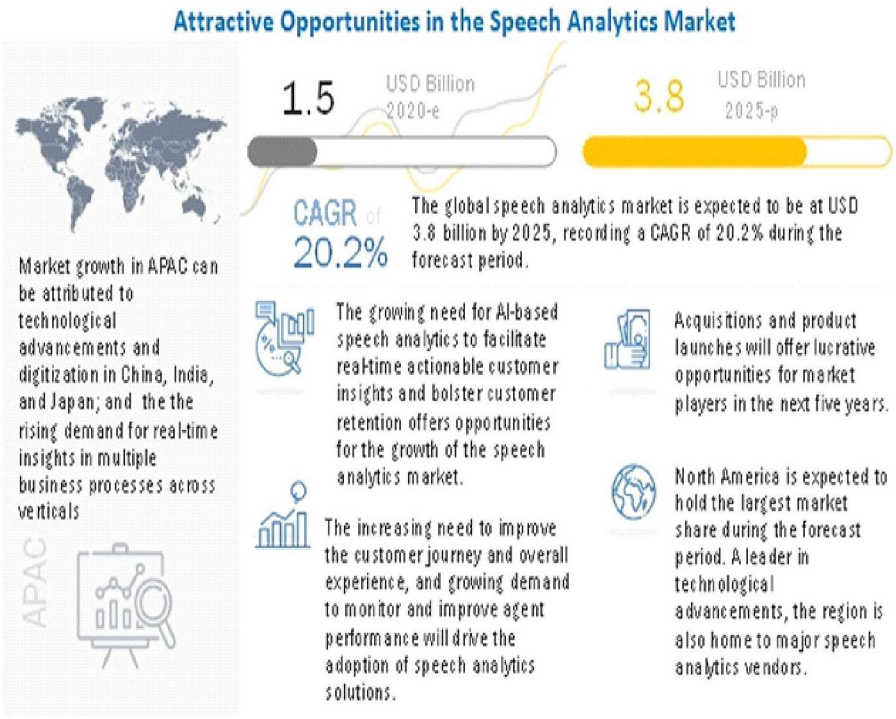


Fig Source : marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports /

Also the demands as per the segments being covered are as below published by grandviewresearch.com (Published date: Apr 2015, Report ID: GVR-1-68038-209-9)

Fig. 13

Report Attribute	Details
Market size value in 2020	USD 1,001.5 million
Revenue forecast in 2025	USD 1,640.5 million
Growth Rate	CAGR of 10.2% from 2018 to 2025
Base year for estimation	2015
Historical data	2014 - 2015
Forecast period	2018 - 2025
Quantitative units	Revenue in USD million and CAGR from 2018 to 2025
Report coverage	Revenue forecast, company ranking, competitive landscape, growth factors, and trends
Segments covered	Solution, deployment, enterprise size, end-use, and region
Regional scope	North America; Europe; Asia Pacific; Latin America; MEA
Country scope	U.S.; Canada; UK; Germany; Japan; China; Brazil; Mexico; South Africa
Key companies profiled	Nice Systems; Verint Systems; Call Miner; Nexidia; Genesys; and Avaya Inc.
Customization scope	Free report customization (equivalent up to 8 analysts' working days) with purchase. Addition or alteration to country, regional & segment scope.
Pricing and purchase options	Avail customized purchase options to meet your exact research needs. Explore purchase options

***Fig Source**: grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/*

Moreover, as published by McKinsey & Company (2019) in there white paper, it shows that premature adoption of the technology increased the total transactions which points to the answer that innovators, early adopters and even some part of early majority adopted the technology sooner than later. And also that indeed adoption of speech analytics as part of the business intelligence helps companies trace the customers based on key attributes and characteristics. Which can be seen from the below extract:

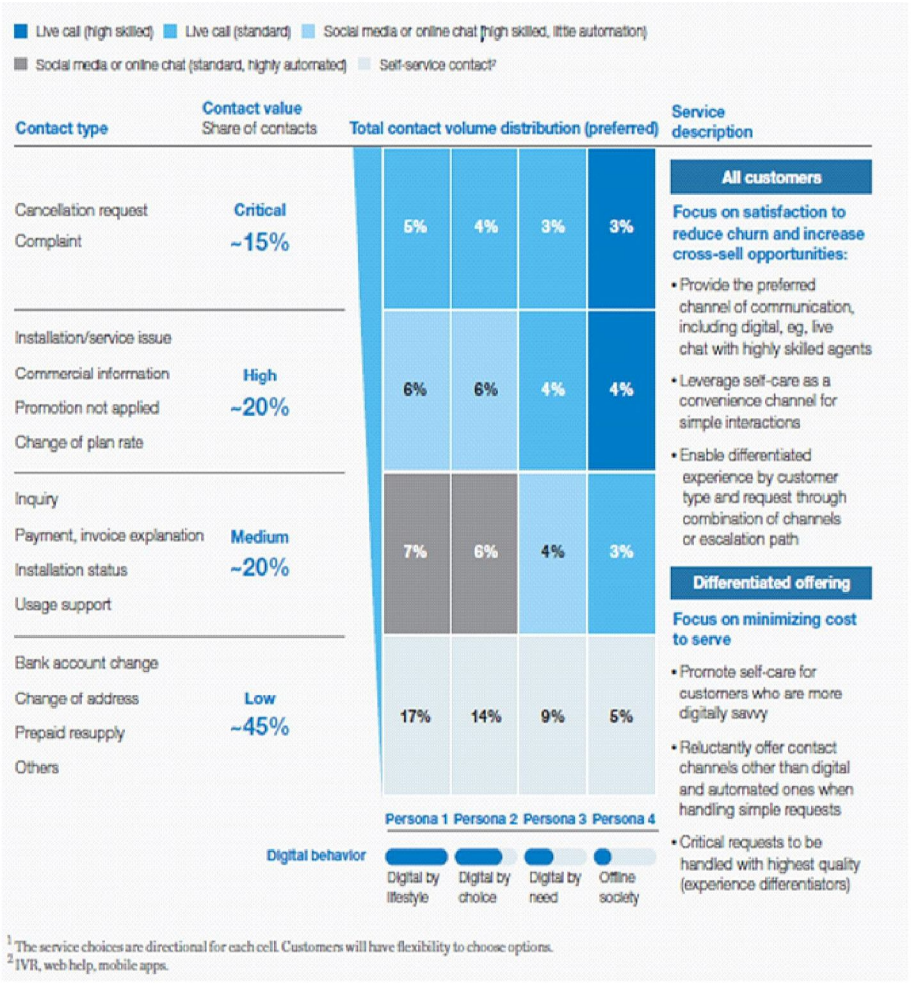
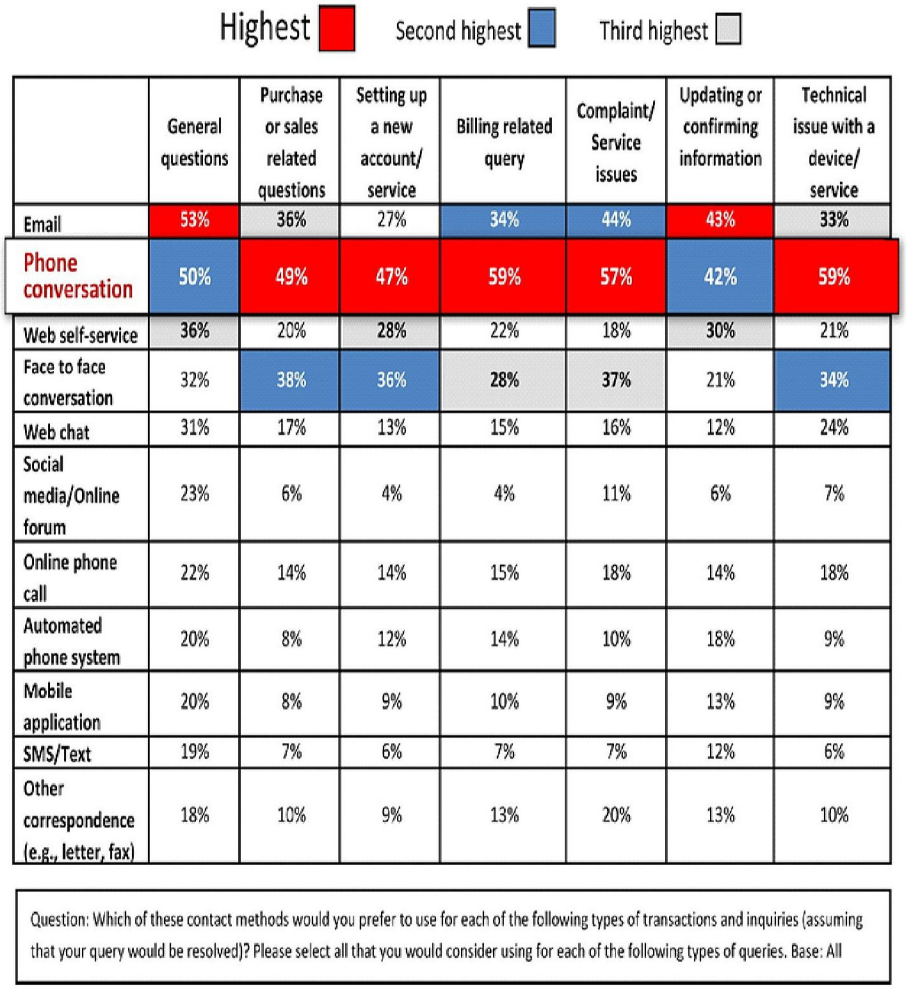


***Fig Source**: McKinsey&Company(2019). Customer First: Personalizing the customer-care journey*

To answer the questions like: whether the speech analytics can be helpful in addressing the various issues from marketing insights to preventing escalations this below extract from Avaya(2013) shows us that customers do prefer having human or agent interaction over phone more often than not, and also this data can reveal a lot from the speech analytics.



	General questions	Purchase or sales related questions	Setting up a new account/ service	Billing related query	Complaint/ Service issues	Updating or confirming information	Technical issue with a device/ service
Email	53%	36%	27%	34%	44%	43%	33%
Phone conversation	50%	49%	47%	59%	57%	42%	59%
Web self-service	36%	20%	28%	22%	18%	30%	21%
Face to face conversation	32%	38%	36%	28%	37%	21%	34%
Web chat	31%	17%	13%	15%	16%	12%	24%
Social media/Online forum	23%	6%	4%	4%	11%	6%	7%
Online phone call	22%	14%	14%	15%	18%	14%	18%
Automated phone system	20%	8%	12%	14%	10%	18%	9%
Mobile application	20%	8%	9%	10%	9%	13%	9%
SMS/Text	19%	7%	6%	7%	7%	12%	6%
Other correspondence (e.g., letter, fax)	18%	10%	9%	13%	20%	13%	10%

Question: Which of these contact methods would you prefer to use for each of the following types of transactions and inquiries (assuming that your query would be resolved)? Please select all that you would consider using for each of the following types of queries. Base: All

Fig Source : *Avaya(2013). Speech Analytics: Key to Unlocking Voice of the Customer for Business Transformation Across the Enterprise*

The same published white paper, does give us an idea about how speech analytics is helping companies in different sectors for the process of decision making and these various fields are characterized as below:

Fig. 16

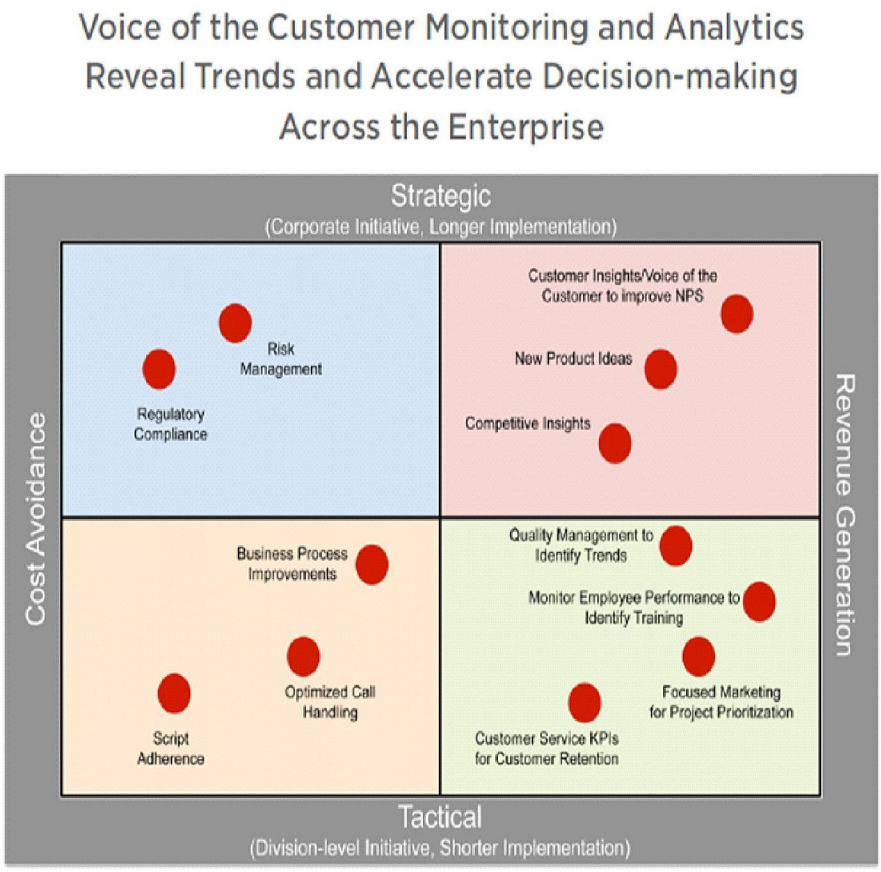


Fig Source : *Avaya(2013). Speech Analytics: Key to Unlocking Voice of the Customer for Business Transformation Across the Enterprise*

To answer the question as to what issues and gaps in service does the speech analytics helps to address, in broader perspective from customer point of view it is to smooth there E2E customer experience to whosoever the enterprise serves but from company perspective, at functional level it solves a lot of redundant work that goes and also the handshakes that happen due to multiple functional levels involved in providing the required service is made easy. Below is an extract showing the same from McKinsey&Company (2019) white paper.

Fig. 17

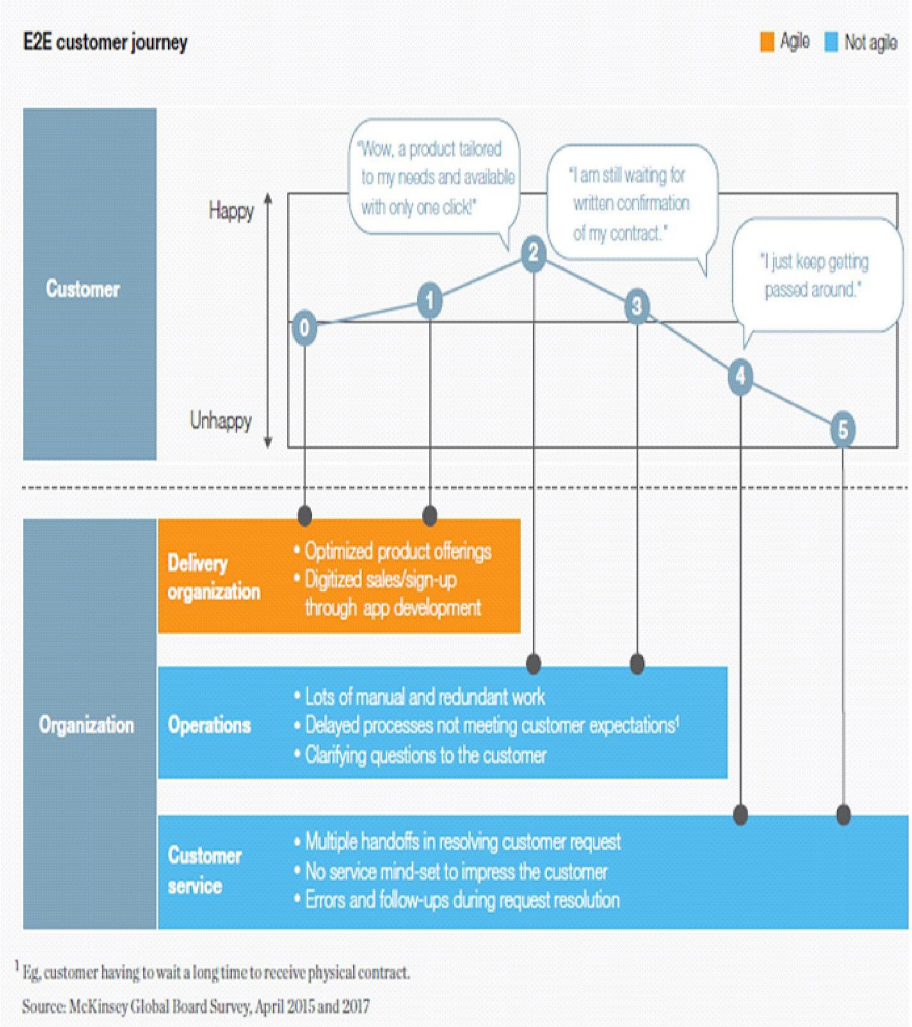


Fig Source: *McKinsey & Company(2019), Customer First: Personalizing the customer-care journey*

Conclusions & Recommendation:

As per the observations made from data dissected from various former studies, it is evident that the power of big data is used my many companies to harness and deliver exceptional customer service and bridge the service gaps realized by companies at different stages. Speech Analytics is the next generation solutions which as mentioned can be tailored and customized based on the enterprise size and solution they are looking for. The synchronization of customer data obtained from multiple channels can help visualize environment

which might require better decision making or putting better effort to get the best results.

The speech analytics solution can thus be seamlessly integrated across Social Media monitoring, Web chats, Web self services, Emails, SMS, On call interactions, mobile applications etc. And as the insights drawn from the studies, while selecting the suitable speech analytics solution the enterprise should look into below aspects:

** The ease of interface
** Supporting the industry standards if in case third party is involved
** Ability to support translation from any sources of incoming inputs
** To achieve non-restricted search terms

**** The recommendations thus as for now can be as below:**

This can help companies in framing short term and long term strategic goals The advanced speech analytics system can convert the obtained raw-unstructured data into metadata which can be helpful for the enterprises to detect the rising trends, make decisions and spot the discrepancies and all this using the real time data. Hence, the need of the hour would be to build an agile, robust speech analytics system which can deliver the results from the real time data generated to the appropriate stakeholders helping in making right strategic goal formation and implementation.

**** Cross functional speech analytics teams can be greater used**

The best results of speech analytics can be derived when the resources allocated and the people administering it know the system properly and are trained cross functionally so that better resource utilization takes place, the people with imagination and power to visualize can be of potential benefits in this case. The areas which can get involved here can be Sales, operations, R&D, Finance, QA as well as customer support and PR people. The executive sponsor from organization with interests involving several areas from an organization can help accelerate the best message of "this is most important for our organization".

As well as the early involvement from the designing to deployment can fetch better results.

**** Training provided based on the different optimum level of skill can be done**

The initial phases of implementation of speech analytics does require some part of required formal education but for the core team to leverage the maximum out of the technology it will require training at appropriate level firstly to build

the mindset to learn this new technology which in a way is both science and arts. The gradual learning process will bring more depth to the insights and even expertise over time to master what can be derived from the technology. Once the system becomes a part of the enterprise it is easier to share this knowledge further and help teams in understanding the way and method to reaching to a certain conclusion.

**** The new growth paradigm can be based on an engagement to find the sweet spot between customer and organization**

The uses of speech analytics can be many from transforming customer experiences to providing enhancement for brand experiences the potential lies in the way of extending speech analytics to ultimately make impact on business results. As we know and have seen from above collected data that customers tend to seek more personalized and consistent services which are easily accessible, they tend to seek empowerment from all the channels available around them and the organizations tend to make best use of the technologies to leverage and possess competitive edge and here is where lies the sweet spot between what customers expect and organizations provide between the goals and overall experience and it should be to bridge the gaps at all stages, speech analytics is a tool which can be of benefit when it comes to bridging this gaps.

Seamless integration of speech analytics with all data streams can optimize and help business growth

As seen and analyzed earlier the use and implementation of speech analytics starts in patches and from small it expands throughout the organization with experience as well as exposure. So it can be safely said that it is an exponential curve which accelerates due to training and it cannot be a standalone basis. Instead to benefit the most out of it, the system needs to be integrated seamlessly across any and all sources of data from consumer's end which can include the channels like :

* Emails
* Social Media Handles
* Company owned websites
* Mobile texts
* Company owned mobile applications
* Online surveys
* Chat bots deployed on websites

**** The implementation of new age edge computing model**

This is the new model for data storage and distribution which both the Ozonetel can try to inculcate in their current offerings, as the cloud storage is something which has some limitations and with the increasing amount of data now a days the cloud storage might become more costlier as well as inefficient over the time. This edge computing is based on the idea of :

"Distributed computing topology" where the information is located closer to the edges and these are the information consumed by both man and machines. We can safely say it is what can bring the data storage and processing much closer and with low latency it can be done much faster than cloud computing.

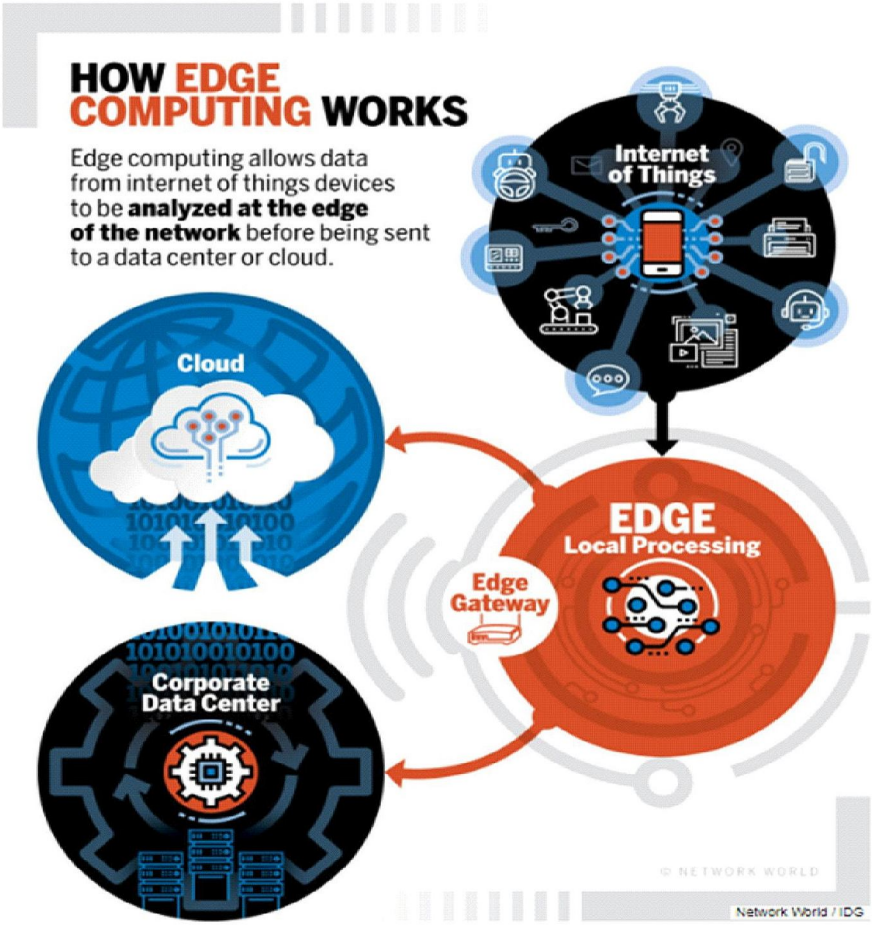


Fig Source : *networkworld.com/article/3224893*

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লোক-সমাজে অশ্লীল শব্দের বহুল প্রয়োগ

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সভ্যতার অগ্রগতির ফলে সমাজকে আমরা দুটো ভাগে ভাগ করে নিয়েছি– একটি 'শিষ্ট' অপরটি 'লোক'। এই ভাগ সংস্কৃতিগত। শিষ্ট-সমাজের সংস্কৃতির মধ্যে 'দেয়া' এবং 'নেয়া'র ব্যাপার থাকলেও লোক-সমাজের সংস্কৃতি নিজস্ব আন্তরিকতার ফসল। জীবন-যাপনের উল্লেখযোগ্য উপাদান। এখানে কোনো বাছ-বিচার, সংশোধন-পরিমার্জন, গোপনীয়তা, শ্লীল-অশ্লীল ইত্যাদির পরিমাপ অর্থহীন। এরা সহজ-সরল, আন্তরিক। এরা কোনো কথা গোপন রাখে না। এরা প্রয়োজন-অপ্রয়োজনে অশ্লীল শব্দ প্রয়োগ করে। হয়তো এরা আক্ষরিক শিক্ষার আলো থেকে বঞ্চিত। হয়তো এরা শিষ্ট সমাজ থেকে আশানুরূপ আপনাপন পায়নি। হয়তো এদের সমাজ কাঠামোই এমন। হয়তো অর্থনৈতিক অস্বচ্ছলতা এদেরকে অশ্লীল হতে বাধ্য করেছে। হয়তো এরা সত্যকে গোপন করতে চায় না। তাই দেখা যায় এদের রঙ্গ রসিকতার মধ্যেও গালাগালি প্রচুর।

তবে একথা ঠিক– 'অশ্লীল' কথার সর্বজনীন ব্যাখ্যা দেওয়া দু:সাধ্য। তবুও বলা চলে– অশ্লীল মানে যা শ্লীল নয়, কুৎসিত, লজ্জাজনক, কুরুচিসম্পন্ন, চলতি অথচ অমার্জিত। এককথায় যা কথ্য নয়, কিংবা যা উচ্চারণযোগ্য নয়, তাই অশ্লীল। আসলে বাচনভঙ্গি বা স্বরভঙ্গির বিশিষ্টতার জন্য ব্যবহৃত নির্দিষ্ট শব্দ অশ্লীল হয়ে ওঠে। অশ্লীল শব্দ কোনো আঞ্চলিক ভাষা নয় কিংবা উপভাষাও নয়। তাই দেখা যায় অশ্লীল শব্দের অনেকগুলোই বিভিন্ন অভিধানের অন্তর্ভুক্ত।

লক্ষ্য করার বিষয়– অশ্লীল শব্দের বহুল প্রয়োগ লোক-সমাজেই সর্বাধিক ব্যবহার্য। কারণ– এরা মাটির সঙ্গে সম্পর্কযুক্ত বলে অশ্লীল শব্দ প্রয়োগ রক্তগত। সেই অর্থে অশ্লীল গালাগালি লোক-সমাজের নিজস্ব সম্পত্তি বলে বিবেচিত। গালাগালি কিংবা যৌনগন্ধী অশ্লীল শব্দ প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে লোক-জীবনের আসল সত্তাটি ফুটে ওঠে। হয়তো সেই শব্দগুলো শুনতে আমাদের কানে লাগে। হয়তো আমরা সেই সমস্ত শব্দ শুনতে অভ্যস্ত নই। কিন্তু লোক-সমাজে ব্যবহৃত অশ্লীল

শব্দের মধ্যে বহুমাত্রিক ব্যঞ্জনা খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় তাদের সংসার জীবনের ঘাতপ্রতিঘাতে উচ্চারিত শব্দবহুলতায়। লোক-সমাজে সংসার জীবনের সকল সত্যই আবিষ্কৃত হয় অশ্লীল গালাগালির আসল উপকরণে।

অশ্লীল শব্দের বহুল ব্যবহার লোক-সমাজের ওপর আরোপিত হলেও সাহিত্যে এর প্রয়োগ অহরহ। চর্যার একাধিক পদে অশ্লীল শব্দের প্রয়োগ আমাদের ভাবায়। তাছাড়া বড়ু চণ্ডীদাসের 'শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন', উইলিয়াম কেরীর 'কথোপকথন', দীনবন্ধু মিত্রের 'নীলদর্পন'; 'সধবার একাদশী' ; 'নবীন তপস্বী' মধুসূদন দত্তের 'একেই কি বলে সভ্যতা' ; 'বুড়ো শালিকের ঘাড়ে রোঁ', কালিপ্রসন্ন সিংহের 'হুতোম প্যাঁচার নকশা', বুদ্ধদেব বসুর 'তপস্বী ও তরঙ্গিনী' ইত্যাদি গ্রন্থে লোক-সমাজের মানুষদের অশ্লীল কথোপকথন লক্ষ্য করার মতো। আধুনিক কালেও কাব্য, নাটক, ছোটগল্প, উপন্যাস প্রভৃতিতে প্রচুর পরিমাণে অশ্লীল শব্দের ব্যবহার দেখা যায়। আমরা লোক-সমাজের প্রবাদ-প্রবচন, ছড়া, গীত, কবিতা ইত্যাদিতেও অশ্লীল কথাবার্তা লক্ষ্য করে থাকি। গ্রন্থভুক্ত কতগুলো অশ্লীল বাক্য, যেমন –

১) "আলো ডোম্বী তোত্র সম করিবে ম সাঙ্গ।"[১] (কাহ্নপাদ/১০)

২) "ডোম্বতি আগলি নাহি চ্ছিণালী।"[২] (কাহ্নপাদ/১৮)

৩) "গরু নিবারিতেঁ নারে কাহ্নাঞিঁ ছাওয়াল।
হিফিলেক রাধাক বলদ সিংহটাল।।"[৩] (শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন/যমুনাখণ্ড)

৪) "হাঁ লো ঝি জামাই খাগি কি বলছিস। তোরা শুনছিস গো এ আটকুড়ি রাঁড়ির কথা। তুই আমার কি অহঙ্কার দেখিলি তিন-কুলখাসি আমি কি দেখে তোর ছেলের মাথার উপর দিয়া কলসি নিয়া গিয়াছিলাম যে তুই ভাতার পুত কেটে গালাগালি দিচ্ছিস। তোর ভালডার মাথা খাই হালে ভালডা খাসি তার বুকে কি বাঁশ দিয়াছিলাম হাড়ে।"[৪] (কথোপকথন/কন্দল)

৫) "ড্যাকরার ভীমরতি হয়েছে, ভাতারখাগীর ভাতার মেয়ে মানুষ ধরে গুদামে রাখতে পারে, ড্যাকরার সে রকম তো একদিন দেখলাম না।"[৫] (নীলদর্পণ)

৬) "নর// আজ ভাই দেখছি এই বাবাজী বেটা একটা ভারি হেঙ্গাঁম করে বসবে এখন। বোধকরি, ও ঐ মাগীদের ভিতরে ঢুকতে দেখেছে।"[৬] (একই কি বলে সভ্যতা)

৭) "তরঙ্গিণী // ...পাপিষ্ঠ, কপলভাষিণী পারলি কই ?"[৭] (তপস্বী ও তরঙ্গিণী)

৮) "ওদের ন বৌটা কি বজ্জাত মা, মাগি যে জক্কী।"[৮] (হুতোম প্যাঁচার নকশা)

৯) "আপনি ফোর্স নিয়ে না গেলে বানচোৎদের ট্যাকেল করা যাবে না।"[৯] (কাঙাল মালসাট)

১০) "আমার গায়ে হাত দেবার সাহস করবে, এমন কোন সুয়োরের

বাচ্চা আছে দেখা।" [১০] (পূর্ব পশ্চিম)

১১) "ঐতিহ্য ! খানকির বাচ্চা পুরুতমোল্লার জিব প্রস্রাবের কল।"[১১] (একিলিসের গোড়ালিতে নিক্ষিপ্ত তিরের প্রতি)

সাহিত্যে যে অজস্র অশ্লীল গালাগালি ব্যবহৃত হয়েছে তার মূল উপাদান সংরক্ষিত আছে লোক-সমাজে উচ্চারিত কথোপকথন মালায়। অশ্লীল শব্দ উচ্চারণ করতে আমাদের মনে সংকোচ বোধ হলেও বাস্তব সত্য সংযোজনই সাহিত্যের অন্যতম শিল্প মাধ্যম। কিন্তু লোক-সমাজের মানুষ অশ্রাব্য শব্দ ব্যবহার করে অনেকগুলো ব্যাপারে। যেমন– রাগ হলে, খোঁচা দিয়ে কথা বলতে, হাসি-ঠাট্টা করতে, বিরক্ত হলে, ঘৃণা জন্মালে, আপন মনে হলে, আত্মারক্ষার প্রয়োজনে, আশ্চর্য হলে, আনন্দ প্রকাশ করতে, আঘাৎ করতে, আক্রমণ করতে, প্রেম নিবেদন করতে, খারাপ ইঙ্গিত করতে, বলশালী দেখাতে, আকর্ষণ করতে, অভিশাপ দিতে, অপ্রয়োজনীয় ভাবে, মুদ্রাদোষ হিসেবে এবং আরও নানা কারণে। তবে কিছু ব্যবহৃত শব্দ আছে যা অশ্লীল নয়, কিন্তু স্থান বিশেষে এবং প্রয়োগ বিশেষে অশ্লীল হয়ে ওঠে।

আমরা লক্ষ্য করেছি, লোক-সমাজে বিবাহিত পুরুষ এবং মহিলাদের মুখেই অশ্লীল গালাগালি বেশি শোনা যায়। পল্লব সেনগুপ্ত বলেন, "মেয়েদের নিজস্ব কিছু নিন্দা-কুৎসা-কলঙ্কবাচক শব্দ আছে, যা আবার পুরুষদের মহলে প্রায় ব্যবহৃত হয় না। ঈর্ষাপরায়ণতাও এই বিশেষ ক্ষেত্রে গালাগালির হেতু রূপে গণ্য হয়ে থাকে।"[১২] গালাগালির ব্যাপারে লৌকিক জীবন-যাপন করা মানুষরা যেখানে যৌনতাকে প্রাধান্য দেয় সেখানে মা, বোন-কেই গালাগালির পাত্র হিসেবে ব্যবহার করে থাকে। হয়তো এর যথাযথ অর্থও তারা জানে না। যেমন– মাদারচোদ, বানচোদ প্রভৃতি। উল্লিখিত অশ্লীল যৌনগন্ধী শব্দ দুটো ভারতবর্ষের প্রায় সব ভাষাতে ব্যবহার্য। নারীদের বেলায় যে সমস্ত গালাগালি অহরহ শোনা যায়, তার কয়েকটি হল– রেণ্ডি, ভাতারখাগি, শালি, হেট্টিমারানি, খানকি, ছিনাল, মাগি, খাসি, দামড়ি, ডেকি, খেমটি, অলক্ষ্মী, রাক্ষসী ইত্যাদি।

পুরুষদের বেলায়ও নির্দিষ্ট কিছু অশ্লীল গালাগালি শোনা যায়। তবে নারীদের ক্ষেত্রে যতটা অভদ্র শোনায় পুরুষদের বেলায় তা অনেক হালকা হয়ে ওঠে। গালির নমুনা– হারামজাদা, শালা, চোদনা, গুণ্ডা, পাষণ্ড, ষণ্ডা, পাণ্ডা, নাগর, রেণ্ডা, চাঁড়াল, আলুবাজা, বোকা, লক্ষ্মীছাড়া, কেষ্ট, খেচ্চর, বেজন্মা, দুশ্চরিত্র, নিরবংশা, ইতর, পাঁঠা, কুকুর, শুওর, বেয়াদপ, মক্কেল, ইত্যাদি। উল্লিখিত সমস্ত গালাগালিই লোক-সমাজে বহুলভাবে প্রচলিত। তারা শ্লীল-অশ্লীলের বাছ-বিচার জানে না। ছোট-বড় সকলের সামনে অভদ্রভাবে গালাগালি

এদের অভ্যাসে পরিণত হয়ে গেছে। যখন গালির পর্ব চলে তখন দেখা যায়– সামনে ছোট ছেলে বা মেয়ে কিংবা যুবতী বোন কিংবা মা কিংবা বাবা কিংবা সম্মানীয় কেউ দাঁড়িয়ে রয়েছেন। কারণ গালাগাল দেবার ব্যাপারে তারা আপোস করে না। কোনো লজ্জা কিংবা আড়ালতা তাদের নেই। সময়-স্থান-কাল-পাত্র-পরিবেশ তারা দেখে না। গালাগালি করার মূল কারণ উদ্দিষ্ট ব্যক্তির সম্মানহানি অথবা নিজের অন্তরের জ্বালা মেটানো। অমঙ্গল কিংবা অভিশাপ দেবার উদ্দেশেও কখনও গালাগাল করা হয়, এতে উদ্দিষ্ট ব্যক্তিটির ক্ষতি কামনার মাধ্যমে সামনের ব্যক্তিটি যাতে ভয় পায় তাই মূল লক্ষ্য।

লোক-সমাজে গালাগালি অশ্লীল বিবেচিত হলেও মনের মধ্যে সব সময় ঘৃণা বা কুৎসাভাজন বিরাজমান থাকে না। সামাজিক নিয়ম-কানুনের ব্যতিক্রম হলেই, কিংবা নিজের ক্ষতি বোধ হলেই একে অন্যকে অশ্লীলভাবে গালাগালি করে। এতে ছোট-বড় বাছ-বিচার থাকে না। লোক-সমাজে নারীদের মুখ থেকেই সবচেয়ে বেশি অশ্লীল গালি নির্গত হতে দেখা যায়। নারীরা নারীদেরকেই বোধহয় বেশিভাবে অশ্লীল গালাগালি করে থাকে। পুরুষরা নারীদেরকে যেমন অশ্লীল বাক্যদ্বারা ক্ষান্ত করতে চায় নারীও তেমনি উল্টে গালির ফোয়ারা বর্ষিত করে। এতে কারও মান-সম্মানের ব্যাঘাত হয়েছে বলে তারা মনে করে না।

কারণ–এই গালাগালির প্রচলন লোক-সমাজে সংস্কৃতির অঙ্গ হয়ে উঠেছে। আসলে এদের সমাজকাঠামোটাই প্রায় তেমনভাবে নির্মিত। তাই লক্ষ্য করা যায়, লোক-সমাজে গণিকাদের আলাদা কোনো স্থান নেই, পরিবারে সকলের সঙ্গেই তাদের বসবাস। লোক-সমাজে গালাগালির প্রচলন এত বিস্তৃত হবার ফলে অনেক ক্ষেত্রে নারীদের বহুগামীতার পরিচয় আবিষ্কৃত হয়ে ওঠে।

দুর্বল বা অসহায় ব্যক্তির কাছে গালি অপমানজনক ব্যাপার। দু:খজনক বা বেদনাজনকও। গালি প্রদান করার ব্যাপারে শিশু কিংবা নিজের সন্তানই সবচেয়ে বেশি দুর্বল বা অসহায়। তাদেরকে শাসাতে গিয়ে যে সমস্ত গালি বর্ষণ করা হয় সেগুলো তেমন অশ্লীলজনক নয়, যেমন– মূর্খ, হারামি, কুকুর, গাধা, গরু, বাঁদর, পাঁঠা, নির্লজ্জ, লক্ষ্মীছাড়া, হারামজাদা, মুখপোড়া, শয়তান ইত্যাদি। শিশু বা নিজের সন্তানকে গালি দেবার উদ্দেশ্য– সে যেন আগামীতে নিজেকে সংশোধন করতে পারে এবং সতর্ক হয়। তবে বাস্তব জীবনে আমরা এমন অনেক শব্দ ব্যবহার করি যেগুলো আপাত অশ্লীল মনে হলেও বাস্তবিক অশ্লীল নয়, যেমন– বাল, স্তন, পোঁদ, পাছা, পেচ্ছাব, পাদ (পাঁদ), মাল, খাসা, শালা, শালি, কেষ্ট, বেটা ইত্যাদি। আবার অনেক গালি আছে যা একেবারে অশ্লীল নয় অথচ অপমানজনক, তার নমুনা স্বরূপ বলা চলে– চিটিংবাজ, হারামজাদা,

কুকুরের বাচ্চা, শুওরের বাচ্চা, বদমাইশ, তালে মাতাল, ইতর, পাজি, কাপুরুষ, ছোটলোক, লম্পট, বেহায়া, কাঁচকলা, অলক্ষী, মক্কেল, খেচ্চর, খাটাশ, সেয়ানা, ইত্যাদি। বৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে বলা চলে যাদের মুখ খুব অশ্লীল তারা প্রচণ্ড কামুক স্বভাবের হয়ে থাকে।

যাইহোক, একটি সমাজকে জানতে গেলে সেই সমাজের সামাজিক, পারিবারিক, অর্থনৈতিক , শিক্ষার পরিকাঠামো, মনস্তাত্ত্বিক অনুষঙ্গ প্রভৃতিকে সামনে রেখে তাদের অশিষ্ট ভাষাকে তুলে আনতে পারলেই লোক-সমাজের পূর্ণাঙ্গ দিকটি আবিষ্কৃত হওয়া সম্ভব। "আসলে গালাগালির মাধ্যমে অনেক সময়ই রূপক, উপমা ইত্যাদি অলঙ্কারের সঙ্গে যে সব চিত্রকল্প তৈরি হয়, তার মধ্যেই তার শিল্পসৌন্দর্যও নিহিত।"[১৩] শালা আপাতও গালি মনে হলেও এর অনেকগুলো অর্থ লক্ষ্য করা যায়। যেমন– রামু আমার স্ত্রীর ছোটভাই অর্থাৎ শালা ; ধুর শালা ; শালা আমার সর্বনাশ করেছে ; আমার এই শালা জীবন একেবারেই বেকার, ইত্যাদি। অভিশাপ সংক্রান্ত একপ্রকার গালাগাল লোক-সমাজে খুব বেশি চর্চিত, তার কয়েকটি নমুনা হল– তুই রাঁড়ি হ ; উষ্টা খেয়ে মর ; ভগবান তার বিচার করবে ; ছেলের মরা মুখ খা ; কুষ্ঠ হোক ; মা শীতলায় নেক ; মর মর ; তোর সর্বনাশ হোক ; তোর গোষ্ঠীর পিণ্ডি হোক ইত্যাদি।

লোক-সমাজে অর্থনৈতিক অনটন গালাগালির অন্যতম কারণ বলে মানা হয়। তেমনই লোক-পরিবারের একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত ছবি লিপিবদ্ধ করা হল। একটি পরিবারে সকাল থেকে খাবার নিয়ে স্বামী-স্ত্রীর মধ্যে চলছিল অশ্লীল গালাগালি। স্বামী তার স্ত্রীকে গালাগালি করতে গিয়ে বলেছে– রেণ্ডি, তোর মা রেণ্ডি, খানকি, মাগি ইত্যাদি। শব্দ গুলো শুনতে আমাদের অপমান এবং লজ্জা প্রখর হয়ে ওঠে। সবগুলো শব্দই একেবারে অশ্লীল। স্ত্রীও কম যান না। তিনিও এমনই বিচ্ছিরি গালাগালি দিতে আরম্ভ করনে– তোর মা খানকি, তোর মা রেণ্ডি প্রভৃতি। তারপর স্ত্রী ফুঁসতে ফুঁসতে এবং চোখের জল ঝরাতে ঝরাতে উঠান ঝাড়ু দিয়ে চলল। সেদিন ছিল হাটবার। দুর গ্রামে সপ্তাহে একদিন হাট হয়। স্বামী যখন স্ত্রীর কাছে বেকাবু এবং গালাগালি করে গাত্রজ্বালা মিটিয়ে বাজারের থলে হাতে নিয়ে চুপচাপ বেরিয়ে পড়লেন। সারাদিনে স্ত্রীও সব ভুলে গেছেন। সন্ধ্যা হয়ে গেলে স্ত্রীর মন আনচান করতে লাগল। সারাদিন বাড়িতে আসেনি। সে কিছু খেয়েছে কি না তাই ভাবতে লাগল স্ত্রী। কোথায় গেল ! সন্ধ্যা পেরিয়ে রাত হয়ে এলো, তখনও স্বামীর কোনো খবর নেই। তার মন আরও ভয়ার্ত হতে লাগল। একসময় বাজারের থলে হাতে স্বামী বাড়ি ফিরলেন। ব্যাগ এগিয়ে দিয়ে স্বামী বলল, বড় মাছ আছে তাড়াতাড়ি রান্না বসাও। বড় ক্ষিধে পেয়েছে। স্ত্রী রান্না

বসিয়ে দেবার আগে ব্যাগ থেকে একটা একটা করে জিনিসগুলো বের করতে লাগল। শুধু মাছ নয় বেরিয়ে এলো এক ঠোঙা জিলিপি, একটা আয়না, একটা নখ-পালিশ এবং পাঁচ কিলো চাল। এখন দুজনের মুখেই হাসি। ধুমধাম রান্না চলে। স্বামী পাশে বসে উনানে কাঠ ঠেলে দিয়ে স্ত্রীর সহায় করতে লাগলেন এবং সেই সঙ্গে কত রকমের গল্প হতে লাগল। সকালে যারা একে অন্যকে অশ্লীলভাবে গালাগাল করছিল সেটা সেই সময়ই অদৃশ্য হয়ে গেছে। এটাই লোক-সমাজের আসল পরিচয়, যেখানে লুকিয়ে রয়েছে প্রেমের যথার্থ অনুভূতি।

অশ্লীল গালাগালির নমুনা লিপিবদ্ধ করতে বৃহত্তর সুরমা-বরাকের লোক সমাজে উচ্চারিত শব্দের একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত খসড়া তুলে ধরা হল। যেমন–

আনচান : (কেমন কেমন করা) কিতারে তর মন কার লাগি অত আনচান করে।

আলুবাজ : (দুশ্চরিত্র) বেটা ইগুয়ে পুড়ি বিয়া দিলে কিতা অইব, আলুর দুস অকনও গেছে না।

আংবাং : (বাজে বাজে কথা) আমার সামনে আংবাং কতা কইলে দাত বাংগি দিমু।

ইতর : (বর্বর, পামর) তুমার বংশ ইতর।

ইতরামি : (ইতরের মতো আচরণ, দুষ্ট আচরণ) আমার লগে ইতরামি করবায় না কইলাম, চড়াইআ গাল লাল করি দিমু।

উষ্টা : (লাথি মারা) মেকুরর বাইচ্চারে উষ্টা মারি খেদাও।

উঁকি : (লুকিয়ে দেখা) উকা-উকি করচ কিতা, আমারে কুনুদিন দেখচত না-নি ?

এণ্ডা/এ্যাণ্ডা: (ডিম) এনডা তেকি বারাইআও কয় বিয়া করি লাইত। হবে এনডা বারঅ।

কাউআ : (নীচ স্বভাব) কাউআর মতন ইকানঅ কা কা করিচনা কইলাম।

কুত্তা : (কুকুর) কুত্তার বাইচ্চায় আমার বাগানর হক্কল ফুল চুরি করি নিচেগি।

কুত্তি : (বদ মেয়ে, দুশ্চরিত্র মেয়ে) কুত্তি মারানিরে উস্টাইয়া নাক বাংগি দিতাম।

কলা : (পুরুষ যৌনাঙ্গ) তুমার মুকেদি আমার কলা ঠেলিয়া ডুকাইমু।

কাঁচকলা : (পুরুষাঙ্গ) তুমি আমার কাঁচকলাটা জান।

কানা : (অন্ধ) কানার কানা মরলেউ বাচি।

কলির কেষ্ট : (চরিত্রহীন ব্যক্তি) হউ বাড়ির কলির কেস্টরে ইমুকা দেকলেউ পিটিয়া দিঅ।

কুটকুটানি : (চুলকানো স্বভাব) পিটিআ তুমার কুটকুটানি ছুটাইদিমু।

কিচ্চা : (কেচ্ছা, কলঙ্ক সূচক কাহিনি<কিসসা<কুৎসা) খানকি ইগুর কিচ্চা হুনিআ আমার অইত কিতা।

কৃষ্ণলীলা : (পরকীয়া প্রেম) হালার পুতে কিসনঅলীলা করার জেগা পাইচেনা।

খিলখিল : (শব্দ করে হাসা) খানকিনতর লাকান খিলখিল করিআ আসচ কিতা।
খাসি : (বেঢপ মোটা <আ. খসি) দিন দিন খার আর খাসির মত বনের।
খেদি : (অপছন্দ মেয়ে) হালি মারাউনি খেদিটায় আমার পুআরে জাদু করছে।
খেকখেক : (রুক্ষভাবে কথা বলা) দুরে যাও, আমার সামনে খেক্‌খেক করবায় না।
খানকি : (বেশ্যা, অশ্লীল গালি, ফা. খানগি) তাই খানকি মাইআ না অইলে অত রাইত কানতনে আওয়া যাওয়া করে।
খেমটা : (কুৎসিত অঙ্গভঙ্গি, যৌনতাসূচক আগ্রাসন) হেট্টি-মারানিত্র খেমটা করার জেগা পাইচে না।
খেচ্চড় : (নোংরা) ইগু বড় খেচ্চড় বে।
খাটাশ : (অপরিষ্কার) খাটাশ মাইনষর লগে আটিতে আমার গিন্না করে।
গরু : (বোকা, অকর্মণ্য) গুরুর মত চললে রাস্তাত তো মাইনষে টেকরাইবউ।
গু : (বিষ্ঠা, ঘৃণনীয় জিনিস) লইজজা সরম করে না, গু খাইআ মর।
গোবর : (বুদ্বিহীন) ইগুর মাতাত গুবরও নাই নাইলে সার অইল নে।
গাট্টাগুট্টা : (মোটাসোটা) গাট্‌টা গুট্‌টা বেটা ইগু বড় ইতর।
গাঁড় : (পায়ু<সং গুগু) গাঁড় মারানির কতা হুনিয়া আইজ আমার বারটা বাজিগেচে।
ঘাঘু : (চতুর) বেশি ঘাগু মাইনষরে বিশ্বাস করলে বিপদ অইবউ।
চোদন : (ঠেলা) এমন চুদন দিমু কুততার বাইচ্চায় বাপর নাম বুলি যাইব
চুলবুল : (চঞ্চল, উশখুশ করা) তুমার পুআ অগুএ অত চুলবুল করে কেনে– আমার লগে যাইত-নি-নায়।
চুকচুক : (অশ্লীল শব্দ, চুম্বন করার ভাব) আমার মুকর সামনে চুকচুক করবায় না কইলাম।
চিটিংবাজ : (ধাপ্পাবাজ) চিটিংবাজি করতে অইলে তর বাপর লগে করিচ।
চিমসে : (রুগ্ন, অপরিপুষ্ট, কাঙাল) চিমসা মানুষ ইগুন হারা জীবনউ চিমসা থাকইন।
চাঁড়াল : (চণ্ডাল) চাকরি পাইআও চাড়ালমানা গেছে না।
চ্যাটাং-চ্যাটাং : (উদ্ধত ভাব) তুমার চেটাং চেটাং কতা আমার এককেরে বালা লাগে না।
চুদুরবুদুর : (উল্টাপাল্টা) আমার লগে চুদুরবুদুর করলে উষটাইয়া বাপর নাম বুলাইদিমু।
চুতরাপাতা : (একধরনের ভেষজ পাতা যা লাগলে শরীর চুলকায়) অত বাড় বাড়লে হালিরে চুতরা পাতা লাগাইয়া ঠাণ্ডা করি দিমু।
ছিনাল : (বেশ্যা, হীন চরিত্রের নারী <প্রা. ছিন্নাল) ডেকি পুড়ি অগুর ছিনালিমানা

দেখলে আমার সইলল জ্বলে। [ছুঁড়ীর কি চমৎকার রূপগা, আর একটু ছেনালীও আছে। –বুড়ো শালিকের ঘাড়ে রোঁ।]
ছেঁচা : (থেঁতলে দেওয়া) বেশি বাড়াবাড়ি করলে তর পেল ছেচি দিমু।
জুতামারা : (বাজেভাবে অপমান করা) জুতাইয়া ইগুর মুখ লাল করিদিলায় না কেনে ?
টস্‌টস্‌ : (রসে পরিপূর্ণ) শইলল রসে টস্‌টস্‌ করের– এরলাগি তাইর গাত জাড় লাগের না।
টেংরি : (পা) বেশি ফালাইলে এককে বাড়িত টেংরি বাংগি দিমু।
ঠ্যালা : (খপ্পর, প্রভাব) ঠেলা খাইলে বুজবঅ কত্‌ ধানঅ কত চাউল
ঠোঁসা : (ব্রণ, তুচ্ছার্থে স্তন) পুড়ি অগুর নতুন নতুন ঠুসা উঠচে অউ এরলাগি একটু পরে পরে আয়নার বায় চায়।
ডেকা : (যুবক, দুষ্ট যুবক) ডেকা ইগুএ বেশি জিনিগেছে।
ডেকি : (যৌবনবতী, ঋতুমতী) ডেকি ইগুর হারাদিন গুরাত মন, বালা জামাই পাইলে বিআ দিলাইতাম।
তেরিমেরি : (আস্ফালন, মেজাজ দেখানো) আমার লগে বেশি তেরিমেরি করলে এক থাপপড়ে বত্রিশটা দাত পালাই দিমু।
দামড়া : (সাবালক, অপদার্থ লোক) পড়ালেকা না করলে তুমার দামড়া পুআইনতরে কামঅ পাটাও।
ধানদাবানদাঃ (মতলব বাজ) আমার লগে ধানদাবানদা করলে হককলতা শেষ পাইব।
ধাউড় : (সং. ধূর্ত) তুমার মইর-গরর বাই ইগু এক নম্বরর ধাউড়।
নাগর : (প্রেমিক, অবৈধ প্রেমিক<সং. বিদগ্ধ) রুমনির নাগররে বাজারঅ দেকলাম আরক পুড়ির আত ধরি গুরের।
নকশা : (কায়দা, ন্যাকামি < আ. নকশ) আমার বউ ইগু কুনুকান যাইতে অইলে বড়অ নকশা করে।
নজর : (লুব্ধদৃষ্টি<আ. নজর) ডাইনির মত চউক, নজর ত লাগবউ।
নিরবইংশা : (যার বংশ নেই) নিরবইংশার লগে আমারে কুনুকান পাটাইবায় না।
পেট : (গর্ভসঞ্চার) হউ রাড়িয়ে কতবার পেট পালাইছে ই-খবর আমার তাকি বেশি কেও জানে না।
পিরিত : (প্রীতি, ঘনিষ্ঠতা) ইকানঅ পিরিতর কতা কইলে ডাইল গলতঅ নায়।
পুটকি/পুঁটকি : (পশ্চাদ্দেশ) পুটকি মারানি বউরে কইলাম দুকান তনে আমার লাগি এক-বান্দ বিড়ি আনিচ, হুনল না কতা।
পাঁদ/পাদ : (মলদার দিয়ে বায়ু নির্গমন হেতু শব্দ বা গন্ধ) হালির হালি পাদ

মারার জেগা পাচনানি।
পেটলি : (গর্ভসঞ্চার) কুন বেটার লগে হুইচলঅ অকন পেটলি অইআ গুরের।
ফাটাফাটি : (প্রচণ্ডভাবে মারামারি) বিআন তাকি হাউড়ি-বউএ ফাটিফাটি চলের।
ফায়দা : (লাভ<আ. ফয়দা) হালির লগে গুরিলে ফায়দা আছে।
ফালতু : (বাজে) ফালতু কতা কইলে জাড়ু দি বাইড়াইআ দিমু।
ফুটানি : (অহংকার) তুমার ফুটানি তুমার কাচে রাখিঅ।
বাইনচোদ : (হি. বহিনচোৎ) বাইনচুদর বাইচ্চায় আমারে ডেক্কা মারি পালাইদিচে।
বাল : (পশম, যৌন কেশর) বালর বাল হরিদাস পাল, বাল ছিড়িআ আটি বান্দরায়।
বাংলা : (দেশি মদ) বাংলা খাইআ গালাগালি করবায় না গদাদি মাতা ফাটাই দিমু।
বান্দর : (পাজি, নচ্চার) বানদর পুআ ইগুএ লেকাপড়া করত চায় না।
বেয়াদব : (অভদ্র) বেআদবিমানা করলে লজেন কিনি দিতাম নায়।
বেজন্মাঃ (যার জন্মের ঠিক নেই, অবৈধ সন্তান) বেজনমার বেজনমা আমারে কয় লাইনঅ দাড়াইতাম।
বেহায়া : (লজ্জাহীনা) মুকপুড়া বেহায়া পুড়ি ইগু নাইপতর লগে বাগি গেছে।
ভেংচি : (মুখ বিকৃতি, নকল করে বিদ্রুপ করা) মুক ভেংচি করি তর্ক করিচ না কইলাম।
ভোঁ ভোঁ : (যেমন খুশি ঘোরা) হারাদিন ভোঁ ভোঁ গুরিআ কেগুর গু পালাইআ আইচত ?
মক্কেল : (বুদ্ধু) আমারে মককেল কইবায় না বালা অইত নায়।
মাল : (পণ্য সামগ্রী) কচি মাল ইগু বড়অ টনটনা।
মাগি : (তুচ্ছার্থে নারী) মাগির আইজ-কাইল ফুটানি বাড়ি গেছে।
মাই : (স্তন) তুমার দ্বারা কুনতা কাম অইত নায় বউর মাই চুও গিয়া।
মুত : (পেচ্ছাপ<সং. মূত্র) অত চেন চেন করিআ মুতচ কিতা।
মদনা : (বোকা) মদনা বেটার লগে আমি এক পা-ও দিতাম নায়।
রেণ্ডি : (বেশ্যা<সং. রণ্ড) রেণ্ডির বাইচ্চারে কুনতা কওআ যায় না।
রাক্ষসী : (ক্ষতিকারক মহিলা) হালি বড়অ রাইককসি-তাই বেটারে খাইয়া রাড়ি অইআ গুরের।
রাড়ি/রাঁড়ি : (বিধবা, বেশ্যা) রাড়ি ইগুর মুক দেকি কুনুকান গেলে বালা অইত নায়।
লাথি : (পা দিয়ে মারা) লাততি মারিআ তারে অনতনে খেদানি দেও।
লক্ষ্মীছাড়া : (দুর্ভাগা) লক্কিচাড়া বেটা ইগুএ হারাদিন খালি গুমার।

শালা : (গালি, স্ত্রীর ভাই) তাইন আমার বড়অ হালার গরর হালা।
শালি : (গালি, স্ত্রীর বোন) হালিমারানিরে পিটিআ মুক চুন-কালি লাগাইআ গ্রামচাড়া করন লাগব।
ষণ্ডা : (ষণ্ড, বলদ, গুণ্ডা) হারাদিন খালি ষণ্ডাগিরি করলে বাত জুটত নায়।
সেয়ানা : (চালাক, ধড়িবাজ<সং. সজ্ঞান) থাপড়াইআ তর সেয়ানাগিরি চুটাইদিমু।
হিসি : (প্রস্রাব) বুড়া বেটায় হিসি করার জেগা পাইচে না অউ পাকর গরর কুনাত বইগেচে।
হেটোমারানি : (অশ্লীল গালি) হেটোমারানির পুয়ায় আমার কুনু কতা হুনে না।
হেঙ্গা : (বিয়ে) আমার হেংগা লাগচেনি-তরে গুললা কিনি খাবাইতাম।
হারামজাদা : (অসভ্য লোক, পাপী) হারামজাদায় আমার পুড়িরে কয় চিনেমা দেকাইব।
হাগা : (মল) হাগা পাইলে আমি করতাম কিতা।

অশ্লীল শব্দ প্রয়োগ অর্থাৎ গালাগালি হচ্ছে মন্ত্রতুল্য। মন্ত্র উচ্চারণের ফলে মানুষের মন ও আত্মা বিশুদ্ধ হয়ে ওঠে। গালাগালি করলে মানুষের মুখ অশ্লীল হয়ে উঠলেও পুরমুহূর্তে তাকে আনন্দিত দেখায়। মনে প্রেমের সারাৎসার বর্ষিত হয়। মন হালকা হয়ে ওঠে। যে গালাগাল দেয় সে তার গাত্র জ্বালা মেটাতেই অশ্লীল শব্দ মুখনিসৃত করে। কোনো মানুষ গালাগালি করার পরমুহূর্তে তাকে সতেজ দেখায়। মন থেকে সমস্ত দু:খের অবসান হয়ে যায়। তখন তার মনে এক নতুন শক্তির উদ্যম হয়। মনে জমে থাকা ভাব সহজেই নির্গত করতে পারে। ভয় ডর কিছুই থাকে না। তাই গালাগালি আমাদের কাছে অভব্য মনে হলেও এর প্রয়োজন আবশ্যক। বিশেষ করে লোক-সমাজে গালাগালি একটি শিল্পমাধ্যম বললে ভুল হয় না। কেননা– লোক-সমাজের গালাগালি লোক-সংস্কৃতিরই অঙ্গ বিশেষ।

উল্লেখপঞ্জি

১. মজুমদার অতীন্দ্র, সম্পাদনা : চর্যাপদ, নয়া প্রকাশ, কলকাতা-৬, পৃষ্ঠা-১০৭
২. প্রাগুক্ত, পৃষ্ঠা-১১৭
৩. ভট্টাচার্য অমিত্রসূদন, সম্পাদনা : শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা-৭৩, পৃষ্ঠা-৩৩৯
৪. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় অসিতকুমার, সম্পাদনা : পুরাতন বাংলা গদ্যগ্রন্থ সংকলন, পৃষ্ঠা-১৬১-১৬২
৫. গুপ্ত ক্ষেত্র, সম্পাদনা : দীনবন্ধু রচনাবলী, সাহিত্য সংসদ, কলকাতা, পৃষ্ঠা-১৬
৬. মুখোপাধ্যায় ড° নিশীত, সম্পাদনা : একেই কি বলে সভ্যতা, বামা পুস্তকালয়, কলকাতা-৭৩, পৃষ্ঠা-৮

৭. বসু বুদ্ধদেব, তপস্বী ও তরঙ্গিণী, আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রা: লি:, কলকাতা-৯, পৃষ্ঠা-৫৫

৮. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ দাস সজনীকান্ত, সম্পাদনা : হুতোম প্যাঁচার নকশা ও অন্যান্য সমাজচিত্র, বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য পরিষৎ, কলকাতা-৬, পৃষ্ঠা-৬

৯. ভট্টাচার্য নবারুণ, কাঙাল মালসাট, সপ্তর্ষি প্রকাশন, কলকাতা, পৃষ্ঠা-৩৫

১০. গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় সুনীল, পূর্বপশ্চিম, প্রথম খণ্ড, আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রা: লি: কলকাতা-৯, পৃষ্ঠা-৩২৫

১১. রায়চৌধুরী মলয়, মলয় রায়চৌধুরীর কবিতা ২০০৪-১৯৬১, আবিষ্কার প্রকাশনী, কলকাতা-৭০, পৃষ্ঠা-২১২

১২. সেনগুপ্ত পল্লব, লোকসংস্কৃতির সীমানা ও স্বরূপ, পুস্তক বিপণি, কলকাতা-৯, পৃষ্ঠা-৩০৫

১৩. প্রাগুক্ত, পৃষ্ঠা-৩১৪

সহায়ক গ্রন্থ

১. সেনগুপ্ত পল্লব, লোকসংস্কৃতির সীমানা ও স্বরূপ, পুস্তক বিপণি, ২৭ বেনিয়াটোলা লেন, কলকাতা-৯, প্রথম প্রকাশ : ডিসেম্বর ১৯৯৫, মূল্য-২০০ টাকা

২. বসু অভ্র, বাংলা স্লাং সমীক্ষা ও অভিধান, প্যাপিরাস, ২ গণেন্দ্র মিত্র লেন, কলকাতা-৪, প্রথম প্রকাশ : মে ২০০৫, মূল্য-১৫০ টাকা

৩. চক্রবর্তী জগন্নাথ, বরাক উপত্যকার আঞ্চলিক বাংলা ভাষার অভিধান ও ভাষাতত্ত্ব, ভাষা-সংস্কৃতি আকাদেমি, অসম, হাফলং, উত্তরকাছাড় পার্বত্য জেলা, প্রথম প্রকাশ : বৈশাখ ১৪১২, মূল-৬০০ টাকা

৪. দত্ত ড° মিলন মুখোপাধ্যায় অমলেন্দু, শব্দসঞ্চয়িতা, নিউ সেন্ট্রাল বুক এজেন্সি প্রা: লি: ৬/১ চিন্তামণি দাস লেন, কলকাতা-৯, প্রথম প্রকাশ-১৯৯৫, মূল্য-৯৬ টাকা।

শব্দ সঞ্চয়

বরাক উপত্যকার বিভিন্ন গ্রাম ঘুরে লোক-সমাজের মানুষদের ব্যবহৃত অশ্লীল শব্দ সংগ্রহ। গ্রামগুলো-ভেটাইরবন্দ (দুর্লভছড়া), কানাইগুড়ি (দুধপাতিল/শিলচর), ভুবগুর (ধলাই), রাঙামাটি (লওয়াইরপোয়া), কাটাখাল অঞ্চল, আইরনমারা অঞ্চল, লঙ্কা নীলবাগান, হোজাই, মোরাবস্তি (লামাডিং), বদরপুর, শ্রীগৌরী, করিমগঞ্জ, চরগোলা, কাটিগড়া, ইত্যাদি।

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আশাপূর্ণা দেবীর ' জবর দখল ' : নারীচেতনার মাইলস্টোন

ড· রুণা পাল
সহকারী অধ্যাপিকা
ওয়েস্ট শিলচর কলেজ, বড়যাত্রাপুর, কাছাড়

আমাদের সমাজ নানাভাবে বিন্যস্ত। বর্ণ-বর্গ-লিঙ্গগত বিভাজন সমাজের বিচিত্র মানসিকতাকে মূর্ত করে তোলে। এর মধ্যে লিঙ্গগত বিভাজন এক বিশেষ মাত্রায় স্বতন্ত্র বলে গণ্য হয়ে থাকে। বর্ণ-বর্গ বা অন্য সকল বিভাজনে দু'পক্ষেই রয়েছে নারী ও পুরুষ। একমাত্র লিঙ্গ গত বিভাজনই নারী ও পুরুষকে পুরোপুরি স্বতন্ত্র অবস্থানে দাঁড় করিয়ে দিয়েছে। নারীর জন্য নির্দিষ্ট করে দেওয়া হয়েছিল গৃহকোণ, আর পুরুষের জন্য বাইরের পৃথিবী। শুধু এইটুকুই নয়, নারীকে তার জীবনের সমস্ত রকম সাধ-আহ্লাদ স্বতঃস্ফূর্ততা থেকে বঞ্চিত করে রাখা হয়েছিল। ফলে পারিবারিক-সামাজিক-রাজনৈতিক-ধর্মীয় প্রেক্ষাপটেও নারী হয়ে যায় অপাংক্তেয়, শোষিত এবং প্রান্তিকায়িত। নারীর উপর চালানো হয়েছিল অমানবিক, অকথিত শারীরিক ও মানসিক অত্যাচার। অল্প বয়সে বিয়ে দেওয়া হতো অপেক্ষাকৃত বেশি বয়সের পুরুষের সঙ্গে। নারীর হেসে-খেলে বেড়ানোর বয়সে তাকে মাথায় ঘোমটা দিয়ে সভ্রম এবং বিধি-নিষেধের দমবদ্ধ পরিস্থিতিতে মানিয়ে চলার শিক্ষা দেওয়া হতো। বাল্যবিবাহ, সতীদাহপ্রথা, বহুবিবাহ, পর্দাপ্রথা, বৈধব্যের কঠোরতা ইত্যাদি অমানবিক বিধি নিষেধে নারীর জীবন হয়ে উঠেছিল বিষময়। লৈঙ্গিক বৈষম্যের কারণে গৃহকোণে বন্দী হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নিজেদের সত্তা সম্পর্কেও হয়ে পড়েছিল উদাসীন। এবং কিছু সংখ্যক সমাজপতিদের সৃষ্ট বিধি-নিষেধের নিগড়ে তারা পড়ে গিয়েছিল বাঁধা। ফলে প্রতাপের আধিপত্য বিস্তারকারী পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের হাতের পুতুল রূপে পরিগণিত হয়ে পড়েছিল। পুরুষ নারীকে নিজের প্রয়োজনে কখনও স্তুতি কখনও নিন্দা করেছে। তারা নারীকে গড়ে তুলেছে– অর্ধেক মানবী তুমি, অর্ধেক কল্পনা। অর্থাৎ নারী পুরো মানবী বা মানুষ নয়। তার অস্তিত্ব খণ্ড, অপূর্ণ।

এই কী নারীর চিরন্তন রূপ! যদি না হয় ? তবে কেমন ছিল নারীর পূর্ব পরিচিতি। এ প্রসঙ্গে চলে যেতে হয় একেবারে বৈদিক যুগে। তখন কেমন ছিল নারী পরিসর, তার চৈতন্যময় সত্তা কি ছিল দ্বিধাজর্জরিত কিংবা অপমানিত, বঞ্চিত ? না। এর প্রমাণ স্বরূপ আমরা ড.সুস্মিতা ঘোষের সাহায্য নিয়ে বলতে পারি –

"বৈদিক যুগের সমাজে নারীর প্রতি কোন রকম অশ্রদ্ধার ভাব দেখা যায় ? না। প্রাচীন আর্যঋষিরা অনুভব করেছিলেন যে, ব্যবহারিক জীবনে ও আধ্যাত্মিক জীবনে পুরুষের সঙ্গে নারীও সমান শক্তির অধিকারিণী।...

বৈদিক যুগে আর্যদের মধ্যে নারী শিক্ষার বিষয়ে অত্যন্ত আগ্রহ ও উৎসাহ দেখা যায়। বৈদিক মন্ত্রোচ্চারণে নারীর অধিকার ছিল এবং সে কারণে উপনয়ন বিধি পুরুষের মতো নারীর ক্ষেত্রেও অবশ্য কর্তব্য ছিল। শিক্ষারম্ভ করে তাঁরা সাধারণত ষোল-সতের বছর বয়স পর্যন্ত শিক্ষালাভের সুযোগ পেতেন। এরপর তাঁদের বিবাহ হতো।"[১]

অর্থাৎ দেখা যাচ্ছে নারী ও পুরুষের মধ্যে ধর্মীয়-সামাজিক-শৈক্ষিক পরিসরে তখন কোন পার্থক্য ছিল না। শুধু তাই নয়, নানা রকম ললিত কলাতেও তৎকালীন নারীরা অনেক পারদর্শিতা দেখিয়েছিলেন। সঙ্গীত ও নৃত্যে মেয়েরা পুরুষের থেকে অনেক বেশি এগিয়েছিল। বাল্যবিবাহ, সতীদাহপ্রথা কিংবা অন্য কোনওভাবে নারীরা অত্যচারিত ছিলনা। স্বভাবতই প্রশ্ন আসে তবে নারী তাদের সমস্ত রকম উন্নয়ন এবং অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত হল কখন ? কিংবা কখন কীভাবে নারী প্রান্তিকায়িত হয়ে চেতনসত্তা হওয়া সত্বেও প্রতিক্রিয়াহীন হয়ে গেল ? এ প্রসঙ্গেও ড. সুস্মিতা ঘোষের গ্রন্থ থেকেই বলা যায়–

"যজুর্বেদের সময় থেকেই নারীর প্রতি সমাজের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি পাল্টাতে শুরু করে। ধর্মের ক্ষেত্রে অনুষ্ঠানের আড়ম্বর ও জটিলতা বৃদ্ধি পেতে থাকে, ব্রাহ্মণ্য সম্প্রদায় নিজেদের আধিপত্য সম্বন্ধে বিশেষ উৎসাহী হন এবং এরই সঙ্গে ছিল অনার্য সংস্কৃতির সংমিশ্রণ। তখন থেকে শুরু হয়েছিল ন্যায্য অধিকার থেকে নারীদের বঞ্চিত করার প্রচেষ্টা। যজ্ঞকর্মে নারীর অধিকার ও শিক্ষার অধিকার হ্রাস পেতে থাকে। ঋগ্বেদের পরবর্তী সময়ে 'মিথ্যাচারিণী', 'দুর্ভাগ্যস্বরূপিণী', 'কন্যাসন্তান অভিশাপ' ইত্যাদি অবমাননাকর শব্দগুলি নারীদের সম্পর্কে বৈদিক সাহিত্যে ব্যবহৃত হতে দেখা যায়।

সমাজে নারীজাতির মর্যাদা ধীরে ধীরে কমে আসায় স্ত্রী শিক্ষার বিরোধিতা

করে তাদের শিক্ষার অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করার জন্য তৎকালীন সমাজপতিরা শাস্ত্রের দোহাই দিয়ে বলেন–

১) শাস্ত্রে স্ত্রী শিক্ষার কোন উল্লেখ নেই ।

২) মেয়েরা লেখাপড়া শিখলে ব্যভিচারিণী হয় এবং স্বামী ও অন্যান্য গুরুজনদের অবজ্ঞা করতে শেখে।

৩) মেয়েদের অর্থ উপার্জন করতে হয় না বলে তাদের বিদ্যা শিক্ষারও কোন প্রয়োজন নেই।"[২]

এভাবে শাস্ত্র, ধর্ম, সামাজিক বিধি-নিষেধ, অলিখিত সংস্কার-কুসংস্কারকে প্রাধান্য দিয়ে দিয়ে সমাজের এক বিরাট অংশ নারীকে চরম অসাম্য ও অন্ধকারের দিকে ঠেলে দেওয়া হয়েছিল, বঞ্চিত করা হয়েছিল সামাজিক এবং ব্যক্তিক সচেতনতা থেকে। 'স্বামী' 'শ্বশুরবাড়ি' নামক শব্দগুলি মেয়েদের পঙ্গুপ্রায় করে দিয়েছিল। স্বামীর আয়ুকমা, স্বামীর অসুস্থতা, স্বামীর মৃত্যু অর্থাৎ নারীর বৈধব্য ইত্যাদির ভয় দেখিয়ে মেয়েদের নানা কাজে বাধা দেওয়া হতো। অন্যদিকে আবার শ্বশুরবাড়িতে গেলে গাল খেতে হবে, লোকে মন্দ বলবে ইত্যাদি বলেও তাদের ইচ্ছেমতো কাজ করা থেকে বিরত রাখা হতো। মেয়েরা শুধু মেয়ে বলেই সাধারণ কাজ থেকে শুরু করে জীবনে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়ার মতো এক বিরাট অধ্যায় থেকেও ছিল বঞ্চিত।

লৈঙ্গিক বিন্যাসের ভিত্তিতেই সামাজিক এই নিয়ম মেয়েদের মেয়ে করে তুলেছে। একটি শিশু জন্মের সময় প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মানুযায়ী স্ত্রী লিঙ্গ বা পুরুষ লিঙ্গ নিয়ে জন্ম নেয়। সেজন্য সামাজিক-রাজনৈতিক-পারিবারিক-ধর্মীয়-শৈক্ষিক পরিবেশে চলার ক্ষেত্রে কোন পার্থক্য থাকতে পারে না। কিন্তু জন্মের পর থেকে ছেলেদেরকে একরকম এবং মেয়েদেরকে অন্যরকম চালচলন, কথাবার্তা, সাজপোশাক, খেলনার সামগ্রী ইত্যাদির মাধ্যমে পৃথক করে তোলা হয়। তাইতো তাত্ত্বিক সিমোন দ্য বোভোয়া বলেন–

"কেউ নারী হয়ে জন্মায় না, সমাজই তাকে নারী করে তোলে।"[৩]

আমাদের সমাজ ব্যবস্থায় দেখতে পাই নারী শিশুকালে পিতার, যৌবনে স্বামীর এবং বৃদ্ধাবস্থায় পুত্রের অধীন। এই সামাজিক বিধি পিতৃতন্ত্রের আধিপত্যকেই সর্বত্র বহাল রাখে, আর নারী অনায়াসে সামাজিক সেই বিধিকে মেনে নিতে থাকে। সেই থেকে পিতৃতন্ত্র বুঝে নেয় এবং দৃঢ় নিশ্চয় হয় যে নারীর উপর রয়েছে তাদের পূর্ণ অধিকার। ঘরের আর পাঁচটা জিনিসের মতোই নারী পুরুষের ব্যবহার্য সামগ্রী মাত্র হয়ে যায়। বিবাহের কালে অন্যান্য সামগ্রী

যেমন– তিল, হরিতকী, থালা, বাসন, গরু, ভূমি, সোনা ইত্যাদি দান করা হয় তেমনি নারীকেও দান করা হয় । নারী এক পুরুষ থেকে অন্য পুরুষে অর্থাৎ বাবা, দাদা কিংবা তৎস্থানীয় ব্যক্তিপুরুষের হাত থেকে স্বামীতে হস্তান্তরিত হয়। আর সেই থেকে স্বামী হয়ে ওঠে তার জীবনের সর্বময় কর্তা। স্বামীর ইচ্ছা-অনিচ্ছায় তার জীবনের প্রতিটি পদক্ষেপ নির্ধারিত হয়। এভাবে নারীর উপর পিতৃতন্ত্রের আধিপত্য স্বত:সিদ্ধ এবং সামাজিক স্বীকৃতি পেয়ে যায়। আর সেই স্বীকৃতি থেকে এবং স্বীকৃতিজাত অধিকার থেকে জন্ম নেয় নারীকে সম্পূর্ণরূপে শাসনের এবং প্রয়োজনে পীড়নের স্বীকৃতিটুকুও ।

অপরদিকে এই সত্যটুকুও স্বীকার করতে হয় যে যেখানে পীড়ন, সেখানেই প্রতিবাদ। তাই পীড়িত নারীর মনে জাগে দোলা, তারা প্রতিবাদ জানাবার ভাষা খোঁজে, পথ খোঁজে। ফলে প্রান্তিকায়িত, অত্যাচারিত নারীসমাজের গভীরে ক্ষোভ-যন্ত্রণা-প্রতিরোধ ভাষাহীন অন্ধকার ভেদ করে ধীরে ধীরে উচ্চারণের আলো দেখা দেয়। ধাপে ধাপে নারী বিরূপ বিশ্বে নিজের স্বতন্ত্র অস্তিত্বের স্বীকৃতি লাভ করতে উৎসাহী এবং প্রতিজ্ঞাবদ্ধ হয়। একদিনে বা স্বল্প সময়ে এই কার্য সম্পাদন হয়নি নিশ্চয়ই, দীর্ঘ সময় ও লড়াই হয়ে গেছে ইতিমধ্যে। সময়ের হিসেবে তবু বলতে হয় যে উনিশ শতকের শেষ দশকে নারীর নিজস্ব অভিজ্ঞান সন্ধান বিশিষ্ট চরিত্র অর্জন করতে শুরু করে।

নারীর নিজের অস্তিত্ব সম্পর্কে সচেতনতা, ব্যক্তিত্ব সম্পর্কে স্বীকৃতি লাভেচ্ছা এবং পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলায় অগ্রগামী হওয়া নিয়ে সাহিত্যতত্ত্ব গঠন এবং জীবনে এর প্রয়োগ হওয়ার বিষয়টি নি:সন্দেহে ইউরোপীয় সাহিত্য ও জীবনেই প্রথম রূপায়িত হয়েছিল। সকল সাহিত্যশিল্প ও তত্ত্বই পরবর্তীতে আমাদের সাহিত্যে এবং জীবনেও প্রসার লাভ করে। নারীচেতনাবাদী তত্ত্বও এর ব্যতিক্রম নয়। আজ তা ছড়িয়ে পড়েছে দেশে-দেশান্তরে। সাহিত্য চিন্তার বিভিন্ন ধারার সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়ে নারীচেতনাবাদ তাই এখন বিচিত্র পথের যাত্রী হয়ে উঠেছে। আমরা জানতে পারি, প্রতীচ্য তাত্ত্বিকগণ নারীচেতনাবাদকে গভীরতর ও ব্যাপকতর মাত্রা দান করেছেন বিশ শতকের শেষ পাঁচ দশক জুড়ে। লিঙ্গভিত্তিক সমাজে যৌন নির্যাতনের প্রতিবাদের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে, নারীর সবধরনের শারীরিক, মানসিক ও আত্মিক অভিজ্ঞতা সাহিত্যিক অভিব্যক্তি দাবি করছে। ফলে নারীচেতনাবাদ একরৈখিক নয়, বহুস্বরিক দ্যোতনায় দ্যোতিত।

নারীচেতনাবাদের প্রাথমিক পর্যায়ে দেখা গেছে সামাজিক, সাংস্কৃতিক,

রাজনৈতিক ও নান্দনিক প্রতিবেদন, অচঞ্চল-অনড় ধারাবাহিকতার বিরুদ্ধে বিক্ষোভ এবং যথাপ্রাপ্ত পরিস্থিতি সম্পর্কে তীক্ষ্ণ প্রশ্ন উত্থাপন। নারী সম্পর্কে পুরুষতন্ত্রের গড়ে তোলা কিছু কিছু ধারণা, সংজ্ঞা ও সিদ্ধান্তকে তখন প্রত্যাখ্যান করার প্রয়োজন মনে করেছিলেন তাত্ত্বিকরা। তাঁরা বিভিন্ন তত্ত্বের প্রয়োগে দেখতে পেয়েছিলেন আধিপত্যপ্রবণ মানসিকতার উদ্ধত কিংবা বিকৃত অভিব্যক্তি। ফলে তাঁরা নারীচেতনা নিষ্পন্ন সন্দর্ভ, নন্দন ও জীবনসত্যকে গুরুত্বের সঙ্গে মান্যতা দিলেন। পুরুষস্রোতে তৈরি সাহিত্যধারা থেকে স্বতন্ত্র সাহিত্যধারা নির্মাণেও তাঁরা প্রয়াসী হয়েছিলেন। তাছাড়া পুরুষের প্রতিবেদনকে পুনঃপাঠের মধ্য দিয়ে প্রান্তিকায়িত নারীসত্তার আর্তি ও যন্ত্রণা, স্বপ্নভঙ্গ ও পরাজয়, দহন ও অবলুপ্তিকে আবিষ্কার করতে শেখেন ও শেখান অন্তর্ঘাতের কৃৎকৌশলকে কাজে লাগিয়ে। এ প্রসঙ্গে তাঁরা জাক দেরিদার বিনির্মাণবাদ ও জাক লাঁকার আকরণোত্তরবাদকে যথেষ্ট মর্যাদার চোখে দেখেছেন। তাই নারীচেতনাবাদীতত্ত্ব এই দুই তত্ত্বচিন্তাকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে নিজেরই ঋদ্ধি ঘটিয়েছে। এই দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে সমাজের সর্বত্র ছড়িয়ে পড়েছিলেন নারীরা নিজেদের জন্য নির্দিষ্ট আকরণকে ডিঙিয়ে। যে শিক্ষা ছিল নারীর জন্য নিষিদ্ধ, সেই শিক্ষার আলোকে অনেকেই জয় করে নিতে শিখেছিলেন তাঁদের নিজেদের ইচ্ছাকে, পৌঁছে যেতে পেরেছিলেন আপন আপন গন্তব্যে। রাজনীতি, সঙ্গীত, ক্রীড়া, চলচ্চিত্র, শিক্ষা, সেবা ও ত্যাগব্রত, বিজ্ঞান, সাহিত্য ইত্যাদি নানা ক্ষেত্রে প্রসারিত হয়েছে নারী পরিসর। ফলে আমরা পেয়ে যাই প্রতিভাসম্পন্ন প্রতিভাদেবী সিং পাটিল ও ইন্দিরা গান্ধীর মতো রাজনৈতিক নারীব্যক্তিত্বদের। পাই সঙ্গীত ও ক্রীড়াঙ্গনে লতা মাঙ্গেশকর, অনুরাধা পোড়ওয়াল, পি.টি. ঊষা, সানিয়া মির্জাদের। সেবা ও ত্যাগব্রতের মন্ত্রে দীক্ষিত হয়ে নিজেদের জীবনকে সমাজ কল্যাণের জন্য সমর্পণ করে নারীর ব্যক্তিত্ব ও মহিমময়ী রূপের প্রকাশ ঘটিয়েছিলেন শ্রীশ্রীমা সারদাদেবী, মাদার টেরেসা, রানী রাসমণি, ভগিনী নিবেদিতার মতো নমস্য নারীরা। এমন কোনো দিক নেই যেখানে নারী প্রতিভার, নারী ব্যক্তিত্বের চমৎকারিত্ব ধরা পড়ে না আমাদের সমাজে। ধর্মীয়, সামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে তো বটেই, মনোরঞ্জনের জগতেও নারীদের সম্মানজনক ব্যক্তিত্ব প্রদর্শনের অবকাশ রয়েছে। চলচ্চিত্র জগতের বিখ্যাত অভিনেত্রী চিরলাস্যময়ী হেমা মালিনী যেমন আছেন তেমনি আছেন পদ্মশ্রী অভিনেত্রী শ্রীদেবী। আবার দেশসেবার ক্ষেত্রে সক্রিয় ভূমিকায় ছিলেন রানী লক্ষ্মীবাঈ, কনকলতা প্রমুখ নারীগণ। তাঁদের জীবন আজ আর তাদের হয়ে থাকেনি। তাঁদের জীবন হয়ে উঠেছে সকলের জন্য গর্বের আধার। এভাবে প্রসারিত হতে দেখা যায় নারীর পারিবারিক, সামাজিক, সাংস্কৃতিক, রাজনৈতিক জীবন। নারী

আজ নিজেকে নিয়ে, সমাজকে নিয়ে ভাবার ক্ষেত্র পেয়েছে। তার চিন্তা চেতনাকে বিজ্ঞানসম্মতভাবে প্রকাশের পথ পেয়েছে। মাটির পৃথিবী ছাড়িয়ে আজ নারী মহাকাশে পাড়ি দিতেও হয়েছে সক্ষম। জীবন-আকাঙ্ক্ষার সর্বোচ্চ বিন্দুটুকুও অনুভব করার, উপভোগ করার তাগিদে তাই কল্পনা চাওলা, সুনীতা উইলিয়ামের মতো নারীরা বিশ্ব পরিচিতি লাভে সমর্থ হয়েছেন। কিন্তু অত্যন্ত পরিতাপের বিষয় এই, যেখানে নারী আকাশ পর্যন্ত জয় করতে সক্ষম সেখানে নারী হওয়ার দুর্ভাগ্যকে জয় করতে অক্ষম। লিঙ্গবাদী সমাজে পুরুষতান্ত্রিক জঘন্য লালসার শিকার হতে হয় নারীকে আজও বাসে, ট্রামে, রাজপথে, কর্মক্ষেত্রে, পরিবারে–সর্বত্র। পত্র-পত্রিকা-দূরদর্শন ইত্যাদি সংবাদমাধ্যমে চোখ রাখলে দেখা যায় প্রতিদিনই কোথাও না কোথাও ঘটে চলেছে নারীনির্যাতন, নারীধর্ষণ, এমনিক শিশুধর্ষণও। যৌন লালসার শিকার হতে হচ্ছে নারীকে ঘরে বাইরে। স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সংগঠন, নারীবাদী সংস্থা, ধর্মীয় উপদেশ, আইনি ব্যবস্থা সমস্ত কিছুকে বুড়ো আঙ্গুল দেখিয়ে একাংশ ঘৃণ্য ব্যক্তিবর্গ আজও তাদের লৈঙ্গিক প্রতাপের আধিপত্য প্রমাণে সক্রিয় থাকে। প্রতিদিন দেশে-বিদেশে ঘটে যাওয়া নারীধর্ষণ এবং নারীনির্যাতনের ঘটনার পরিসমাপ্তির জন্য আইনি ব্যবস্থা, সমাজ সচেতনতা ইত্যাদির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নারীর আত্মরক্ষার জন্য সচেষ্ট হওয়া একান্ত প্রয়োজন। একমাত্র নারী যেদিন নিজেকে নিজে রক্ষার বর্ম পরিধান করতে পারবে সেদিনই নারীনির্যাতনের অবসান হবে। এ কাজের শুভসূচনার ইঙ্গিত পেলাম 'দৈনিক যুগশঙ্খ' পত্রিকায় এক সংবাদ পাঠে। 'হেনস্থা রুখলেন সাহসী দুই কন্যা'শিরোনামের সংবাদটি এ প্রসঙ্গে উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে। সেই দুই কন্যার একজন জাতীয় স্তরের কবাডি চ্যাম্পিয়ন হর্ষাল মোরে। কোচির থানেতে বাস করেন। আর অন্যজন হলেন মহারাষ্ট্রের আদিবাসী অধ্যুষিত ওয়াদা এলাকার এক নাবালিকা। সেই নাবালিকার মার্শাল আর্টস জানা ছিল। ওরা দু'জনেই দুই পরিস্থিতিতে নারীদের উত্যক্ত করতে থাকা যুবক-পুরুষদের বেধড়ক পিটিয়ে উপযুক্ত শাস্তি দিয়েছেন। সংবাদ প্রতিবেদক লিখেছিলেন–।

"থানে, কোচি, ৫ এপ্রিল, (সংবাদ সংস্থা) : একজন কবাডি চ্যাম্পিয়ন। অন্যজন নাবালিকা, জানে মার্শাল আর্টস। রাস্তায় তাদের উত্যক্ত করার ফল হাতে নাতে পেল তিন ব্যক্তি। দুই সাহসিনীর হাতে বেদম পিটুনি খেল তারা।"[৪]

সমাজের বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে নারীর দ্বৈত রূপ লক্ষ্য করা যায়। সাহিত্যও এক্ষেত্রে ব্যতিক্রম নয়। সাহিত্যে নারীর কথা, নারীর ভাষা, নারীর জন্য লেখা, নারীর হয়ে লেখার ক্ষেত্র প্রসারিত করতে তরঙ্গ উঠেছে। পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের

পাঠকৃতিতে তাঁরা আর নি:শ্বাস নিতে পারছিলেন না ভালোভাবে। তাই তাঁরা চেয়েছিলেন নিজেদের মতো করে বাঁচতে, প্রাণ খুলে নি:শ্বাস নিতে। এমনই মনোভাব নিয়ে কলম ধরেছিলেন অনেকে। আশাপূর্ণা দেবী তাঁদের মধ্যে অন্যতম। তিনি সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে নারী পরিসরের পরিবর্তন সাধন করলেন। নারীকে নিজের প্রতি হতে থাকা হেনস্থা রুখবার যথাসম্ভব ব্যবস্থা নিজে থেকে করার শক্তিতে বিশ্বাসী করে তুললেন। এরকমই একটি নারীচেতনাস্ফুরিত প্রতিবেদন 'জবর দখল'। জ্ঞানপীঠ এবং রবীন্দ্র পুরস্কারপ্রাপ্ত আশাপূর্ণা দেবীর উক্ত উপন্যাসটিতে নারীচরিত্র নির্মিতির মধ্য দিয়ে লিঙ্গবাদী সমাজে নারীর প্রতিষ্ঠাকে আমরা খুঁজে পেতে পারি।

আশাপূর্ণা দেবীর অনেক উপন্যাস রয়েছে। বহুচর্চিত ত্রয়ী উপন্যাস–'প্রথম প্রতিশ্রুতি','সুবর্ণলতা','বকুল কথা'র মতো বিখ্যাত প্রতিবেদনগুলি। তবে 'জবর দখল'উপন্যাসটিকে বেছে নিলাম কেন ? এর দুটো কারণ বিদ্যমান। এক, আশাপূর্ণা দেবীর বিভিন্ন উপন্যাস নিয়ে বিবিধ আলোচনা হয়েছে। হাতে এসেছে তাঁর শতবর্ষ পর্যালোচনা উপলক্ষে তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য সম্পাদিত 'আশাপূর্ণা : নারী পরিসর গ্রন্থটি। কিন্তু কোথাও 'জবর দখল'-এর কোনো আলোচনা পেলাম না । তাই অনালোচিত অবজ্ঞেয় গ্রন্থটি আমাকে আকর্ষণ করে। দুই, কাহিনীর নায়িকা কালীর অসামান্য বলিষ্ঠ চরিত্র। সে-ই উপন্যাসটির মূল চরিত্র। কালীকে দিয়ে উপন্যাসের শুরু, কালীকে দিয়েই সমাপ্তি টেনেছেন আশাপূর্ণা দেবী। বিচিত্র চরিত্রের ভিড়ে কিংবা ঘটনার ও পরিস্থিতির টালমাটাল অবস্থায় সে হারিয়ে যায় না, বরং একক ঔজ্জ্বল্যে দ্যুতিময়।

কালী এবং তার বাবা ব্রজ কয়াল, এই বাপ-মেয়েতেই তাদের সংসার। একদা ব্রজর সংসারে স্ত্রী, মা, বাবা, ভাই, বোন সকলে ভরপুর ছিল। তারা সবাই মারা গেছে মড়কে। সে অনেকদিনের কথা এবং সেই থেকে ছোট শিশুকন্যাকে নিয়েই তার সংসার। বাবার অতিরিক্ত আদরে আর খাবারের অপরিমিততায় শিশুকন্যাটি সাত সকালেই বাড়-বাড়ন্ত হয়ে ধাড়ি পাহাড় মেয়ে হয়ে উঠেছে। শুধু দৈহিক দিক থেকেই নয়, মৌখিক ভাবেও সে ছিল মুখরা। সেই ছেলেবেলাতেই তার সম্পর্কে পাওয়া যায়–

"লোকে ওই ছোট্ট মেয়েটার মুখে পাকা পাকা কথা শুনে মজা পেত খুব । বাক ফোঁটার কাল থেকেই কালী তার বাপের কথার সঙ্গী, দ্বিতীয় প্রাণী ঘরে না থাকায় মেয়ের সঙ্গেই ছিল তার সব কথা। অতিরিক্ত খেয়ে খেয়ে কালী সাত সকালেই বাড়ন্তও হয়ে উঠেছিল বেশ,আর অতিরিক্ত কথা কয়েকয়ে হয়ে

উঠেছিল গিন্নী।"[৫]

সেই গিন্নী মেয়েকে বিয়ে থা দিয়ে সত্যিকারের গৃহিণী করে তোলার জন্য ব্রজ পোস্টঅফিসে খাতা খুলে টাকাও জমাতে শুরু করেছিল। কিন্তু সে সমস্ত ভেসে গেল বানে। ভিটেমাটি দোকান-পাট সব ছেড়ে ছুড়ে বন্যায় ভেসে ভেসে এসে উঠেছিল বীরভূম জেলার খুঁটিগাড়া গ্রামে। আশ্রয় পেয়েছিল সেখানকার একটি ঝুপড়িতে। ঝুপড়িগুলোতে মানুষ বাস করলেও এগুলি পাখির বাসার মতোই ভাঙা ক্যানেস্ত্রা, কাঁটা বাঁশ, ছেঁড়া চট, কাঠি-খসা মাদুর, মচকানো ঝুড়ি, চটা-ওঠা রবার ক্লথ, উলিডুলি ক্যাম্বিসের টুকরো ইত্যাদি কুড়োনো মালে বোঝাই, অথচ কালী এর মধ্যে বসেই চুলে 'ভাবন' করে, মুখে পাউডার মাখে, কপালে টিপ আঁকে, পায়ে আলতা লাগায়, সায়া-ব্লাউজের উপর শাড়ি পেঁচিয়ে পরে। গলায় পুঁতির মালা ও খোঁপায় ফুল লাগিয়ে শৃঙ্গার করে। বর্তমান পরিবেশে নারীর চালচলনে কোন বাধ্যবাধকতা নেই কালী তা জানে।

ব্রজর আদি বাড়ি ছিল মেদিনীপুর। সেখানকার স্মৃতি ব্রজকে ব্যথিত করে, হতাশ করে। বাবাকে হতাশ বা নিরাশ হতে দেখলে কালী মোটেই সহ্য করতে পারে না। তবু সহানুভূতি দেখায় না, বাবাকে সান্ত্বনা দেয় না। বাবার মনকে দুর্বল না করে শক্ত হয়ে ওঠার জন্য শাসিয়ে বলে–

"খবরদার বলে দিচ্ছি বাবা, তোমার ওই বাপ-পিতেমোর ভিটের জন্যে নিঃশ্বেস ফেলবে নি, আর কি ছিল, কি ছিল বলে হায় হায় করবে নি, মনে কর তোমার কিছু ছেল না। এই মাত্তর পৃথিবীতে এসে পড়লে তুমি একটা ধাড়ি পাহাড় মেয়ে ঘাড়ে করে।"[৬]

কালীর এই শাসানিতে কাজ হয়, ব্রজ ঘুরে দাঁড়ায়, নিজের ও মেয়ের অন্নসংস্থানের কাজে লাগে। 'জব ওয়ার্ক' করে, আয় ভালোই হয়। কখনো গার্ড সাহেবের ফরমাস খাটা, কখনো স্টেশন মাস্টারের, কখনো টিকিট বাছাইয়ের কাজ, কখনো ইঞ্জিনের কয়লা এগিয়ে দেওয়া ইত্যাদি করে ব্রজ। বাঁধা মাইনের কাজ না করলেও তার ভালই চলে। তবে এই সমস্ত কিছুর পেছনে রয়েছে তার ধিঙ্গি মেয়ে কালী। লেখিকা বলেন–

"সর্বস্বান্ত ব্রজ কয়াল আবার যে এখন বুকে বল, আর কোমরে গামছা বেঁধে পেটের ভাতের জোগাড় করছে, সে শুধু ওই মেয়ের শিরদাঁড়ার জোরে, অথবা বলতে পারা যায় তার বাক্যির জোরে।"[৭]

বাক্যির জোরে অনেক কিছুই করেছে কালী। বিনা টিকিটে রেলগাড়ি

চড়ে এখান থেকে ওখানে যাওয়া, টিকিট চেকারের মোকাবিলা করা, আইনি-বেআইনি বিষয় চোখে আঙ্গুল দিয়ে দেখিয়ে দেওয়া, সাহস দেখিয়ে সত্য বলা ইত্যাদির জন্যই কালী নিজের অবস্থানকে স্বতন্ত্র বলে চিহ্নিত করতে পেরেছে। লেখিকা জানান–

"এই কালী।

কাজেই এই 'বুঝড়ি নগরে'ও আপন খ্যাতি বিস্তার করতে বেশীদিন সময় লাগেনি তার।

কালী এখন সর্বজন পরিচিতা।"[৮]

এই পরিচিতি অর্জনে কালীর বেশিদিন ব্যয় করতে হয়নি। নতুন জায়গায়, নতুন পরিবেশে কালী ও তার পিতার সংসারে কে যে 'কর্তা' তাই বুঝে ওঠা যায় না। সব বিষয়ে কালীর সচেতনতা, কর্মক্ষমতা, সাহস, দৃঢ়তা, যুক্তিনিষ্ঠা কালীকে সাধারণ নারীর থেকে স্বতন্ত্র বলে চিহ্নিত করেছে। তাই পাওয়া যায় দ্বিধাপূর্ণ বয়ান–

"বাড়ির আসল কর্তা কে, ব্রজ না কালী, এ বিষয়ে আশপাশের বাসিন্দাদের সংশয় আছে।"[৯]

পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজে পুরুষেরাই বাড়ির কর্তা হয়ে থাকেন। কিন্তু এখানে কালী কর্তা হতে পারে বলে যে সংশয় প্রকাশ হচ্ছে সেখানেই নারীর নিজস্বতা, নারীর চেতনার স্ফুরণ ঘটেছে । ভাষা ব্যবহারের ক্ষেত্রেও লক্ষ্য করা যায় একজন পুরুষ যে সকল বাক্য ব্যবহার করতে পারে, কালীও পারে তা। লেখিকার কালীকে নিয়ে এভাবে এগিয়ে চলা স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই নারীচেতনাবাদে উদ্বুদ্ধ নারীপরিসরকেই সামনের পানে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া ।

আশাপূর্ণা দেবীর বহু উপন্যাসে মধ্যবিত্ত একান্নবর্তী পরিবার এবং তাতে স্থিত নারীবিশ্বের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। কিন্তু এই উপন্যাসটির কাহিনীতে ভিন্নতা রয়েছে। এখানে কখনও ইঙ্গিতে কখনও স্পষ্টতই দু'টি সমাজের ছবি ফুটে উঠেছে। ব্রজদের অতীত সমাজবাস্তবতা এবং বর্তমান সমাজবাস্তবতায় মানুষের অবস্থান দেখিয়েছেন লেখিকা। বিশেষ করে সমাজবাস্তবতায় নারীর স্বতন্ত্র অবস্থান তাঁর চিন্তার বিষয়। তিনি নারীকে দিয়েই বুঝিয়ে দেন দুই সমাজ পরিবেশের পার্থক্য প্রতীতিকে। ভিটে মাটি ছেড়ে আসা বাবার স্মৃতি উদ্বেল ভাবকে তাড়ানোর জন্য কালী বলে–

"এখেনে তোমার বেঁচে থাকার টেক্‌সো খাজনা নেই। আর দেশে-গাঁয়ে

উঠতে বসতে টেকসো । জগৎ-সংসারে যে যেখানে আছে তাদের মান রাখ আর হাত জোড় করে থাক, ওই বুঝি কার গোঁসা হল, ওই বুঝি কার ক্রোধ হল। ... এখেনে তোমায় কেউ ধিক্ দিতে আসছে– ব্রোজো তুই এখনো মেয়ের বে দিলিনে ? ধাড়ি-ধিঙ্গী মেয়ে নিয়ে এখনো বসে আচিস ?"[১০]

বিয়ে দিতে না পারলে সমাজের কটাক্ষ সইতে হয় না খুঁটিগাড়া গ্রামে। তাছাড়া এখানে আপন মনে সাজসজ্জাও করা যায়, যা মেদিনীপুরের পরিবেশে ছিল নিন্দার–

"খোঁপায় ফুলটা কালী এই বীরভূমে এসে শিখেছে। দেশে থাকতে এ সাজ ছিল না, ওতে নিন্দে ছিল।"[১১]

কালী চরিত্রটিকে নিজের মতো করে প্রকাশ করার জন্য স্থান পরিবেশ বদলের প্রয়োজন পড়েছিল লেখিকার। কালীদের পূর্ব পরিবেশে যে তা সম্ভব ছিল না লেখিকা তা পাঠকের অবগতির জন্য জানিয়েও নিয়েছেন এভাবে। নারীকে প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য, নারীকে নারী থেকে মানুষ হয়ে ওঠার জন্য তার সমাজ পরিবেশের বদল যে অবশ্যই প্রয়োজন এই ব্যঞ্জনাময় বার্তাটি আমরা এখানে পাই। স্থানান্তরের মাধ্যমে এ কাজ আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে সাধিত হলেও মূলত তা সমাজ পরিবেশের যথাস্থিত অবস্থানকে পরিবর্তনের সুরেই গেঁথে দেওয়া হয়েছে।

নারীর কলমে নারীর নিজস্বতাকে কতদূর সাবলীলভাবে ধরা যায় আশাপূর্ণা দেবী তা দেখিয়েছেন। নায়িকা কালীকে ঘিরেই কাহিনী আবর্তিত হয়েছে। তার শারীরিক উপস্থিতি কিংবা অনুপস্থিতিতেই অন্য সকল চরিত্র উঠে এসেছে। খোলামেলা স্বভাবের কালীর যা মনে, তা মুখে। লেখিকা নিজে থেকে বিশ্লেষণ করে করে যেমন এঁকেছেন তাকে, তেমনি, তার ক্রিয়া-প্রতিক্রিয়ার দ্বৈততাকেও স্পষ্ট করেছেন প্রতিবেদনে। 'ডোন্ট কেয়ার' ভাবটা কালী চরিত্রের এক বিশেষ দিক। রাগলে সে অনায়াসে বাবাকে নাম ধরে ডাকতে পারে, আবার বাবার সম্পর্কে কেউ অবজ্ঞাপূর্ণ কথা বললে তাকেও ছেড়ে কথা বলে না। মস্তান মার্কা পবন আর শয়তানী বুদ্ধিতে পটু জগৎ সাহা সে ক্ষেত্রে তার কাছে সমান। পবনকে যেমন শাসিয়ে রাখে–

"আবার বাবাকে যদি কোনদিন একথা বলবি, তোর সঙ্গে হয়ে যাবে।"[১২]

তেমনি জগৎ সাহা তার বাবার নাম ধরে বললে কড়া গলায় বলে–

"আপনি আমার বাবার নাম ধরে বলছেন যে ?... ভদ্রলোক ভদ্রলোককে

বাবুই বলে।

ছোটলোকের কথা আলাদা।[১৩]

'ছোটলোক' কথাটার উপরে জোর দিয়ে কালী জগৎ সাহার পরিচিতিকেই স্পষ্ট করে। তাছাড়া দেখতে পাই–

"একশো পুরুষের মাঝখানে বসে আড্ডা দিতে পারে কালী আর একটা পুরুষের মত! ব্রজ কয়াল তো নিজেই ওই ডাকাবুকো মেয়ের ছত্রছায়ায় থাকে।"[১৪]

কিন্তু তাই বলে কালী নির্দয় নয়, সে তার বাবা এবং পবন দুইয়ের ভালোর জন্যই চিন্তা করে। বাবার আনন্দের জন্য সার্ট কিনে আনে, বাবাকে পূর্বস্মৃতিচারণ থেকে সরিয়ে এনে বর্তমান পরিস্থিতির সঙ্গে সানন্দে খাপ খাইয়ে নেবার কথা বলে। আবার হিম লেগে পবনের শরীর খারাপ হবে বলে কড়া হুকুম করে হাট থেকে 'সুয়েটার' কিনে আনার জন্য। ভালোবাসা, আনন্দ, সহজতার মতো স্বাভাবিক সুকুমার প্রবৃত্তিগুলিও তার চরিত্রের মাধুর্যকে বর্ধিত করে ।

কোমলে-কঠোরে গড়া কালীর মনটি ছিল উদার, বৃহৎ ও মহৎ। সে সংকীর্ণ নোংরা খুঁটিগাড়া গ্রামের ঝুপড়িতে বাস করেও বৃহত্তর জগতে পাড়ি দিতে চায়। তার মন অনেক দূরে কোথাও ভেসে যেতে চায়, দূর অরণ্যের ঘ্রাণ নিতে চায়, দূর আকাশের তারা গুনতে চায় । সমুদ্রের স্বপ্ন দেখে সে। আর সেই স্বপ্নকে বাস্তবায়িত করার জন্য সে পবনকে স্বতন্ত্র ব্যবসা করার উৎসাহ ও পরামর্শ দেয়। সে চায় পবন তাকে বিয়ে করার আগে বোলপুরে নিজস্ব দোকান খুলুক, দাদা-বৌদির সংসার থেকে মুক্তি পাক। মুখকাটা কালী সাফ জানিয়ে দেয় পবনের বৌদির সঙ্গে এক সংসারে তার থাকা হবে না। কিন্তু বয়স কারোর জন্য অপেক্ষা করে থাকে না। বয়স যখন অনেকটাই পেরিয়ে যাচ্ছিল তখন কালীর এই আধুনিক যুক্তিনিষ্ঠ নারীমনকে আর বুঝেও বুঝে উঠতে পারছিল না পবন । কিছুটা বিরক্ত হয়েই সে কালীকে বলে–

"তোর যে আবার ওই এক বায়নাক্কা। বাপের কালে শুনিনি শহর বাজারে দোকান দিতে না পারলে পুরুষের বিয়ে হয় না।[১৫]

কালীর এই বায়নাক্কা যে খামখেয়ালী নয়, জীবনের প্রতি পদক্ষেপে এর যে প্রয়োজনীয়তা রয়েছে তা ভালোভাবেই জানে কালী । তাই সে গম্ভীরভাবে নিজের মনোভাব ব্যক্ত করে–

"দোকানের কথা নয় পবন, ওটা উপলখ্যি, নিজের পায়ে দাঁড়ানোর দরকার, সেটাই হচ্ছে কথা। দাদা-বৌদির সংসারে যে কেমন থাকিস তা তো

আর আমার জানতে বাকি নেই। এখন তোর সঙ্গে গিয়ে চাকরের বৌ চাকরানী হয়ে থাকতে হবে, এছাড়া আর কিছু না । কালীর দ্বারা ও পোষাবে নি, এই আমার সাদা বাংলা।"[১৬]

কালীর চারিত্রিক দৃঢ়তা, স্পষ্টবাদিতা ও আত্মসম্মানবোধ আমাদের সচকিত করে। উপন্যাস দেহের সর্বত্র কালীর চেতনাসঞ্জাত সুস্থ স্বচ্ছ প্রকাশে পাঠক আকর্ষিত হয়।

আধুনিক যুক্তিনিষ্ঠ, বুদ্ধিদীপ্ত, সাহসী, সপ্রতিভ নারী কালী। সে আত্মসচেতন। ঝুপড়িতে বাস করেও মনের তাগিদে গাঁইয়াপনা, শহুরেপনা ও ছোটলোক ভদ্রলোকের কথাবার্তার তারতম্য বুঝতে পারে। কথার মাঝে মাঝে সঠিক স্থানে ইংরেজি শব্দ ব্যবহার করা, জীবনযাপনের রুচিসম্মত শৈলী ইত্যাদি সম্পর্কেও সে অবগত। সবচেয়ে বেশি অবগত আর সচেতন 'মানুষ' জাতটার মত দেখতে শেয়াল-কুকুর সম্পর্কে। যারা সমাজে হয়তো বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তিত্ব কিন্তু কালীর দৃষ্টিতে তারা পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের লৈঙ্গিক প্রতাপের প্রতিভূ। ভালবাবু জগৎ সাহা, ডাক্তার বটুকে সে চেনে ও জানে। সুযোগ পেলেই জগৎ সাহা কালীকে জ্বালাতন করে। ব্রজর ঘরে ফিরতে রাত হবে, কালী একা আছে জেনে জগৎ চুপি চুপি সেখানে এসে ওঁৎ পেতেছে। কালীকে দেখতে পেয়েই ব্যঙ্গের হাসি হাসে। কালীর হাড় জ্বলে যায়, গা-টাও ছমছম করে ওঠে। কিন্তু প্রত্যুৎপন্নমতি কালী সেই ছমছমানিকে প্রশ্রয় না দিয়ে কায়দা করে পিছিয়ে পরিস্থিতির উপযোগী হয়ে ওঠে। আত্মস্থ হয়ে উদ্ধত গলায় জগৎ সাহার এখানে আসার কারণ জানতে চায়। জগৎ সাহা কুৎসিত ভঙ্গি আর নোংরা হাসির সঙ্গে কাশি মিশিয়ে বলে–

"একটু আগলাতাম। দিনকাল তো ভাল নয়। ভয় খেতে পারিস।"[১৭]

কিন্তু কালী মনে ভয় পেলেও বুকে বল মুখে তেজ দেখায় এবং জানিয়ে দেয় ভয় পাওয়ার কিছু নেই। টাঙি, কাঠ কাটার দা, মাছ কাটার বঁটি আর হাঁড়িতে গরম জল সবই রয়েছে। যে কেউ আসুক সে তার উপযুক্ত ফল পেয়েই যাবে। লুব্ধ পুরুষ মালবাবু তাকে বাগে আনতে পারে না, উল্টো নিজেই ভয় পেয়ে চলে যায়। লৈঙ্গিক পীড়নের সাধ নিয়ে এসেছে মালবাবু, কিন্তু কালীর মুখের তোড়ের কাছে শুধু আজেবাজে দুটো কথায় মন ভিজিয়ে চলে যেতে বাধ্য হয় ।

কালীর মত দস্যি বেপরোয়া মুখরা যথেচ্ছ বিহারিণী বেওয়ারিশ মেয়ের দিকে বটু ডাক্তারেরও নজর আছে। কিন্তু কালী আত্মরক্ষার সমস্ত রকম ব্যবস্থা

করে রাখে বলে তার দিকে হাত বাড়ানোর সাহস করতে পারে না । দুষ্টবুদ্ধি, কুরুচিপূর্ণ যৌনলালসা তাড়িত পুরুষদের ব্যর্থকাম করে কালী তার ক্রিয়া-প্রতিক্রিয়ার মধ্য দিয়ে। লেখিকা সবিশেষ যত্ন নিয়ে চরিত্রটিকে সবদিক থেকেই অনন্য করে তুলেছেন। এই অনন্য চরিত্রটির বিয়ের পর্বে প্রবেশের পূর্বে 'কনে দেখার' ব্যাপারটিও লেখিকা একটু স্বতন্ত্র করে তুলে এনেছেন। কনে দেখার প্রচলিত রীতিকে উপড়ে ফেলে দিয়েছেন। কালীর মতো মেয়েকে আর পাঁচটি মেয়ের মতো জড়োসড়ো ভাবে চুপটি করে বরপক্ষের সামনে বসিয়ে দেওয়া যেন কোনভাবেই সাজে না। লেখিকা তাই তাকে বরের সামনে নিয়ে আসার প্রেক্ষাপটটিও তৈরী করেছেন সেভাবেই। সে কিছুই জানে না। মান্যিমান সুদাম নস্কর তার বাবার দেশের লোক, সেই সুবাদে তাদের এখানে এসেছে। আসার সময় সঙ্গে করে নিয়ে এসেছে মিষ্টি, ব্রজ লজ্জিত হয়। কিন্তু কালী তাতে লজ্জাবোধ করে না, বরং সুদাম নস্করের বিচক্ষণতার প্রশংসা করে সে বলে–

"ছিঃ দেবার কিছু নেই বাবা । উনি বিচক্ষণ ব্যক্তি, জানেন গরীবের সংসারে হঠাৎ গিয়ে পড়লে তারা অতিথিকে নিয়ে দিশেহারা হবে, তাই ব্যবস্থা সঙ্গেই নিয়ে এসেছেন।"[১৮]

এরকম সপ্রতিভ কালীকে দেখে নস্করের ভালই লাগে। তার মায়ের সংসারটাকে, এমনকি নিজেকেও সুদাম কারোর হাতে তুলে দিয়ে নিশ্চিত হতে চায় । আর কালীকে প্রথম দেখাতেই সে বুঝে নেয় কালীর দ্বারাই তা সম্ভব। কারণ তার কল্পনায় এমন 'দীর্ঘাঙ্গী দৃপ্তদীপ্ত' একটি মূর্তিই ছিল। আশাপূর্ণা দেবী কালী চরিত্রটি অত্যধিক মনোযোগ সহকারেই এঁকেছেন। লেখিকার সৃষ্ট নারীচরিত্র সর্বত্রই দীপ্ত হয়ে ওঠে, তথাপি কালীর সমগোত্রীয় চরিত্র যেন খুব কমই আছে ।

সমস্ত উপন্যাস জুড়ে কোথাও আমরা কালীকে বিচলিত হতে দেখিনি। দৃঢ়চেতাকালীকে এক জায়গায় শুধু একটু দ্বিধান্বিত দেখি। প্রত্যেক মানুষের জীবনেই কোন না কোন মোড়ে দ্বিধাগ্রস্ত হতে দেখা যায়, কালীর ক্ষেত্রেও তা হয়েছে। আর সেই দ্বিধাকে কাটিয়ে তার কাছে যা সঠিক লেগেছে, তার মন-বুদ্ধি-যুক্তি যাতে সায় দিয়েছে, সে তা-ই করেছে। পবন তার ভালোবাসার পাত্র, অথচ পবন সম্পর্কে ভাবতে গেলে সে তাকে 'ছেলেটাই' মনে করে। নিজের থেকে চার বছরের বড় পবনকে তার 'ছেলে মানুষ' বলেই মনে হয়। ফলে সে বুঝতে পারে না তার জীবনে পবনের মূল্য কতটুকু। আত্মবিশ্লেষণ করে নিজের ভালোবাসার গভীরতা মাপতে চায় কালী। কিন্তু কোনো সদুত্তর পায় না। পবনের

ভালোবাসার তীব্রতাকে সে দুরন্ত ছেলের বায়না বলে মনে করে। সুদামের সঙ্গে কালীর বিয়ে যখন ঠিক হয়ে যায়, তখন গায়ে হলুদের দিন পবন সুদামের মাথা ফাটিয়ে দেয় । জেলে যায় পবন আর সুদাম হাসপাতালে। এরপর সুদামএ বিয়েতে রাজী হবে কিনা, ব্রজ একথা বললে কালী বিচিত্র একটু হেসে জানায়–

"সুদাম রাজী হলেও তোমার মেয়ে আর রাজী হতে পারছে কই বাবা! যে হতভাগা আমার জন্যে খুন করে ফাঁসি যেতেও প্রস্তুত, তোমার মেয়ে তাকে একটু বিয়ে করে কেতার্থ করতে পারবে না ?"[১৯]

পবনের প্রতি দ্বিধাগ্রস্ত মনোভাবের পরিবর্তন ঘটে তার ভালোবাসার তরঙ্গে। আর সেখানে সঠিক সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়। নিজের জীবনের এই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সিদ্ধান্ত সে নিজেই নেয়। কারোর চাপ বা ইচ্ছার কাছে কালী নিজেকে বলি দিতে পারে না। তার বিবেক, তার সততা অটুট। কালীর জীবন অধ্যায়ের পর্যায়ে পর্যায়ে রয়েছে নানা বিভঙ্গ, রয়েছে নারী চেতনার বিচিত্র অভিব্যক্তির স্বত:সিদ্ধ প্রকাশ। লিঙ্গ ভিত্তিক সমাজে নারীর এই প্রকাশমানতা নি:সন্দেহে ঔপন্যাসিকের বিশেষ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির পরিচায়ক। লিঙ্গ ও নারীবাদী প্রেক্ষিতে উপন্যাসটিকে আলোচনা করে সংশয়মুক্ত হয়েই বলা যায় যে আলোচ্য উপন্যাসটি নারীচেতনাবাদের ক্ষেত্রকে আরো প্রসারিত করে নিয়ে যাওয়ার পথে এক মাইলস্টোন। বাড়ির কর্তা হওয়া, ছত্রছায়ায় কাউকে রাখা, প্রতিকূল পরিবেশে উপযুক্ত পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ, শয়তানদের সায়েস্তা করা ইত্যাদি সাধারণত পুরুষদের একচেটিয়া অধিকার বলে মনে হয়, কিন্তু 'জবর দখল'-এর নায়িকা এ সমস্ত কিছুই করে গেছে অবলীলায়। সে তার অধিকারকে ছিনিয়ে নিয়েছে পুরুষতন্ত্রের আমলাদের কাছ থেকে। নারীর নিজস্ব অধিকার আদায় করে আপন স্বরূপের প্রতিষ্ঠায় উপন্যাসটি অনবদ্য ।

আকর গ্রন্থ :

জবর দখল : আশাপূর্ণা দেবী

সহায়ক গ্রন্থ :

১) আশাপূর্ণা– নারী পরিসর: সম্পাদক তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য
২) প্রতীচ্যের সাহিত্যতত্ত্ব: তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য
৩) নারীচেতনা: মননে ও সাহিত্যে: তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য
৪) কথাসাহিত্যে নারী পরিসর ও অন্যান্য: রামী চক্রবর্তী

সূত্র নির্দেশ :

১) বাংলায় নারীমুক্তি আন্দোলন এবং শ্রীশ্রীমা সারদাদেবী: সুস্মিতা ঘোষ, উদ্বোধন কার্যালয়, কলকাতা-৩, প্রথম সং : ২৯ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৯৯, ষষ্ঠ পুনর্মুদ্রণ, আগস্ট ২০০৯, পৃ-২

২) তদেব, পৃ-৩

৩) প্রতীচ্যের সাহিত্যতত্ত্ব : তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য, অমৃতলোক সাহিত্য পরিষদ, মেদিনীপুর, ৭২১১০১, প্রথম প্রকাশ : জানুয়ারী ১৯৯৭, পৃ ১১৯।

৪) দৈনিক যুগশঙ্খ-শিলচর, গুয়াহাটি ও ডিব্রুগড় থেকে একযোগে প্রকাশিত, শিলচর, শনিবার, ৬ এপ্রিল ২০১৩। পৃ : ৭, VOL. 18, ISSUE 328.

৫) জবর দখল আশাপূর্ণা দেবী, ভবানী পাবলিশিং কনসার্ন, ১ এইচ, রাধানাথ মল্লিক লেন, কল-১২, প্রথম প্রকাশ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৩৮৮, পৃ ৩ ।

৬) তদেব

৭) তদেব

৮) তদেব, পৃ ৫

৯) তদেব, পৃ ১

১০) তদেব, পৃ ৭

১১) তদেব, পৃ ১

১২) তদেব, পৃ ৭

১৩) তদেব, পৃ ১৬

১৪) তদেব, পৃ ৭

১৫) তদেব, পৃ ১১

১৬) তদেব, পৃ ১১

১৭) তদেব, পৃ ১৭

১৮) তদেব, পৃ ৩৪

১৯) তদেব, পৃ ৪৬।

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সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের 'সাতপুরুষ ডট কম' : সময়ের নবনির্মাণ

ডঃ রূপদত্তা রায়
সহকারী অধ্যাপিকা
বাংলা বিভাগ
নবীনচন্দ্র কলেজ, বদরপুর

সত্তরের দশক পেরিয়ে মধ্যবিত্ত ছুঁৎমার্গ ঔপন্যাসিক প্রতিবেদনে আর নেই যেহেতু, ফলে উপন্যাসে স্বাগত জানানো হলো প্রাকৃতায়ণকে, উত্তরায়ণ মনস্কতাকে। সর্বব্যাপী পণ্যায়ণের বিরুদ্ধে ঔপন্যাসিক জীবন ও জগতের নতুন ভাষ্যমুখর প্রতিবেদনকে করে তুললেন হাতিয়ার। তাঁদের হাতে বিনির্মিত হলো ইতিহাস, ঐতিহ্য, আখ্যান।

এই সময় কাহিনির মায়াকে প্রত্যাখ্যান করে যাঁরা কাহিনিহীন আখ্যান লিখছেন তাঁদের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়। তাঁর 'সাতপুরুষ ডট কম' স্বল্প দৈর্ঘ্যের উপন্যাস কিন্তু অনেকার্থদ্যোতনায় চিহ্নিত। অতীত বর্তমানের বেড়া ভেঙে দিয়ে ঐন্দ্রজালিক বাস্তবতার সৃষ্টি যেমন করা হয়েছে উপন্যাসে, তেমনি নয়া উপনিবেশবাদের ষড়যন্ত্র উন্মোচিত করে পাঠককে সচেতন করতে চেয়েছেন ঔপন্যাসিক।

এই নিবন্ধে বিশ্লেষণ করতে চেষ্টা করব, সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের 'সাতপুরুষ ডট কম' উপন্যাসে সময়কে অতীত-বর্তমানের মধ্যে দোদুল্যমান পেন্ডুলামের মতো ব্যবহার করে অথবা ঐন্দ্রজালিক বাস্তবতার প্রয়োগ করে লেখক কীভাবে নয়া ঔপনিবেশবাদের আগ্রাসন চিহ্নিত করেন, কীভাবে বর্তমানের যন্ত্র-প্রযুক্তি নির্ভর আত্মকেন্দ্রিক প্রজন্মের মুখ ও মুখোশ আলাদা করে দেন এবং কীভাবে প্রাতিষ্ঠানিকতার বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিরোধ গড়ে তোলেন।

(মূল শব্দ : নয়া ঔপনিবেশবাদ, অতীত ও বর্তমানের ভাঙাগড়া, ঐন্দ্রজালিক বাস্তবতা, প্রতিষ্ঠান বিরোধী আখ্যান)

যন্ত্রচালিত আজকের পৃথিবীতে সভ্যতার মানে কি নিষ্ঠুরতা, সম্পর্কহীনতা আর স্বার্থসিদ্ধির হীন চক্রান্ত, এই প্রশ্ন প্রত্যেক বিবেকবান মানুষকে পীড়িত

করছে। তাঁরা দেখছেন যন্ত্র প্রযুক্তির আস্ফালনের আড়ালে চতুর্দিকে ছড়িয়ে যাচ্ছে প্রতাপের দৃশ্য ও অদৃশ্য জাল। অতীতের সম্মান, ভবিষ্যতের স্বপ্ন হারিয়ে যাচ্ছে আত্মকেন্দ্রিক প্রযুক্তি সর্বস্ব বর্তমানে। স্বাভাবিক গতির অতিরিক্ত গতি আরোপ ও তথাকথিত প্রগতির সঙ্গে তাল মেলানোর চেষ্টা এ দুয়ের ফলে মানুষ ক্রমাগত একা থেকে আরো একা যাচ্ছে। জীবন থেকে হারিয়ে যাচ্ছে মানবতা বোধ, সম্পর্কের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা, সবধরনের দ্বিবাচনিকতা। নয়া উপনিবেশবাদ যন্ত্র প্রযুক্তিকে হাতিয়ার করে যে কোনো রকমের বৈচিত্র্য ছাঁটাই করে সব এক ধরনের ছাঁচে ঢালতে চায়। এরকম সময়ে যে কোনো সাহিত্যিকের কাছে দুটো পথ খোলা থাকে– প্রথম পথ, প্রতাপের ছত্রছায়ায় আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করে মনোরঞ্জক সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি। যে সাহিত্য মানুষের দৈনন্দিন জীবনের গ্লানি মুছে নেবে মনোরঞ্জনের নেশায়। নষ্ট করবে মানুষের স্বাধীন চিন্তন ও মনন শক্তি। আর দ্বিতীয় পথ হল, এমন সাহিত্য রচনা করা যা মানুষের মনের সুপ্তিকে ভেঙে দেবে। এ পথ কঠিন কারণ, আজকের এই দ্বিচারী সময়ে মানুষের মন কেবল ঘুমন্ত নয়, অনেকে জেগে ঘুমানোর অভিনয়ে ব্যস্ত। যে ঘুমিয়ে আছে তাকে জাগানো যায়, কিন্তু যে জেগে ঘুমের অভিনয় করছে তাকে জাগানো সোজা কথা নয় তাই দ্বিতীয় পথের পথিক লেখকদের লেখায় ক্রমাগত শান দিতে হয়,কারণ লেখাই তাঁদের আয়ুধ। প্রাতিষ্ঠানিকতার বিপ্রতীপে, ছাঁচে ঢালা বিশ্বব্যাপ্ত সমান্তরালতার বাইরে তাঁরা প্রাকৃতায়ন ও উত্তরায়ণ মনস্কতাকে প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে চান।

সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় তাঁর লেখক জীবনের প্রারম্ভ থেকেই দ্বিতীয় পথের পথিক–যিনি নিরন্তর সংগ্রামকে বেছে নিয়েছেন তাঁর সাহিত্য জীবনে। লেখা তাঁর কাছে সামাজিক দায়িত্ব। সত্তরের দশকে লেখক হিসেবে তাঁর প্রথম উপন্যাস 'অগ্নিদগ্ধ' প্রকাশিত হয় ১৯৭০ সালে। তারপর একে একে প্রকাশিত হয় 'গহীন গাঙ', 'দুই ঠিকানা', 'উদ্যোগ পর্ব' 'পিতৃভূমি', 'পক্ষবিপক্ষ', 'জলতিমির', 'মাটির অ্যান্টেনা', 'ধরিত্রী', 'তেঁতুলপাতার ঝোল' ইত্যাদি। আমার এই আলোচনার জন্য লেখকের ২০০৫ সালে প্রকাশিত 'সাতপুরুষ ডট কম' উপন্যাসটিকে বেছে নিয়েছি। আখ্যানিটির নাম থেকেই সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় বিনির্মাণ শুরু করেছেন যেন। আজকের আন্তর্জালে জড়ানো যে যন্ত্র সভ্যতা তাকে ব্যঙ্গ করেই নামটি রাখা হয়েছে।

আখ্যানকার এ উপন্যাসে ভেঙে দিয়েছেন সময়ের বাঁধাধরা নিয়ম। অবশ্য সময় নিয়ে খেলা এবং জীবিত মৃতের ব্যবধান মিটিয়ে দেওয়া সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের একটি প্রিয় খেলা। আসলে আখ্যানকারের আদর্শ, চিন্তাভাবনা

তাঁর দেখা ও লেখাকে নিয়ন্ত্রণ করবে এত খুব স্বাভাবিক। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় 'কেন উপন্যাস লিখি' নামক একটি প্রবন্ধে তাঁর সময় ভাবনা সম্পর্কে মত প্রকাশ করেছেন এভাবে–

'ব্যক্তিগতভাবে আমি মনে করি, অতীত বর্তমান ভবিষ্যৎ বলে আসলে কিছু হয় না। ওগুলো সমাজে মানুষের কাজ চালানোর জন্য প্রতীক তৈরি করা। আমরা পুরোটাই বিস্তৃত একটা বর্তমানে বাস করি। আঁকিবুকি দিয়ে দাগ টেনে নিয়ে অতীত ভবিষ্যৎ ভাগ করা নেই।' (পৃ.১৪৯/ কোরক সাহিত্য পত্রিকা)

এটুকু লেখার পর আখ্যানকার আরো লিখেছেন যে সময় নিয়ে তাঁর এই বিশ্বাসটিকে রূপ দিতে গিয়েই 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম'-এর জন্ম। মাত্র ছিয়াশি পৃষ্ঠার এই উপন্যাসটিতে সময়ের চলন সত্যিই অদ্ভুত। আখ্যান শুরু হয়েছে জমিদার নলিনীকুমারকে নিয়ে, সময় ১৮৫৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ। খুব কম কথায় উপন্যাসের স্বাদ নিতে নিতে ঔপনিবেশিক ভারতবর্ষে তথাকথিত নবজাগরণ ও পরিবর্তনের হাওয়া নানা শ্রেণীর ভারতবাসীর মনে কী ছাপ ফেলেছিল তা জানতে চাইলে 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম'-এর প্রথম পরিচ্ছেদটি পড়তে হয়। খুঁটিয়ে খুঁটিয়ে সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় বর্ণনা করেছেন উনিশ শতকের মধ্যভাগের বাঙালির জীবন, তাদের মানসিক গতিবিধির পরিচয়। তারপরের পরিচ্ছেদের সময় একুশ শতক– আর কুশীলব নলিনীকুমারের অধস্তন সপ্তম পুরুষ শশধর আর স্বয়ং নলিনীকুমার। তিন প্রহর আর দুই দণ্ড ঘোড়ায় চড়ে পনেরো ক্রোশ অতিক্রম করে নলিনীকুমার এসে পৌঁছেছেন দেড় শতাব্দী পরের এক মফস্বলে। একুশ শতকের প্রথম দশকে মহানগরের উপকণ্ঠে থাকা শহরেও মহানগরের ব্যস্ততার ছোঁয়া লেগেছে। সাফল্যের ইঁদুর-দৌড়ে সবাই সামিল। বৃদ্ধ শশধরের দুই পুত্র একে অপরের শত্রু।

শশধর নলিনীকুমারের আগমনে তাঁর থাকা খাওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করেন আবার তাঁর সঙ্গে যাত্রাসঙ্গী হয়ে পাঁচমুড়া পর্যন্ত যান। ঊর্ধতন সপ্তম পুরুষটির সঙ্গে বাড়ি থেকে বের হতেই সময় আবার পৌঁছে যাচ্ছে দেড়শো বছর পরে। এ আবার সেই সময় যখন প্রথম রেলগাড়ি চলবে বঙ্গদেশে, যখন কিছু দিন আগেই জলপথ ও স্থলপথকে নিরাপদ করার লক্ষ্যে ডাকাতদের বিরুদ্ধে অভিযান চলছে। এভাবে দুটো সময় পাশাপাশি বয়ে চলে। আর এই দুই পাশাপাশি বয়ে যাওয়া সময়কে জুড়ে রেখেছেন শশধর। অতীত আর বর্তমানের একসঙ্গে বয়ে যাওয়া সত্যিই অভিনব। অতীত বলে যাকে উল্লেখ করছি তা তারিখের হিসেবে ১৮৫৪ সাল হলেও রচনা বৈশিষ্ট্যের জন্য তাও হয়ে দাঁড়ায় বর্তমান। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়

একটি প্রবন্ধে লিখেছেন– 'যে কোনো আখ্যানের মূল দায়িত্ব হল এক বা একাধিক স্পেসে পাঠকদের চালিত করা। সময় সম্পর্কেও একই কথা। সব আখ্যানই অতীতের, কিন্তু পাঠকের কাছে তা বর্তমান হয়ে যায়।' (পৃ.৪৫/অক্ষরে বদ্ধজীবন)

এ কথা তো যথার্থ যে মুহূর্তে কোনো কিছু লেখা হচ্ছে পরমুহূর্তেই তা অতীত হয়ে যাচ্ছে। আর অতীতের কোনো ঘটনা অথবা বিষয়ই অভিজ্ঞতা আর মতাদর্শের রসে জারিত করে সাহিত্যকার তাঁর সাহিত্যে প্রকাশ করেন। সে অতীত হয়তো নিকট অতীত অথবা সুদূর অতীত। কিন্তু যদি দুটো সময়ের চারিত্রিক বৈশিষ্ট্য মনে হয় প্রায় এক তবে কেন তাদের একত্রিত করা যাবে না ? 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম'–এ যে দুটো সময় জুড়ে গেছে এসে একসঙ্গে তাদের মধ্যে অন্তর্নিহিত সামঞ্জস্য, প্রচুর অমিলের মধ্যেও অবাক করার মতো।

ঔপনিবেশিক ভারতবর্ষে শাসকগোষ্ঠীরা যখন রেলপথ নির্মাণ করেছিল তখন তার পেছনে তাদের মূল লক্ষ্য ছিল দেশের সম্পদ কুক্ষিগত করা। যোগাযোগের ব্যবস্থা উন্নয়নের পেছনে রাজনৈতিক কারণ অবশ্যই ছিল, কিন্তু বণিকের হাতে যখন রাজদণ্ড ওঠে তখনও সে বাণিজ্যিক দিককেই যে প্রাধান্য দেবে তাতে আর সন্দেহ কি ? আর জনগণের হিত সাধন যে তাদের চিন্তার মধ্যে কখনোই ছিল না রেলপথ নির্মাণের পেছনে তাও বলা বাহুল্য। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় সাবলীল মুন্সিয়ানায় বিষয়টিকে আখ্যানে তুলে ধরেছেন। ইস্ট ইণ্ডিয়া রেল কোম্পানি পশ্চিমবঙ্গে রেল চালানোর আগে ১৮৫৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মুম্বাই থেকে থানে ভারতের প্রথম রেল চলাচল শুরু হয়। গ্রেট পেনিনসুলা নামের এক কোম্পানি এই রেল চালু করে। দুই কোম্পানির প্রতিযোগিতার কথা প্রসঙ্গ ক্রমে চলে আসে রেলপথ স্থাপনের পেছনে যে বাণিজ্যিক উদ্দেশ্যে তার বিবরণ – 'আজ এই ট্রায়াল রান এর চার পাঁচ মাসের মধ্যে আমরা কালো হীরের দেশে পৌঁছে যাব। ওখানে মাটির নিচে আমাদের ভাগ্যে কোটি কোটি পাউণ্ড অপেক্ষা করছে। কেবলমাত্র আমাদের জন্য। গ্রেট পেনিনসুলার সে সুযোগ কৈ ?' (পৃ.৭০/ সাতপুরুষ ডট কম)

দেড়শো বছর পর পৃথিবীর প্রায় সব দেশই যখন ঔপনিবেশিক শোষণ ও শাসন থেকে মুক্তি লাভ করেছে তখন প্রবল হতাশার সঙ্গে আমরা লক্ষ করছি সাম্রাজ্যবাদ ভোল পাল্টে তার কর্তৃত্ব বজায় রাখছে তৃতীয় বিশ্বের দেশগুলোর উপর। বিজ্ঞাপনের মোহিনী মায়ার ভুলিয়ে অপ্রয়োজনীয় সামগ্রীর বাজার তৈরি করা হয়। আর সেই বাজারকে আরো মায়াময় করার জন্যে প্রয়োজন হয় বিশ্বসুন্দরী প্রতিযোগিতার। লক্ষ্য এখানেও সেই মুনাফা অর্জন। এই নয়া

সাম্রাজ্যবাদ ছড়িয়ে যাচ্ছে ব্যাপকহারে তৃণমূল পর্যায়েও, তাই দেখি মফস্বল, ছোট প্রত্যন্ত শহরেও সুন্দরী প্রতিযোগিতা ঘটা করে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম'-এ শশধরের ছেলে সুলক্ষণ সুন্দরী প্রতিযোগিতার আয়োজন করে। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় কার্নিভালের আমেজ নিয়ে আসেন রচনা পদ্ধতিতে, যেখানে দেখি, আগরপাড়ায় যে বেসরকারি সংস্থা সুন্দরী প্রতিযোগিতার আয়োজন করছে তাদের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য – 'সকলের জন্য শিক্ষা ও সমাজের অর্থনৈতিক পিছিয়ে পড়া মানুষের মধ্যে সৌন্দর্যবোধ সৃষ্টি' (পৃ.৬৫/সাতপুরুষ ডট কম)। সমাজের অনগ্রসর জনগোষ্ঠীর জন্য যথার্থ শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করা নয়, তাদেরকে অর্থনৈতিক দিক থেকে সাবলম্বী করার চেষ্টাও নয়, তাদের মধ্যে সৌন্দর্য বোধ সৃষ্টির কাজ করা সংস্থার লক্ষ্য ! আর সেই লক্ষ্যের উপায় সুন্দরী প্রতিযোগিতা ! ব্যঙ্গের কষাঘাতে কথাকার যেন পাঠককে সচেতন করতে চান।

উপনিবেশবাদের শেখানো আধুনিকতার একটি ধারণা হলো পুরানোকে পুরোপুরি বাতিল করে দেওয়া। আধুনিকতাবাদের আগমনে বাংলা সাহিত্যে ঘটে গেছিল শিকড় থেকে উচ্ছেদ, ঐতিহ্য থেকে বিচ্যুতি। নীলকুঠির সাহেব স্টিফেন রেলে চাপার পর এবং রেলের সিগন্যালারের অস্ট্রেলিয়ান সংকর প্রজাতির দ্রুতগামী ঘোড়ার চড়ার পর, নিজের একসময়ের প্রিয় ঘোড়াটিকে হত্যা করে। গতির পৃথিবীতে সামান্যতম পিছিয়ে পড়াও সে বরদাস্ত করতে পারে না। সে বিশ্বাস করে বাতিলের অধিকার তার আছে। সে বলে – 'গতি ! গতি ! – কোনো দরকার নেই তোর। বাতিল।... আমার হক আছে... বাতিলের অধিকার আছে।' (পৃ.৮১/ সাতপুরুষ ডট কম)

একুশ শতকে তো নিজেদের মা-বাবাকেই বাতিল করে দেওয়া হচ্ছে – সময়ের দোহাই দিয়ে। বৃদ্ধ শশধরও নিজের বাড়ির এককোণে পড়ে থাকেন, কাজের মানুষের ভরসায়। নাতি-নাতনিরা তো আসেই না– দুই ছেলেও খোঁজ খবর নিতে আসে না। অসুস্থ পিতার সুস্থতা তাদের প্রয়োজন কেবল সম্পত্তির কাগজপত্রে সই করানোর জন্যে। এমনকি ডাক্তাররা শশধরকে মৃত ঘোষণা করলেও ভেন্টিলেশনে তাঁর হৃৎপিণ্ডের ওঠানামা চালু রাখা হয় সম্পত্তির হিসেব নিকেশের বোঝাপড়া করার জন্যে। আধুনিক থেকে আধুনিকতর হওয়ার প্রচেষ্টা এভাবে আমাদের ঠেলে দিচ্ছে একাকিত্বের অন্ধকূপে।

যে রেলপথ উদ্বোধনের কথা থেকে এ আখ্যানের প্রারম্ভ সেই রেলপথ ও রেলগাড়ি নিয়ে সাধারণ মানুষ থেকে শুরু করে নানা শ্রেণীর মানুষের চিন্তা-ভাবনা আখ্যানকার তুলে ধরেছেন। নতুন কিছু শুরু হলে তার পক্ষে ও বিপক্ষে

নানা ধরনের কথা তৈরি হতে থাকে– এ ক্ষেত্রেও তার ব্যতিক্রম হয়নি। সবচেয়ে মর্মস্পর্শী মন্তব্য –

'... যা দিনকাল পড়েছে এমনিতেই হাজারো অশান্তি... আমি দু-বছর খুশিমতো চাষ দিতে পাচ্ছি না, কেবল নীল বুনতে হচ্ছে, দশঘর প্রজা কেঁদেকেটে এক স !... এর মধ্যে সেধে এ উৎপাত কেন ? আমাদের এ গাড়ি চড়ে কী লাভ ?' (পৃ.৯/ সাতপুরুষ ডট কম)

এই প্রসঙ্গে কি মনে পড়ে যায় না, বর্তমানের বড়ো বড়ো শপিংমল, বিলাসবহুল গাড়ি, মাল্টিপ্লেক্স– ধনীর জন্যে তৈরি এই জিনিসগুলো গরিবের কোন কাজে লাগে ? যারা দু'বেলা খেতে পায় না, তাদের কীই বা প্রয়োজন বিলাসের এই আয়োজনে ? মনে চলে আসে, এ জাতীয় ধনীর বিলাস সামগ্রী তৈরির জন্য গরিবের এক টুকরো জমি অধিগ্রহণ। এই বিষয়গুলো দেড় শতকের ব্যবধান ঘুচিয়ে দেয়। সময়ের এতো পার্থক্য থাকা সত্ত্বেও তাদের মধ্যে যে চারিত্রিক বৈশিষ্ট্যের সাযুজ্য তা সত্যিই অবাক করার মতো। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় দুটো সময়কে ভাঁজ করে পাশাপাশি নিয়ে এসে পাঠকদের ভাবতে বাধ্য করেন এ কোন সময়ে আমাদের অবস্থান ? আমরা কি যথার্থই সভ্যতার পথে হাঁটছি নাকি প্রথম বিশ্বের দেশগুলোর প্রদর্শিত পথে হেঁটে চলেছি অদৃশ্য গোলামির জোয়াল কাঁধে নিয়ে।

ল্যাতিন আমেরিকার লেখকরা তাঁদের দেশের দুর্বিষহ বাস্তবের অচলায়তনকে ভেঙে দেওয়ার জন্য লেখায় নিয়ে এসেছিলেন প্রকল্পনা বা ফ্যান্টাসি। ঐন্দ্রজালিক বাস্তবতার প্রয়োগ করে তাঁরা চিরপরিচিতি জগৎকে করে তুলেন রহস্যময়, মায়াময়। কিন্তু একথাও লক্ষণীয় যে, তা কখনোই বাস্তব থেকে পলায়ন নয়। আধিপত্যবাদী ঔপনিবেশিক দেশগুলোর প্রমাণিত বাস্তব থেকে, তাদের ভাবাদর্শগত বলয় থেকে মুক্তির আকাঙ্ক্ষাই ল্যাতিন আমেরিকার লেখকদেরকে উদ্বুদ্ধ করেছিল তাঁদের আখ্যানে এক বিকল্প জগৎ নির্মাণের। বিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে এই নব্য ধারাটি বিকশিত হয়ে ওঠে। বাংলা সাহিত্যে বিশ শতকের শেষ দিকে বিভিন্ন সাহিত্যিকের কলমে এই আন্তর্জাতিক চিন্তাভাবনা একটি দেশীয় রূপ পায়। এখানে উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে বাংলা সাহিত্যে এই ধারাটি কিন্তু সম্পূর্ণ বহিরাগত নয়। ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ মুখোপাধ্যায় 'কঙ্কাবতী', 'ডমরুচরিত', 'ভূত ও মানুষ' ইত্যাদি আখ্যানে বানিয়ে তোলা কাহিনিকে ভেঙে দিতে চেয়েছিলেন। কার্নিভালের অট্টহাসি অথবা পশু-মানুষ, জীবিত-মৃতের

ব্যবধান মিটিয়ে দিয়ে এক নতুন রীতির প্রস্তাবনা নিয়ে এসেছিলেন। কিন্তু আধুনিকতাবাদ পুষ্ট উচ্চসংস্কৃতির দাপটে ত্রৈলোক্যনাথের এই প্রচেষ্টা একঘরে হয়েই থেকে যায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর পর্যন্ত তাঁর লেখাকে যথাযোগ্য সম্মান জানাননি। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর স্বয়ং কয়েকটি অতিপ্রাকৃত গল্পে অপর বাস্তবতার অবতারণা করেছেন। তারাশঙ্কর বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের গল্প-উপন্যাসে লোকায়ত বিশ্বাস, মিথের উপস্থাপনা আধুনিকতাবাদী বাস্তব থেকে সম্পূর্ণ ভিন্নরাজ্যে নিয়ে যায় যেন। তবে ব্যাপকতরভাবে এবং তত্ত্বগতদিকটি সম্বন্ধে অবহিত হয়ে সত্তরের দশকের বাঙালি লেখকরা জাদুবাস্তবতাকে তাঁদের লেখায় এনেছেন।

সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের 'মাটির অ্যান্টেনা', 'গুল্মলতার ইলেকট্রন', 'শেষরাতের শিয়াল' 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম'-এর মতো উপন্যাসে জাদু বাস্তবতার বহুল প্রয়োগ লক্ষ করার মতো। 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম'-এ অতীত ও বর্তমানের দেওয়াল ভেঙে গেছে এক আশ্চর্য ফ্যান্টাসির সাহায্যে। বাস্তব ও কল্পজগতের অন্তর্বয়নে এক অভিনব সাহিত্যকৃতি আমরা পেয়ে যাই। অধ্যাপক তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য 'এ সময়ের আখ্যান' প্রবন্ধে এই উপন্যাস সম্পর্কে তাই বলেন – 'সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় যখন 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম'–এ পাঠকদের নিয়ে দুটি জগতে সঞ্চরণ করেন এবং আখ্যান কোনও স্তরেই স্থির থাকে না, আমাদেরও মনে হয় যে কথাকার ঐ 'Hour of zero gravity' -ই খুঁজেছেন।' (পৃ.২৭/কোরক সাহিত্য পত্রিকা)

অতি সহজেই সাত প্রজন্মের ব্যবধান ঘুচে যায়। শশধরের 'ঠাকুদ্দার ঠাকুদ্দার বাপ' নলিনীকুমার শশধরের বাড়িতে ঘোড়ায় চড়ে উপস্থিত হন। পলিত কেশ নলিনীকুমার সময়ের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে যৌবন প্রাপ্ত হতে থাকেন। সময়ের উল্টো ধারার কথা সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় এভাবে জানান–'শশধর এ-যাত্রা অধিক বিস্ময়ে লক্ষ্য করে, ঢুকবার কালের তুলনায় বর্তমানের 'উনি অনেক তরুণ হয়ে গেছেন। চুনোট ধুতি, চাপগান, পাঁসনে, চেনাবাঁধা পকেট ঘড়ি। গোঁফ ও কুচকুচ চাপদাড়ি। সমৃদ্ধ বনেদি দৃষ্টির ফাঁকে জিজ্ঞেস করলেন, ধুতি, চাপগান, পাঁসনে, চেনবাঁধা পকেট ঘড়ি। গোঁফ ও কুচকুচ চাপদাড়ি। সমৃদ্ধ বনেদি দৃষ্টির ফাঁকে জিজ্ঞেস করলেন, তুমি কিছু বিস্ময় বোধ করছ ?
না, মানে, আসলে .....।

হ্যাঁ, সেই আমি-ই। ওটা ছিল পড়ন্ত বেলার ভবিষ্যৎ চেহার। আগাম না হয় দেখেই রাখলে। ...এখন সবে আমার জ্যেষ্ঠ পুত্র জন্মেছে... এরপর দ্বিতীয়

স্ত্রীর গর্ভে মেজপুত্র আসবে অশ্বিনীকুমার... তার মধ্যম সন্তান আনন্দকুমার... তারপর ধৃতিকুমার... তারপর নবীন... নইলে তোমার আসার পথ খোলে কী করে ?' (পৃ. ১৭/সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম্)

এই নামগুলো শশধরের স্মৃতির উৎসমুখ খোলে দেয়। প্রপিতামহ আনন্দকুমারের কথা তাঁর মনে পড়ে। যিনি তাঁকে শেখাতেন বংশপরিচয়, ব্রাহ্মণ হিসেবে জাত্যাভিমান। যিনি প্রপৌত্রকে ডাকতেন 'বাবা', আর তাঁর সামান্যতম পীড়ায় ইষ্টদেবতার স্তব, ঝাড়ফুঁক করতেন। শশধরের মনে পড়ে যায় অকালমৃত পিতামহের কথা। যাঁকে তিনি দেখেননি, যাঁর মৃত্যু হয়েছিল সন্ন্যাস রোগে। স্নানের সময় পুকুরে নেমেছিলেন, সেখানেই মৃত্যু হয় তাঁর। সময় এভাবে ঠিক কোন পথে হাঁটছে বোঝা যায় না, পুরো তালগোল পাকিয়ে গেছে মনে হয়। স্মৃতি হাঁটছে পেছন পথে, অথচ যাঁকে কেন্দ্র করে এই স্মৃতি রোমন্থন সুদূর অতীতের সেই ব্যক্তি বর্তমানে জলজ্যান্ত দাঁড়িয়ে আছেন।

একুশ শতকের যন্ত্রপ্রযুক্তি সর্বস্ব যুক্তিবাদের গণ্ডিতে আবদ্ধ রুদ্ধ-বাস্তবে নতুন বিন্যাসের খোঁজে সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের মতো লেখকদের অধিবাস্তবের সাহায্য নিতে হয়। আসলে রূঢ় এই বাস্তবই তাঁদের ভাষাকে ইন্দ্রজাল নিষ্ণাত করে তোলে। বিশ্ব সাহিত্যে বা বাংলা সাহিত্যের কোষে কোষে কেন সঞ্চারিত হচ্ছে বাস্তবের অধিক ঐন্দ্রজালিক বাস্তবতার ছোঁয়া তা তাত্ত্বিক তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য 'ঐন্দ্রজালিক বাস্তবতা অথবা বাস্তবের ইন্দ্রজাল' নামক প্রবন্ধে বিস্তারিত ব্যাখ্যা করতে গিয়ে লিখেছেন –

'আধুনিকোত্তরবাদী নির্মানবায়ন ও কুহকী পণ্যায়নের মোকাবিলা করার জন্যে কথাকারেরা ঐন্দ্রজালিক বাস্তবতার প্রয়োগ কৌশলকে নিছক কাহিনির প্রযুক্তি বলে ভাবছেন না। এ আসলে বিশ্বাস ও আস্থা পুনরুজ্জীবনের দার্শনিক বীক্ষাভূমিও। ধ্বংস ও নৈরাজ্য ও মৃত্যুর কুহকী বলয়ের স্পর্ধাকে কথাকারেরা বহুমাত্রিক ও বহুস্বরিক নব্য ইন্দ্রজাল দিয়ে প্রতিহত করতে চাইছেন। যেন আমাদের ফিরিয়ে দিতে চাইছেন নতুন আরম্ভের প্রতিশ্রুতি !' (পৃ.৫১/উপন্যাসের ভিন্ন পাঠ)

সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় দেখেছেন বৃদ্ধ পিতাকে গৃহবন্দী করে রেখে সম্পত্তির জন্য সন্তানেরা গজকচ্ছপের লড়াইয়ে মগ্ন, দেখছেন পিতা মাতার ভাগ্যে অপেক্ষা করছে বৃদ্ধাশ্রম, দেখছেন পুরনো 'কনসেপ্টগুলোকে' উপড়ে ফেলে দেওয়া হচ্ছে শেকড়শুদ্ধ, আবার দেখছেন প্রাচীন সংস্কৃতিকে-ঐতিহ্যকে, পাশ্চাত্যের নানা

তত্ত্বকে ব্যবসাদাররা ব্যবহার করছে নিজেদের সুবিধা অনুযায়ী। সাহিত্য থেকে সিনেমা, বিজ্ঞাপন থেকে চিত্রকলা– চারুশিল্পের সবকিছুতেই এ জাতীয় চাতুরি লক্ষ করা যায়। মানুষের আদিম একটা প্রবৃত্তিকে ব্যবহার করা শিল্পে চটজলদি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণের সোজা উপায়। সেই জন্যে সাহিত্য থেকে শুরু করে যে কোনো চারুকলার সর্বত্র যৌন আবেদন ঢুকিয়ে দেওয়া একটি পুরোনো রীতি। আর বর্তমানে যা হচ্ছে তা হল যৌনতাকে ব্যবহার করার সময় তাতে প্রয়োগ করা হচ্ছে নানা 'জ্ঞান'। তাই মধ্যবিত্ত ও উচ্চবিত্তদের লক্ষ্য করে বানানো বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রচুর যৌন আবেদন ঢুকিয়ে দেওয়া হচ্ছে আর সঙ্গে থাকছে 'ফ্রয়েড, হ্যাবলক এলিস থেকে বাৎসায়ন, ভারতীয় সমাজ, মদনভস্ম, শিবলিঙ্গ, গৌরীপটের মিথ, বিপরীত বিহারের ধর্মীয় প্রতীক' (পৃ.১৫/ সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম্)। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় আরো দেখছেন নামিদামি শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের ভালো ছাত্রছাত্রীরাও কুসংসর্গে পড়ে বিপথে পা বাড়াচ্ছে, দেখছেন এক কালে প্রান্তিকায়িতের অভ্যুত্থানের স্বপ্ন দেখা মানুষগুলো প্রতাপের কাছে মাথা মুড়িয়ে হাঁটু গেড়ে বসে আছে। সমাজের রন্ধ্রে রন্ধ্রে ছড়িয়ে যাওয়া এই অসুখ দেখে কোনো সৎকথাকার চুপ করে থাকতে পারেন না, সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ও পারেননি। ক্ষুদ্র পরিসরে তিনি তাঁর নিজস্ব আঙ্গিকে প্রকাশ করেন সভ্যতার এই অসুখ। আর এসব কিছুর পাশাপাশি যে বিষয়টি তাঁর বিশেষ দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছিল তা হচ্ছে আমাদের ঔপনিবেশিক মনের কাঠামো। আর আখ্যানে এগুলো সব আনার জন্যে তাঁকে সাহায্য নিতে হয়েছে কল্পনার। কল্পনা যেখানে প্রকল্পনার ছোঁয়ায় রঙিন। লেখক একটি প্রবন্ধে জানান–

'কল্পনায় এসেছিল, প্রথম যেদিন হাওড়া থেকে চুঁচড়ো অবধি রেলগাড়ি চলে, বিশিষ্ট যাত্রী হিসেবে প্রথম দিনের যাত্রায়, বেশ কিছু দিশি জমিদার–তালুকদার সম্ভ্রান্তবংশীয় ব্যক্তি আবেদন করেছিলেন। সকলকে অনুমোদন দেয়া যায়নি। যে-ক'জন ভাগ্যবান সুযোগ পেয়েছিলেন, তাঁদেরই একজন বসিরহাটের একজন জমিদার আগের দিন বিকেলে রওনা হয়ে উপস্থিত হলেন বর্তমান আগরপাড়ায় তাঁর সপ্তম অধস্তন এক বংশধরের বাড়িতে। রাতটা কাটিয়ে পানসিতে গিয়ে সোজা উঠবেন হাওড়ায়। এ-ভাবেই দুই আপাত আলাদা-আলাদা কালখণ্ডকে একটি বর্তমানে মিশিয়ে, রেলযাত্রা ও রাতে আনন্দ ফূর্তি করিয়ে পরদিন ফিরিয়ে আনার মধ্যে দেখাতে চেয়েছিলাম আমাদের প্রাচীন সভ্যতার ভূমিতে আড়াইশ বছরের ঔপনিবেশকতা। তার শাসনে গড়া আমাদের মনের

কাঠামোটি। যা আজও, নয়া ঔপনিবেশিক সমাজে মুক্ত স্বাধীন তো হয়নি, নব কলেবরে শক্তি বৃদ্ধি করছে। '(পৃ.১৫০/ কোরক সাহিত্য পত্রিকা)

লেখক, যদিও একবার লিখে নেওয়ার পর তাঁর অবস্থান পাঠকের সঙ্গেই। তাঁর লেখা সম্বন্ধে মতামত একজন পাঠকের মতামত হিসেবেই ধরা হবে। কিন্তু এখানে সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় ঠিক কোন মানসিকতা নিয়ে লিখেছিলেন, তার প্রকাশ করেছেন। তাই কথাটি অবশ্যই একটু বিশেষ অভিনিবেশের দাবি রাখে। তিনি দেখাতে চেয়েছিলেন আমাদের মানসিকতায় থেকে যাওয়া গোলামির স্বভাব– যা আজও পুরো মুক্ত হয়নি। আর তা দেখানোর জন্য কাহিনি বা না-কাহিনির অবতারণা। বিষয়ের সঙ্গে আঙ্গিক তাই সম্পূর্ণ একাত্ম হয়ে যায়। বিষয়কে কীভাবে উপন্যাসায়িত করা হবে তা ঔপন্যাসিকের ভাবাদর্শ, চিন্তাধারার ওপর নির্ভর করে। কখনো কাহিনির আপাত আড়ালে গভীরতর সত্য প্রকাশিত হয়। কখনো গল্প আর না-গল্প এগিয়ে চলে সমান্তরালে। কখনো ভাষায় মায়াময় এক আবেশ সৃষ্টি করেন কোনো সাহিত্যিক, তো আবার অন্য কোনো লেখক কাটাকাটা বাক্য বিন্যাসে অনুপুঙ্খ বর্ণনা দেন। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় তাঁর লেখায় গল্পকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যান না-গল্পের ধাক্কায়। 'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম্'-এ প্রতীক ও চিহ্ন ব্যবহার হয়েছে সফলভাবে। আঙ্গিক ও বিষয় দুটোকেই সমৃদ্ধ করেছে প্রতীকের এই সার্থক সন্নিবেশ। খুব সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিসরে ঔপনিবেশিক ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস জানানো সম্ভব হয়েছে ভাষায় চিহ্ন ও প্রতীকের ব্যবহারের জন্য। জমিদার নলিনীকুমার ও নীলকুঠির মালিক স্টিফেনের মধ্যে সৌহার্দ্যের অভাব নেই, একে অপরকে 'বন্ধু' হিসেবে সম্বোধন করেন। কিন্তু নলিনীকুমার যখন 'বন্ধু'কে একটি' অনুরোধ' করেন, তখন তার ইংলিশ করে নেয় স্টিফেন 'প্রেয়ার' হিসেবে। ঔপনিবেশিক প্রভুরা বন্ধুর সমান আসনে শাসিত দেশের কোনো ব্যক্তিকে বসালেও মর্যাদায় তারা উঁচু– তা কি তারা ভুলেছিল কখনো ? আবার রেল লাইন পাতার প্রসঙ্গে এক জায়গায় কথাকার জানাচ্ছেন– 'মানুষ জ্ঞানের গর্বে ক্রমাগত নতুন নতুন উদ্ভট পরিবর্তনের কথা বললে ফল হবে বিষময়'(পৃ.৫/ সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম্)। এই কথাটি যেন রেলের প্রচলনের প্রসঙ্গ ছাড়িয়ে অনেক ব্যাপক হয়ে পড়ে, যখন আমরা দেখি বিজ্ঞানের নানা আবিষ্কার জীবনকে গতিময় আরামদায়ক করার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে মানব সভ্যতাকে তথা সম্পূর্ণ পৃথিবীকেই দাঁড় করিয়ে দিচ্ছে

প্রশ্নচিহ্নের সামনে।

আখ্যানের শেষে দেখি কোমায় থাকা শশধরের মস্তিষ্কেরও মৃত্যু হয়েছে, ডাক্তাররা তাঁকে মৃত ঘোষণা করেছে। ভেন্টিলেশনে তাঁর দেহ আছে কিন্তু মস্তিষ্ক মৃত। নলিনীকুমারের আসা এবং যাওয়াও তাঁর মস্তিষ্কের মৃত্যুর সঙ্গে সঙ্গে হারিয়ে গেছে– 'তারপর সমস্তটাই হিং টিং ছট, ঝুল কালি, অন্ধকারের লেপাপোছা পর্দা'(পৃ.৮৬/ সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম্)। আখ্যানটি আরম্ভ হয়েছিল অতীতের কথা থেকে, কিন্তু শেষ হয়েছে এসে বর্তমানে– শশধরের মৃত্যু এবং নলিনীকুমারের কাহিনির হারিয়ে যাওয়ায়। আখ্যান যেন এভাবে ফিরে আসে সমে। আসলে আখ্যানে সাতপুরুষের ব্যবধান ঘুচিয়ে দিয়ে যে ফ্যান্টাসি তৈরি করা হয়েছিল– তা একটি নির্দিষ্ট ভাব প্রকাশের মাধ্যম– পাগলের প্রলাপ তো নয়। তাই ফ্যান্টাসির আড়ালেও একটা যুক্তি থাকে, রাখতেই হয়। আর তাই নলিনীকুমারের আখ্যানে আগমন ও বহির্গমনের পেছনে একটা যুক্তি প্রয়োজন ছিল। শশধরের মৃত্যু সেই যুক্তিসূত্র।

আখ্যানকার নামের মধ্যে যেমন একই সঙ্গে অতীত ও বর্তমানের আভাস দিয়ে এক প্রত্যাশা জাগিয়ে তুলেছিলেন, আগাগোড়া পাঠে তা সার্থক প্রতিভাত হয়। 'সাতপুরুষ' শব্দের মধ্যে দীর্ঘ ঐতিহ্যের আভাস ও 'ডট্ কম্' শব্দের মধ্যে আমাদের বর্তমান আন্তর্জালিক দুনিয়ার প্রতি ইঙ্গিত ও ব্যঙ্গ যেমন সার্থক প্রকাশ পেয়েছে, তেমনি পুরো আখ্যানে সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের ভাবাদর্শের এক স্পষ্ট প্রতিফলনও ঘটেছে। বর্তমান ভারতীয় সমাজ জীবনে ঔপনিবেশিকতা ও তার নয়া সাম্রাজ্যবাদ, আধুনিকতাবাদের নঞর্থক প্রভাব ও তার চলমান প্রতিক্রিয়া কিংবা আধুনিকোত্তরবাদের প্রভাব আখ্যানে প্রতিফলিত করে আবার এ সমস্ত কিছুর বিপরীত এক স্বর প্রকাশ করা সম্ভবই হতো না যদি ফ্যান্টাসি না থাকতো। তাই বলা যায় ফ্যান্টাসি এই উপন্যাসের মূল চালিকাশক্তি, কেবল উপকরণ মাত্র নয়। আবার ফ্যান্টাসিকে যুক্তিসঙ্গত করার জন্যে আখ্যানের সমাপ্তি অংশটি অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয় ছিল– নয়তো আখ্যানটি হয়ে দাঁড়াত হিং টিং ছট্। কেন্দ্রহীনতা সাম্প্রতিক আখ্যানের একটি বৈশিষ্ট্য। তবে কথাতন্তুকে কে কতটা কুশলতার সঙ্গে গুছিয়ে নিতে পারেন, সেটাও দেখার বিষয়। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় সমাপ্তি অংশের সংযোজনের দ্বারা সেই গুছানোর কাজটুকুই করেছেন। সব মিলিয়ে

'সাতপুরুষ ডট্ কম্' এই সময়ের এক ব্যতিক্রমী আখ্যান। সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের 'গুল্মলতার ইলেক্ট্রন' সম্বন্ধে এই সময়ের প্রখ্যাত সমালোচক তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য যে মন্তব্য করেছেন তা আলোচ্য উপন্যাস সম্বন্ধেও সম্পূর্ণ যথাযথ। তাঁর মতে উপন্যাসটি 'আধুনিকতাবাদী প্রতিবেদনের বলয় পেরিয়ে গিয়েই সময়ের পাঠ-পাঠান্তর তুলে ধরে, আবার প্রচলিত আধুনিকোত্তরবাদী প্রতি-উপন্যাস থেকেও সযত্ন দূরত্ব রচনা করে।'(পৃ.৮৯/ উপন্যাসের ভিন্ন পাঠ)। কথাকার সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় লেখাকে সামাজিক দায়িত্ব মনে করেন বলেই তাঁর দায়িত্ব পালন করে আসছেন নিষ্ঠার সঙ্গে। সমাজের প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রে ব্যাপ্ত বিরোধাভাস, আপাত-জটিলতা, অনন্বয়ের তাৎপর্য অনুসন্ধানের প্রচেষ্টা করে যান সাধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় তাঁর কথাসাহিত্যে, সেই প্রচেষ্টা তাঁর আজও অব্যাহত।

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