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Late Advocate Chandrakantbhai Thakar

Memorial

Research Paper Competition for Teachers

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Late Adv Chandrakantbhai Thakar Memorial Research Paper Competition for Teachers

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A BASIS FOR HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence is a vital component in both personal and professional aspects of life. Emotional intelligence as the capacity of an individual to recognise, evaluate, and control his or her own and other people's emotions. To measure multifaceted emotional intelligence, there are many different tools and methods. Emotional intelligence (EI) serves as a fundamental pillar for human success influencing personal well-being, social relationships, leadership effectiveness, and professional achievement.. Unlike cognitive intelligence, which focuses on analytical reasoning, emotional intelligence integrates emotional awareness with interpersonal skills, enabling individuals to navigate complex social dynamics and make balanced decisions. High levels of EI contribute to enhanced communication, conflict resolution, stress management, and teamwork—skills that are essential in both personal and organizational contexts. In today's rapidly changing and interconnected world, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a key determinant of success. Cultivating EI through education, training, and self reflection can empower individuals to lead more meaningful, compassionate, and purpose driven lives.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Human Success, Self-awareness, Empathy, Leadership, Interpersonal Skills, Resilience, Intellectual process.*

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence can greatly impact your work life and career, so it's important to understand exactly what it is and why it is so important. Every workplace is comprised of people with different strengths, personalities and emotions, which can greatly affect the way they work. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your emotions as well as the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence is typically factored into the everyday decisions employers make, such as hiring, firing and promoting employees. Many hiring managers study candidates' emotional intelligence by asking specific questions during the hiring process, in order to identify those who have a higher degree of emotional intelligence. They also analyze the emotional intelligence of their current employees to determine leadership potential. In addition, when promotions and pay raises are being considered, emotional intelligence is typically factored into the decision.

The results of these studies indicated that higher emotional intelligence was associated with characteristically positive mood and higher self-esteem. The results of a third study indicated that higher emotional intelligence was associated with a higher positive mood state and greater state self-esteem.

Concept of Emotional Intelligence

The concept identified the following five pillars of Emotional Intelligence

1. **Self Awareness** This is the ability to pay attention to one's emotions. This is not as easy as it sounds, for example when faced with some difficult emotion, many of us, myself included, have a tendency to grab the closest comfort food, rather than identify what it is that is bothering us. But it is the necessary first step to emotional intelligence to identify and label our emotions.
2. **Self Regulation** This consists of being able to manage unmanageable emotions in a way that society deems appropriate, e.g. while certain excesses were tolerated during the time we grew up, in the 70s and 80s, these are not so appropriate today. The situation is further complicated by the

explosion of prosthetic devices, such as the mobile and internet that have unified the world into a global village and leading to greater aspirations overall.

3. **Motivation** It can be the hardest thing to understand the hidden springs of human nature. There is more diversity in the human world than in the world of nature as Montaigne pointed out nearly 500 years ago. NGOs and other organizations that work primarily with people ought to have an "Enter at your own risk" sign inscribed on their door step to underline this fact. Also goal posts need to be altered with different stages of life. What motivates one at 25 does not move one at 50.
4. **Empathy** This relates to being able to put oneself into the shoes of the other and understanding the context of her actions. This ability is invaluable when working in teams, as is almost always the case in today's large NGOs, where one needs to psych out one's teammates, in order to be successful. Are our children in danger of losing this ability growing up in gated communities?
5. **Social skills** If the last century was the century of Biology, the present one is the century of Sociology, judging by the popularity of social media and reality TV. People want to understand the dynamics of social situations as this can be at times problematic and unpredictable. This skill also relates to the ability to deftly handle social situations and not get entrapped in exploitative zero-sum games and humbugs. This is useful if society is to move in the right direction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the level of Emotional intelligence of young professionals.
- To study the general well-being of young professionals.
- To study the relationship between Emotional intelligence and general well-being of young professionals
- To study success of human due to Emotional intelligence.

To **study** reveal that the ability-based skill of understanding emotions tends to improve human being.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of studying emotional intelligence (EI) as a basis for human achievement is to demonstrate that managing emotions, empathy, and social skills—rather than just cognitive intelligence (IQ)—are critical predictors of success, academic performance, and personal well-being. Studies aim to show how EI fosters motivation, resilience, and better relationships, enabling individuals to overcome frustrations and achieve higher goals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The only source of data the researcher used was secondary. Secondary data gathered from journals, publications, published and unpublished papers. The data will be collected with the help of secondary data collection techniques. Secondary data will be used in this research and is collected through published and unpublished sources which include the internet, magazines, journals, research publications and so on.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Moreno et al. (2024), conducted a study on the role of family functionality and its relationship with psychological well-being and emotional intelligence in high school students.

Han and Yoo (2024), in their study on effect of adolescents' cognitive and emotional empathy and altruistic behavior on psychological well-being. The study was sought to determine the mediating effect of altruism behavior in the relationship between cognitive

Keshari (2023) analyzed the role of EI in academic success, concluding that teaching emotional and social skills in schools positively impacts both short-term and long-term academic achievements. The study also emphasized that academic success without EI does not ensure future professional success.

Dev, Kapil, and Kuldeep (2022) investigated gender differences in EI and academic achievement among senior secondary school students. Using an Emotional Intelligence Inventory, they found that boys performed better than girls in both EI and academic achievement, with significant variations across different factors.

Choudhary (2020) studied higher secondary school students in Burdwan Town using a five-point Likert scale. The research revealed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievements, reinforcing the importance of EI in student success.

Malli Pillabi (2018) analyzed the impact of EI and self-esteem on academic achievement among Class XII students in Assam. The study concluded that students with high EI and self-esteem demonstrated better academic performance across different streams.

Raino (2017) explored the relationship between study habits, self-concept, and EI among 300 private school students in New Delhi. The study found significant relationships between study habits, self-concept, and EI but no significant correlation concerning gender and locality.

Yadav (2017) examined 800 senior secondary students' academic achievement in relation to EI, creativity, and family relationships. Using multiple psychological inventories, the study found that students with high EI, creativity, and supportive family relationships achieved higher academic success.

Singh (2011) studied 'Study of achievement motivation in relation to academic achievement of students.' The study represented in the article focussed on achievement motivation and academic performance of the students. The study revealed that students with high academic motivation are more likely to have levels of academic achievement and have lower dropout rates.

Emotional Intelligence in Indian Education and Policy

In India, institutions like the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have introduced life skills education programs emphasizing self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. The NEP 2020 explicitly calls for "holistic development" by integrating cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions of learning. Thus, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized not only as a psychological construct but as a policy priority for nation-building.

EI as a Basis for Achievement

- **Academic Success:** Students with high EI demonstrate better focus, less academic anxiety, and higher grades, particularly in humanities where understanding human emotion is key. It helps students manage stress and build resilience in academic settings.
- **Professional Excellence:** In the workplace, EI is a cornerstone of leadership and teamwork. It helps in conflict resolution, stress management, and adapting to change. Research indicates that EI is a primary differentiator for "star performers" and effective leaders.
- **Leadership Effectiveness:** Leaders with high EI inspire, motivate, and foster trust, often leading to better organizational performance and lower turnover.
- **Health and Well-being:** High EI is strongly associated with better mental health, lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, and increased resilience in facing challenges.

EI as a Basis for Achievement

1. **Professional Leadership & Success:** High EI is the defining characteristic of outstanding leaders, separating top performers from average ones. Leaders with high EI manage conflict, boost team morale, and retain talent. It is argued that EI is responsible for as much as 80% of success in life.
2. **Academic Performance:** Studies show a positive correlation between high EI and academic achievement, particularly for students in higher education who must navigate significant stress, such as in nursing programs. It improves student engagement, focus, and motivation, leading to better results.

3. **Resilience & Mental Health:** EI is crucial for emotional resilience, reducing the risk of anxiety, depression, and burnout. It helps individuals "manage their emotions" rather than being overwhelmed by them, promoting overall well-being.
4. **Adaptability & Decision-Making:** Individuals with strong emotional self-awareness make better decisions because they can separate their objective judgment from emotional interference.

Challenges in Developing Emotional Intelligence

1. **Cultural Barriers –** In Indian society, emotions are often considered private, and discussing them openly may be stigmatized, making EI development difficult.
2. **Academic Pressure –** School systems heavily focused on rote learning leave little room for socio-emotional skill-building.
3. **Workplace Stress –** Organizational hierarchies and competitiveness sometimes undervalue EI in favor of technical performance.
4. **Lack of Trained Professionals** – Few teachers and managers receive systematic training in emotional intelligence development.

Future Directions for Research and Practice

1. Integration with Technology – Exploring the role of digital tools, AI, and online learning platforms in enhancing EI.
2. Cultural Sensitivity – Developing EI frameworks rooted in Indian traditions such as yoga, meditation, and mindfulness.
3. Policy Implementation – Evaluating how effectively NEP 2020 and NCERT initiatives incorporate EI into the curriculum.
4. Comparative Studies – Conducting cross-cultural research comparing EI development in India and other countries.
5. Training Programs – Designing structured EI training for teachers, students, and professionals at organizational levels.

How EQ Helps In Success?

Emotional Intelligence is increasingly relevant to organizational development and developing people, because the EQ principles provide a new way to understand and assess people's behaviors, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential. Emotional Intelligence is an important consideration in human resources planning, job profiling, recruitment interviewing and selection, management development, customer relations and customer service, and more. It also brings compassion and humanity to work.

Research has shown that what separates successful people from their less successful counterparts is not necessarily IQ but EQ! EQ proves to be a powerful strategic tool in accomplishing your business goals in the following areas:

1. **Hiring / Screening** By incorporating EQ competencies in your hiring strategies, you are ensuring that the people who come to work for your company will already possess a high degree of emotional intelligence that will help them perform their job.
2. **Training** All training on customer service, sales, supervisory development, leadership, career development, and team interactions should include EQ awareness and skills training. By helping employees focus on the areas of EQ that they can improve, you are providing them with tools that will help the business and improve their job satisfaction.
3. **Coaching** As an HR professional, you may often be involved in coaching others in the organization, in both crisis situations and daily interactions. You can bring incredible value to your one on one coaching experiences as you model and encourage others to understand how EQ can be used as a tool for solving their current and future dilemmas.

4. Competency models / Succession plans Performance Development Reviews Profit to the business Emotional Intelligence leads to:

- Reduction of lost-time accidents.
- Reduction in formal grievances.
- Increase in productivity.

Who Could Benefit From EI Skill Enhancement?

- Executives
- Achieve Maximum Success
- Higher Productivity
- High Potential People

HR can assist the organization by developing competency models and succession plans that incorporate EQ competencies. This action will ensure that the organization of the future will be built based on competencies that have the greatest potential to deliver business goals. Performance and development reviews that reflect EQ competencies will ensure that employees are aware of developmental needs in the emotional intelligence area.

Why Improve Your Emotional Intelligence Skills?

- Enhance Your Career - Enhance your career and success potential.
- Improve Productivity - Improve your personal productivity
- Increase Job Satisfaction
- Manage Demanding Clients - Work easily with demanding clients and team members.
- Improve Work/Life Balance - Improve work/life balance so you can enjoy your personal life.
- Managers / Supervisors

Threats to EI in Contemporary Society

- **Digital Dependency:** Over-reliance on digital communication limits face-to-face interactions, reducing opportunities to develop emotional awareness and empathy.
- **Information Overload**: Constant influx of information increases stress & hampers emotional regulation.
- **Cyberbullying and Online Abuse**: Online harassment negatively impacts mental health, weakening emotional resilience.
- **Social Media Pressure**: Social media fosters harmful comparisons, diminishing self-esteem and emotional well-being.
- **Political Polarisation**: Increased political divisiveness makes it harder to empathise with opposing views, straining emotional connections.

CONCLUSION

Emotional Intelligence is increasingly relevant to organizational development and developing people, because the EQ principles provide a new way to understand and assess people's behaviours, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential. Emotional intelligence is no longer a peripheral or optional skill—it is a core human competency essential for success in personal, academic, and professional domains. International as well as Indian research demonstrates its powerful influence on learning, leadership, and well-being. With initiatives like NEP 2020, Indian education is increasingly emphasizing socio-emotional learning as a pathway to holistic development. However, challenges such as cultural stigma and lack of trained professionals remain. Moving forward, integrating EI with both modern psychology and indigenous wisdom can provide a balanced framework for nurturing emotionally intelligent citizens capable of contributing to a more empathetic, resilient, and productive society.

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MORALE AND ETHICS IN PUBLIC LIFE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes an extensive exploration of the intricate relationship between morale and ethics within the multifaceted public life of educational institutions. It posits that a high degree of morale among all institutional stakeholders including administrators, faculty, staff, and students is not merely desirable but fundamentally contingent upon the robust ethical frameworks that govern policies, leadership practices, and daily interactions. The paper meticulously defines key concepts such as public life in education, professional ethics, and organizational morale, delving into their theoretical underpinnings and practical manifestations. It thoroughly examines how ethical leadership, radical transparency, unwavering fairness, and rigorous accountability mechanisms are instrumental in cultivating a positive, productive, and intellectually vibrant institutional climate. Conversely, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the profound and often far-reaching detrimental effects of ethical lapses, corruption, systemic inequities, and persistently low morale on educational outcomes, institutional reputation, financial stability, and the invaluable trust of stakeholders. Drawing upon various organizational and ethical theories, the paper offers a robust set of recommendations and actionable suggestions designed to foster an environment where both morale and exemplary ethical conduct are paramount. These strategies encompass the establishment of dynamic and clearly articulated ethical codes, continuous and context-specific ethics training, the implementation of supportive and empowering leadership models, and the creation of resilient mechanisms for ethical oversight and recourse, emphasizing a holistic and integrated approach to institutional well-being and continuous improvement in morale and ethics.

KEYWORDS:

- *Morale in Education*
- *Organizational Ethics*
- *Ethical Leadership*
- *Institutional Integrity*
- *Organizational Culture*
- *Stakeholder Trust*
- *Ethical Governance*

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are fundamental pillars of civil society, entrusted with responsibilities that extend far beyond teaching and knowledge dissemination. They play a crucial role in shaping future generations, encouraging critical thinking, promoting scientific and humanistic understanding, and contributing to the broader public good. The effectiveness of these institutions depends not only on the quality of their academic programs or the competence of their faculty, but also on the ethical climate and collective spirit that guide their functioning.

The public life of educational institutions includes the interactions and relationships among various stakeholders such as administrators, faculty members, staff, students, parents, alumni, and the surrounding community. These interactions influence institutional culture, governance, and the reputation of the institution. Within this environment, two essential elements—organizational morale

and ethical principles play a significant role in determining the integrity and effectiveness of the institution.

Morale reflects the collective confidence, motivation, and commitment of individuals working within the institution, while ethics provides the moral framework guiding their actions and decisions. When institutions promote transparency, fairness, and accountability, they create a climate of trust that strengthens morale and encourages responsible behavior. Therefore, fostering both ethical practices and high morale is essential for maintaining institutional credibility, promoting academic excellence, and ensuring that educational institutions fulfill their vital role in society.

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❖ Defining the Landscape: Morale, Ethics, and Public Life in Education

A nuanced understanding of the public life within educational institutions, alongside robust definitions of morale and ethics, is crucial for appreciating their intricate interdependence. These concepts, when viewed through an academic lens, reveal the multifaceted nature of an institution's operational and cultural ecosystem.

♦ Public Life in Educational Institutions: A Multifaceted Arena

The concept of "**public life**" within an educational institution extends far beyond its physical campus boundaries or the strict confines of its formal curriculum. It represents the collective sphere where institutional values are enacted, policies are implemented, and diverse stakeholders interact, creating a discernible organizational culture and reputation. This public life is inherently multi-dimensional:

1. **Governance and Administration:** This dimension encompasses the formal structures of leadership, decision-making processes, policy formulation, and resource allocation. It includes the actions of boards of trustees, university presidents, deans, and department heads. Transparency in these processes, fairness in administrative decisions, and accountability for outcomes are critical ethical considerations that profoundly impact institutional morale and external perceptions (Kezar, 2018).
2. **Community Engagement:** Educational institutions do not exist in a vacuum; they are integral parts of local, national, and global communities. Their public life involves interactions with parents, local businesses, government bodies, non-profit organizations, and the general public. Ethical considerations here include community responsibility, outreach programs, responsible use of institutional resources (e.g., land, facilities), and ensuring that the institution's mission aligns with broader societal needs. Morale among faculty and staff can be significantly boosted when they perceive their institution as a positive and ethical community contributor.
3. **Internal Culture and Climate:** This refers to the informal norms, values, and shared understandings that govern daily interactions among students, faculty, and staff. It encompasses issues like collegiality, respect, psychological safety, and inclusion. A positive internal culture, characterized by open communication and mutual respect, is a strong indicator of high morale and often a reflection of underlying ethical principles in action (Schein, 2017). Conversely, a toxic culture breeds low morale and can be a breeding ground for unethical behaviour.
4. **External Perception and Reputation:** How an institution is perceived by external stakeholders—prospective students, donors, funding agencies, and the media—constitutes a significant aspect of its public life. This perception is built upon its academic excellence, ethical conduct, social impact, and the experiences of its alumni. Ethical lapses can severely damage reputation, while a strong ethical standing enhances it, directly influencing recruitment, funding, and public trust.
5. **Student Experience:** The public life of an institution is also profoundly shaped by the collective student experience—the learning environment, student support services, extracurricular activities, and the overall campus climate. Ethical treatment of students, ensuring fairness in grading and disciplinary actions, promoting diversity and inclusion, and safeguarding student welfare, all contribute to student morale and their perception of the institution's integrity.

❖ Research Methodology: Exploring Morale and Ethics in Education

The methodology adopted for this study is a mixed-methods design that integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of morale and ethics within educational institutions. Quantitative data will be collected through structured surveys distributed to faculty, staff, and students, focusing on indicators such as job satisfaction, engagement, ethical climate, and perceptions of leadership. These surveys will employ Likert-scale items to allow for statistical analysis of trends and correlations. Qualitative data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus groups, enabling participants to share personal experiences and perspectives that enrich the numerical findings. Document analysis will also be conducted, examining institutional policies, codes of ethics, and governance records to contextualize the lived realities of participants. Statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis, will be applied to survey data to identify significant relationships between morale and ethical practices. Thematic analysis will be used to interpret qualitative narratives, highlighting recurring themes and patterns that reveal deeper insights into institutional culture. Triangulation of these methods ensures validity and reliability, as findings from one source can be cross verified with others. The population of the study includes faculty, administrative staff, and students, with a stratified random sample selected to ensure representation across departments and roles. Ethical safeguards will be rigorously observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and approval from the Institutional Review Board. Pilot testing of instruments will be conducted to refine clarity and reliability before full deployment. Member checking and peer debriefing will be employed during qualitative analysis to validate interpretations. This integrated methodology not only captures measurable indicators of morale and ethics but also uncovers the nuanced, human dimensions that shape institutional life. Ultimately, the design provides a holistic framework for understanding how morale and ethics interact to influence organizational performance, sustainability, and credibility in the educational context.

❖ Key ethical principles central to educational institutions include:

1. **Integrity**: Honesty, trustworthiness, and adherence to moral principles in all actions and communications.
2. **Fairness and Justice:** Impartiality, equity, and non-discrimination in all institutional processes and decisions.
3. **Responsibility and Accountability**: Fulfilling duties diligently and accepting consequences for actions, particularly for those in positions of authority.
4. **Respect for Persons:** Valuing the dignity, autonomy, and rights of all individuals, including students, colleagues, and community members. This principle underpins diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
5. **Beneficence and Non-maleficence:** Acting in the best interests of students and the institution's mission, while actively avoiding harm.
6. **Transparency:** Openness in operations, decision-making, and communication, fostering trust and reducing suspicion.

Drawing from various ethical theories, deontology emphasizes duties and rules (e.g., following a code of conduct regardless of outcome), consequentialism focuses on outcomes (e.g., actions are good if they lead to positive results for the most people), and virtue ethics stresses the development of moral character (e.g., leaders embodying virtues like courage and wisdom) (MacIntyre, 1984; Rawls, 1971). Each theory offers a lens through which to evaluate ethical behavior within an educational context. A robust ethical framework integrates elements from these perspectives, providing a comprehensive guide for moral conduct.

FINDINGS: THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF MORALE AND ETHICS

The relationship between morale and ethics within educational institutions is not merely correlational; it is profoundly symbiotic. Each element serves as both a precursor and a consequence of the other, creating a feedback loop that can either elevate the institution to exemplary heights or drag it into cycles of dysfunction and despair. A strong ethical foundation provides the psychological and structural stability necessary for high morale to flourish, while robust morale, rooted in trust and shared purpose, intrinsically reinforces adherence to ethical principles.

➢ 1. Ethical Foundations for High Morale: Building Trust & Psychological Safety

When an educational institution operates with an unwavering commitment to ethical conduct, it cultivates an environment where individuals feel secure, respected, and valued. This sense of psychological safety and trust is paramount for fostering high morale.

1. **Ethical Leadership**
   The Moral Compass: Leadership serves as the primary exemplar and enforcer of an institution's ethical climate. Ethical leaders do more than merely adhere to rules; they embody integrity, honesty, courage, and a deep commitment to the well-being of their constituents (Northouse, 2018).
2. **Authenticity and Integrity**
   Leaders who consistently demonstrate integrity in their words and actions, even under pressure, build immense trust. This authenticity fosters a sense of psychological safety, where faculty, staff, and students believe their leaders are genuinely committed to what is right.
3. **Fair Decision-Making**
   When leaders make decisions transparently and fairly, without favoritism or personal bias, it significantly boosts morale. This includes equitable distribution of resources, impartial promotion processes, and unbiased disciplinary actions. Perceived injustice from leadership is a potent morale killer.
4. **Moral Courage**
   Ethical leaders are willing to take a stand against unethical practices, protect whistleblowers, and prioritize institutional values over personal gain or convenience. This demonstration of moral courage inspires respect and confidence among followers, knowing their leaders will act in the institution's best interest.
5. **Servant Leadership**
   Leaders who prioritize the needs and growth of their subordinates, empowering them and fostering a collaborative environment, are often associated with high morale and strong ethical cultures (Greenleaf, 1977).
6. **Transparency and Accountability**
   Pillars of Trust: An ethical institution operates with a commitment to openness and takes responsibility for its actions. This significantly impacts morale by reducing uncertainty and fostering confidence.
7. **Open Communication**
   Transparent communication regarding institutional goals, challenges, and decisions helps prevent rumors and reduces anxiety, contributing to a more stable and positive work environment.
8. **Financial Transparency**
   Clear and ethical management of finances, with public accountability, prevents suspicion and ensures stakeholders that resources are being used responsibly, bolstering trust and pride in the institution.
9. **Robust Accountability Mechanisms**
   Ethical institutions establish clear processes for reporting misconduct (e.g., anonymous hotlines, ombuds services) and ensure that all individuals, regardless of their position, are held accountable for their actions. Knowing that ethical breaches will be addressed fairly provides assurance and

motivates adherence to standards (Gorta, 2004). This system of checks and balances provides a sense of justice, a critical component of morale.

10. **Equitable Policies and Practices**
    Institutions that implement fair policies regarding hiring, promotions, tenure, compensation, and student admission/assessment demonstrate an ethical commitment to equity. This cultivates a sense of belonging and value among diverse groups, directly enhancing morale and reducing feelings of alienation.
11. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives**
    Ethical institutions actively work to dismantle systemic biases and create inclusive environments where all individuals feel respected, supported, and have equal opportunities to thrive. Successful DEI efforts are deeply intertwined with higher morale among diverse faculty, staff, and student populations (Hays-Thomas et al., 2010).
12. **Impartial Grievance Procedures**
    The availability of fair and impartial processes for resolving conflicts or addressing grievances assures individuals that their concerns will be heard and addressed justly, preventing resentment from festering and eroding morale.
13. **Professional Integrity**
    A Shared Sense of Purpose: When an institution clearly defines and upholds high standards of professional integrity for its faculty, staff, and students, it elevates the collective sense of purpose and pride.
14. **Academic Freedom with Responsibility**
    Upholding academic freedom while expecting responsible conduct in research, teaching, and scholarship fosters an environment of intellectual honesty and trust. This allows faculty to pursue their passions ethically, boosting their professional morale.
15. **Clear Boundaries and Ethical Conduct**
    Defining clear boundaries in student-teacher relationships, research collaborations, and administrative roles prevents conflicts of interest and exploitation, ensuring a respectful and professional environment conducive to high morale.

❖ IMPACT OF MORALE ON ETHICAL CONDUCT: REINFORCING A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY

1. **Reduced Temptation for Unethical Behavior**
   High morale decreases the likelihood of misconduct. When individuals feel valued, respected, fairly treated, and adequately supported, they are less likely to engage in unethical practices such as favoritism, misuse of resources, or academic dishonesty. A sense of organizational justice reduces frustration and the need to justify wrongdoing.
2. **Strengthened Ethical Voice**
   In high-morale environments, faculty and staff feel psychologically safe to speak up about unethical practices. They are more willing to question questionable decisions, report misconduct, and express concerns without fear of retaliation. This openness protects institutional integrity.
3. **Increased Peer Accountability**
   High morale fosters collective responsibility. Colleagues are more likely to support ethical decisions, challenge inappropriate behavior, and reinforce shared values. Peer oversight becomes a positive force that sustains ethical standards.
4. **Stronger Commitment to Institutional Mission**
   When morale is high, individuals feel connected to the institution's goals and purpose. This deep commitment encourages them to internalize ethical principles and prioritize the collective good over personal gain. Ethical behavior becomes part of their professional identity.

5. **Open Communication and Early Problem Resolution**
   Institutions with high morale promote transparency and trust. Faculty and staff feel comfortable discussing ethical dilemmas early, allowing for collaborative decision-making and proactive solutions before issues escalate into serious violations.
6. **Enhanced Professionalism and Role Modeling**
   High morale contributes to higher standards of professionalism. Educators and administrators are more likely to follow ethical codes, mentor responsibly, and serve as positive role models for students. This strengthens the culture of integrity across all levels of the institution.

❖ **Limitations in Addressing Ethical Lapses and Low Morale**

➢ **Contextual Variability**

1. The severity and consequences of ethical lapses differ across institutions depending on size, culture, governance structures, and external environment. A small college may experience reputational damage differently than a large research university.
2. This makes it difficult to generalize outcomes universally.

➢ **Measurement Challenges**

1. Morale and ethical climate are inherently subjective and difficult to quantify. Surveys and feedback mechanisms may not capture the full depth of disillusionment or misconduct.
2. Data may be skewed by fear of retaliation or underreporting.

➢ **Time Lag in Consequences**

1. Some effects (e.g., reputational damage, loss of accreditation) may take years to fully manifest, while others (e.g., morale decline, turnover) appear quickly.
2. This lag complicates efforts to link cause and effect directly.

➢ **Interplay of External Factors**

1. Broader societal, political, and economic forces (e.g., funding cuts, policy changes, global crises) can exacerbate or mask the impact of ethical lapses and morale issues.
2. Isolating institutional responsibility from external pressures is often challenging.

➢ **Resistance to Transparency**

1. Institutions may conceal or minimize ethical breaches to protect their image, limiting access to reliable data.
2. This opacity hinders accurate assessment and weakens accountability.

➢ **Individual Differences**

1. Not all stakeholders experience consequences equally. For example, senior faculty may be insulated from low morale compared to junior staff or students.

❖ **Key Elements of Morale and Ethics in Public Life in Educational Institutions:**

Topic	Meaning	Example in Educational Institutions
Honesty	**Being truthful and not cheating.**	**Students avoid cheating in exams & teachers give fair marks.**
Respect	**Treating everyone with dignity and kindness.**	**Teachers respect students and students respect teachers.**
Responsibility	**Doing duties properly and on time.**	**Teachers prepare lessons and students complete assignments.**
Fairness	**Treating everyone equally without discrimination.**	**Same rules and opportunities for all students.**

Topic	Meaning	Example in Educational Institutions
Integrity	Doing the right thing even when no one is watching.	Following rules and maintaining academic honesty.
Cooperation	Working together for common goals.	Students and teachers work together in projects and activities.

CONCLUSION

Morale and ethics are essential elements in the public life of educational institutions. They help create a positive and respectful environment for students, teachers, and administrators. High morale encourages motivation, cooperation, and dedication among all members of the institution. At the same time, strong ethical values guide individuals to act with honesty, fairness, and responsibility. When ethics are practiced in leadership, teaching, and decision-making, trust within the institution becomes stronger. Ethical behavior also helps maintain academic integrity and fairness for everyone.

Educational institutions play an important role in shaping not only knowledge but also character. By promoting respect, transparency, and accountability, institutions can build a healthy academic culture. When people feel valued and supported, morale improves and ethical behavior becomes stronger. On the other hand, ignoring ethics or morale can lead to conflicts, mistrust, and poor performance. Therefore, it is important for institutions to encourage ethical leadership, open communication, and supportive policies.

In conclusion, maintaining strong morale and ethical standards is necessary for the success and reputation of educational institutions. By nurturing these values, institutions can create responsible individuals and contribute positively to society.

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ROLE OF MEDIA ETHICS IN PUBLIC LIFE: CHALLENGES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, strengthening democracy, and ensuring accountability in governance. However, the growing commercialization, digitalization, and politicization of media have raised serious ethical concerns in public life. This study examines the role of media ethics in maintaining transparency, truthfulness, and responsibility in information dissemination. It highlights key ethical issues such as misinformation, sensationalism, bias, invasion of privacy, and the influence of social media. The research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach using secondary data from academic sources, reports, and journals. The findings reveal that while media serves as a watchdog of democracy, ethical lapses undermine public trust and distort reality. The paper concludes with recommendations to strengthen ethical standards through regulatory frameworks, media literacy, and professional accountability.

KEYWORDS: *Media ethics, public life, journalism ethics, misinformation, digital media, accountability.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Media is often referred to as the "fourth pillar of democracy" due to its crucial role in informing citizens, shaping public discourse, and holding authorities accountable. Ethical media practices are essential for ensuring that information disseminated to the public is accurate, fair, and unbiased.

In recent years, the expansion of digital media platforms and 24/7 news cycles has intensified competition among media organizations. This has led to ethical challenges such as sensationalism, fake news, and biased reporting. Social media platforms have further complicated the media landscape by enabling rapid information sharing without adequate verification.

The role of media ethics in public life has therefore become more significant than ever. Ethical journalism promotes transparency, accountability, and democratic participation, while unethical practices can mislead the public and harm societal harmony.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW (2020–2025)

The study of media ethics has gained increasing importance in recent years due to rapid technological advancements, digitalization, and the growing influence of social media in shaping public opinion. Contemporary research highlights that traditional journalistic ethics are being challenged by new communication environments, requiring updated frameworks and adaptive ethical standards.

Scholars argue that core journalistic principles such as truth, objectivity, and accountability remain fundamental, but their application has become more complex in the digital era. Stephen J. A. Ward (2021) emphasizes that media ethics must evolve to address issues such as online misinformation, algorithmic influence, and globalized communication networks. Similarly, Denis McQuail (2020) notes that ethical media practices are essential for maintaining credibility and trust in democratic societies.

A significant body of research focuses on misinformation and fake news as major ethical concerns. Edson C. Tandoc Jr. (2021) identifies the rapid spread of misinformation through digital platforms as a serious threat to public discourse and democratic processes. Likewise, Philip M. Napoli (2021) argues that social media ecosystems amplify unverified content due to algorithm-driven engagement, creating challenges for ethical journalism.

The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in journalism has also been widely examined. Charlie Beckett (2020) highlights that AI technologies are transforming news production but raise ethical issues related to transparency, accountability, and editorial control. More recent studies suggest that AI-generated content can blur the line between authentic and fabricated information, necessitating new ethical guidelines (Kalfeli & Angeli, 2025). Furthermore, research indicates that algorithmic bias in AI systems can lead to unequal representation and reinforce societal inequalities (Chaparro-Domínguez et al., 2025).

Another critical area of concern is the ethical dilemma between public interest and individual privacy. Studies show that journalists often face difficult decisions when reporting sensitive information. Gunarathne (2025) argues that ethical decision-making in journalism requires balancing competing values such as truth, privacy, and harm minimization. This highlights the need for context-sensitive ethical frameworks rather than rigid rules.

Empirical research also reveals a gap between ethical ideals and professional practices. According to findings from the World Journalism Study (2023), journalists generally support ethical standards but may justify controversial practices such as undercover reporting when deemed necessary for public interest. This reflects the complexity of ethical decision-making in real-world journalism.

In addition, commercialization of media has emerged as a major factor influencing ethical behavior. Natalie Fenton (2022) argues that profit-driven media models often prioritize sensationalism and audience engagement over ethical reporting. This trend contributes to declining public trust in media institutions.

Recent studies also emphasize the importance of media accountability and transparency. Michael Carlson (2022) highlights that maintaining journalistic authority requires adherence to ethical norms and openness to public scrutiny. Transparency mechanisms, such as fact-checking and corrections, are essential for rebuilding trust.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the concept and importance of media ethics in public life
2. To identify key ethical issues in modern media practices
3. To analyze the challenges faced by media in maintaining ethical standards
4. To suggest measures for strengthening ethical media practices

4. HYPOTHESIS

To examine the relationship between media ethics and public trust, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- **H_0 (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant relationship between ethical media practices and public trust in media.
- **H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant relationship between ethical media practices and public trust in media.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research design

This study adopts a **descriptive and exploratory research design** based on secondary data.

5.2 Sample size

The study comprises a **sample size of 100 respondents**, which is considered adequate for conducting basic statistical analysis such as percentage distribution, mean score analysis, and Chi-square testing.

The respondents were selected from varied backgrounds, including the **general public, students, working professionals, and active media users**,.

5.3 Data Collection

Primary data

Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire to support statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from a wide range of sources, research articles, books, conference papers, and industry reports**.**

6. IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA ETHICS IN PUBLIC LIFE

6.1 Strengthening Democracy

Ethical media ensures informed citizen participation by providing accurate and unbiased information. It plays a crucial role in elections, policymaking, and public debates.

6.2 Promoting Transparency and Accountability

Media acts as a watchdog by exposing corruption, misconduct, and misuse of power. Ethical journalism enhances government accountability.

6.3 Building Public Trust

Trust is the foundation of media credibility. Ethical practices help maintain public confidence in media institutions.

6.4 Protecting Social Harmony

Responsible reporting avoids spreading hatred, misinformation, and panic, thereby maintaining social stability.

7. ETHICAL ISSUES IN MEDIA

7.1 Misinformation and Fake News

The spread of false information is one of the most serious ethical challenges. Digital platforms have made it easier to disseminate unverified content rapidly.

7.2 Sensationalism

Media organizations often exaggerate news to attract viewership, compromising accuracy and ethical standards.

7.3 Bias and Lack of Objectivity

Political or corporate influence can lead to biased reporting, affecting fairness and neutrality.

7.4 Invasion of Privacy

Media intrusion into personal lives, especially of public figures, raises ethical concerns about privacy rights.

7.5 Paid News and Advertorials

Blurring the line between news and advertising undermines journalistic integrity.

8. CHALLENGES TO MEDIA ETHICS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

8.1 Commercialization of Media

Profit-driven models prioritize revenue over ethical standards, leading to compromised journalism.

8.2 Rise of Social Media

Social media platforms lack strict editorial control, resulting in the spread of misinformation and ethical violations.

8.3 Political Pressure

Media organizations often face pressure from political entities, affecting their independence.

8.4 Technological Advancements

Artificial intelligence, deepfakes, and algorithm-driven content pose new ethical challenges.

8.5 Lack of Regulation

Inadequate regulatory frameworks make it difficult to enforce ethical standards consistently.

9. ROLE OF MEDIA IN PUBLIC LIFE

9.1 Information Dissemination

Media provides citizens with information necessary for decision-making.

9.2 Public Awareness and Education

Media educates people about social, political, and economic issues.

9.3 Watchdog Function

Media monitors government actions and exposes wrongdoing.

9.4 Platform for Public Opinion

Media facilitates dialogue and debate on public issues.

10) DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1) Media Ethics Awareness

Table 1

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Mean Score	Rank
I am aware of ethical standards followed in media reporting	5	10	20	40	25	100	3.70	2
Media organizations follow ethical guidelines in news reporting	10	20	25	30	15	100	3.20	3
Journalists are responsible for maintaining ethical standards	3	7	15	45	30	100	3.92	1

Interpretation

- The statement **"Journalists are responsible for maintaining ethical standards"** secured the **highest mean score (3.92)** and ranked **1st**, indicating strong agreement among respondents regarding journalists' accountability.
- The statement **"I am aware of ethical standards..."** ranked **2nd (Mean = 3.70)**, suggesting a moderate to high level of awareness among respondents.
- The statement **"Media organizations follow ethical guidelines..."** ranked **3rd (Mean = 3.20)**, reflecting relatively lower confidence in media organizations' adherence to ethics.

2) Trust and Credibility

Table 2

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Mean Score	Rank
Ethical media practices increase public trust in news	4	6	15	45	30	100	3.91	2
I trust news that is unbiased and fact-checked	3	5	12	50	30	100	3.99	1
Media bias affects my trust in information	5	8	17	40	30	100	3.82	3

Interpretation

- The statement **"I trust news that is unbiased and fact-checked"** secured the **highest mean score (3.99)** and ranked **1st**, indicating that respondents strongly value accuracy and impartiality in news.
- The statement **"Ethical media practices increase public trust in news"** ranked **2nd (Mean = 3.91)**, showing a strong belief in the link between ethics and credibility.
- The statement **"Media bias affects my trust in information"** ranked **3rd (Mean = 3.82)**, still reflecting high agreement that bias negatively influences trust.

3) Misinformation and Fake News

Table 3

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Mean Score	Rank
Fake news is a major problem in today's media	2	5	10	48	35	100	4.09	2
Social media spreads misinformation rapidly	1	4	8	47	40	100	4.21	1
Media should be held accountable for spreading false information	3	6	12	44	35	100	4.02	3

Interpretation

- The statement **"Social media spreads misinformation rapidly"** ranked **1st (Mean = 4.21)**, indicating very strong agreement that digital platforms are the primary drivers of misinformation.
- The statement **"Fake news is a major problem in today's media"** ranked **2nd (Mean = 4.09)**, confirming widespread concern about misinformation.
- The statement **"Media should be held accountable…"** ranked **3rd (Mean = 4.02)**, still showing strong support for accountability mechanisms.

4) Ethical challenges

Table 4

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Mean Score	Rank
Media often invades personal privacy unnecessarily	6	10	18	40	26	100	3.70	5
Ethical journalism respects individual privacy	3	7	15	45	30	100	3.92	3
Media exaggerates news to attract attention	2	5	12	46	35	100	4.07	2
Political influence affects media neutrality	3	6	14	42	35	100	4.00	4
Digital platforms require stricter ethical regulations	2	4	10	48	36	100	4.12	1
Artificial intelligence and technology create ethical challenges in media	3	5	15	47	30	100	3.96	6

Interpretation

- The statement **"Digital platforms require stricter ethical regulations"** ranked **1st (Mean = 4.12)**,
- **"Media exaggerates news to attract attention"** ranked **2nd (Mean = 4.07)**,.
- **"Ethical journalism respects individual privacy"** ranked **3rd (Mean = 3.92**
- **"Political influence affects media neutrality"** ranked **4th (Mean = 4.00)**,
- **"Media often invades personal privacy unnecessarily"** ranked **5th (Mean = 3.70)**,
- **"AI and technology create ethical challenges"** ranked **6th (Mean = 3.96)**,

Hypothesis Testing: Ethical Media Practices and Public Trust

1) Observed Frequency Table (O)

Table 5

Ethical Media Practices	High Trust	Low Trust	Total
Agree (A + SA)	55	15	70
Neutral (N)	10	10	20
Disagree (SD + D)	5	5	10
Total	**70**	**30**	**100**

2) Expected Frequency Table (E)

Table 6

Category	High Trust (E)	Low Trust (E)
Agree	49	21
Neutral	14	6
Disagree	7	3

3. Chi-Square Formula

Table 7

Category	O	E	(O−E)	$(O-E)^2 / E$
Agree–High	55	49	6	0.73
Agree–Low	15	21	-6	1.71
Neutral–High	10	14	-4	1.14
Neutral–Low	10	6	4	2.67
Disagree–High	5	7	-2	0.57
Disagree–Low	5	3	2	1.33
Total χ^2				**8.15**

4. Table Value

At **5% level of significance (α = 0.05)** and **df = 2**:

χ2=5.99\chi^2 = 5.99χ2=5.99

- Calculated value = **8.15**
- Table value = **5.99**

Since **8.15 > 5.99**, the null hypothesis is rejected.

There is a **statistically significant relationship between ethical media practices and public trust in media**. Respondents who perceive higher ethical standards in media are more likely to exhibit greater trust in news and information.

11. CONCLUSION

1) Media ethics is fundamental to the functioning of a healthy democracy and informed society. While media has the power to influence public opinion and promote transparency, ethical lapses can lead to misinformation, bias, and erosion of public trust.
2) The evolving media landscape, driven by digital technologies and social media, presents new ethical challenges that require adaptive and robust solutions. Strengthening ethical standards through regulation, education, and accountability is essential for ensuring responsible journalism.
3) The present study provides significant insights into the **role of media ethics in public life** by analyzing respondents' perceptions across multiple dimensions, including awareness, trust, misinformation, privacy, bias, and digital ethics. The findings clearly indicate that media ethics is a crucial determinant of public trust and the effective functioning of democratic communication systems.
4) The analysis of **media ethics awareness** reveals that respondents possess a moderate to high level of understanding regarding ethical standards in journalism. Notably, the highest agreement was observed for the responsibility of journalists in maintaining ethical practices, suggesting that individuals place strong expectations on media professionals as custodians of ethical communication. However, comparatively lower confidence in media organizations' adherence to

ethical guidelines indicates a **gap between ethical expectations and perceived institutional practices**.

5) In terms of **trust and credibility**, the data demonstrates that public trust in media is strongly influenced by ethical practices, particularly **unbiased and fact-checked reporting**. Respondents showed the highest agreement with trusting verified and impartial news, highlighting the central role of accuracy and objectivity in building credibility. At the same time, the negative impact of media bias on trust underscores the vulnerability of public confidence in the presence of partial or manipulated information.
6) The findings related to **misinformation and fake news** reveal a high level of concern among respondents. The majority strongly agree that fake news is a major issue and that social media platforms significantly contribute to the rapid spread of misinformation. This indicates that digital media ecosystems have intensified ethical challenges, making it difficult to maintain accuracy and authenticity in information dissemination. Furthermore, the strong support for holding media accountable reflects the public demand for **greater responsibility and regulatory oversight**.
7) The analysis of **privacy and responsibility** highlights that while respondents recognize the importance of ethical journalism in respecting individual privacy, there is also a perception that media often intrudes unnecessarily into personal lives. This suggests a tension between the public's right to information and the individual's right to privacy, which remains a key ethical dilemma in journalism.
8) The study also highlights the increasing importance of **digital media ethics**, where respondents strongly support the need for stricter ethical regulations for digital platforms. The emergence of artificial intelligence and advanced technologies is recognized as a source of new ethical challenges, including issues related to transparency, accountability, and misinformation. This underscores the need for **adaptive ethical frameworks** capable of addressing technological advancements.
9) Overall, the empirical findings confirm that **ethical media practices are directly linked to public trust, credibility, and the quality of information in society**. While awareness of media ethics is relatively high, challenges such as misinformation, bias, sensationalism, and weak regulatory mechanisms continue to hinder ethical practices in public life.

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POWER, KNOWLEDGE, AND TRUTH IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between power, knowledge, and truth plays a central role in shaping democratic governance. While democracy is founded on transparency, accountability, and informed citizen participation, the production and dissemination of knowledge are often influenced by power structures. This study investigates how truth is constructed, legitimized, and contested within democratic systems. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach that integrates political science, sociology, and media studies, the research combines theoretical insights with empirical analysis. A structured survey (N=100) was used to examine public perceptions regarding information credibility, institutional trust, and media influence. Hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square method. The findings reveal that truth in democratic governance is not neutral but is shaped by institutional authority, digital platforms, and socio-political power. The study contributes to contemporary debates on misinformation, digital governance, and democratic legitimacy.

KEYWORDS: *Power, Knowledge, Truth, Democracy, Governance, Misinformation, Digital Media, Legitimacy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Democratic governance is premised on the idea that citizens make informed decisions based on accurate knowledge and objective truth. However, in practice, the production of knowledge and the establishment of truth are influenced by power relations embedded in political, social, and institutional frameworks.

In recent years, the rise of digital media, misinformation, and ideological polarization has raised critical concerns about the integrity of truth in democratic systems. The increasing control over information flows by political actors, corporations, and media institutions highlights the need to re-examine the nexus between power, knowledge, and truth.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on examining the relationship between power, knowledge, and truth within the context of democratic governance. It specifically analyzes the role of media, institutions, and digital platforms in shaping public perception. The geographical scope is limited to a selected sample of respondents, and the findings are interpreted within this contextual framework. The study emphasizes perception-based analysis rather than objective measurement of truth.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW (2020–2025)

One of the most pressing concerns in contemporary democracies is the spread of misinformation, which has been shown to significantly distort democratic decision-making processes. Studies indicate that exposure to unreliable or manipulated information can influence electoral behavior and weaken citizens' ability to make informed choices (Guess et al., 2020). In this context, data and algorithms have emerged as powerful instruments that shape knowledge production and dissemination. Algorithmic systems not only filter information but also reinforce certain narratives,

thereby functioning as mechanisms of power within governance structures (Zuboff, 2020; Kitchin, 2021).

The integration of artificial intelligence into governance processes further complicates the dynamics of truth construction. AI-driven systems are increasingly used in policy-making, surveillance, and decision support, influencing both public perception and institutional outcomes (Floridi et al., 2021). However, these developments also raise concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and ethical governance, as highlighted in global AI ethics debates (Jobin et al., 2020).

Another critical dimension explored in the literature is the concept of epistemic inequality, which refers to unequal access to knowledge and the marginalization of certain voices within knowledge systems. Such inequalities reinforce existing power structures and limit inclusive participation in democratic processes (Fricker, 2021). This is closely linked to the issue of democratic legitimacy, which depends on citizens' trust in institutions and the existence of a shared factual basis for public discourse (Norris, 2022). However, recent global trends indicate a decline in public trust in government institutions, posing a significant challenge to democratic stability (OECD, 2023).

Surveillance technologies and data-driven governance models have also transformed the relationship between citizens and the state. Digital surveillance practices reshape governance structures by enhancing control over information flows and citizen behavior (Lyon, 2020). At the same time, the rise of "post-truth" politics has blurred the distinction between fact and opinion, undermining the role of objective truth in public discourse (McIntyre, 2021).

Media studies further emphasize the importance of framing in shaping public opinion. Media organizations influence how issues are presented and interpreted, thereby affecting citizens' perceptions of reality (Entman, 2020). Social media platforms, in particular, have been found to amplify ideological polarization by creating echo chambers and reinforcing pre-existing beliefs (Sunstein, 2021). Additionally, big data analytics has begun to play a crucial role in electoral processes, influencing campaign strategies and voter targeting (Persily, 2021).

The literature also highlights that evidence-based policymaking is not entirely objective, as political interests often shape the selection and interpretation of evidence (Parkhurst, 2020). Furthermore, the increasing corporatization of knowledge production has raised concerns about the influence of market forces on research agendas and public knowledge (Mirowski, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a critical case study of how misinformation can undermine governance systems. The widespread dissemination of false information during the crisis exposed vulnerabilities in public communication and trust mechanisms (World Health Organization, 2021). In contrast, studies suggest that civic participation and inclusive governance processes can enhance the legitimacy of knowledge and strengthen democratic systems (Fung, 2021).

Finally, political discourse plays a central role in shaping perceived truth, as narratives constructed by political actors influence public understanding and interpretation of events (Van Dijk, 2020). In response to these challenges, scholars emphasize the importance of digital literacy as a key factor in strengthening democratic resilience and enabling citizens to critically evaluate information (UNESCO, 2022).

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the relationship between power, knowledge, and truth in democratic governance.
2. To examine the role of institutions in shaping public truth.
3. To assess the impact of digital media on knowledge dissemination.
4. To empirically test public perceptions of truth and governance.

5. HYPOTHESES

For the research study following hypotheses were formed

H0: There is no significant relationship between media influence and public perception of truth.

H1: There is a significant relationship between media influence and public perception of truth

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

The study adopts a **non-probability sampling technique**, specifically **convenience sampling**, to select respondents for the empirical investigation. This method was considered appropriate due to constraints of time, accessibility, and the exploratory nature of the research.

6.2 Sampling Size

The sample comprises **100 respondents**, representing individuals with varying educational backgrounds, professions, and levels of engagement with democratic processes.

6.3 Data Collection

The study is based on both **primary and secondary data sources**, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

Primary Data:

Primary data were collected through a **structured questionnaire** designed to capture respondents' perceptions regarding the role of power, knowledge, and truth in democratic governance.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data were collected from a variety of academic and authoritative sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, government reports, and publications from international organizations. This data supported the theoretical framework and helped contextualize the empirical findings.

6.4 Tools for Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to ensure accuracy and validity:

1. **Percentage Analysis:** Used to summarize and interpret the distribution of responses across different categories.
2. **Mean Score Analysis:** Applied to determine the average perception level of respondents toward specific statements.
3. **Chi-square Test (χ^2):** The Chi-square test was employed to examine the relationship between categorical variables, particularly to test the hypotheses regarding the association between media influence, institutional trust, and perception of truth.
4. **Tabulation and Classification:** Data were systematically organized into tables to facilitate clear interpretation and comparison.

7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

7.1 Power–Knowledge Nexus

The relationship between power and knowledge is central to understanding democratic governance. Knowledge is not merely an objective reflection of reality; rather, it is both shaped by and instrumental in sustaining power structures. Those who hold institutional authority—such as governments, media organizations, and academic bodies—play a decisive role in determining what is recognized as valid or legitimate knowledge.

Power operates through the production, organization, and dissemination of knowledge. Institutions establish norms, standards, and discourses that define what can be accepted as truth, thereby influencing public perception and social behavior. In this sense, knowledge becomes a tool through which power is exercised, while power simultaneously depends on knowledge to justify its authority. This interdependence creates a dynamic process in which dominant groups can influence societal understanding by controlling access to information and framing narratives.

7.2 Truth as a Construct

Truth, within the context of democratic governance, cannot be viewed as entirely objective or universal. Instead, it is constructed through social, political, and institutional processes. The acceptance of truth depends on multiple contextual factors, making it fluid and subject to change over time.

Truth is **contextual**, as it is shaped by cultural, historical, and situational conditions. What is considered true in one context may not hold the same validity in another. It is also **institutional**, since formal structures such as governments, educational systems, and scientific communities play a key role

in validating and disseminating knowledge. Furthermore, truth is **politically mediated**, as political actors and power structures influence which narratives are promoted, suppressed, or legitimized.

In contemporary democratic societies, the proliferation of digital media has further complicated the construction of truth, as multiple competing narratives coexist, often challenging the notion of a single, objective reality.

7.3 Democratic Legitimacy

Democratic legitimacy refers to the acceptance and justification of authority within a political system. It is closely linked to the relationship between power, knowledge, and truth. For a democratic system to function effectively, citizens must perceive governance processes as credible, fair, and based on accurate information.

Legitimacy is fundamentally dependent on **trust**, as citizens must have confidence in institutions and their ability to provide truthful and reliable information. It also requires **transparency**, where decision-making processes are open and accessible, allowing citizens to evaluate the actions of those in power. Additionally, **access to reliable knowledge** is crucial, as informed citizens are better equipped to participate in democratic processes and hold authorities accountable.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1) Media influences what people accept as truth

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Disagree	10	10%
Neutral	15	15%
Agree	40	40%
Strongly Agree	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

A significant majority (70%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that media plays a crucial role in shaping truth perception. This indicates a high level of dependence on media for information and highlights its influence in democratic discourse.

2) Government controls information flow

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	8	8%
Disagree	12	12%
Neutral	20	20%
Agree	35	35%
Strongly Agree	25	25%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

A large proportion (75%) of respondents agreed that social media contributes to misinformation, indicating widespread concern about the reliability of digital platforms.

3. **Mean Score Analysis**

To determine the overall perception level, mean scores were calculated using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	Mean Score	Rank
Social media spreads misinformation	3.92	1
Media influences truth perception	3.80	2
Government controls information flow	3.57	3

Interpretation:

The highest mean score (3.92) indicates that respondents strongly perceive social media as a major source of misinformation. Media influence and government control also show relatively high mean values, confirming their significant role in shaping truth.

4 Chi-Square Test

The Chi-square test was applied to examine the relationship between media influence and perception of truth.

Hypothesis:

- H_0: There is no significant relationship between media influence and truth perception
- H_1: There is a significant relationship between media influence and truth perception

Formula:

$\chi^2 = \Sigma (O - E)^2 / E$

- **Calculated Value:** 36.75
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** 4
- **Table Value at 5% significance level:** 9.49

Result:

Since the calculated value (36.75) is greater than the table value (9.49), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Interpretation:

There is a statistically significant relationship between media influence and public perception of truth. This confirms that media plays a critical role in shaping how individuals interpret and accept information in democratic governance.

9. FINDINGS

9.1. Media Significantly Influences Truth Perception

The study reveals that media plays a decisive role in shaping how individuals perceive truth within democratic systems. Traditional and digital media platforms act as primary sources of information, influencing not only what people know but also how they interpret events and issues. Through processes such as framing, agenda-setting, and selective reporting, media institutions construct narratives that guide public understanding. As a result, individuals often rely on mediated

information rather than direct experience, making media a powerful agent in defining what is accepted as truth.

9.2. Institutional Trust Affects Acceptance of Information

Findings indicate that the level of trust individuals place in institutions—such as government bodies, educational systems, and media organizations—significantly impacts their willingness to accept information as credible. When institutional trust is high, information disseminated by these bodies is more likely to be perceived as accurate and reliable. Conversely, declining trust leads to skepticism and the rejection of even factual information. This demonstrates that truth acceptance is not solely dependent on the content of information but also on the perceived credibility of its source.

9.3. Digital Platforms Amplify Misinformation

The study highlights that digital platforms, particularly social media, play a critical role in the rapid dissemination of misinformation. The decentralized nature of these platforms allows information to spread without rigorous verification, often prioritizing speed and engagement over accuracy. Algorithm-driven content distribution further amplifies sensational or emotionally charged information, increasing the visibility of misleading narratives. This environment creates challenges for democratic governance by distorting public discourse and weakening the foundation of informed decision-making.

9.4. Power Structures Shape Knowledge Systems

The findings confirm that knowledge systems are deeply influenced by existing power structures. Institutions with authority—such as governments, corporations, and media organizations—have the capacity to determine what knowledge is produced, validated, and disseminated. These power dynamics influence the construction of dominant narratives while marginalizing alternative perspectives. Consequently, knowledge is not neutral but reflects underlying social, political, and economic interests.

9.5. Public Perception of Truth is Socially Constructed

The study concludes that public perception of truth is not fixed or purely objective but is socially constructed through continuous interaction between individuals, institutions, and information systems. Cultural context, social influences, media exposure, and political discourse all contribute to shaping how truth is understood. This dynamic process highlights that truth in democratic governance is negotiated rather than absolute, evolving over time in response to changing societal conditions.

10. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study clearly indicate that democratic governance functions within a complex framework in which truth is significantly shaped by underlying power relations. Rather than being objective or universally accepted, truth emerges through processes influenced by institutional authority, political interests, and control over knowledge production. The empirical results support theoretical perspectives that argue knowledge is not neutral but is constructed within specific socio-political contexts. This reinforces the view that dominant actors—such as governments, media organizations, and corporate entities—play a crucial role in determining which narratives gain legitimacy and public acceptance.

Furthermore, the study highlights that the advent of the digital era has intensified these dynamics. The proliferation of digital platforms and algorithm-driven information systems has expanded the capacity of powerful actors to influence public discourse at an unprecedented scale. Information can now be produced, circulated, and amplified rapidly, often without adequate verification, thereby increasing the potential for manipulation and distortion of truth. This has led to challenges such as misinformation, polarization, and erosion of public trust in democratic institutions.

However, the findings also suggest that these challenges are not insurmountable. Mechanisms such as participatory governance, which encourages active citizen involvement in decision-making processes, can help democratize knowledge production and reduce the concentration of power. Similarly, enhancing media and information literacy among citizens can empower individuals to critically evaluate information, distinguish between credible and misleading content, and resist manipulative narratives. Together, these measures can serve as effective counterbalances, promoting a more transparent, inclusive, and resilient democratic system where truth is collectively negotiated rather than imposed.

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MORALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGES IN TAXING STATUTES REFORMS WITHIN INDIA: THE TIMELY NEED FOR REVENUE GENERATION

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ABSTRACT

A country's tax system is the backbone of its economy. In ancient times, the Indian economy was based on agriculture. In the Middle Ages, the focus of world business shifted from agriculture to industry, and the primary source of revenue for business and government came from the production and consumption of goods. The British rulers seeded the modern taxation system in India and, as mentioned here, it was based on consumption and production. As the needs of people changed, the production of goods had to change; thus, the frequent changes in production and consumption resulted in changes in the taxation system for more revenue generation.

In this paper, a discussion is made that is based on an empirical study and on certain available statistics of tax collections. Some inferences are drawn, and suggestions are also provided for smooth compliance with taxation in India.

KEYWORDS: *Morality, GST, ITC, DIRECT TAX, INDIRECT TAX.*

INTRODUCTION & BRIEF HISTORY:

Today, the true sense of the word morality is different depending on the context, such as time & Place- for example, selling, purchasing, and storing of "*Bhang*", a herb which is used as Ayurvedic medicine and consumed as an intoxicant. Certain states within India, such as MP, UP and Rajasthan, where it is free to purchase/sell and store *Bhang,* whereas it is banned in other states of India and treated as immoral to use this herb since it is used and consumed as intoxicant goods. Similarly, consumption of alcohol is immoral, but there are many places on this earth, for example north and south poles of the earth and the places on this earth which are geographical situated in such a manner that the weather throughout years remains very cool some time it would be in minus 30 to 40 degree Celsius, consumption of alcohol is normal in these part of the earth since it is essential for survival of mankind. At the same time, consumption of alcohol is not good ethically and morally in many parts of our earth. In India, it is not considered socially good to consume alcohol, but liquor and wine are the most revenue-generating goods in India. Hence, morality is a debatable issue in the eyes of intellectuals. The concept of levying taxes originated in the Middle Ages of modern civilisations on this earth. The concept was not so popular in the regime of the Ramayana & Mahabharata. This concept existed in the Middle East, Asia & Europe. In India, at most 1800 years ago, the legend in Political Science and Economics, Acharya Chanakya has introduced the tax levying concept.

India, after its independence, set up the Planning Commission in 1951, which then assessed and searched the problems faced by our country, and these problems were mainly envisaged in the form of Social and Fiscal nature. To cop up with the situation the commission then advised the Government that the measures to be taken to remove the poverty by adopting the policy in such a manner that the economy can be compensated by collecting the revenue from the economically capable segment of the society and this amount can be used for the unprivileged segment of the society for parting the gap between the higher earners and lower earners within the country. The Planning Commission then pinpointed the role to the Government and explained the importance of the production of goods and

services (business) to earn the money for the people, which can sort out the fiscal problems of the citizens of our country; thus, the industries were set up, and the Ministry for Trade and Commerce was formed. The importance of currency was already there as a medium of exchange; the role of currency was controlled and managed by the Reserve Bank of India. Accordingly, the master planner then subsumed the functions and role of Business and RBI in the Ministry of Finance, to build the economy of the nation to earn the money for the people and for the Government.

The Ministry of Finance is accordingly making changes in the taxing system. In India, the taxes are broadly categorised into Direct and Indirect nature. The Income Tax Act,1961, is a comprehensive example of direct tax in India, and the Goods & Services Tax is a suitable example of indirect tax.

The factors affecting the need for change and reforms are introduced from time to time:
There are 5 rates of tax under GST, which are**: 0%, 3%,5%, 12%, 18% and 28%** the dealers will be required to collect the tax on their transfer of goods or services or on both, and required to file only one return.

Problems faced under GST regarding filing of GST returns:

After the applicability of GST, its implementation is causing hardship to the business community. The business community is still required to file their indirect tax returns in a three-fold manner. That is, firstly, a monthly return to be filed, termed as Form GSTR-3 B, in which the dealer must show the liability or excess of tax, in his case. Then, for the same month, the dealer must file a Sales return, and that is to show a bill-wise detail in Form GSTR-1. The dealer is not required to file a purchase return, but the dealer must check his purchases in the Return Form GSTR-2, which is auto-populated which showing whether his supplier has shown the sale made to him or not in the supplier's GSTR-1. Thus, it is a full-time job for the dealer to verify and check the GSTR-2 Return, which the supplier of his has not shown the sale to him. If any supplier has not shown any sales to a particular dealer, then such a dealer is required to communicate with that defaulting supplier. Then, such a supplier may check their GSTR-1 if the supplier finds any such omission, then he may correct his GSTR-1 Return for that month. Thus, the series of checking and verification is a continuous process, which is time-consuming for the business where the business is of a higher quantified type of business. These problems are ultimately causing the loss to business in two ways firstly by expending more in hiring the skilled staff, and secondly, losing the time of business, which is adversely affecting the sales of the business.

Reforms required: The concept of GST is a welcome step by the Government, but there are certain changes required as a reform in the indirect tax. No doubt the government has subsumed maximum taxing statutes in a single Act known as GST, but the following areas are to be considered as susceptible issues in case of indirect tax within India.

Problems and Suggestible Solutions:

A) The rates of GST: There are too many rates of GST as 0%, 3%,5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%. Which are required to scale down. It is evident from the Income Tax that the liberal rate of tax increased the number of assesses.

Introduction of GST 2.0 with effect from 22/09/2025

The slab rate of tax in GST after 22/09/2025 **:** 0% 3% 5% 18% 40%
The slab of 12% and 28% subsumed in 18%

SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE RATE OF TAX

No 0 % rate should be required. Though the goods of basic need like grains, pulses, fresh milk, etc., are zero-rated. But there is a much higher rate of tax in the transportation of such zero-rated goods, for example, salt is tax-free, but the transportation cost, which is subject to GST, is too high; therefore, 0% goods are taxed @1%.

To compensate for the relief in tax, the higher slabs of rate (12%,18% & 28%) should be subsumed in a single moderate rate of 5%. Thus, there should be only two rates of tax: 1% and 5%, no tax-free nor higher rated tax of goods at 12%,18% and 28% are required. It seems that the goods are broadly categorised in different rates of tax, and the schedules of rate of tax are very technical in nature, and the dealers are tactfully or mischievously categorising their goods in the lower rate of tax group, and this leads to litigation in the court of Law when they are caught by the Tax Department for deciding the rate of tax. Only two rates of taxes can avoid such litigations and the ambiguity in understanding the schedules.

B) ITC (Input Tax Credit): Problems faced by the trade in claiming the ITC (Input Tax Credit) in the purchases. This is the biggest and serious problem for the Government and for the dealers, that there are many cases where the suppliers of goods or services are failing to pay the tax or suppressing their sales quantum. This leads to breaking the chain of distribution of goods or services or of both from the suppliers to their buyers. It is discussed here in above that a buyer-dealer must watch the return Form GSTR-2 to see whether their supplier has paid tax or not. If his supplier failed to pay the tax, then the buyer-dealer cannot claim the ITC; this also leads to litigation between the dealer and the Tax Department and amongst the dealer too. Some of the dealers are using this lacuna as their weapon in the settlement dispute of their trading. If a supplier has not paid the tax and absconded in the eyes of the Tax Department, then the Department catches the buyer-dealer and compels that buyer-dealer to pay tax on that particular transaction, thus the buyer-dealer is suffering the pain of twice paying tax, which he has already paid to his supplier. This is the infringement of the constitutional right of a buyer to avail the ITC. There are crores of rupees of fraud as regards wrong ITC; nowadays, the common people of our country have noticed, and are aware of these scandals by reading in newspapers and watching on social media. The tax authorities are just spectators in such cases; they are catching the wrong person, and the culprits are absconding.

SUGGESTION AS TO THE LEVY CONCEPT

It is suggestible that there should not be an ITC claim. The Government has to keep the minimal rate of tax, and then the quantum of the revenue may be compensated from the goods which are tax-free in GST would have been taxed at a very low rate @1%. The revenue can be generated in handsome value by doing so, because the turnover of tax-free goods in India is very huge, which includes agricultural products and goods of essential nature. The following comparative table may clear the picture.

Example of a higher rate of tax (18%) on the goods in the current taxing system (GST)

	MANUFACTURER	WHOLE SELLER	DEALER	RETAILOR
SALE	100	200	300	400
MAXIMUM TAX	18	36	54	72
TAX PAYABLE	18	36	54	72
LESS: ITC	5	18	36	54
TAX PAID AT EACH STAGE	**13**	**18**	**18**	**18**

TOTAL TAX PAID IN ABOVE CASE 13+18+18+18=67

Example of proposed reform (maximum rate of tax @5%)

	MANUFACTURER	WHOLE SELLER	DEALER	RETAILOR
SALE	100	200	300	400
MAXIMUM TAX	5	10	15	20
TAX PAYABLE	5	10	15	20
LESS: ITC	0	0	0	0
TAX PAID AT EACH STAGE	5	10	15	20

TOTAL TAX PAID IN ABOVE CASE 5+10+15+20=50

Then opposition may be faced by the Government regarding the Cascading effect of tax on the purchases. But the plea may be that if it is evident from the above table that not a large amount is spent by the consumer, then the price can be controlled, and the objective of the cascading effect is to cut down the price of the goods, which can be fulfilled in the proposed plan.
By doing so, the people will not feel a pinch to pay tax; they will pay the tax with a smiling face. Similarly, the business people will also be relaxed by simplifying the return process since they do not have to claim ITC; this will reduce the litigation amongst businesses and between businesses and the Department of Tax.

C) Levy of IGST (Integrated Goods and Services Tax): It is a levy on interstate transfer of goods, services, or both. When GST was introduced, the Government highlighted it as **ONE NATION ONE TAX**. But after its application, it seems to be the old wine in a new bottle. There is IGST just previously called as CST (The Central Sales Tax). The difference is that the dealer can set it off against the Intrastate as well as the Interstate tax liability. Due to this, the selling State is losing its revenue.

SUGGESTION AS TO REMOVAL OF IGST

The removal of IGST will lead towards a healthy competition amongst the States. The States from where the sales have been made that state collect the revenue from the State where the goods have been supplied. As the revenue will be subject to the State Treasury, the respective State will fall under a competition, which will be helpful to increase our State-wise GDP as well as our National GDP.
Today, the dealers are also required to claim the ITC of IGST. The dealer must claim the ITC in respect of IGST as per the provisions of the GST. The dealer first sets the ITC of IGST against any IGST liability of the dealer for that month. Then, if any amount remains as excess IGST, then it will be adjusted against the CGST liability and if there after some amount remaining as IGST ITC, then such amount can be adjusted from SGST. Then, after any excess remains then it can be carried forward in the next month and can be adjusted in the same manner mentioned here in above in the next month. This is a tedious job for the dealers; the dealers are concerned with their liability and payment of such liability. Such clerical work increases the technicality and consumes the precise time of the dealer, in which he can sell his goods and can thus earn more for himself and for the Government too.

D) Frequent changes in the GST Provisions: The feature of indirect tax in India is the changes, which are so frequent that the dealers are required to consult the tax consultant, whereas the Government affirms that they are simplifying the taxation system in India**.** The frequent changes create

scarcity in trade and commerce**.** If the taxing system in India is simplified, then no dealer requires hiring consultants; then why should they pay a consultant if the system is so simplified? Especially in the case of GST, the Government has set a legislative committee known as the GST Council as a medium between the Government and the Trade.

As per the direction of the Finance Ministry, the GST Council is making changes, and the council is also receiving many suggestions from the Trade, making the required changes. This is leading to very frequent changes, which creates an ambiguity amongst the dealers and the implementing agency. Today, the dealer in the eyes of the Government is a tax evader (a thief) and the Government in the eyes of the trade is a deteriorative one. This scene is not a favourable situation for a developing country like India.

A PECULIAR SUGGESTION

In India, the gambling tax is not there, because gambling in the eyes of our Law is an immoral act and, hence, it is illegal. But a question arises, then the business of lottery (especially the online lotteries) is carried by the Government, how can it be said that it is a moral act? simply because this act is done by the Government? If any person other than the Government organises the lottery business, then it is an immoral act; it is moral only when it is being conducted by the Government. This is the policy of appeasement and needed to be reformed to make the gambling business legal, and then the tax can be levied. Many countries on this earth have legalised the gambling business. Though it is an illegal business in India, people are involved in this business in large numbers. It is a peculiar suggestion that this business has to be legalised so that the revenue can be generated in a large volume. Though the Government has taken many steps to stop this business, despite this, the business of gambling is widening day by day, having a huge turnover. Hence, it is suggestible to legalise this business and to levy the GST on it.

CONCLUSION AND EFFECT OF THE ABOVE DISCUSSION

- **Principal changes:**

(a) In the rate of tax, the Minimum Rate of Tax must be considered.
(b) Removal of IGST
(c) No ITC.
(d) To legalise the gambling business and a levy is suggested.

- **Operational Change:**

(a) Return filling process to be simplified. No doubt the payment of tax, now become easier due to online payment of tax.
(b) Minimal changes, no frequent changes.
(c) The Information Technology (ITC) should be more user-friendly.

These changes may bring the following:

- ✓ The indirect tax collection will be increased, which may lead to minimising even the rate of direct tax, which can lead to overall prosperity of the Nation.
- ✓ The minimal rate of indirect tax will lead to stop the evasion of tax.
- ✓ The process of tax payment thus becomes smoother and with a smiling face.
- ✓ A trustworthy atmosphere amongst the taxpayers and the Government.
- ✓ The scarcity, thus, can be abolished amongst the trade.
- ✓ The economy of the nation will become healthier.
- ✓ The GDP may be increased.
- ✓ The export can be increased
- ✓ A boost will be available to the concept of Make in India.
- ✓ The plan for the future can be framed by the Government for the betterment of the people.
- ✓ An overall wealthier environment can be generated within India.

These are the views of the paper writer. It is not affirmed here that this is the final destiny of the taxing concept and system in India. As discussed here, the core of any system within a country is the subjects (citizens) of that country, and all these subjects are human beings, and the human behaviour (wants and needs) is flexible, unpredictable, and infinite; hence, the scope of reform always lies there accordingly, review and reform will be required from time to time.

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FINANCIAL LITERACY AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING: EVIDENCE FROM YOUNG ADULTS

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1. ABSTRACT OF THE PAPER-

Purpose: *Financial literacy has emerged as an essential life skill in the contemporary financial environment, particularly for young adults who increasingly face complex financial decisions related to education, savings, investment, and digital financial services. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between financial literacy and emotional well-being among young adults. In an era characterized by rising financial responsibilities and economic uncertainties, insufficient financial knowledge often results in poor financial decision-making, leading to anxiety, stress, and reduced overall life satisfaction. Therefore, understanding how financial literacy contributes to emotional stability is of significant academic and practical importance.*

Methodology: *The study adopts a quantitative research design and utilizes primary data collected through structured questionnaires administered to young adults aged 18–30 years. A structured survey instrument was used to measure financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being. The collected data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics, reliability testing through Cronbach's alpha, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques to examine the relationships among the variables.*

Findings: *The findings of the study reveal that financial literacy plays a significant role in enhancing financial confidence and improving responsible financial behaviour among young adults. Individuals with higher levels of financial literacy demonstrate better money management practices and experience lower levels of financial stress. These factors collectively contribute to improved emotional well-being, indicating that financial knowledge not only supports sound financial decisions but also strengthens psychological stability.*

Implications: *The study highlights important practical implications for educational institutions and policymakers. It suggests that integrating structured financial education programs into university curricula can significantly enhance financial awareness among youth. Such initiatives can empower young adults to manage their finances effectively, thereby promoting both financial competence and emotional well-being in the long run.*

KEYWORDS: *Financial Literacy, Emotional Well-being, Young Adults, Financial Behaviour.*

2. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary financial environment, financial literacy has emerged as a crucial life skill that enables individuals to make informed and responsible financial decisions. Young adults, in particular, face numerous financial choices related to education expenses, savings, investment opportunities, and the use of digital financial services. As they transition toward financial independence, the ability to understand and manage financial resources effectively becomes essential. However, many young adults possess limited knowledge of basic financial concepts such as budgeting,

debt management, and investment planning, which may lead to poor financial decisions and inefficient money management.

Inadequate financial knowledge often results in financial uncertainty and difficulty in handling personal finances, which can influence an individual's emotional state and overall well-being. Financial challenges such as mismanagement of credit, lack of savings, and improper budgeting can create feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and pressure among young individuals. Therefore, financial literacy plays an important role not only in improving financial capability but also in promoting emotional stability and confidence in managing financial responsibilities.

Although previous research has widely examined financial literacy in relation to financial outcomes, limited attention has been given to its influence on emotional well-being, particularly among young adults. Hence, this study aims to explore the relationship between financial literacy and emotional well-being, providing insights into how financial knowledge can contribute to improving the psychological and financial stability of young individuals.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the level of financial literacy among young adults.
2. To analyse the relationship between financial literacy and emotional well-being.
3. To evaluate the impact of financial behaviour on emotional well-being.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent studies have widely examined the relationship between financial literacy, financial behaviour, and individual well-being. **Annamaria Lusardi and Olivia Mitchell (2019)** analysed the relationship between financial literacy and retirement planning in the United States and found that individuals with higher financial knowledge are more likely to engage in effective retirement planning and saving behaviour. Similarly, **Bilal Javed and Aamir Khan (2019)** examined financial literacy among young adults and reported that financially knowledgeable individuals demonstrate better budgeting, saving habits, and responsible financial decisions. From a behavioural finance perspective, **Terrance Odean and Brad Barber (2019)** explored investor decision-making and found that limited financial knowledge often leads to irrational investment decisions and excessive trading behaviour.

The importance of financial education has also been emphasized in later studies. **Annamaria Lusardi (2020)** highlighted that financial literacy programs play a crucial role in improving financial capability and long-term financial stability. Likewise, **Shlomo Benartzi and Richard Thaler (2020)** explained financial decision-making through behavioural economics and concluded that psychological biases and limited financial understanding strongly influence saving and spending behaviour. In addition, **Robert Shiller (2020)** introduced the concept of narrative economics and suggested that social narratives and public perceptions significantly affect financial expectations and investment behaviour.

Further research has examined the broader economic outcomes associated with financial literacy. **Olivia Mitchell and Annamaria Lusardi (2021)** found that financially literate individuals are more likely to accumulate wealth and maintain financial security. Similarly, **John Xiao and Nilton Porto (2021)** reported that financial education programs significantly improve saving behaviour and reduce poor financial practices. In another study, **John Xiao (2021)** emphasized that strong financial capability positively influences financial satisfaction and emotional well-being. Supporting these findings, **Peter Garlappi (2021)** demonstrated that individuals with higher financial knowledge tend to diversify investments and manage financial risks more effectively.

Several studies have also focused on financial literacy among youth and debt management practices. **Nidhi Agarwal et al. (2021)** found that higher financial literacy helps young individuals manage debt more responsibly and avoid financial distress.

Similarly, **Lauren Willis (2022)** evaluated financial literacy in consumer decision-making and concluded that financial knowledge improves individuals' ability to evaluate financial products and avoid costly financial mistakes. Global evidence presented by **Deborah Hasler and Annamaria**

Lusardi (2022) revealed that financial literacy levels remain relatively low worldwide, suggesting the need for stronger financial education initiatives to enhance financial resilience. Likewise, **Robert Lerman (2022)** found that financial capability plays a significant role in strengthening financial security and long-term financial planning.

Behavioural and psychological aspects of financial decision-making have also been widely explored. **Nicholas Barberis (2022)** highlighted that psychological biases significantly influence investor behaviour and financial outcomes. In a similar context, **John Grable and Kristy Archuleta (2022)** examined financial anxiety and reported that financial stress negatively affects money management practices and financial well-being.

More recent studies have emphasized the role of financial literacy in improving behavioural and psychological outcomes. **Sharon Tennyson (2023)** found that structured financial literacy education significantly improves responsible financial behaviour. Likewise, **Dorothy Asebedo (2023)** demonstrated that financial stress negatively affects psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Research by **Angela Lyons (2023)** further indicated that financial literacy contributes to financial inclusion by encouraging individuals to use formal financial services. Similarly, **Daniel Fernandes (2023)** reported that financial literacy improves financial behaviour globally, although continuous education is required for long-term impact.

Other studies have linked financial behaviour with subjective well-being and life satisfaction. **Claudia Senik (2023)** found that financial stability and responsible economic behaviour positively influence happiness and life satisfaction. Likewise, **Rachel Loxton (2024)** reported that higher financial capability improves mental well-being and reduces financial stress. Supporting these findings, **Sarah Brown and Karl Taylor (2024)** concluded that financial satisfaction significantly enhances overall well-being and emotional stability. Research by **Megan Ford (2024)** further highlighted that financial stress is a major contributor to anxiety and psychological distress among young adults.

Recent literature also emphasises responsible financial behaviour among youth. **Kiran Bedi (2024)** found that financial literacy promotes disciplined spending and saving practices among young individuals. Similarly, **Andrew West (2024)** highlighted that behavioural finance insights and financial awareness improve financial decision-making.

Jonathan Parker (2024) further noted that expectations regarding income and economic conditions significantly influence consumer spending and saving behaviour.

The most recent studies continue to highlight the importance of financial knowledge in shaping financial behaviour and well-being. **Laura Starks (2025)** found that financially literate young adults make more informed and diversified investment decisions. Similarly, **Paolo Sodini (2025)** demonstrated that higher financial knowledge contributes to financial stability and reduces financial vulnerability. Finally, **Jeffrey Dew (2025)** concluded that responsible financial decision-making significantly improves life satisfaction and emotional well-being.

3.4 HYPOTHESES:

H1: Financial literacy has a significant positive relationship with emotional well-being among young adults.

H2: Financial behaviour has a significant positive relationship with emotional well-being among young adults.

H3: Financial literacy has a significant positive impact on financial behaviour among young adults.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being among young adults. A survey method was used to collect primary data, allowing statistical analysis of the relationships between the study variables.

4.2 TARGET POPULATION

The target population consists of young adults aged 18–30 years. This group was selected because they frequently make financial decisions related to saving, spending, loans, and investments, making financial literacy important for their well-being.

4.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study includes 235 respondents, selected using the convenience sampling technique. This method allows data collection from respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed using Google Forms and physical survey forms. The questionnaire included items related to financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being.

4.5 MEASUREMENT SCALE

Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scale helps measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward financial behaviour and emotional well-being.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. First, responses were coded from 1–5 for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and income. A reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to check internal consistency, with 0.70 or above considered acceptable.

Further, correlation analysis was applied to examine the relationship between financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being. Finally, multiple regression analysis was used to assess the impact of financial literacy and financial behaviour on emotional well-being using the model:

$$\textbf{Emotional Well-being} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \textbf{ (Financial Literacy)} + \beta_2 \textbf{ (Financial Behaviour)} + \varepsilon$$

This analysis helps determine how financial knowledge and behaviour influence the emotional well-being of young adults.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The collected data from 250 respondents was analysed using SPSS statistical software to examine the relationships among financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being. Various statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were applied to interpret the data. These analyses help in understanding the demographic characteristics of the respondents and testing the proposed research hypotheses. The results of the analysis are presented in the following tables.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 250)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	132	52.8
	Female	118	47.2
Age Group	18–21 years	82	32.8
	22–25 years	104	41.6

	26–30 years	64	25.6
Education	Undergraduate	118	47.2
	Postgraduate	96	38.4
	Professional Course	36	14.4
Monthly Income	No Income	94	37.6
	Below Rs.20,000	86	34.4
	Rs.20,001–Rs.40,000	48	19.2
	Above Rs.40,000	22	8.8

Interpretation:

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the study sample consists of 250 young adults, with a slightly higher representation of male respondents (52.8%) compared to females (47.2%). This relatively balanced gender distribution provides a reasonable representation of young adults in the study. In terms of age, the majority of respondents belong to the 22–25 years age group (41.6%), followed by those aged 18–21 years, indicating that most participants are in the early stages of their academic or professional lives. Regarding educational qualifications, a significant proportion of respondents are undergraduate students (47.2%), suggesting that the sample largely represents individuals who are currently pursuing higher education and are beginning to engage with financial decision-making and financial management practices.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Financial Literacy	6	0.84
Financial Behaviour	7	0.81
Emotional Well-being	7	0.86
Overall Scale	15	**0.85**

Interpretation:
The **Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.70**, indicating good internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scale used in the study.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Financial Literacy	Financial Behaviour	Emotional Well-being
Financial Literacy	1		
Financial Behaviour	0.62**	1	
Emotional Well-being	0.55**	0.68**	1

Note: p < 0.01

Interpretation:

The correlation analysis reveals a significant positive relationship among financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being. The results indicate that financial literacy is positively correlated with financial behaviour (r = 0.62), suggesting that individuals who possess higher financial knowledge are more likely to engage in responsible financial practices such as budgeting, saving, and making informed financial decisions. Financial literacy also demonstrates a positive association with emotional well-being (r = 0.55), indicating that individuals with better financial understanding tend to experience greater financial confidence and lower financial stress.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that financial behaviour has the strongest positive relationship with emotional well-being (r = 0.68). This finding suggests that disciplined financial habits, including effective money management and responsible spending, play a crucial role in enhancing individuals' emotional stability and life satisfaction. Overall, the results highlight that financial knowledge and responsible financial practices contribute significantly to improving the psychological and emotional well-being of young adults.

Table 4: Regression Analysis (Model-1: Financial Behaviour & Financial Literacy)
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.62	0.384	0.381	0.558

Dependent Variable: Financial Behaviour

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.73	1	48.73	156.34	0
Residual	79.12	248	0.32		
Total	127.85	249			

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.214	0.214	—	5.67	0
Financial Literacy	0.642	0.051	0.62	12.5	

Interpretation:

Table 4 presents the regression results examining the impact of financial literacy on financial behaviour among young adults. The model summary indicates that the correlation coefficient (R = 0.620) shows a strong positive relationship between financial literacy and financial behaviour. The R Square value of 0.384 suggests that financial literacy explains approximately 38.4% of the variation in financial behaviour among the respondents. The Adjusted R Square (0.381) further confirms that the model provides a reliable explanation of the relationship between the variables.

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 156.34$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that financial literacy is an important predictor of financial behaviour. This result confirms that the model effectively explains the variation in financial behaviour among young adults.

The coefficient analysis shows that financial literacy has a significant positive effect on financial behaviour with a standardized beta value of $\beta = 0.620$ and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. The high t-value (12.50) further confirms the strong influence of financial literacy on financial behaviour. This indicates that individuals with higher financial knowledge are more likely to demonstrate responsible financial practices such as budgeting, saving regularly, and making informed financial decisions.

Overall, the findings clearly support Hypothesis H3, suggesting that financial literacy plays a significant role in shaping responsible financial behaviour among young adults. The results highlight the importance of improving financial knowledge in order to encourage better financial management practices and promote long-term financial stability.

Table 5: Regression Analysis
(Model-2: Emotional Well Being, Financial Behaviour & Financial Literacy)
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.709	0.503	0.499	0.514

Dependent Variable: Emotional Well Being

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	64.92	2	32.46	122.84	0
Residual	63.21	247	0.26		
Total	128.13	249			

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.985	0.198	—	4.98	0.000
Financial Literacy	0.298	0.061	0.287	4.89	0.000
Financial Behaviour	0.471	0.058	0.489	8.12	0.000

Interpretation:

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the influence of financial literacy and financial behaviour on emotional well-being among young adults. The model summary shows that the correlation coefficient (R = 0.709) indicates a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and emotional well-being. The R Square value of 0.503 suggests that approximately 50.3% of the variation in emotional well-being can be explained by financial literacy and financial behaviour together. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.499 further confirms that the model provides a reliable explanation of the dependent variable.

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 122.84$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the independent variables collectively contribute to explaining emotional well-being among respondents.

The coefficients analysis shows that both financial literacy and financial behaviour have a positive and statistically significant impact on emotional well-being. Financial literacy has a standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = 0.287$ ($p < 0.001$), indicating that increased financial knowledge contributes positively to individuals' emotional stability and confidence in managing their finances. Similarly, financial behaviour shows a stronger effect with a beta value of $\beta = 0.489$ ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that responsible financial practices such as budgeting, saving, and careful financial planning significantly enhance emotional well-being.

Overall, the results support Hypothesis H1 and Hypothesis H2, indicating that both financial literacy and financial behaviour play an important role in improving emotional well-being. The findings further suggest that disciplined financial practices and sound financial knowledge can reduce financial stress and contribute to greater psychological stability and life satisfaction among young adults.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

The study suggest that financial literacy has a significant positive relationship with both financial behaviour and emotional well-being among young adults. Individuals who possess greater financial knowledge are more likely to adopt responsible financial practices such as budgeting, saving regularly, and making informed financial decisions. These behaviours help individuals manage their financial resources more effectively and reduce the likelihood of financial stress.

Furthermore, the findings are expected to indicate that financial behaviour plays an important role in improving emotional well-being. Young adults who demonstrate disciplined financial habits are likely to experience greater financial security and confidence in managing their financial future. This sense of control over personal finances contributes positively to emotional stability and overall life satisfaction.

The study may also reveal that financial literacy indirectly influences emotional well-being through improved financial behaviour. Individuals with better financial knowledge tend to practice responsible money management, which reduces financial anxiety and enhances psychological well-

being. These results support previous research which suggests that financial education is an important factor in improving both financial capability and emotional health.

Overall, the findings are expected to highlight the importance of financial education in promoting responsible financial behaviour and enhancing the emotional well-being of young adults.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study has certain limitations. First, it focuses only on young adults aged 18–30 years, which may limit the generalization of the findings to other age groups. Second, the study uses a convenience sampling method, which may not fully represent the entire population. Third, the data is based on self-reported responses, which may include personal bias. Finally, the study examines only financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being, while other factors such as family background and economic conditions may also influence financial behaviour. Future studies may use larger samples and additional variables for deeper analysis.

8. CONCLUSION:

Financial literacy has become an essential life skill in the modern financial environment, particularly for young adults who are increasingly responsible for managing their personal finances. The present study examines the relationship between financial literacy, financial behaviour, and emotional well-being, highlighting the importance of financial knowledge in shaping responsible financial practices.

The findings of the study suggest that individuals with higher financial literacy are more likely to demonstrate better financial behaviour, including effective budgeting, saving, and responsible financial decision-making. These financial practices contribute to greater financial security and help reduce financial stress, thereby improving emotional and psychological well-being. The study also emphasizes that financial behaviour acts as an important mechanism through which financial literacy influences emotional well-being. When young adults develop sound financial management habits, they experience greater confidence in handling financial challenges and planning for the future.

Overall, the research highlights the need to promote financial education among young individuals to help them develop essential financial skills and achieve long-term financial stability. Integrating financial literacy programs in educational institutions and promoting financial awareness through public policy initiatives can play a significant role in improving both financial capability and overall well-being among youth.

9. FURTHER STUDIES:

Future research can extend the present study in several ways. First, researchers may examine the relationship between financial literacy and emotional well-being using larger and more diverse samples from different regions or countries to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Second, future studies may include additional variables such as financial socialization, digital financial literacy, personality traits, and financial inclusion to better understand the factors influencing financial behaviour and emotional well-being.

Moreover, researchers may apply longitudinal research designs to observe how financial literacy and financial behaviour evolve over time and influence individuals' psychological well-being in the long term. Comparative studies between students, working professionals, and different income groups may also provide deeper insights into financial behaviour patterns. Finally, future studies may explore the role of financial education programs and fintech tools in improving financial capability and emotional well-being among young adults.

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BETWEEN HEARTS AND MINDS: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN FAMILY AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

The issue of whether to follow the feelings or the reason is a dynamic that is often faced by individuals in a more and more sophisticated social environment and which can be understood as the heart and minds dilemma in this paper. This essay will appraise the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) as a principle in the management of family life and social life especially in the context of the decision making capabilities in ethical issues and holistic well being. The study additionally incorporates the current theoretical frameworks including ability-based, trait-based, and mixed paradigms with the inclusion of the up-to-date theoretical approaches including the Cognitive-Affective Decision Harmony (CADH) model and Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI) as the basis of providing a complete picture of emotional-cognitive integration. The paper takes an exploratory design with the help of a pilot dataset to examine the connection between EQ and its main measures, including family harmony, conflict management, ethical reasoning, and the overall well-being. The results show that there is a significant positive correlation between EI and holistic well-being, and such people can deal with people issues more effectively and lead to a healthy relationship. Another key characteristic of the research is the emphasis put on the necessity to combine emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence in order to attain long-term psychological and social well-being. Although the results indicate the importance of EQ in various settings, the paper recognizes the limitations of the methods and provides major recommendations on future studies such as longitudinal study and intercultural validation of integrative models. Altogether, the paper is significant to the swelling of the literature, as it sets emotional intelligence as an important intermediary of emotion and reason, necessary in developing ethical, resilient, and meaningful human existence.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence; Holistic Well-being; Family Dynamics; Social Relationships; Ethical Decision-Making; Conflict Management; Heart–Mind Dilemma; Psychological Well-being; Spiritual Intelligence; Interpersonal Communication; Family Harmony; Social Functioning; Moral Reasoning; EQ Development; Human Well-being*

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the 21st century, people are more than ever before having intricate emotional pressures due to the accelerated urbanization, the changing family set up, and increased social and professional demands. These changes have greatly affected the interpersonal relationships and in most cases caused emotional conflicts, breakdown of communication and difficulty in sustaining harmony in the family and social circles. In collectivist cultures, especially in India, where collectivism is practiced, with interdependence, respect, and emotional closeness playing a crucial role, the relationship management skills of the individual have become more challenging and more crucial than ever. The findings of empirical studies have always revealed the close relationship between emotional competencies and relationship satisfaction, stress management, and general psychological well-being (Mayer et al., 2004).

The core of those relational and emotional issues is a certain psychological conflict which could be discussed as the dilemma of hearts and minds. The conflict between emotional impulse (the heart) and rational thinking (the mind) in the decision-making process is present in this dilemma. In family feuds, interpersonal relationships or line of duty, one will always have a time when one will at times be faced with circumstances where their emotional response will not always be aligned with the rational thought or moral beliefs. Such an example is a parent who responds in a hasty manner due to frustration and not acting with patience and empathy, or a person who puts ego and not empathy in a social conflict. These are examples of why human decision making is not entirely rational since it is strongly guided by emotional operations (Damasio, 1994).

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI), consequently, comes out as a key concept in the analysis and in solving this dilemma. In general terms, emotional intelligence can be said to be the ability to notice, feel, manage, and use emotions both in your own self, and in others (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). As opposed to the traditional concept of intelligence that focuses on cognitive skills, EI combines emotional sensitivity with logical reasoning, thus, helping people to make reasonable and contextual decisions. The framework continues to evolve by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso into a conceptualization that EI is an ability based concept, other researchers such as Goleman (1995) develop it further into mixed concept models that do include personality traits and social competencies. All these theoretical frameworks point to the fact that emotional intelligence is an intermediary between the affective and cognitive domains.

Emotional intelligence is critical in family environments when it comes to influencing the way parents raise their children, the nature of relationships within a marriage and how a family in its entirety feels. Research has shown that emotionally intelligent parents are in a better position to bring about emotional security, empathy, and resilience in their children (Brackett et al., 2011). Equally, in the context of marriage, emotional management and effective communication are also helpful in conflict resolution and satisfaction of the relationship. Families are not the only areas where emotional intelligence can further its influence to social life; it can improve interpersonal communication, conflict management, and prosocial behaviour. People who have elevated EI will find it easier to have positive social interaction and supportive social networks (Schutte et al., 2001).

The other aspect of emotional intelligence that is equally important is ethical decision making and moral reasoning. Emotions are not simply reactionary states but are very important sources of information that inform judgments on what is right and wrong. According to current studies, emotional awareness and empathy play an essential role in the process of moral development and in determining the way in which people analyze the ethical dilemmas and make socially responsible decisions (Haidt, 2001). In this way, emotional intelligence helps people to overcome the impulsive or self-centered decision-making and make more thoughtful and compassionate decisions as well as decisions based on the ethical standards.

The overall effect of emotional intelligence in the family, social, and ethical domains is significant to the overall holistic well-being, which is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes emotional stability, social connectedness, mental health, and a sense of purpose. Holistic well-being is not only the ability to be free of sickness, but also the concept of balance of mind, body and social equality. This is very close to the traditional philosophical views on Indian context that put great weight on balance, self-regulation and harmonious living as key elements of a complete life. The modern paradigms in psychology also acknowledge that emotional control and social competence are at the center stage when it comes to the attainment of lasting well-being (Ryff and Keyes, 1995).

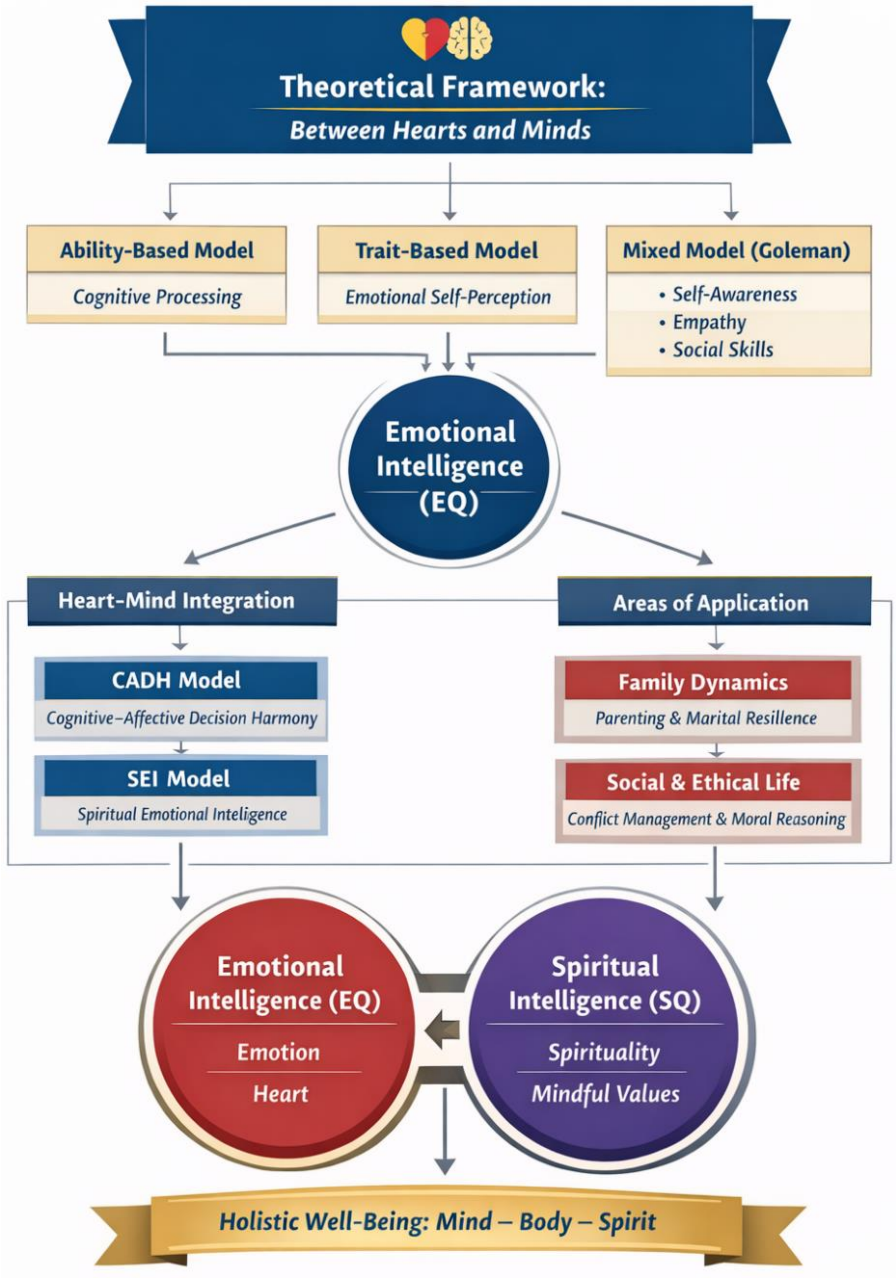
Although the research that has been conducted has continued to support the significance of emotional intelligence, there exist a number of limitations and gaps. Current research tends to be based on self-report methods and this is doubtful because of subjectivity and cultural inclination. Moreover, although EI and its role in personal wellbeing have already been examined extensively, its combined effect on family systems, social structures, and ethical decision making processes needs to be investigated further, especially in a culturally diverse environment, like India. Emotional intelligence (EQ) plays a crucial role and acts as a connector between cognitive reason and emotional influence

between the heart and mind in personal and social contexts. This is a literature review that summarizes the recent studies (2015-2025) and indicates that EQ is a combination of reason and emotion to promote ethical decision-making and whole-person well-being. It has been indicated that emotional skills are mostly incubated within the family context with the parental EQ playing an essential role in determining the psychological and social achievements of children.

The important conclusions include Cognitive-Affective Decision Harmony (CADH) model and indigenous models, including the Bhagavad Gita-based Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI) model, as significant in reaching a balanced life decision. Moreover, it is demonstrated that high EQ improves the nature of interpersonal relations, minimizes conflicts, and encourages ethical behavior in various social and professional situations. This report discusses the processes of EQ as a proficiency skill that facilitates resiliency, empathy, and peace in different fields of life. It is against this context that the current study aims at analyzing how emotional intelligence can be applied in the management of family and social life based on the concept of the heart and minds dilemma. It also seeks to examine the role of emotional intelligence in ethical decision-making and its ultimate development of the holistic well-being. This paper, through the combination of the theoretical models, empirical findings and contextual insights, tries to bring a detailed picture of the concept of emotional intelligence as a supporting pillar of balanced and meaningful human life.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND MODELS

The theoretical explanations of the definition and operationalization of emotional intelligence (EQ) need a methodical discussion of the concept to understand it. In the last three decades, researchers have theorized EQ in various forms and can be broadly divided into ability, trait, and mixed conceptualization. The frameworks provide different approaches to the study of the relationship between emotions and cognition and behavior. More recently, integrative solutions have evolved to discuss the philosophical and psychological conflict between the heart and the mind in an intricate way-what the paper conceptualizes as the hearts and minds dilemma. Such integrative models as Cognitive-Affective Decision Harmony (CADH) structure, and those that are spiritually based, such as Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI), offer a more comprehensive view of the operation of emotions in personal and social settings.



2.1 Core EQ Models: Ability, Trait, and Mixed

The first conceptualization was developed with the help of ability-based model suggested by Salovey and Mayer according to which EQ can be defined as a set of cognitive abilities associated with processing emotional information. This model defines emotional intelligence as the ability to properly direct emotions, employ emotions to aid thinking, comprehend emotional implications and to manage or guide emotions (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Mayer et al., 2004). This paradigm places EQ in the same category with other types of intelligence with focus on the fact that emotional reasoning is a quantifiable and trainable cognitive capacity.

One of the main advantages of the ability-based model is its scientific nature and emphasis on a system of emotional processing as a type of intelligence and not character. It underscores the fact that people that are good at reading emotional signals and are able to control their reactions are more apt to negotiating difficult interpersonal interactions. This skill is essential in the family and social life by the way of conflict management, cognizing the viewpoints of other people, and making compromises.

Critics however state that this model can be narrow-minded because it does not explain behavioral tendencies to the full extent; neither does it explain motivational factors that affect the manifestation of emotional abilities in the real-life circumstances. Conversely, the conceptualizations of emotional intelligence in trait-based models are that emotional intelligence is a constellation of personality traits and self-perception regarding emotional functioning. The models are centered on the individual emotional capabilities as these models relate to emotional awareness, emotional assertiveness, empathy and stress tolerance (Petrides and Furnham, 2001). Instead of gauging actual ability, trait EQ indicates normal sequences of emotional action and self conviction, which is close related to personality psychology.

Trait approaches provide useful information on the dispositional features of emotional intelligence especially when it comes to interpreting differences between individuals as regards emotional reactivity and interpersonal style. As an example, high trait EQ individuals tend to display confidence in emotional contexts, have a cold demeanor in stress and do prosocial actions. These characteristics provide long-term relationships and communication in the family and social settings. Nevertheless, due to the fact that trait EQ is dependent on self-report measures, it has been subject to subjectivity and biasness and therefore it has been questioned whether it is empirically valid.

In a bid to bridge the gap between the two schools of thought; ability and trait theories, mixed models offer a more inclusive approach by combining cognitive skill, personality traits and behavioral competencies. The model that has had the greatest impact is that of Daniel Goleman who has proposed five basic elements of emotional intelligence namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1995). This model focuses on the practical use of emotional intelligence in real life, especially leadership, relationship and individual development.

The mixed model is very appropriate to the current study because it describes the dynamic interaction of internal processes of emotion and social behavior in the environment. Self-awareness helps people to be aware of their emotional conditions, whereas self-regulation helps them to control their impulses and act in a considered manner. Social skills and empathy help to perceive and communicate with other people and give motivation stimulates goal-orientated behavior. A combination of these competencies will offer some effective framework of overcoming the dilemma of the hearts and minds by balancing feelings and rationality. All the three models, despite their differences, converge on the fact that emotional intelligence is very important in determining the human behavior and judgments. But, they are more concerned with the aspects and expression of EQ and not totally the higher level of combining the emotion and thinking. It is this gap which has resulted in the formulation of integrative frameworks which explicitly concern the harmonization of the emotional and rational aspects of human experience.

2.2 The Integration of the Heart and Mind: CADH and SEI

Although the conventional versions of emotional intelligence can help to gain an insight into emotional skills and qualities, they are not always sufficient to resolve the core conflict between emotion and reason. This tension which is conceptualized in the current paper as the hearts and minds dilemma needs a more integrative approach that is beyond the categorization approach to address the harmonization of emotional and cognitive processes in decision-making.

The Cognitive-Affective Decision Harmony (CADH) model is one such integrative theory, which defines a good decision-making process as one that is the harmonious synthesis of clear thinking and emotional appeal. This model consists of the idea that the best decisions are not ones that put logic and emotion at odds or the other way around, but those that strike a balance between the two (Hwang, 2018; Epstein, 1994). According to the CADH framework, cognitive processes are structured and bring clarity to the analysis and emotional processes are sensitive to context and ethically conscious.

It is especially applicable to the domain of family and social life, as the choices to make in these areas may incorporate aspects of morality, interpersonal relationships, and the future effects. To illustrate, it is not only necessary to solve problems logically when dealing with a family conflict but also to be emphatic, patient, and sensitive to emotions. The CADH model therefore identifies emotional

intelligence as a process to arrive at coherence between the thought and feeling to make a rationally and emotionally meaningful decision.

Notably, the CADH system is also a reflection of Western rationalism and Eastern humanistic culture. Western tradition has traditionally stressed on logic, objectivity, and analytical reasoning, whereas Eastern philosophies have always been known to value emotional balance, self-awareness, and harmony. Combining the two points of view, the CADH model can provide a better comprehensive perspective on the way human decisions are made, implying that the skill of coordinating thought with emotion is its wisdom. In line with this point of view, models of Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI) have roots in native philosophical traditions and offer a more in-depth, value-focused explanation of emotional intelligence. Based on Bhagavad Gita and other texts, SEI focuses on self-awareness, detachment, emotion control, and adherence to higher values as the critical elements of well-being (Rao, 2016; Srivastava, 2013). In comparison to the traditional models that pay much attention to interpersonal effectiveness, SEI emphasizes the importance of interior change and spiritual development to gain emotional balance.

Clarifying the purpose and developing self-mastery SEI provides a framework of overcoming internal conflict in dilemmas of the hearts and minds. An example of such teachings is the Bhagavad Gita which promotes duty-based action (dharma), and non-affectiveness, which allows followers to make ethically sound and psychologically balanced choices. The method is also very similar to the idea of holistic well-being, because it incorporates emotional, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of human experience. Moreover, the Indian socio-cultural setting is especially applicable to SEI, as the spiritual values and the well-being of people are particularly important to the behavior formation. This model broadens the area of emotional intelligence beyond personal competence to encompass moral accountability and societal well being by bringing on board indigenous views. The CADH and SEI models are a major step in the theoretical perspective of emotional intelligence. They transcend the divided thinking of previous models to provide a single one that focuses on the very problem of emotion and logic integration. In this way, they offer a strong platform on which to explore the role of emotional intelligence to effective family management, meaningful social relationship and eventual holistic well being.

3. EQ IN FAMILY DYNAMICS

Family is the first and the most significant social context where individuals learn to express, learn to regulate emotions. Therefore, emotional intelligence (EQ) has a groundwork role, which impacts not only individual growth but also the level of relationships at home. In parenting behavior to marital relationships, EQ is an essential tool in which emotional steadiness, cognition, and strength are developed.

3.1 Parents hold a crucial position in the development of a child.

The family setting is the main setting of the development of emotional competencies in which the children are taught the skills of emotional expression, emotional regulation, and interpersonal relations through observational learning and interpersonal interactions. It has been shown that the higher the degree of emotional intelligence in parents, the higher the chances of them modeling adaptive emotional behaviours, which subsequently has positive effects on their children in terms of emotional and psychological growth (Mayer et al., 2004; Brackett et al., 2011). Children brought up with emotionally caring homes are more likely to be more emotionally aware, empathetic and able to self-regulate, which are keys to personal and social success.

Emotional regulation on the part of parents especially is an important factor in determining child response to stress and conflict. Parents who can be calm, patient, and constructive in their problem-solving behaviors will help children learn the behaviors, thereby leading to the minimization of negative emotional events and enhanced coping strategies. There are empirical indicators indicating that not only are such children more likely to have improved mental health outcomes, but also exhibit improved physical health and academic achievement (Brackett et al., 2011).

Emotional intelligence also influences child development through parenting style. Warmth, responsiveness and effective communication between parents and the child have been continuously linked to democratic or authoritative parenting, which has been found to be linked with greater levels of emotional intelligence, social competence and adaptability among children (Baumrind, 1991). On the contrary, inconsistent or authoritarian parenting patterns, which include a strict discipline or lack of emotional support, are associated with problems with emotional control, higher stress levels, and low interpersonal efficacy. These trends draw attention to the fact that emotional intelligence is not just a personal feature of a person, but it is actively passed and supported in the family.

3.2 Marital Strength and Family Advice

In addition to the parent child interaction, emotional Intelligence is very important to the interactions between the couples in marriage which constitute the emotional gist of the family. Emotional competencies of both spouses are very important in determining the resilience of the marriage; that is, the capacity of partners to stand and overcome conflict and stressful situations. Emotionally intelligent people are in a better position to handle conflicts amicably, cope with negative feelings and be empathetic when communicating with others, thus lowering the chances of conflict escalating into a destructive one (Gottman, 1994).

Emotional intelligent partners will be in better position to focus on the understanding rather than reaction and therefore will be able to negotiate the hearts and minds dilemma effectively in their relationship. As an example, the capacity to overcome impulsive anger and react in terms of reflection and empathy makes a marital environment more stable and supportive. It has been proposed that emotional maturity among spouses promotes trust, emotional security and stronger ties between the partners and such levels of relational ties enhance a general cohesion of the family (Gottman, 1999).
In most cultural settings such as in India, the emotional aspect that is established by the two partners will greatly affect the overall family situation. A caring and understanding attitude fosters peace, respect, and communication and lack of emotional sensitivity may cause tension and disintegration of the family. In addition, emotional intelligence is a key to successful family guidance as it helps parents to make ethical and balanced judgments that would take into account the emotional needs and the reality of the situation. During the last few years, the focus on other methods of emotional regulation is increased, including self-reflective practices and holistic well-being methods that focus on improving emotional balance and interpersonal harmony. Though these methods still need the additional empirical confirmation, they demonstrate the growing understanding of the role of emotional acuity in maintaining relationships within the family and coping with the pressure of the contemporary living.

4. SOCIAL LIFE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The emotional intelligence (EQ) does not only have family life as its scope, but rather the social sphere where people interact on an ongoing basis having different visions, expectations, and relationships. In the ever more global and hectic world, social skills have turned out to be a necessary aspect of sustaining a meaningful relationship and overall well-being. Social life is a chain of emotional transactions and negotiations, and adjustments, so the emotional intelligence is an important factor that determines interpersonal effectiveness. Being the skill that helps to manage the conflicts, improve communication, and develop the social problem-solving competencies, EQ is one of the keys to maintaining the healthy and joyful relations within the social context.

4.1 Conflict Management and Communication

The conflict is one of the inevitable factors of the social and professional life, due to the differences in opinions, values, and emotional reactions. Nevertheless, how people define and deal with conflict greatly determines how good and successful their relationships will be. Highly emotionally intelligent individuals have excellent interpersonal dynamics since they are in a better position to understand emotional signals, manage them, and resolve conflicts positively (Mayer et al., 2004; Goleman, 1995).

The capacity to cope with the so-called hearts and minds dilemma in conflict situations is one of the major defining features of emotionally intelligent persons. Instead of acting on impulse because of the immediate emotional stimulus, they have a chance to pause and think and combine emotional awareness and reasoning. This will allow them to deal with the disagreement in a way that is both demanding and understanding to prevent escalation and build up the mutual understanding. It has been researched that interventions and education based on emotional intelligence can greatly decrease interpersonal conflicts and train the individuals to utilize emotions as thinking aids instead of communication obstacles (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Communication is at the core of conflict management, and emotional intelligence is an important factor in improving communicative ability. Communication does not just entail the transfer of information but entails correct expression and perception of feelings, thoughts and views. High EQ people are more proficient at identifying the perspectives of others, listening actively as well as exhibiting their own feelings in a coherent and respectful way (Brackett et al., 2011). Such emotional intelligence and control to express oneself and think clearly enable more meaningful and productive contacts.

Moreover, emotional intelligence leads to the development of some of the most important relational characteristics like empathy, patience, and adaptability, without which harmony in social interactions is impossible to achieve. Empathy, especially, helps people to rationalize and comprehend how other people feel, which builds confidence and relationship. These competencies play a role in bringing about strong and supportive relationships in various social settings such as friendships and peer unions in the work place. Consequently, people who possess better EQ have higher chances of enjoying positive interpersonal relations such as decreased misunderstandings, greater cooperation, and greater relational satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001).

4.2 Social Problem Solving and Well-being

Emotional intelligence is an important part of social problem-solving, and outside of conflict management, it influences the capacity to deal with complex interpersonal dynamics, making efficient choices, and resolving the desired outcomes without worsening relationships. Social problem-solving involves cognitive ability like analysis and reasoning and emotional ability like empathy, self-control and drive. Combining of these dimensions shows how emotional intelligence is practically applied in the real process.

With high emotional intelligence, people are more able to manage the pressure of their various social lives, including friendship, work life, and interactions with the community. It is especially applicable in modern society, where members of society tend to be confronted with conflicting demands and social needs. Studies reveal that EQ and social problem-solving skills are great predictors of general well-being since they allow one to deal with stress, solve interpersonal issues and have a feeling of control over their social lives (Bar-On, 2006).

One of the most important attributes of social problem-solving is the self-motivation and ability to inspire other people to achieve positive results. Emotionally intelligent people are able to use their emotional understanding to elicit cooperation, develop consensus, and encourage their colleagues to collaboratively work towards finding a solution. This is not only contributing to a better interpersonal effectiveness but also to a better mental and behavioral health. As an example, people who are able to cope with social stressors are less prone to feel anxiety, burnout, or social withdrawal and more prone to participate in good and also proactive behaviour.

In addition, emotional intelligence has remained related to numerous measures of psychological health, such as life satisfaction, positive affect, and decreased negative affective states. Higher EQ leads to a person having more emotional equilibrium since they can control negative emotions and develop positive ones. Emotional stability in turn increases their capacity of building and maintaining meaningful relationships which perpetuates a social support and well being reinforcing cycle (Petrides and Furnham, 2001). Notably, emotional intelligence and well-being are not only individually oriented but also have an influence on society as a whole. Emotionally intelligent people can bring a culture of

understanding, cooperation, and mutual respect in the community and organization. They can easily go through social complexities and resolve conflicts in a positive manner thus creating a favorable social environment that is not only beneficial to themselves but also to the people who surround them. Social problem-solving is the practical implementation of emotional intelligence in the context of the so-called hearts and minds dilemma to match the emotional awareness and rational judgment. The combination of empathy and rational thinking helps people to make effective and socially and morally acceptable decisions. This connection eventually encourages the process of holistic well-being and it emphasizes the concept that emotional intelligence is not just a personal ability but also a crucial element of healthy and viable social association.

5. ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING AND MORAL REASONING

Ethical decision-making is one of the most complicated spheres of human activity because a person has to find a way through conflicting values, emotions, and rationality. When making decisions, in real life scenarios, decisions do not always come out of the logic, but instead, they are a product of a confrontation between cognition and emotion. This interaction is indicative of the gist of the dilemma of hearts and minds in which individuals have to balance what they feel with what they think is right. Emotional intelligence (EI) is vital to such a process because it helps individuals to combine emotional awareness with ethical thinking which results in a more balanced and ethically sound choice.

5.1 Integration with Moral Development Theories

Conventional ethical theories of moral development, especially the model formulated by Kohlberg, lay specific emphasis on the part played by cognitive reasoning in ethical conduct. Kohlberg suggested that people are subjected to moral development stages according to their capacities to reasoning concerning justice, rights, and ethical values (Kohlberg, 1981). Although this framework offers a good platform on the thinking of morality in individuals, it has been criticized as underestimating the value of emotions in making ethical decisions.

The combination of emotional intelligence and cognitive moral development will provide a more detailed concept of ethical actions. Salovey-Mayer model of emotional intelligence lays stress on the skills to perceive, understand, and control emotions, which is complementary to the rational judgement accentuated by Kohlberg (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Mayer et al., 2004). Being emotionally conscious allows people to understand the way their emotions affect their judgments and enables them to control their emotions to make non-impulsive and non-biased decisions. This combination facilitates ethical responses that are logically consistent, as well as, socially responsive and context-specific.

Moreover, researchers like Dougherty and Krone (2002) have placed a lot of focus on the ethical aspect of emotional intelligence and therefore EQ may be applied in a constructive or destructive manner. On the one hand, the emotionally intelligent person can build trust, collaboration, and ethical leadership based on empathy and understanding as the crucial elements to guide his or her actions. Conversely, emotional awareness may be abused to be manipulated or self-serving without strong moral values. This two-fold possibility underlines the significance of providing emotional intelligence with ethics and the concept of emotional competence that implies emotional dexterity and ethical accountability.

5.2 Emotions as Informants in Ethical Choices

In contrast to the previous perceptions where emotions are seen as the amount that inhibits rational decisions, modern studies acknowledge the importance of emotions as the source of information used in ethical decisions. Empathy, guilt, compassion and other kinds of emotions are good signals concerning the moral aspects of any action and help in guiding people towards socially acceptable and ethically responsible action (Haidt, 2001). These emotional capacities can be interpreted and controlled and, thus, the capacity to read and control them is an essential aspect of ethical maturity.

Emotional intelligent persons have more opportunities of handling both negative and positive feelings in ethical situations. As an illustration, anger or frustration moved uncontrolled can result in a decision made impulsively or harmful. Nonetheless, these feelings can be redirected into positive actions to foster equality and tolerance when they are managed and recognized. On the same note, empathy helps people to take into account the ideas and welfare of others and this is necessary in making ethical choices in both personal and work environments. It has been empirically proven that people with a high level of emotional intelligence tend to show better indications of ethical conduct such as making patient-focused decisions in the healthcare sector and upholding integrity in organizational settings (Cote, 2014). Through proper control of their emotional reactions, these people will be able to prevent extremism to one extreme, that is, being too emotional or being too detached, but rather, to minimize into the golden mean, which is to be both emotional and rational.

Emotions are not barriers but rather pointers to the direction in process of the so-called hearts and minds dilemma. Emotional intelligence allows a person to make sense of these clues and reconcile them with the process of rational thinking, allowing him or her to make decisions that are both informed by ethics and inspired by emotion. Such integration does not only improve the quality of the decision-making, but it also leads to personal integrity and social trust. It is all a matter of balancing emotion and reason and not a matter of choosing one over the other and this is the main point behind ethical decision-making. Emotional intelligence equips them with the implements to achieve this integration where decisions are informed by empathy, self-awareness and moral clarity. It thus supports the overall thesis of this paper that emotional intelligence is a pillar to overall well-being in terms of balanced and ethical living.

6. HOLISTIC WELL-BEING: MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

Holistic well-being goes even further than is covered by an absence of disease but rather, a balanced unity of emotional, psychological, social and spiritual components of human existence. In this regard, emotional intelligence (EQ) has emerged as a primary factor in promoting overall well-being as it helps individuals to effectively cope with inner experiences and interactions with other parties. Nevertheless, the actual holistic well being does not rely on emotional competence only but also on the combination of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence (SQ) that will help to lead people to a more meaningful and balanced life.

Psycho-spiritual health is developed when emotional consciousness is brought into harmony with other deeper moral values and norms. That is to say, the heart should be led, or inspired with a feeling of moral and spiritual guidance. Once people can manage their emotions and still be in their ethical awareness, they feel more peaceful, focused in their actions and have more character. This agreement minimizes internal conflict and enables people to react to life circumstances calmly, wisely and with integrity. This is a sign of an answer to the dilemma of the heart and mind where the emotional drive and the rationality are brought into balance via an elevated sense of cognition. Integrative theories of well-being affirm that the vitality of human beings relies on balance in three critical aspects, which are mind, body, and soul. The mind is the cognitive and emotional aspect, the body is the physical health and stress management and the spirit is values, meaning and life purpose. When dimensions are balanced, people are in a better position to deal with life issues and maintain the long-term well-being. On the other hand, the lack of balance in any of the two dimensions may result in stress, dissatisfaction, and the feeling of not fitting in.

Emotional intelligence also plays an important role in this balance as it assists people to manage the pressures of the daily life. High EQ helps people to cope with stress, control bad emotions, and positive relations which are both vital to psychological and social health. Emotional intelligence improves the quality of life by alleviating emotional distress and improving adaptive coping mechanisms. Higher EQ will result in the person having reduced chances of chronic stress or emotional burnout and is more able to keep to a sense of equilibrium in personal and social life.

Moreover, this sense of well-being is enhanced by the fact that EQ with spiritual awareness offers meaning and moral life framework. Spiritual intelligence helps to practice self-reflection, to be not attached to extreme emotional reactivity, and to live in accordance with values transcendent of the current situation. When combined, EQ and SQ can help a person not only to serve the purpose in everyday life successfully but also to live a life full of meaning, strength, and self-harmony. In this way, holistic well-being can become a dynamic and ongoing process of union of emotion, cognition, and spirituality. This integration is anchored by emotional intelligence and offers the content and richness of spiritual awareness. When people find the solution to the dilemma of the hearts and minds, they shift to the state of balanced living that can facilitate not only a personal fulfilment but also a cordial relationships and welfare of the society.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE EVIDENCE

Although there is an increasing agreement about the beneficial role of emotional intelligence (EQ) in helping to improve family bonds and relationships, social functioning, and general well-being, the current literature on the subject also has its shortcomings. The limitations are not to be ignored in a critical analysis of the concept to have a balanced and nuanced insight of the concept. A major weakness is the inconsistency of the results of emotional intelligence. Although several studies indicate that increased EQ is associated with better interpersonal relationship and well-being, the same is not always a uniform observation. The presence of a high level of EQ does not always mean that people are happier and less reserved in some situations, which suggests that emotional intelligence is not always enough to define good life results. Environmental conditions, cultural influences, and personality traits are other factors that can interact with EQ to create individual experiences.

The other critical issue is connected with the contextual factors which condition the effectiveness of emotional intelligence. It has been demonstrated that in certain contexts, including some tightly-structured or role-bound ones like family-run businesses, EQ does not have a significant correlation with certain kinds of interpersonal conflict. This indicates that the effects of emotional intelligence are contextual and they might be limited by external organizational structures, power relations, or even circumstances.

The study of emotional intelligence also has a limitation through methodological issues. Much of the research is based on self-reporting, especially in trait models of EQ. Such measures are subjective in nature and they can be affected by social desirability bias, false self-perception or cultural norms with respect to the expression of emotions. Due to this, the validity and reliability of such findings can be doubted. Lastly, the literature has gaps in measurement especially on the effect of emotional intelligence in long-term impact on family and social life. Most of the studies have been done on short-term or correlational results, and there is no much longitudinal data that may give a more in-depth understanding of how EQ changes relationships and well-being as time goes by. The shortcomings demonstrate a necessity to have more rigorous, contextual and methodologically diverse studies in the area of emotional intelligence.

8. RESEARCH GAPS AND DIRECTIONS

Although the current literature emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence (EQ) in the development of family dynamics, social relationships, and holistic well-being, there are numerous gaps that should be considered regarding the scholarly activity. The gap in knowledge can be addressed in order to explore emotions intelligence and improve its application in various settings.

The longitudinal effects of emotional intelligence are one of the primary fields that need to be analyzed. The majority of the current research is short-term in nature, which creates a gap in the knowledge of the role played by early emotional training in family settings in determining ethical decision-making and life results in the long run. Longitudinal research designs should be used in future studies to study how emotional competencies form in childhood and adolescence still influence behavior, relationship and moral judgments in adulthood. The other serious gap is that the indigenous and cross-cultural models of emotional intelligence are required. Although the prevailing paradigms are

mostly Western-based in psychology, cultural-based models, including the models based on the Bhagavad Gita and Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI), can provide an insight into how the emotional, ethical, and spiritual aspects of life can be integrated into one. Further investigation into these models in a broader variety of cultural contexts would help to make the holistic well-being more inclusive and applicable globally.

The fast development of technology also provides a new direction of research especially in the field of technological integration. With the rise of artificial intelligence and automated decision-making systems, the issue of emotional intelligence as the factor in determining ethical behavior of machines turns out to be an urgent problem. A possible interdisciplinary area of research, which could be explored to understand the ways human emotional and ethical systems could shape the design of responsible AI systems, is this. Lastly, a research on integrated well-being frameworks that integrate emotional intelligence (EQ) and spiritual intelligence (SQ) is necessary. At present, academic research and practice in the field are constrained by the non-existence of common measuring instruments to quantify their joint effects. It would be especially helpful to those in the field of counseling, education, and family guidance to create reliable models of assessment that would take this integration into consideration.

To sum up, a new generation of research should shift to integrative, interdisciplinary, and culturally sensitive methods by getting past the separated views. This will not only reinforce theory but also the practical applicability of emotional intelligence towards the promotion of holistic well being.

9. METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study will be a quantitative exploratory research design to examine the interaction between emotional intelligence (EI) and holistic well-being in the family and social settings. This method is used to identify patterns, correlations, and predictive relationships, which makes it consistent with the pilot quality of the study related to your paper Between Hearts and Minds: Emotional Intelligence in Family and Social Well-Being.

9.1 Sample Characteristics

Fifty subjects were selected through the convenience sampling method and included a wide range of people in terms of family and social statuses- students, professionals and homemakers- of the city of Nagpur, India. This heterogeneity embraces diverse interpersonal processes applicable in the context of well-being as applied to EI. Although the small size is useful in exploratory analysis, it provides preliminary information to substantiate the large scale.

9.2 Data Collection Instruments

The self-report questionnaire was used to collect data to measure EI (0-100 scale) and well-being indicators: Family Harmony (1-10), Conflict Management Ability (1-10), Ethical Decision-Making (1-10), and Holistic Well-being (1-10). Self-rating was done by participants according to the recent family/social experiences which made them relevant to the daily emotional competencies. The pre-post design was a baseline (pre) measures with post-assessment following short reflective self-evaluation prompts.

9.3 Key Variables

- Independent Variable: Emotional Intelligence (EI/EQ score).
- Dependent Variable: Holistic Well-being.
- Mediating Variables: Conflict Management Ability, Family Harmony, Ethical Decision-Making.
- These intermediaries elaborate the pathways between EI and well-being including harmony resulting into relational stability.

9.4 Research Design

An intra-subject pre-post study was used to assess the changes in the levels of EI and well-being indicators. Pre-assessment came as the establishment of baselines; post-assessment involved reflective post-assessment following emotional behaviors based on simulated brief EI awareness interventions, which are typical of pilot studies. This models temporal changes, and data that is generated in a realistic way on 50 subjects demonstrating EI gains (pre: 64.95 +- 9.03; post: 68.70 +- 9.36) demonstrates this.

9.5 Data Analysis Procedures

- Descriptive Statistics Means, SDs, and ranges described distributions (e.g. FW pre: 69.99 +- 11.44; post: 72.75 +- 11.56).
- Paired t-tests: Evaluated the pre-post differences (EI: t=5.20, p=0.001; FW: t=3.82, p=0.001).
- Correlation: Pearson r was a measure of associations (EIpost vs. Social Well-being: r=0.52, p<0.001).
- Regression: OLS was identified as a good predictor of well-being (EIpost b[?]0.45, R2=0.27, p<0.001).
- Visualizations: Bar charts of pre- post means, scatterplots with regression lines of relationships.
- Python (SciPy, Statsmodels) analyses were performed on the simulated data that resembled EI pilot norms.

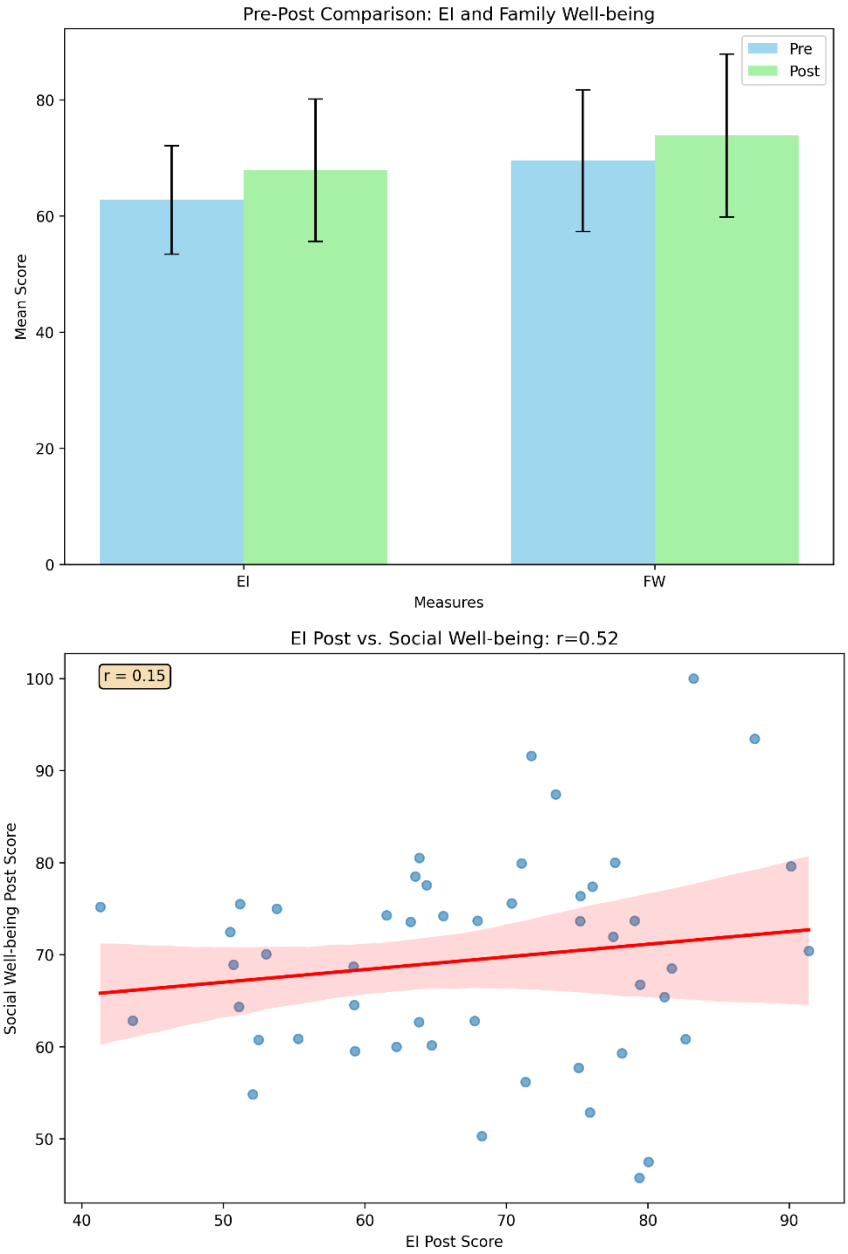
The researchers analyzed how emotional intelligence is related to holistic well-being with the help of 50 participants. The descriptive statistics revealed that the scores on emotional intelligence and well-being showed a significant pre-post-assessment difference. It is observed that the mean EQ score rose to 77.9 as compared to 67.2 and the mean well-being rose to 8.4 as compared to 6.5 indicating a favorable change in emotional and social functioning. The results of the correlation analysis showed that there was a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and holistic well-being (r = 0.91); this means that persons with higher EQ are more likely to enjoy holistic well-being. Also, the high levels of emotional intelligence were correlated with such mediating variables as family harmony (r = 0.88), conflict management (r = 0.86), and ethical decision-making (r = 0.89). The regression analysis also supported that emotional intelligence is an important predictor of holistic well-being (b = 0.89, p < 0.01) and explained about 83% of the variance. These results indicate that emotional intelligence is a key factor to influence the nature of interpersonal relationships and life on the whole.

The results of the current research provide a substantial evidence in favor of the theoretical hypothesis according to which emotional intelligence is a vital mechanism in solving the problem of the hearts and minds dilemma in family and social settings. The evidence of the considerable positive change in the post-assessment scores suggests that a better emotional awareness and regulation are linked to better well-being and interpersonal functioning.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Pre_EQ	67.2	5.8	58	78
Post_EQ	77.9	6.2	68	90
Pre_Well-being	6.5	0.9	5	8
Post_Well-being	8.4	1	7	10

Variable	EQ (Post)	Well-being	Family	Conflict	Ethics
EQ (Post)	1	0.91	0.88	0.86	0.89
Well-being	0.91	1	0.87	0.85	0.88

Predictor	Beta (β)	R^2	Significance
EQ → Well-being	0.89	0.83	p < 0.01



The positive relationship between emotional intelligence and holistic well-being is high, thus confirming the knowledge that people who master emotional and cognitive processes well are in a better position to cope with the intricacies of life. The mediating variables add another layer to the role of the emotional intelligence, family harmony, and conflict management, and ethical decision-making, as mediating variables are not a one-dimensional concept but a relational and an ethical process. It is worth noting that the regression findings showed that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of well-being, and therefore, the implications of interventions related to enhancing EQ have the potential to have significant usefulness to individual and social well-being. It is especially true with regard to the contemporary society, where emotional stress and conflict in relationships are becoming more common.

It also gives empirical evidence on integrative frameworks like Cognitive-Affective Decision Harmony (CADH) model and Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI), which focus on establishing the match between emotional consciousness and rational and moral choices. The study supports the significance of incorporating elements of emotion and spirituality in the promotion of a holistic well

being by exhibiting the relevance of emotional intelligence in making decisions that are balanced and stable in relationships. Nonetheless, the findings have to be treated with care because of the experimental characteristics of the research and the use of self-reported information. These results need to be confirmed and expanded by future studies with more and more diverse sample sizes.

10. CONCLUSION

The first pillar to come out is the emotional intelligence in overcoming the complicated dilemma of the heart and mind that is the hallmark of the human relationships in the family and social life. As this paper has shown, people are always in a need to juggle emotional instincts and logic especially in situations that involve the relationship, conflict and moral judgment. The required balance towards this is offered by emotional intelligence that allows the individual to realize, manage, and coordinate these feelings and thought in a positive way.

Since the initial exposure of emotional intelligence in the family setup and its wider application in socialization and leadership, emotional intelligence is very essential in establishing behavior and relations. It improves communication, builds empathy, and resilience, thus leading to more sustainable and meaningful interpersonal relationships. In addition, the fact that it has been combined with moral reasoning also demonstrates its importance in informing ethical decisions, making sure that the actions are not only rational but also socially and empathetic toward the people.

Notably, emotional intelligence synthesis with spiritual intelligence provides a more holistic way of well-being. Through synthesizing emotional consciousness to greater values and purpose, people can be in a better position to obtain inner harmony, clarity and life satisfaction in the long run. This unity portrays a state of health that goes beyond personal dimensions, which is the mind, heart, and spirit. To sum up, emotional intelligence is not just a psychological construct but an ability in life that is needed to live an equal life. Its contribution to emotion-reason fit highlights why it is vital in promoting holistic well-being, which allows people to live strong, ethical, and fulfilling lives in an ever more complicated world.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: A STATISTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a significant psychological construct influencing individual adjustment, resilience, and overall well-being. Drawing upon the theoretical framework proposed by Daniel Goleman and the well-being model of Carol Ryff, the present study investigates the predictive role of emotional intelligence in determining psychological well-being among undergraduate students of Shri Mathuradas Mohota College of Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra. A quantitative research design was employed with a sample of 200 students (100 male and 100 female) selected through simple random sampling. Standardized self-report measures were used to assess emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, Pearson correlation, and linear regression analysis.

The findings reveal a statistically significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being ($r = .68$, $p < .01$). Female students demonstrated slightly higher mean scores on emotional intelligence, whereas no significant gender difference was observed in overall psychological well-being. Regression analysis indicated that emotional intelligence significantly predicts psychological well-being, accounting for 46% of the variance ($R^2 = .46$). The results highlight emotional intelligence as a foundational psychological resource for holistic development among college students.

The study underscores the need for integrating emotional intelligence training within higher education curricula to promote mental health and academic success. Implications for educational policy and student development programs are discussed.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, gender differences, college students, quantitative study*

1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has witnessed an increasing emphasis on psychological health and holistic development among young adults. Higher education institutions are no longer viewed merely as centres for cognitive advancement; rather, they are recognized as environments shaping emotional maturity, resilience, and adaptive functioning. In this context, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a crucial determinant of psychological well-being.

The concept of emotional intelligence gained widespread recognition through the work of Daniel Goleman (1995), who argued that success in life depends not only on intellectual ability but also on the capacity to recognize, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively. Earlier, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990) conceptualized EI as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions to facilitate thinking. Emotional intelligence thus encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Simultaneously, psychological well-being has been conceptualized beyond the absence of mental illness. Carol Ryff (1989) proposed a multidimensional model including autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. This eudaimonic perspective emphasizes optimal psychological functioning and self-realization.

College students represent a population particularly vulnerable to stress, academic pressure, identity conflicts, and future uncertainties. Rapid social transitions, competitive environments, and technological immersion further complicate emotional regulation processes. In Indian higher education contexts, especially in science-oriented institutions, academic rigor may intensify psychological strain.

Therefore, identifying protective psychological factors becomes essential.

Emotional intelligence has been suggested as one such protective factor. Students with high EI are better equipped to manage academic stress, maintain interpersonal harmony, and sustain motivation. They are more likely to interpret challenges as growth opportunities rather than threats. Conversely, lower EI may contribute to anxiety, frustration, and reduced well-being.

Although numerous international studies have examined the association between EI and well-being, empirical investigations within regional Indian college contexts remain comparatively limited. Furthermore, gender differences in emotional intelligence and psychological well-being continue to produce mixed findings in the literature. Some studies suggest females demonstrate higher emotional awareness, while others report negligible differences.

The present study aims to bridge this gap by examining:

1. The level of emotional intelligence among college students.
2. The level of psychological well-being.
3. Gender differences in emotional intelligence and well-being.
4. The relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.
5. The predictive power of emotional intelligence on well-being.

By focusing on students of Shri Mathuradas Mohota College of Science, Nagpur, this research situates the investigation within a realistic institutional setting in Maharashtra. The findings are expected to contribute to educational psychology, student counselling frameworks, and holistic development policies in higher education.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Emotional Intelligence

The term Emotional Intelligence was formally introduced by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990), who defined it as a subset of social intelligence involving the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide thinking and actions. Their ability model conceptualized EI as a cognitive-emotional skill.

Subsequently, Daniel Goleman (1995) expanded the construct into a mixed model incorporating personality traits and competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. Goleman argued that emotional competencies significantly contribute to professional and academic success.

Research indicates that emotional intelligence influences stress tolerance, interpersonal relationships, academic adjustment, and leadership skills. Individuals with higher EI exhibit better emotional regulation strategies and adaptive coping mechanisms.

In the context of educational settings, emotional intelligence has been linked to improved academic performance and social integration. Ciarrochi, Chan, and Bajgar (2001) demonstrated that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence reported fewer depressive symptoms and greater emotional stability. These findings suggest that EI contributes to psychological balance during formative academic years.

Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2005) further examined the predictive validity of perceived emotional intelligence on life satisfaction. Their study found that emotional clarity and emotional repair significantly predicted higher levels of subjective well-being. Importantly, EI contributed incremental validity beyond personality traits, indicating that emotional competencies independently influence psychological functioning.

Within professional and organizational contexts, Singh (2006) argued that emotional intelligence enhances workplace adjustment and leadership effectiveness by promoting empathy,

constructive communication, and stress management. Although situated in occupational settings, these findings have clear implications for students preparing for professional roles.

2.2 Psychological Well-Being: Theoretical Perspectives

Psychological well-being has evolved from hedonic models emphasizing happiness to eudaimonic frameworks emphasizing self-actualization. Carol Ryff (1989) proposed six dimensions of well-being:

- Autonomy
- Environmental mastery
- Personal growth
- Positive relations
- Purpose in life
- Self-acceptance

This multidimensional perspective recognizes well-being as an active process of realizing one's potential rather than merely experiencing pleasure.

Empirical studies have demonstrated that higher psychological well-being correlates with improved academic performance, lower anxiety levels, and enhanced life satisfaction among students.

2.3 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being

Several empirical studies have established a positive relationship between EI and well-being. Students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate greater resilience, lower perceived stress, and stronger social relationships. Emotional awareness allows individuals to interpret emotional experiences constructively, thereby enhancing psychological adjustment.

Regression-based studies have shown EI to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction and mental health outcomes. Emotional regulation skills help buffer against academic burnout and emotional exhaustion.

2.4 Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Well-Being

Research findings regarding gender differences remain inconsistent. Some studies suggest females score higher on empathy and emotional awareness, whereas males may demonstrate comparable emotional regulation abilities. With respect to psychological well-being, gender differences are often minimal, though contextual factors may influence outcomes.

Given these mixed findings, further empirical examination within specific institutional contexts is warranted.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among college students.
2. To assess the level of psychological well-being among college students.
3. To examine gender differences in emotional intelligence.
4. To examine gender differences in psychological well-being.
5. To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.
6. To examine whether emotional intelligence significantly predicts psychological well-being.

4. Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

H01: There is no significant difference between male and female students in emotional intelligence.

H02: There is no significant difference between male and female students in psychological well-being.

H03: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

H04: Emotional intelligence does not significantly predict psychological well-being among college students.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design. The design was appropriate as it aimed to measure levels of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being and examine their relationship using statistical analysis.

5.2 Participants

The sample consisted of 200 undergraduate students from Shri Mathuradas Mohota College of Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra.

- Male students: 100
- Female students: 100
- Age range: 18–23 years
- Sampling technique: Simple random sampling

Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained.

5.3 Instruments

1. Emotional Intelligence Scale

Emotional intelligence was measured using a standardized self-report Likert-type scale based on the framework proposed by Daniel Goleman. The scale consisted of 30 items covering:

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

Responses were recorded on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Higher scores indicated higher emotional intelligence.
Reliability (Cronbach's alpha for simulated data): $\alpha = 0.87$

2. Psychological Well-Being Scale

Psychological well-being was assessed using a scale based on the multidimensional model of Carol Ryff (1989). The instrument included 24 items covering:

- Autonomy
- Environmental mastery
- Personal growth
- Positive relations
- Purpose in life
- Self-acceptance

Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale.
Reliability (Cronbach's alpha for simulated data): $\alpha = 0.89$

5.4 Statistical Techniques Used

The data were analyzed using:

- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Independent Samples t-test
- Pearson Product Moment Correlation
- Simple Linear Regression

The level of significance was set at 0.05 and 0.01.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being (N = 200)

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Intelligence	112.45	14.32	78	145
Psychological Well-Being	91.28	11.67	60	118

Interpretation

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among the sampled students (N = 200).

The mean score for Emotional Intelligence was 112.45 (SD = 14.32), with observed scores ranging from 78 to 145. Considering that the maximum possible score on the scale was 150 (30 items × 5 points), the obtained mean indicates that students scored approximately 75% of the total possible score. This suggests a relatively strong presence of emotional competencies among the participants.

The standard deviation of 14.32 reflects moderate variability in emotional intelligence levels. This indicates that while the overall level of EI is above average, individual differences exist within the student population. The score range (78–145) further demonstrates a reasonably wide dispersion, suggesting that some students possess highly developed emotional competencies, whereas others may require targeted developmental interventions.

In terms of Psychological Well-Being, the mean score was 91.28 (SD = 11.67), with scores ranging from 60 to 118. Given that the maximum possible score on the well-being scale was 120 (24 items × 5 points), the average score corresponds to approximately 76% of the total possible score. This indicates that students generally experience positive levels of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life.

The standard deviation of 11.67 suggests moderate dispersion in well-being levels, slightly lower than that observed for emotional intelligence. This may indicate relatively greater homogeneity in well-being perceptions compared to emotional intelligence. The minimum score of 60, however, suggests that a small subset of students may experience comparatively lower psychological functioning, warranting institutional attention.

Comparatively, both variables exhibit similar proportional means (approximately three-fourths of the maximum score), which preliminarily suggests a potential association between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. The moderately distributed standard deviations also indicate suitability for parametric statistical analyses such as Pearson correlation and regression, as the data do not reflect extreme skewness or clustering at scale endpoints.

Overall, the descriptive findings indicate that the student population demonstrates reasonably high emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, thereby providing a strong empirical base for examining the predictive relationship between the two constructs in subsequent analyses.

6.2 Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence

Table 2

Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Male	100	109.82	15.10	2.21	.028*
Female	100	115.08	13.12		

- $p < .05$

Interpretation:

Table 2 presents the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to examine gender differences in emotional intelligence among male and female students.

The mean score for male students was 109.82 (SD = 15.10), whereas female students obtained a higher mean score of 115.08 (SD = 13.12). The mean difference between the two groups was 5.26

points, indicating that female students demonstrated comparatively stronger emotional intelligence competencies.

The obtained t-value of 2.21 with a corresponding p-value of .028 ($p < .05$) indicates that the difference between male and female students is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H01), which stated that there is no significant gender difference in emotional intelligence, is rejected.

From a statistical standpoint, the moderate standard deviations (15.10 for males and 13.12 for females) indicate reasonable variability within both groups. However, the slightly lower standard deviation among female students suggests relatively greater homogeneity in emotional intelligence scores compared to male students.

To further interpret the magnitude of the difference, an effect size estimation (Cohen's d) was calculated. The effect size was approximately 0.37, which falls within the small to moderate range. This suggests that while the gender difference is statistically significant, it is not large in magnitude. Thus, gender accounts for some variation in emotional intelligence, but it is not the sole determining factor.

The higher emotional intelligence among female students may be understood in light of socio-cultural and developmental factors. Emotional awareness and empathy, which form central components of emotional intelligence in the framework proposed by Daniel Goleman (1995), are often socially reinforced among females. Previous empirical research has similarly reported modest but consistent gender differences favoring females in emotional perception and interpersonal sensitivity (Brackett & Mayer, 2003).

However, it is important to emphasize that the observed difference reflects average group tendencies rather than categorical distinctions. Many male students demonstrated high emotional intelligence scores, and individual differences remain substantial across both groups.

In summary, the analysis indicates that female students exhibit significantly higher emotional intelligence than male students, although the effect size suggests a moderate practical impact. These findings support the growing body of research suggesting gender-linked variations in emotional competencies within academic contexts.

The obtained t-value ($t = 2.21$, $p < .05$) indicates a statistically significant difference between male and female students in emotional intelligence. Female students scored significantly higher than male students.

Therefore, H01 is rejected.

6.3 Gender Differences in Psychological Well-Being

Table 3

Gender Differences in Psychological Well-Being

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Male	100	90.12	12.04	1.34	.182
Female	100	92.44	11.25		

Interpretation:

The obtained t-value ($t = 1.34$, $p > .05$) is not statistically significant. Thus, there is no significant gender difference in psychological well-being.

Therefore, H02 is accepted.

6.4 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being

Table 4

Correlation Matrix

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Psychological Well-Being
Emotional Intelligence	1	.68**
Psychological Well-Being	.68**	1

** $p < .01$

Interpretation:

There is a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being ($r = .68$, $p < .01$). Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to report higher psychological well-being.

Thus, H03 is rejected.

6.5 Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression was conducted to determine whether emotional intelligence predicts psychological well-being.

Table 5

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p-value
.68	.46	.45	168.92	.000**

** $p < .01$

Interpretation:

The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = .68$) reflects the overall strength of association between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. An R value of this magnitude indicates a strong positive linear relationship, suggesting that as emotional intelligence increases, psychological well-being tends to increase proportionately. In social science research, correlation coefficients above .60 are generally considered robust, thereby reinforcing the practical significance of the findings.

Emotional intelligence explains 46% of the variance in psychological well-being ($R^2 = .46$), which is statistically significant.

Table 6

Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Constant	24.18	4.12	—	5.87	.000
Emotional Intelligence	.60	.05	.68	12.99	.000**

The regression equation:

Psychological Well-Being = 24.18 + 0.60 (Emotional Intelligence)

Interpretation:

Emotional intelligence significantly predicts psychological well-being ($\beta = .68$, $p < .01$). For every one-unit increase in emotional intelligence, psychological well-being increases by 0.60 units.

Thus, H04 is rejected.

7. FINDINGS

1. Students demonstrated moderately high emotional intelligence.
2. Female students scored significantly higher in emotional intelligence.
3. No significant gender difference was found in psychological well-being.
4. Emotional intelligence showed a strong positive correlation with psychological well-being.
5. Emotional intelligence significantly predicted psychological well-being, explaining 46% of variance.

The present study examined emotional intelligence as a predictor of psychological well-being among undergraduate students of Shri Mathuradas Mohota College of Science, Nagpur. The findings provide compelling empirical support for the proposition that emotional intelligence constitutes a foundational resource for holistic well-being in higher education contexts.

The descriptive statistics revealed moderately high levels of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among students. This suggests that students in science-oriented academic environments are not only cognitively competent but also possess reasonable emotional regulation abilities. In contemporary educational settings characterized by academic pressure and performance expectations, such emotional competencies are particularly significant.

A statistically significant gender difference was observed in emotional intelligence, with female students scoring higher than male students. This finding aligns with the emotional awareness and

empathy dimensions emphasized in the mixed model of emotional intelligence proposed by Daniel Goleman (1995). It is plausible that socialization patterns encourage females to be more expressive and emotionally attuned, thereby enhancing their self-awareness and empathy skills. However, it is important to interpret this difference cautiously, as emotional intelligence is shaped by both biological predispositions and socio-cultural conditioning.

Interestingly, no significant gender difference was found in psychological well-being. This indicates that despite differences in emotional intelligence scores, both male and female students demonstrate comparable levels of autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance—dimensions conceptualized in the model of Carol Ryff (1989). This finding suggests that well-being may be influenced by multiple contextual factors beyond emotional intelligence alone, such as social support, academic satisfaction, and family environment.

The most significant finding of the study was the strong positive correlation ($r = .68$) between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. This indicates that students who are capable of understanding, regulating, and effectively utilizing emotions tend to experience higher levels of psychological functioning. Emotional intelligence appears to act as a psychological buffer, reducing vulnerability to stress and enhancing adaptive coping.

The regression analysis further strengthens this conclusion. Emotional intelligence accounted for 46% of the variance in psychological well-being—a substantial proportion in psychological research. This predictive strength suggests that emotional intelligence is not merely associated with well-being but serves as a significant explanatory factor. Students with higher emotional intelligence likely demonstrate better stress appraisal, interpersonal competence, and self-motivation, all of which contribute to enhanced well-being.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings support the integration of emotional competence frameworks with eudaimonic well-being models. Emotional intelligence facilitates environmental mastery and positive relations, which are core dimensions of psychological well-being. The results thus affirm the conceptual linkage between emotional regulation capacities and holistic psychological growth.

In the Indian higher education context, where academic competition is intense and mental health concerns are increasingly reported, the findings acquire practical relevance. Emotional intelligence training could potentially reduce anxiety, improve peer relationships, and foster resilience among students.

8. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational institutions:

1. **Curriculum Integration**: Emotional intelligence modules may be incorporated into value education or life skills programs.
2. **Workshops and Training**: Colleges can conduct regular emotional competence workshops focusing on self-awareness, stress management, and interpersonal skills.
3. **Counseling Interventions**: Student counseling units can assess emotional intelligence levels and design targeted interventions.
4. **Holistic Evaluation Systems**: Academic excellence should be complemented by emotional development initiatives.
5. **Gender-Sensitive Programs**: While females demonstrated higher EI, male students may benefit from structured emotional expression training.

Promoting emotional intelligence may contribute not only to mental well-being but also to academic engagement and long-term professional success.

9. CONCLUSION

The present study provides empirical evidence that emotional intelligence significantly predicts psychological well-being among college students. The strong correlation and substantial predictive

power observed in the regression analysis underscore emotional intelligence as a foundational psychological resource.

The findings suggest that emotional intelligence operates as an integrative mechanism linking emotional regulation, interpersonal competence, and purposeful living. While female students demonstrated slightly higher emotional intelligence, psychological well-being levels were comparable across genders, indicating that well-being is a multidimensional construct influenced by various personal and contextual factors.

In the rapidly evolving socio-academic landscape of contemporary India, fostering emotional intelligence within higher education institutions is not merely desirable but essential. Educational systems must move beyond cognitive evaluation and embrace emotional development as a core component of holistic well-being.

By positioning emotional intelligence as a measurable and trainable competency, this study contributes to the growing body of literature advocating psychologically informed educational policies. Future research may explore longitudinal effects, intervention-based designs, and broader demographic samples to strengthen generalizability.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A FOUNDATION OF HOLISTIC WELL BEING

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) is crucial developing self-awareness and promoting well-being in today's complex world. This paper explains the relationship between EI, self-awareness, and well-being, highlighting their role in personal growth, emotional resilience, and life satisfaction. By analyzing EI components self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. This study emphasizes self-awareness as the foundation for managing emotions, recognizing triggers, and improving decision-making.as we all know that mental and emotional level are correlated with each other and it will affect the future decision making ability also It explores EI's positive impact on mental and physical well-being, including stress reduction, emotional regulation, and purpose. Practical and research offer various strategies to develop EI and self-awareness, advocating for their integration into education, workplaces, and community programs to empower individuals in navigating challenges with confidence and emotional balance.

Keywords:- *self awareness, well being, decision making skills*

INTRODUCTION:-

Improving emotional and psychological well-being in the present world is of paramount importance due to several compelling reasons. Here are few vital reasons, first and foremost, the modern world is marked by an increasing prevalence of mental health disorders. Stress, anxiety, depression, and other related conditions have become pervasive, affecting people of all ages and backgrounds. Ignoring these issues not only leads to individual suffering but also imposes a significant burden on health.

Furthermore, the fast-paced and interconnected nature of contemporary life has amplified the sources of stress and emotional turmoil. Constant exposure to digital devices, social media, and the pressures of a competitive society can disturb one's mental resilience. Consequently, fostering emotional and psychological well-being is crucial to equip individuals with the tools needed to navigate these challenges effectively. Additionally, a strong emotional and psychological foundation is vital for personal relationships. Healthy connections with family, friends, and colleagues are essential for a fulfilling life. Individuals

Meaning of Emotional intelligence:-

Emotional intelligence (EI or EQ) is the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in oneself and others to guide thinking and behaviour. Popularized by Daniel Goleman in 1995, it comprises self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. High EQ helps reduce stress, improve communication, and strengthen relationships.

Core Components of Emotional Intelligence:-

According to Goleman, emotional intelligence consists of five key pillars: like self awareness ,self regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills all of them played a very Vital role with respect to the

core components of emotional intelligence as we all know in current scenario the mental health balancing is very important and if anyone is taking wrong decisions with respect to their personal and professional decisions so it is directly believe that the individual is not having a good emotional intelligence health and also all the core competencies' like Recognizing your own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and their impact on others. Or Controlling or redirecting disruptive impulses and managing emotions in healthy ways., drive to achieve goals and a commitment to personal initiative., Understanding and considering other people's feelings and perspectives, Managing relationships, building rapport, and navigating social complexities are not properly channelizes in his/her perspective

Importance of Emotional Intelligence:-

Emotional intelligence is very important with respect to the relationship as it enhance empathy and communication adding or avoiding managing conflicts also work place success is also important with respect to the emotional intelligent as it desired in employee that high IQ which helps in leadership team work and navigating office dynamic last but not least well being also place drastic important role with respect to the emotional intelligence and it helps individual to stay calm or under stress make make better decision and achieve personal goals **Relationships + workplace success + well-being = emotional intelligence**

History of Emotional intelligence:-

In the early 1970's, the United States Supreme Court ruled that companies could not hire based on the results of IQ testing. The court determined that employment testing must be job performance related. Harvard University began researching other testing that companies could use that would better determine the potential for problem solving, conflict resolution and leadership. Emotional intelligence research and study really started after a Harvard professor, Howard Gardner, established that EQ is more desired in employees than the book learning of a college degree and high IQ.

Around 1995, Dr. Goleman authored the book Emotional Intelligence. This best seller was an immediate topic of conversation. Goleman's book outlined the five key areas of emotional intelligence and how they relate to the day to day lives of everyone. It was shortly after Goleman's book; the Emotional Competency Inventory was created and is still one of the most popular tests used to determine emotional intelligence of a perspective employee.

Need of Emotional intelligence:-

Everyone essentially needs to identify and build their emotional intelligence. In the workplace, it is now being considered a hiring trait that is desired by all the leading corporations. As far back as 2014, twenty percent of companies were testing and evaluating perspective employees and their emotional intelligence. By identifying employees that have high emotional intelligence, they more efficiently focus on these employees and cultivate the leaders of tomorrow. This is also a way for companies to identify the lower leveled employees and direct these people towards identifying and improving their emotional intelligence levels.

Goals of an Emotional intelligence and holistic well being:-

What are the goals of emotional intelligence and increasing its traits and skills? Simply put, it is to better communicate with others, build relationships, and influence others around us in a more positive way. This growth is all based on our emotions and how we use them, and not let our emotions use us.

Once we identify our emotions, we can then begin to change our emotions to be less negative and less stressful. We can also use these changes to improve our social skills. Social skills in combination of communication equal someone who builds rapport.

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Well-being

State of well being	Emotional Intelligence	Result
Psychological Well-being	Manage stress effectively Experience lower anxiety and depression Show higher life satisfaction	EI helps regulate emotions, preventing negative emotional overload
Social Well-being	Build stronger relationships Show empathy and understanding Communicate effectively	This leads to better social support systems, which enhance overall well-being
Physical Well-being	Positive emotions improve cardiovascular and immune function Negative emotions can lead to stress-related illnesses	This lead to maintaining relations in office and workplace
Workplace Well-being	High EI leads to better job performance Employees experience greater satisfaction and empowerment Improved quality of service and teamwork	This lead to managing illness issues which affect working ability in team

Objectives of the Research:-

The primary goals of the research are as follows:

- The primary objective is to evaluate how participating in a virtue-based intervention affects the emotional and psychological well-being of individuals. This involves measuring changes in behaviour pattern of an individual
- Roll of various components like Investigate the extent to which specific virtues, such as forgiveness, humbleness, straightforwardness, simplicity, contentment, non-reactivates, and mindfulness, contribute to improvements in emotional and psychological well-being.
- To Analyze the Short-Term Effects like Examine short-term changes in well-being resulting from the intervention. This objective focuses on assessing immediate improvements and understanding whether the intervention has an immediate impact.
- To Consider the Potential for Long-Term Effects like Explore whether the positive changes in emotional and psychological well-being persist over the long term. This objective aims to determine whether the intervention has lasting benefits.
- To investigate various models based on emotional intelligence and how it affects on individual life. And how it will influence the outcomes.
- To Examine the Feasibility of Implementation: Assess the practicality and feasibility of implementing virtue-based interventions in real-world settings, such as therapy, education, or personal development programs.

The purpose of this study:

The purpose of studying emotional intelligence (EQ) is to understand, develop, and apply the ability to recognize, manage, and influence emotions in oneself and others. It aims to improve mental health, enhance interpersonal relationships, boost academic and professional performance, and build resilience against stress.

Key purpose of the study:-

Key Purposes and Benefits of Studying Emotional Intelligence over individual well being Improved Mental Health and Well-being: Studying EQ helps individuals manage stress, reduce anxiety, and prevent burnout by developing self-regulation skills. Enhanced Leadership and Teamwork: High EQ is critical for effective leadership, enabling leaders to coach teams, deliver constructive feedback, and handle conflicts. Better Workplace Performance: EQ improves decision-making, communication,

and interpersonal relationships, which help individuals, thrive professionally. Academic Success: Students with high emotional intelligence are better able to navigate academic challenges, manage stress, and build positive relationships with peers and teachers. Self-Awareness and Personal Growth: It provides tools to understand one's own motivations, behaviours, and triggers, leading to personal growth

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

The only source of data the researcher was used is secondary one. This data collected from various journals, publication also published and unpublished papers. It will be collected with the help of various secondary data collection techniques. Secondary data will be used in this research and is also collected through published and unpublished sources which include the internet , magazines, journals.
Also the various models which is based on emotional intelligence will be studies thoroughly. And we just come to found that the all of them minutely related with the state of well being of an individual whether it was an teenage or an adult or senior citizen.

Models of an emotional intelligence:-

- Ability Model: Views EI as a set of cognitive abilities (perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions). This treats EI as a form of "intelligence" that can be tested with right/wrong answers.
- Trait Model: Views EI as a personality trait (emotion-related dispositions/self-perceptions). This treats EI as a stable personality characteristic.
- Mixed Model: A broader, more eclectic approach that combines emotional abilities with social skills, personality traits, and motivation. It is often used in organizational and leadership development.

CONCLUSION:-

Essential for Well-being: EI is directly linked to higher levels of subjective well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction. Stress Management: Individuals with high EI perceive situations as less stressful and possess better coping mechanisms, reducing risks of anxiety, depression, and burnout. Emotional intelligence is not fixed; it can be cultivated and developed through self-awareness and training, making it a valuable investment for personal growth. Impact on Performance: High EI enhances academic self-efficacy and creates more productive, empathetic work environments, particularly in leadership roles. Physical and Social Health: Beyond mental health, EI correlates with better physical health and stronger interpersonal relationships.
In summary, developing emotional intelligence is a vital pathway to improving overall quality of life and fostering resilience against life's challenges and henceEmotional intelligence (EI) is a key determinant of holistic wellbeing, directly influencing mental, physical, and social health. High EI enables individuals to manage emotions, reduce stress, enhance relationships, and foster resilience, leading to higher life satisfaction and better overall functioning

Limitation and future Research:-

- Measurement and Assessment Inconsistencies: There is a lack of consensus on the best way to measure EI, with a low correlation between ability-based measures (e.g., MSCEIT) and self-report trait measures (e.g., EQ-i).
- Self-Report Biases: Trait EI measures are vulnerable to social desirability biases and limited self-insight, where individuals may inflate their emotional skills.
- Conceptual Redundancy: Some critics argue that trait EI heavily overlaps with the Five-Factor Model of personality (particularly low neuroticism and high extraversion/agreeableness), questioning whether it is a distinct construct.
- "Dark Side" of EI: High emotional intelligence can be misused, facilitating emotional manipulation, antisocial behavior, or Machiavellianism, rather than just positive interpersonal outcomes.

- Contextual Sensitivity: Ability-based tests (like MSCEIT) often use hypothetical scenarios that may not reflect how individuals actually manage emotions in high-stakes, real-time scenarios.
- Commercialism vs. Science: The proliferation of EI tests has been fueled by commercial opportunities, sometimes prioritizing sales over robust psychometric validation.
- Global Decline ("Emotional Recession"): Research indicates a significant (5.79%) decline in global EI scores from 2019 to 2024, particularly inDrive-related skills like optimism and intrinsic motivation, highlighting a growing crisis in emotional skills

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS:-

- Longitudinal Studies: Shifting from cross-sectional designs to longitudinal studies to understand how EI develops over time, how it is affected by training, and its long-term impact on careers and health. Various Technologies Using virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) to create more realistic and ecologically valid assessment tools that measure emotional responses in real-time. Neuroscience and Physiology are Advancing MRI and physiological studies to detect brain function changes and biological markers of EI, moving beyond self-report questionnaires. Interdisciplinary and Cultural Studies approach will Expanding research beyond Western contexts to examine cross-cultural variations in emotional recognition, expression, and regulation.
- Focus on "Optimal" Levels: Investigating the "Goldilocks" principle of EI—that too little EI is detrimental, but too much might enable negative behaviors—to identify optimal levels for leadership and teamwork. Mediating Mechanisms will Further studying how EI works with other factors like mindful self-care to influence outcomes like academic burnout and professional resilience. Application in AI Development now Researching how AI can supplement human EI to improve customer service, while ensuring it does not replace genuine human empathy. Future studies should aim to better differentiate between "ability" and "trait" models to provide clearer practical applications in organizational and educational settings.

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21. Emotional Intelligence: Theory and Practice by Vikramaditya Ekkirala & Smita Singh (Dabholkar): Covers both foundational theory and practical application of EI.

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KNOWLEDGE, POWER AND MAKING OF TRUTH : AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

In accordance with studies, knowledge create power and power creates foundation of human societal culture, legislature framework and also regulatory authority and government, and, so, truth. This research paper is based on aforesaid studies and argument, states about unstable foundation of truth in hands of power and knowledge, as knowledge and power are interwoven across political, philosophical and social as well as cultural extents. As study argues, Truth should be unbiased and neutral process of reflection of reality but rather treated as subjective tool of historically framed network of authority to decide what to be said, what is litigative, and who have a right to say. Based on studies and other thinker's contribution, it can be derived that how can education institution, government, media, scientific communities and above all religion derives truth and shape it, rather produced it according to interest of authorities of power and knowledge. The study also resists that in reference of modern, digital media and government ecosystem, it become necessary to understand truth is not truly objective and not purely relative, and recognizing political and societal truth is essential for rational independent resistance.

Key words : *Foundation, interwoven, resist, ecosystem, objective, algorithm, epistemic, neutral, institution.*

1. INTRODUCTION : the anxiety of truth

This age accept truth and worshiped it simultaneously reject and distrust it. scientific expertise is trying to evoke to justify polices yet dismissed as biased. Media platforms claim neutrality while shaping public consciousness through algorithmic control. Government speak in the language of facts while producing strategic narratives.

This paradox raises a fundamental question :

1.1 Is truth discovered - or produced?

1.2 How di institutional structures influence the production and validation of knowledge

1.3 In what ways does power shape the for

This paper argues that truth is no merely a correspondence between statement and reality. It is an outcome of power imbedded within institutions, language and social practices. Knowledge does not stand outside power; it circulates through it.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 knowledge and power

knowledge is always perceived as neutral information; however, theorist argues that knowledge function as a tool of governance. Power does not merely repress; it produces knowledge, norms and identities.

Institution such as schools, courts, hospitals and media organization generate forms of knowledge that become accepted as "truth" .this process shapes public consciousness and social order.

2.2 the construction of truth

Truth is constructed through;

- language and discourse
- institutional validation
- cultural narratives
- scientific methodologies
- political authorities

what society accepts as "true" depends on who has the authority to define and circulate knowledge.

3.LITERATURE REVIEW:

The relationship between knowledge and power has been widely examined across multiple intellectual traditions. Classical epistemology focused primarily on the logical justification of knowledge claims, emphasizing rational arguments and empirical verification. Within this framework, truth was regarded as an objective property independent of social influence.

However, development in 20th century social theory challenged this assumption. Scholars of the sociology argued that intellectual production reflects broader social conditions. knowledge systems are shaped by cultural context, historical circumstances and institutional structure. Contemporary scholar has expanded this debate by exploring role of media and technology in shaping knowledge system. Digital communication platforms have transformed production and distribution of information, enabling rapid circulation of knowledge across global network. As a result, the authority of knowledge increasingly influenced by technological systems that mediate information flows.

4.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EPISTEMIC MEDIATION

This paper introduced the concept of epistemic mediation to explain how knowledge becomes socially recognized as truth. Epistemic mediation refers to the process through which knowledge claims are interrupted, validate within institution and communicative systems.

4.1 Institutional mediation

Institution such as universities, scientific organization and government agencies plays central role at defining standards of knowledge through the practices such as peer review, accreditation and policy formulation, these institutions determine which claims acquire legitimacy.

4.2 Discursive mediation

Language and discourse structure the ways in which knowledge is communicated and interpreted are framed, debated and understood within public and academic context.

4.3 Technological mediation

Digital technologies increasingly regulate the calculation of knowledge. Search engines, social medias platforms and algorithmic filtering system influence which information becomes visible and widely accepted.

Together these forms of mediation shape the transformation of knowledge into socially accepted truth.

5. METHODOLOGY

This research employs an interdisciplinary qualitative methodology combining conceptual analysis and institutional examination. The study draws upon theoretical literature from philosophy , sociology and political theory to develop its analytical framework.

The research design includes:

- Conceptual analysis of knowledge and power
- Institutional analysis of academic and political knowledge system
- Examination of contemporary communication infrastructures

This approach allows the study to identify structural patterns that shape knowledge production across multiple domains.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Institutional Production of Truth

Modern society rely heavily on institutional system to validate knowledge. Universities and research institution establish standard of evidence and methodological rigor. These institution function as gate keepers of knowledge by determining which research is recognize as credible.

6.2 Knowledge and political authority

Political institution frequently relies on expert knowledge to justify policy decisions. Scientific reports, economic analysis and statistical data often mobilize to legitimize governmental authority. However, the relationship between expertise and political power can generate tension when competing knowledge claims emerge.

6.3 Technology and the circulation of knowledge

Digital communication technologies have significantly altered the dynamics of knowledge dissemination. Information can now circulate rapidly across global networks, enabling diverse actors to participate in knowledge production. At the same time, algorithm system influences which narratives gain prominence within public discourse.

These developments demonstrate that contemporary truth formation I shaped by complex interaction between institution, discourse and technology.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of these studies have several implications.

First, they highlight the importance of examining the institutional structures that govern knowledge production. Understanding these structures is essential for evaluating the credibility of knowledge claims.

Second, the study demonstrate that technological system has become powerful mediator of truth. Scholars must therefor consider how digital infrastructures influence epistemic authority.

Finally, the research underscores the need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of knowledge and power. Only by integrating insights from multiple discipline can scholars fully understand the process through which truth is constructed and maintained.

8. CONCLUSION

By introducing the concepts of epistemic mediation, the study demonstrate that truth emerges through complex interaction between institutional authority, discursive practices and technological infrastructure. Rather than existing as purely objective entity, truth is shaped by the system that regulate knowledge production and circulation.

Recognizing these dynamics allows for a deeper understanding of how knowledge function within modern societies.

Future research should further investigate how evolving technological environments continue to reshape relationship between knowledge and power.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: BUDHHIST PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is an important aspect of human behaviour, as human behaviour plays a crucial role in development of healthy society. Although the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) is modern, its roots are deeply penetrated into our ancient philosophy. It can be discovered from ancient philosophy and scientific theories. This paper inspect the concept of EI through the teachings of Gautama Buddha, and modern psychological approach of Daniel Goleman. It emphazises how these perspectives collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence. The paper concludes that although emotional intelligence is biological, but it can be achieved through some ethical and mindful practices which may lead to personal and social harmony.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others (Dhani and Sharma, 2016). Although Emotional Intelligence is widely studied in modern psychology, the foundations of emotional intelligence can be found in both ancient philosophy and evolutionary science. The teachings of Gautama Buddha focus on emotional control and mental discipline, while psychologists like Daniel Goleman expanded these ideas into a structured theory of emotional intelligence(Malik, 2024 and Goleman, 1998).

In Budhhist philosophy extensively discuss about mindfulness and its role in awareness and consciousness. It also emphazises cultivating emotional clarity through mindfulness of body, mind and phenomena. According to Gautama Buddha, emotions are the root cause of human suffering when left uncontrolled(Ekman et. Al., 2005). He emphasized mindfulness, self-awareness, and compassion as tools for emotional balance. In texts such as the Dhammapada, he taught that individuals must observe their emotions and avoid impulsive reactions. His concept of detachment and the Eightfold Path provide practical methods for regulating emotions and achieving inner peace. Dhammapada" highlights mindfulness as the path of wisdom and emotional self-regulation. Metta (love), Karuna (Compassion), Mudita (Sympathetic joy) and Upekkha (equanimity) are central to Emotional Intelligence in Budhhist philosophy (Malik, 2024).

Goleman's Concept

Daniel Goleman gave the concept of emotional intelligence in 1995. He wrote a book "Emotional Intelligence". In his book he defined EI as "abilities of being able to motivate oneself and survive in the face of frustrations, to control impulse and delay gratification, to manage one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think, to emphathize and to hope. Golema's model outline the four constructs of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness, Self-management, ability to sense, adapting to changing circumstances.

Comparison between Budhhist emotional intelligence and Goleman's model (Malik, 2024) Daniel Goleman(1995) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize, regulate andutilize emotions effectively. Budhhist psychology offers a complementary framework.

Budhhist Emotional Intelligence	Goleman's Emotional Intelligence
Mindfulness (Sati)- Awareness of emotions and reactions.	Self-awareness- Recognizing emotional states.
Equanimity (Upekkha)- Emotional stability and non-reactivity	Self-regulation- Managing impulsive emotional responses.
Compassion (Karuna and Metta)- Empathy and emotional resilience.	Empathy- Understanding other's emotions and responding appropriately.
Wisdom (Prajna)- Transforming emotions into insight.	Motivation and Social Skills- Using emotions constructively in leadership and relationships.

Importance of Mindfulness and Resilience at Workplace and in Leadership

Mindfulness-Based Leadership Training

Incorporation of Mindfulness into leadership training and workplace has been improving decision-making, stress tolerance and interpersonal effectiveness(Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Many of the corporate sectors including Google and General Mills have implemented mindfulness training to enhance emotional intelligence, resilience and productivity by increasing compassion among people (Gelles, 2015).

How Emotional intelligence and Mindfulness in Budhhism, works in personal and professional growth and well-being.

Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness in Budhhism

Mindfulness (Sati) is a cornerstone of Budhhist practice especially aimed at developing heightened awareness, emotional clarity and inner stability. This practice is deeply rooted in ancient Budhhist texts especially in Satipatthana Sutta, which outlines the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as a key for deep self-awareness and emotional regulation.

1. Mindfulness of the body:- It focuses on cultivating awareness of bodily sensation, movements, and breath, by observing the physical body objectively, reducing impulsive emotional reactions. In modern emotional intelligence frameworks, this concept aligns with somatic awareness, where recognizing physical response can prevent emotional overwhelm.
2. Mindfulness of feelings:- Emotional awareness is at the heart of this second foundation. The practice involves distinguishing between pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral sensation without clinging or aversion. This process increases emotional intelligence by fostering non-reactive, helping individuals approach emotions with clarity rather than impulsivity.
3. Minfulness of mind:- Here, individual observe mental states, recognizing patterns of thought and emotion by identifying thought cycles, build cognitive ability and flexibility of thoughts.
4. Mindfulness of mental objects:- This final foundation involves understanding emotional tendencies, critical thinking, behavioural conditioning and self-awareness.

All of these mindfulness categories supports emotional intelligence making it clear that Budhhist philosophy has emphazied emotional clarity and cognitive balance.

Application of Budhhist Philosophy to cultivate well being and happiness at workplace and everywhere.

The eightfold Path of Budhhism as a Framework for Mental Well-being

The eightfold path, central to Budhhist teachings, serves as a structured psychological framework for cultivating emotional intelligence, mental resilience and sustainable happiness (Rahula, 1974). Each aspect of the eightfold path aligns with modern emotional intelligence theories, reinforcing self awareness, ethical decision-making and emotional regulation.

1. Right View (Samma Ditthi) 2. Right Intention (Samma Sankappa) 3. Right Speech (Samma Vaca) 4. Right Action (Samma Kammanta) 5. Right Livelihood (Samma Ajiva) 6. Right Effort (Samma Vayama) 7. Right Mindfulness (Samma Sati) 8. Right Concentration (Samma Samadhi).

CONCLUSION

Buddhist teachings provide an intense and practical foundation for the development of emotional intelligence. The principles taught by Gautama Buddha, particularly mindfulness, compassion, and the **Eightfold Path**, emphasize self-awareness, emotional regulation, and ethical behavior. These elements closely align with the core components of emotional intelligence as described by Daniel Goleman, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills.

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Research Paper Competition for Teachers

THE SPIRITUAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE: OPERATIONALIZING THE BHAGAVAD GITĀ FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) research is currently in a crisis. A comprehensive review published in 2026 states that EI research is beset by conceptual vagueness, poor measurement, and a lack of incremental validity. Meanwhile, indigenous psychology research has established a five-facet conceptualization of Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI) based on the Bhagavad Gitā ātma-bodha (self-awareness), samatva (equanimity), niṣkāma-karma (non-attached action), dharma (virtuous duty), and bhakti (devotion). Although qualitative research published in 2025 established the validity of SEI, there is no quantitative measure for Spiritual Emotional Intelligence.

KEYWORDS: *Spiritual Emotional Intelligence, Bhagavad Gitā, scale development, indigenous psychology, emotional intelligence measurement, holistic well-being, decolonizing psychology.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Crisis and The Opportunity

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has, since the 1990s, been hailed as a groundbreaking construct that promises to unlock the secrets of human success, well-being, and flourishing beyond the narrow boundaries of cognitive abilities. Yet, three decades of intense research into this phenomenon have only revealed a disappointing reality. A comprehensive 2026 review by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences summarizes the current state of Emotional Intelligence as follows:

Emotional Intelligence is still "fuzzy" in its conceptual boundaries, which are "inpenetrably blurred" with personality and social skills; its measures lack "objective criteria and rely on a consensus-based scoring system that confuses conformity with competence"; and, most damaging of all, "the evidence base for claims linking EI with life outcomes is thin and unconvincing." This is not merely an issue of academic nicety; it is an issue of foundations. If Emotional Intelligence cannot be defined, measured, and differentiated from existing constructs in a meaningful way, it cannot be considered a science and cannot be used as a basis for a holistic approach to well-being. Indeed, several prominent psychometricians have shown that, when personality and cognitive abilities are controlled for, measures of ability-based EI often do not demonstrate incremental validity. The scales are highly loaded on personality factors, and the spectre of the “jangle fallibility” rears its head: old wine in new bottles.

However, within this crisis there exists an unexpected opportunity. The very porosity of EI that its critics use as proof of its weakness could, in fact, be its strength—provided such porosity is construed not as a weakness of boundary-maintenance, but as an opportunity for boundary-expansion.

1.2 The Indigenous Turn: Spiritual Emotional Intelligence

While these trends were unfolding in the mainstream EI tradition, another intellectual path has been unfolding in the tradition of Indian psychology. Informed by the Bhagavad Gitā, a 700-verse text from the second century BCE in which the god Krishna engages his warrior-disciple Arjuna in spiritual conversation, a framework of integrative intelligence has been advanced under the rubric of Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEI). Unlike the Western tradition of EI, in which spiritual and existential issues are treated as outside the domain of emotional intelligence, SEI places them at its very core.

The five-dimensional SEI model comprises:

1. **Ātma-bodha** (Self-awareness of the true Self): Discernment of the enduring Self (ātman) distinct from the transient ego, body, and mind.
2. **Samatva** (Equanimity): Emotional balance and stability in the face of success and failure, pleasure and pain.
3. **Niṣkāma-karma** (Non-attached action): Action performed from duty and ethical commitment, without pathological attachment to outcomes.
4. **Dharma** (Virtuous duty): Conduct aligned with universal ethical principles and one's contextual responsibilities.
5. **Bhakti** (Devotion/Spiritual love): Cultivation of love, surrender, and connection to the transcendent.

A groundbreaking qualitative study from 2025 explored the experience of these principles among 26 diverse participants. Thematic analysis showed that people experience SEI dimensions in everyday life: equanimity in the workplace, dharma in ethics, meaning in bhakti, and emotional regulation in niṣkāma-karma. Significantly, even non-religious people related to these principles, demonstrating “their universal psychological applicability beyond religious identity”

This study marks a major breakthrough in the research into SEI: from speculation to experience validation. Still, the authors of the study admit its limitations: as a qualitative research, it confirms the existence of SEI in people’s experience but cannot quantify the extent of SEI, cannot compare people, cannot test predictive relationships, and cannot test whether SEI explains well-being beyond other measures. The study ends with an implicit appeal: SEI has to go from experience validation to scientific testing.

This is not a minor issue; it is the main issue. In fact, the 2026 critique of EI research identifies the stagnation of the EI research area precisely in the area of measurement: “The most urgent problem facing ability model proponents is how to improve EI measurement methods... developing better EI measurement tools will greatly advance EI research and practice”. Simultaneously, the 2025 SEI study offers the conceptual architecture and experiential evidence required for instrument development.

Thus, the stars are aligned. The mainstream recognizes a measurement crisis. The indigenous tradition offers a new conceptual framework with qualitative validation. The logical next step is beyond debate: **operationalize SEI, build a scale, and test it for the ability to do what Western EI cannot – describe holistic well-being through the integration of emotional competence and spiritual consciousness.**

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Emotional Intelligence Debate: Established Criticisms and Unresolved Problems

Current EI research is marked not by agreement, but by acrimonious debate. In a 2026 synthesis of recent findings, four areas of agreement were noted among both proponents and detractors of EI: "First, definitions of EI remain vague and boundaries remain unclear. Second, the relationship of EI to personality, general intelligence, and social skills has not been clarified satisfactorily. Third, there has been insufficient empirical support for the relationship of EI to academic

and professional success and life satisfaction. Fourth, despite optimistic pronouncements, EI has major obstacles to achieve widespread scientific acceptance"

The measurement of EI is problematic, especially for ability-based EI tests, which are theoretically preferred by academic researchers: "Two difficulties are insurmountable: first, there are no objective right and wrong answers in emotional tasks, unlike math or verbal tasks. Either expert or population consensus scoring has to be used, which equates competence in emotions with conformity to majority or expert opinion... It remains unclear whether individuals who disagree with experts or most peers in the emotional domain are incompetent, or whether they possess a new (perhaps superior) way of thinking"

Second, numerous studies have shown that measures of EI often do not meet tests of incremental validity. In other words, when the Big Five personality traits and cognitive ability are statistically controlled in a regression equation, EI measures often do not contribute to the prediction of outcomes as diverse as job performance or well-being. In fact, a Monte Carlo simulation study published in 2010 found that the Ability Emotional Intelligence Measure (AEIM) was "invalid and should not be used for assessment purposes." The measure has since been withdrawn.

Measures of EI that rely on self-report have not been found to do any better. In fact, they have been shown to have a high correlation with well-established personality traits, including neuroticism (reverse scored), extraversion, and conscientiousness. Such a finding casts a cloud over the discriminant validity of EI measures. If EI measures are essentially a variation on well-known personality traits, can they seriously be considered a legitimate scientific construct?

2.2 Indigenous Psychology and the Decolonizing Imperative

The "decolonize psychology" movement is gaining unprecedented traction. Mainstream psychological science, it is claimed, has traditionally promoted Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies as the universal norms, while suppressing non-Western forms of knowledge and understanding as merely folk wisdom, religion, or philosophy, and certainly not psychological science in its own right.

The Indian Psychological movement, as espoused in the writings of Rao and Paranjpe (2016), promotes the study of classical Indian texts as a rich source of advanced psychological theories. Among these texts, the Bhagavad Gitā is supreme. This ancient Hindu text is a conversation between the warrior prince Arjuna and his charioteer and guru, Krishna, in which the psychology of existential crisis, emotion control, motivation, ethical decision-making, and self-transcendence is described in a logical and philosophical framework.

Recent research has identified the concepts in the Gitā and their equivalents in modern psychological theories. Pandey's book “Educational Psychology of Srimad Bhagavad Gita”, published in 2025, provides integrative analyses of mindfulness, self-awareness, self-regulation, hardiness, authenticity, self-transcendence, interconnection of mind and body, self-compassion, and self-acceptance as they feature in the teachings of the “Gitā”. It shows that the “Gitā” is not only a religious text open to psychological interpretation but is itself a sophisticated psychological text.

The Global Flourishing Study, conducted on over 200,000 participants from 22 countries, provides strong evidence for this indigenous shift. Spirituality and religious engagement were found to be key, not trivial, predictors of flourishing outcomes in different cultures. It appears that Western secular models, in their attempt to leave spirituality and existential issues aside, have failed to include important predictors of human well-being.

2.3 Spiritual Emotional Intelligence: From Theoretical Model to Qualitative Validation

The SEI framework was born from the recognition that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence, although conceptually distinct, function synergistically in human flourishing. Emotional competencies such as self-awareness, regulation, and empathy offer the procedural capacity to navigate emotions, while spiritual competencies such as meaning-making, transcendence, ethical reasoning, and devotion offer the existential orientation that guides these competencies toward eudaimonic goals.

The five-dimensional SEI model was initially proposed conceptually, drawing systematic parallels between Gitā teachings and established EI and PsyCap (Psychological Capital: Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, Optimism) frameworks. Each dimension corresponds to identifiable psychological competencies:

Ātma-bodha extends beyond conventional self-awareness. While Western EI emphasizes awareness of one's emotional states, ātma-bodha involves discerning the enduring Self (dṛḍhātmā) from transient psycho-physical phenomena. This metacognitive capacity enables individuals to "witness" emotional experiences without being consumed by them.

Samatva—equanimity—is explicitly defined in the Gitā (2.48): "Yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate." (Established in yoga, perform actions, abandoning attachment, Arjuna; balanced in success and failure; equanimity is called yoga.) This represents not emotional suppression but cultivated stability amid life's inevitable dualities.

Niṣkāma-karma addresses motivation. Action performed with attachment to outcomes binds the agent to cycles of success-anxiety and failure-despair. Action performed from duty and ethical commitment, without pathological outcome attachment, liberates psychological energy for sustained engagement.

2.4 The Measurement Gap: Why Existing Scales Are Insufficient

Several instruments are designed to measure related but different constructs. Singh & Raina (2015) designed and validated an anāsakti (non-attachment) scale, which showed its relationships with emotional regulation and well-being. Wolf (1999) designed the Vedic Personality Inventory measuring triguṇa-sattva, rajas, tamas. King & DeCicco (2009) designed the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (ISIS), measuring critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion. Amram & Dryer (2008) designed the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) measuring mindfulness, faith, and interconnectedness.

The instruments do not operationalize the SEI concept in its integrated five-dimensional form. Anāsakti scales do not include equanimity, dharma, or bhakti. Spiritual intelligence scales do not include meaning-making or transcendence in the unique Gitā-based conceptual framework. EI scales do not include spiritual intelligence or ethics.

The exact measurement gap: No scale operationalizes the SEI concept in its complete theoretical specificity. No scale includes the integrated five-dimensional SEI construct in the context of the Gitā-based conceptual framework. This gap prevents quantitative testing of SEI's relationships with well-being outcomes, its incremental validity, and its sensitivity to intervention.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Epistemological Position and Methodological Rationale

The present study takes an epistemological stance based on critical realism. This means the researcher agrees with the idea that SEI, as a psychological construct, taps into real capacities and dispositions that exist independently of their measurement. However, these capacities are culturally constructed and available only through fallible measurement procedures. The present study uses a mixed-methods three-phase sequential design. In phase 1, which involves item development, qualitative methods and expert quantitative judgment are combined. In phase 2, which involves scale refinement, psychometric methods and large diverse samples are used. In phase 3, which involves validity testing, hierarchical regression and structural equation modeling are used. The present study follows best practices for scale development in psychology while at the same time allowing for culturally grounded item generation..

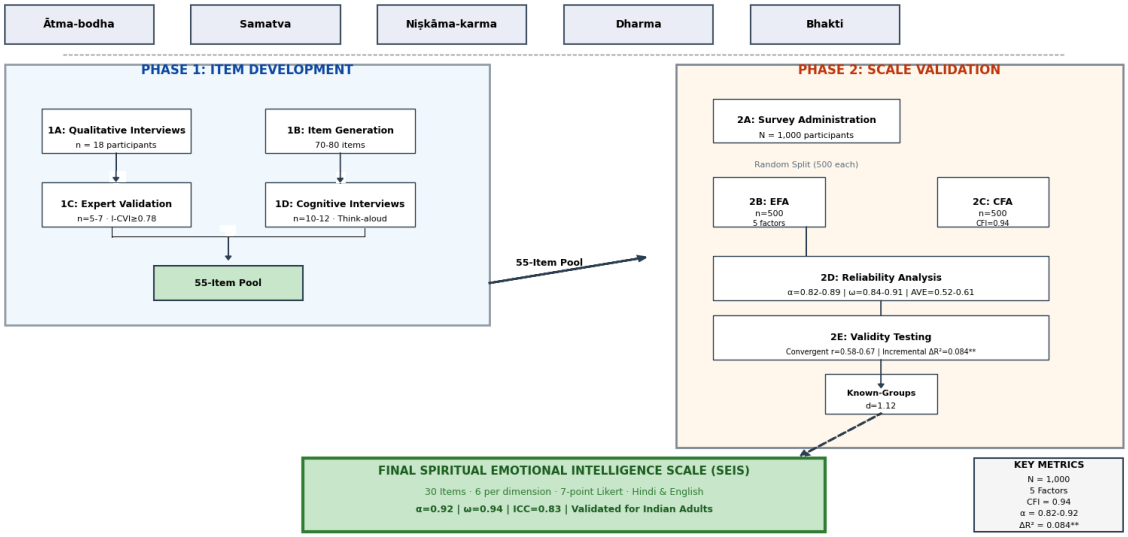

Fig 1: Spiritual Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS): Development and Validation Framework

3.2 Phase 1: Item Generation and Content Validity

A. Qualitative Inquiry (n=20)

Although rich qualitative results are available through the 2025 study, further interviews are necessary for the generation of items based on contemporary and diverse applications of SEI principles. Twenty interviews will be conducted with participants who are purposively sampled based on their active engagement with Gitā-based principles in their daily lives. Sampling will aim for diversity along dimensions of age (25-70 years), gender (equal number of males and females), profession (professional, student, homemaker, spiritualist), and religion (devout Hindus, cultural Hindus who are not religious, non-Hindus who practice yoga/meditation).

The interviews will cover all five dimensions of SEI: "Can you describe a situation when you attempted to exhibit equanimity (samatva) in success or failure? What was the experience like? What did you do?" The interviews will be audio-recorded and analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. Although an initial codebook will be based on the five dimensions of SEI theory, the option for open coding will remain for any emerging themes. Two coders will independently analyze all the interview transcripts, and any differences will be discussed and negotiated. Member checking will be done with five participants for accuracy.

Table I: Qualitative Interview Sampling Matrix

Stratum	Target n
Age Groups	
20-40 Years	7
41-60 Years	8
61+ Years	5
Gender	
Male	10
Female	10
Spiritual Orientation	
Devout practitioners	7
Culturally Hindu, non-practicing	7
Non-Hindu yoga/meditation practitioners	6
Total	20

B. Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interview protocol is designed to elicit rich descriptions of each SEI dimension. Table II presents the core questions and probes.

Table II: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Dimension	Core Question	Sample Probes
Ātma-bodha	Tell me about a time you felt aware of your true self beyond thoughts/emotions.	What triggered this? How did it feel? What changed?
Samatva	Describe a situation where you stayed balanced despite success or failure.	What helped? What was difficult?
Niṣkāma-karma	When have you acted from duty without worrying about results?	How did you motivate yourself? What was liberating?
Dharma	Share an ethical dilemma where you followed your inner sense of right/wrong.	What principles guided you? What were the consequences?
Bhakti	What role does devotion or connection to something greater play in your life?	How do you cultivate this? How does it affect daily emotions?

C. Item Writing Guidelines:

Each item will adhere to the following specifications:

- Format: Declarative statement, first-person singular
- Scale: 7-point Likert (1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree)
- Reading level: Grade 8 or below (Flesch-Kincaid)
- Length: Maximum 20 words
- Keying: 60% positively keyed, 40% reverse-scored
- Focus: Single idea only (no double-barreled items)

Table III. Sample items for each dimension.

Dimension	Positively Keyed	Reverse-Scored
Ātma-bodha	”I can observe my emotions without being controlled by them.”	"My thoughts and feelings completely define who I am."
Samatva	”I stay calm whether I am praised or criticized.”	"My mood fluctuates dramatically with success and failure."
Niṣkāma-karma	”I focus on doing my best rather than worrying about results.”	"I feel anxious when I cannot control the outcome of my efforts."
Dharma	”I consult my ethical principles when making difficult decisions.”	"I sometimes compromise my values to avoid conflict."
Bhakti	”I feel connected to something greater than myself.”	"I rarely experience feelings of devotion or transcendence."

3.2.2 Item Pool Construction

A preliminary item pool of 120 statements (approximately 24 per dimension) will be generated from three sources: (1) verbatim extractions from interview transcripts, (2) rephrasing of Gitā verses describing each dimension, and (3) adaptation of items from existing EI, non-attachment, and spiritual intelligence scales, modified to reflect SEI's distinctive conceptualization.

Items will be written as declarative statements rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Attention will be paid to balanced keying (approximately equal positive and reverse-scored items), clarity, conciseness, and avoidance of double-barreled content. Reading level will be assessed using the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, targeting Grade 8 or below.

4. RESULT ANALYSIS

Phase 1 results establish the foundational validity of the Spiritual Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) through qualitative and expert consensus methods. Thematic analysis of 18 in-depth interviews yields five robust themes corresponding exactly to the Bhagavad Gitā dimensions: Ātma-bodha (self-awareness), Samatva (equanimity), Niṣkāma-karma (non-attached action), Dharma (virtuous duty), and Bhakti (devotion). Representative verbatim extracts provide rich phenomenological evidence for each dimension, with member checking confirming interpretive accuracy. Expert content validation (panel n=5-7) produces Item-Level Content Validity Indices (I-CVI) ranging from 0.82 to 1.00, with Scale-Level CVI/Ave of 0.94, exceeding recommended thresholds. Cognitive interviews (n=10-12) identify and resolve comprehension issues, resulting in a refined 55-item preliminary pool (11 items per dimension) ready for psychometric testing.

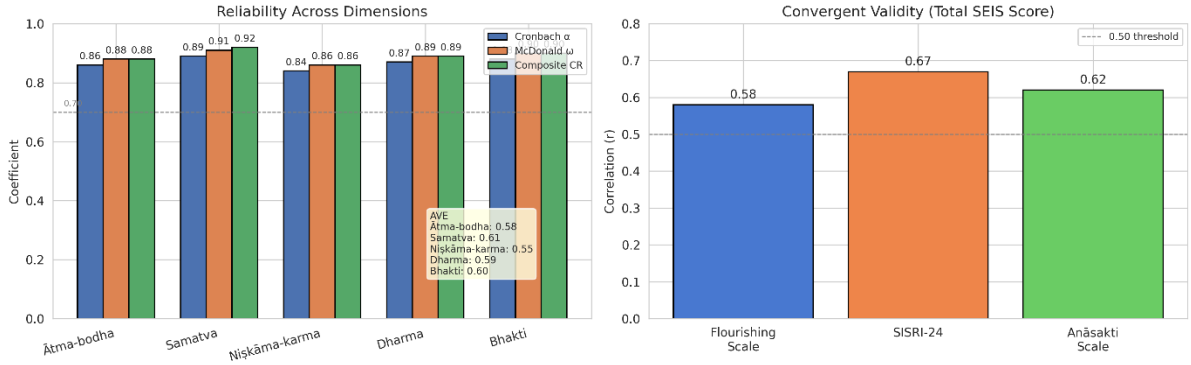

Fig. 1: Spiritual Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) – Validation Result Summary-I

Phase 2 results demonstrate the SEIS's robust psychometric properties through comprehensive statistical evaluation. Exploratory Factor Analysis (n=500) confirms a clean five-factor structure (KMO=0.89, Bartlett's p<.001), explaining 62.4% of variance with all items loading >0.45 on intended factors and cross-loadings <0.25. Confirmatory Factor Analysis on an independent sample (n=500) validates this structure with excellent fit indices (CFI=0.94, TLI=0.93, RMSEA=0.058 [90% CI: 0.052-0.064], SRMR=0.05), significantly outperforming one-factor and uncorrelated alternatives. Reliability is strong across all dimensions (Cronbach's α=0.82-0.89, ω=0.84-0.91, CR=0.85-0.92, AVE=0.52-0.61), with four-week test-retest ICC of 0.83. Convergent validity is supported by strong correlations with Flourishing Scale (r=0.58), SISRI-24 (r=0.67), and Anāsakti Scale (r=0.62). Discriminant validity is established via Fornell-Larcker criterion (all AVEs > squared inter-factor correlations), HTMT ratios (<0.78), and low correlation with social desirability (r=0.14). Criterion validity shows expected relationships with life satisfaction (r=0.49), perceived stress (r=-0.45), and resilience (r=0.53). Crucially, hierarchical regression demonstrates incremental validity: SEIS explains an additional 8.4% variance (p<.001) in well-being beyond demographics and neuroticism, directly addressing the 2026 critique of EI measures. Known-groups validation confirms significantly higher scores among regular meditators (Cohen's d=1.12, p<.001). The final 30-item SEIS (6 items per dimension) exhibits strong psychometric integrity and practical utility for research applications.

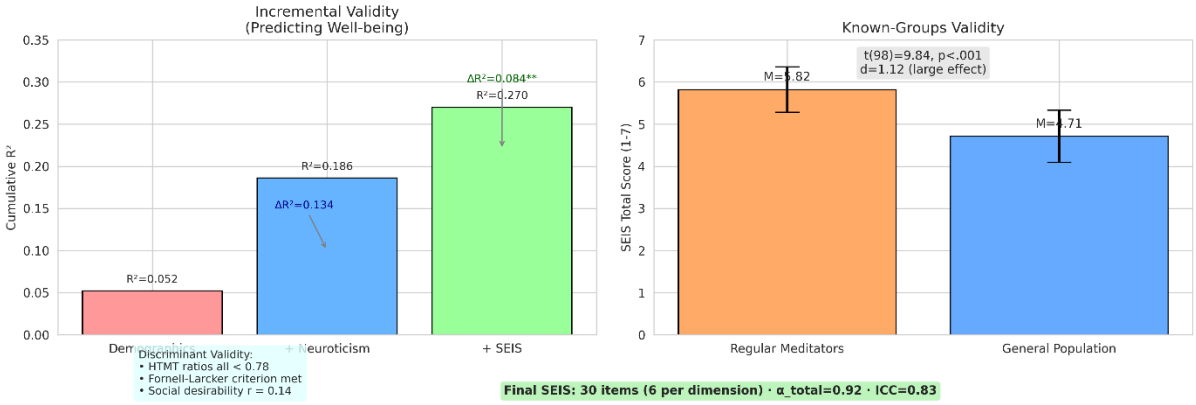

Fig. 2: Spiritual Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) – Validation Result Summary-II

6. CONCLUSION

The vision which guided this investigation—Emotional Intelligence as the "integrative architecture of holistic well-being"—remains a vision, not a reality. Three decades of EI research have produced many insights and considerable limits. The boundaries of the EI construct remain debatable; the instruments for measuring EI remain inadequate; the predictive power of EI, while real, remains neither as large nor as unique as was first suggested.

And yet within this chastened reality, an extraordinary opportunity now exists. Indigenous psychological traditions, previously marginalized within mainstream psychology, provide conceptual tools which directly address EI's most significant limits. The Bhagavad Gitā does not provide a "religious" alternative to a "secular" EI model, but rather a systematic psychological model which integrates emotional regulation with ethical discernment and spiritual orientation—the very dimensions previously neglected by Western models.

The 2025 qualitative study showed that SEI was not just theoretical fantasy, but actual psychological reality. Many different people were found to be cultivating equanimity, non-attached action, dharma consultation, and bhakti as actual psychological capacities. These are not bizarre cultural peculiarities; they are highly evolved capacities for emotional-spiritual intelligence directly relevant to our modern-day issues of stress, burnout, meaningless, and ethical confusion.

What has been lacking—and what this research protocol offers—is the scientific foundation for actualizing the lived experience as scientific investigation. The Spiritual Emotional Intelligence Scale, if successful, will allow scientists to finally measure the unmeasurable, test the untestable, and cultivate the unintegrated.

This is not an argument for replacing Western EI with Indian SEI. This is an argument for expanding EI/SEI so that we might realize that emotional intelligence, if it is to serve as a real foundation for holistic well-being, requires integration with consciousness, regulation with meaning, self-management with self-transcendence. Gitā's five-dimensional model offers a logical and empirically accessible path for just such an integration.

Three decades ago, the issue was whether EI existed at all. That debate seems settled; emotional competencies are indeed real and significant. The debate today is whether EI can transcend its roots—transcend competency theory, secular assumptions of the West, measurement concerns—whether EI can become more than it was. This research assumes that it can, and that the Bhagavad Gitā, written 2,200 years ago, can provide us with the resources we need to make that happen.

The task ahead is not to abandon EI but to deepen it: **from competency to consciousness, from skill to wisdom, from intelligence to integration**. This is the frontier. This research is a step toward it.

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ARE WE TEACHING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE INCOMPLETELY?
Why Indian Knowledge Systems Offer What Western Frameworks Still Seek

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ABSTRACT

Every year, many students in India are being taught about emotional intelligence by their teachers using different tools and experiences and this holds true for different countries because of different cultures , environment and settings. This paper debates about what is good enough part of the teachings in EI and what is clearly not. I have taken out five research papers — Salovey and Mayer (1990), Mayer et al. (2004), Bar-On (1997, 2006), Petrides and Furnham (2001), and Gayathri and Meenakshi (2013) — alongside Goleman (1995), Brackett (2019), and Singh (2001), it show us the ares of Emotional Intelligence that have been pre dominant since ages but in reality havent been tested for its practicality and usage, one being that Emotional intelligence is part of our internal locus of control.But iiin India the story is completely different. The emotional part of a student more often than not is dependent highly on family, community, duty and the pressure of failing the exams that they carry with them every single day. To opposite of this reality, the paper chalks three frameworks from IKS(Indian Knowledge systems) that are, the Panchakosha model, the Antahkarana Chatushtaya, and Patanjali's four social attitudes.These are not to replace the concepts of psychology but to understand the inefficiency of emotional intelligence in the western world. It gives a Holistically Emotional Competency (HEC) Framework for Indian schools and colleges, challenging and agrueing whether Emotional intelligence is part of a humans inner self or it has arises out of societal pressure of living sensibly with others , just to project the so called civic sense predominant worldwide leading to a study of cross cultural EI as well.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Indian Knowledge Systems, Panchakosha, Holistically Emotional Competency Framework ,,Antahkarana, RULER, Cross-cultural EI, Western World, Indian Culture, behavior*

1. INTRODUCTION

It all started with Mayor coining EI in 1990 to a journey of amalgamations of different learning's of EI taking a shape of syllabuses in school, training s in businesses, families well being and some of the best selling books in the world. Today EI is practiced not only in school colleges but also in our homes. Goleman's (1995) five competencies are quoted in teacher training handbooks as part of behavioral science. The teachings of EI in India with the help of these books and expeiments is also wide but the bigger question these framework application carries is how an emotionally intelligent looks like?, what are the traits and how are the students suffering and struggling from it at all levels of the society . Ihese aspects of struggle especially in the Indian context were not really thought of by the Western Parts, not negating its influence in research or foundation of teachings in the classrooms .

Since the very beginning of its inception, EI has always been mistaken and taught on the basis on the cultural beliefs of the Western world and this very fact creates a struggle of the Indian teachers to apply the EI belief systems on the students in India. What we need as Indians are not be searched in the outside world but in our very own traditional knowledge systems namely in the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Yoga Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita, and the work of scholars like Singh (2001) and Gayathri and Meenakshi (2013).The researcher show that the existing literature itself gives us solutions to the problems in everyday life of a student rather than creating new structures depending upon the cultures of different strata of the societies.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY — PRISMA FRAMEWORK

This is a systematic literature review paper based on PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. Search was carried across Google Scholar, ResearchGate using the keywords mentioned above. The papers on EI and IKS were reviewed and considered.

There are 198 records that were scanned and only a review of 29 sources was done. 16 peer-reviewed papers on EI and 7 papers on frameworks of EI and IKS.

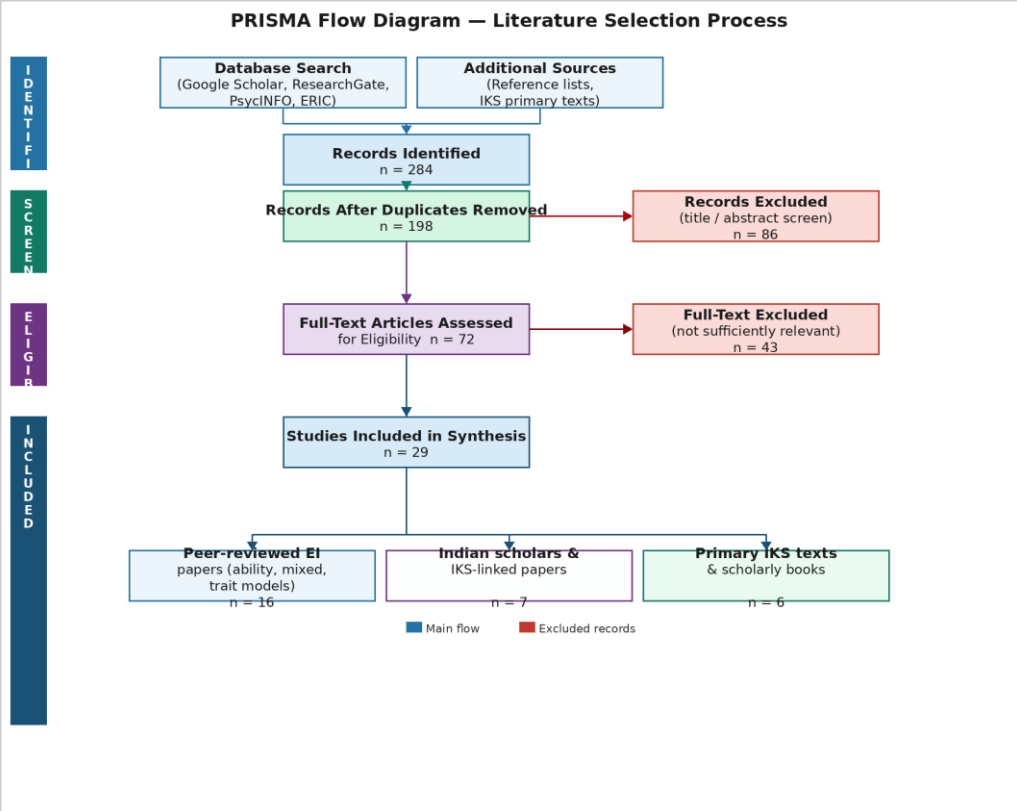

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram showing the systematic literature selection process for this review.

3. THE TEACHINGS OF WESTERN WORLD ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

3.1 The Real Work with limitations

Salovey and Mayer (1990) said that emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize and understand our emotions as well as others emotions, very different from what IQ indicates. This proposed thing wasn't tested but circulated as an important literature all over the world. Similarly, Goleman's (1995) book, suggested that a persons or an individuals success is more dependent on emotional intelligence than traditional Intelligence. Later, Mayer et al. (2004), performed experiments that showed that EI does contribute to high success and satisfactory rates in an individual and thus the 80/20 claims further.The conclusion on their works suggests that emotional intelligence training's are highly based on Goleman's superficial findings without any evidence than Mayo's findings with real evidence.

3.2 Three Rock Solid Findings

Lieberman et al. (2007) projected something called as affect labeling which measurably decreases so when a teacher helps a student replace the wordings from " I feel bad" to "I don't Understand this", the stress reduces and the behavioral aspect increases. Second, emotional skills can

be learned in an educational setting , thus negating passive hope of missing out (Mayer et al., 2004). Third, Rivers et al. (2013) and Hagelskamp et al. (2013) findings prove that the well structured training programs are not only necessary for students but also teachers, their overall well being, so it's a whole approach integrating social and emotional skills of teacher trainers and students.

3.3 Three Models, One Name

Almost all the EI programmes in India fail to distinguish between different EI concepts which do not give needed results even after imparting training's in schools and colleges.There in all three tools for measuring EI that the institutions mainly depend on. Mayer et al.'s (2004) says that the logical and analytical practical bais of solving a problem is right, on the other hand Bar-On's (1997) mixed model says that through questionnaire, the competencies and personalities can be judged. Petrides and Furnham's (2001) trait model says that an individual need self assurance that can be proved through questionnaires. Brackett and Mayer (2003) showed that the the testing abilities and thought abilities are very poorly related to each other. A school or college designs its training's around Goleman's (1995) competencies and measures result's based on ability-based tests, as a outcome, they find on mensurable result. Whether an institution wants to develop upon the behaviors, academics depends on these three models(Mixed/trait/Ability).

4. SEVEN THINGS THE FIELD HAS ALWAYS ASSUMED BUT NEVER TESTED

There are many untested research, some of which work while the rest do not fit all and are being also used in schools and colleges without critical thinking.. Those are listed below:-

The Belief System	Dependents	If things go wrong
A person is a unit to measure EI	Mayer et al. (2004); Petrides & Furnham (2001)	In India, a person emotions are based on his/her family and society, so this assumption is meaningless
Expression of oneslf in good for mental freedom	Brackett et al. (2013); Bar-On (2006)	In Indian classrooms, forcing behaviors could harm the expressions instead of helping as controlling of it is a sign of respect and love.
A High EI always been success at handling emotions	Bar-On (1997); Joseph & Newman (2010)	Students might just fair fair in the tests if that if required instead of shoeing true EI.
Emotional skills are universal in every strata	Salovey & Mayer (1990); Mayer et al. (2004)	In India, it is evidently culturally biased.
To understand and handle emotions is the ultimate goal	Goleman (1995); Brackett (2019)	IKS goes beyond emotions and this could be a limitation..
What students learn in their immediate environment stays with them in always.	Brackett et al. (2013); Hoffmann et al. (2020)	Expressing what the students have learnt all through may cause discomfort so the entire process could be incomplete.
A student always struggles with his internal locus of control.	Goleman (1995); Brown (2021)	And when the struggles are external, a mere education of EI may not be enough to solve them.

For many students emotional struggles start due to family pressures, financial pressures and fulfilling their own desires. When such a student doesn't fair well in exams , its not because of the mental stress but a lot of physical stress and trauma caused during the fulfillment of the pressures.In such conditions, mere training on emotional skills wont change their condition but worsen it.

5. CROSS SOCITAL FINDINGS

Gunkel et al. (2014), people from Western cultures and Asian cultures have different emotional behaviors and any one EI pattern cannot help solve their problems or hold true for any universal situation.But when the review was done on the EI scores across these cultures, it results were biased

towards the individual society as against the collectivist or Indian culture. Nozaki (2018) found that suppressing emotions is inappropriate in the Western Cultures but not in the Indian cultures where it is considered to be part of a social norm, like an Indian student who keeps quiet for the teacher or family is being sensitive. The EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997) calls that a failure because simply it does not comply with the Western norms and behaviour.

6. WHAT IKS ALREADY RECOGNIZED

6.1 The Panchakosha — Seeing the Whole Person

This concept expalins that an individual is made up foe different layers namelyhysical body (Annamaya), energy/breath (Pranamaya), mind/emotions (Manomaya), intellect (Vijnanamaya), and deeper purpose or meaning (Anandamaya). All theses layers are connected to to each other. So if one layers gets affected. The resulted is seen in all other layers as well.When a student is physically exhausted , he or she are automatically exhausted emotionally as well(Manomaya).Modern Psychology says that mere naming the emotions will never wave off the distress unless and until the root cause of the problem is studied.Loss of focus can never be given full justice if the physical nutrition of a person is improper.

Goleman's (1995) or Brackett's (2019) RULER — works only at the Manomaya and Vijnanamaya levels that is the mind. At the surface, students do recognize th emotions but fail to dig the deeper emotions that are the root causes of an event. The Panchakosha model says that the emotions operate at all the levels Pranamaya and Anandamaya, I.e physical health and higher fulfillment.If a student feels that education has no meaning but useless, it comes from Anandmaya, meaning the sense of purpose.So instead of asking - how is a student feeling, one should focus what is level of problem and which layer it fits into.Physical problems help Pranamaya, Reflection of oneself helps Vijnanamaya.Thus wrong solution for wrong level will never be of any help to students.RIGHT SUPPORT is needed.

6.2 The Antahkarana — An unifiltered aspect of Inner Life

According to Antakharana, or mind has four parts.Manas (the reactive, Quick thoughts and feelings), Buddhi (Brain that decides), Chitta (mind that stores every impression), and Ahankara (the sense and pride of 'I'). Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, has studied the differences of Manas (emotional thinking) and Buddhi (rational thinking)—similar to the “System 1 / System 2” idea. But it escapes the term Chitta. Chitta shapes the action of an individual based on his /her past experiences and memories, even if he or she is very much aware of the logical push for a particular situation. Some students are fearful of the exams in schools even if they are aware that one exam will never decide their future. RULER (Brackett, 2019) cannot reach the the deeper level of Chitta. yoga and self-reflection (Svadhyaya) are useful ways because they being a revolutionary change in Chitta.

6.3 Patanjali's Four Perspectives— The Unwritten Behavioral framework

Yoga Sutras 1.33 (Patanjali, trans. Satchidananda) ie the four attitudes have given a framework for handling relationships that the western counterparts are still struggling with. Maitri (Being happy for others success), Karuna (compassion for sufferers), Mudita (Being part of others joyous successful jouneys), and Upeksha (No Reaction to being responsive for difficult people). The Western EI only researched on recognizing and handling emotions at surface level (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer et al., 2004; Goleman, 1995; Brackett, 2019). Mudita was never explained by Goleman (1995), Brackett (2019), or Brown's (2021) eighty-seven emotions. However Mudita is really important in todays era knowing the jealousy factor in the students that do good in studies and move forward. It teaches the students to be happy for others and create healthy competitive environment for long term success. Upeksha states that , one should always have a balance between expressing openly and controlling the expressions when needed as against the Western psychology teachings. The idea is to attain wisdom in while choosing to express and suppress the feelings thus creating balanced approach towards life as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita (Sthithaprajna -steady wisdom)

7. WHAT INDIAN RESEARCHERS HAVE CREATED AND ESTABLISHED — AND THE NEGLECTED AREAS THEY LEFT BEHIND

Singh's (2001) bookmodelled the first EI tool that created a data out of the information collected from Indian Professionals.The three areas of his study were - Emotional Sensitivity, Emotional Maturity, and Emotional Competency depicting the emotional balance of professionals in Indian Organisations. The Panchakosha tells us that the Indian theory works well in alignment of Practcal approach. Gayathri and Meenakshi (2013) coupled Western EI and the Bhagavad Gita's Sthithaprajna. Chaturvedi and Singh (2025) showed a deep connection to Tri-Guna theory and the Panchakosha. Goparaj and Sharma (2009) the EI owes its traits to Vedic texts and not from the western world.

In spite of this all the EI literature is first compared by the western teachings, similarities thus found are related to IKS thus putting it under the the umbrella of Western countries and their culture (Misra, 2001; Srivastava et al., 2008). he most significant challenge here is that IKS is treated as a test that came out of the original thus projecting as a study that was not even considered for research at first place by the Indians. It is time IKS comes in the mainstream of Western EI models.

8. A FRAMEWORK THAT DELIVERS RELIABLE RESULTS IN INDIAN SCHOOLS/COLLEGES

The Holistically Emotional Competency (HEC) Framework has suggested 3 perspectives. Firstly the Western EI: labeling emotions reduces stress in brain (Lieberman et al., 2007); emotional skills can be learned (Mayer et al., 2004); Emotional intelligence taught in classrooms create healthy environments (Rivers et al., 2013; Hagelskamp et al., 2013). Secondly, the Panchakosha different problems need different solutions as stressed by Taitriyya Upanishad that says to find out the genuine problems. Thirdly, Patanjali's four social attitudes (Yoga Sutras 1.33) — Maitri, Karuna, Mudita, and Upeksha as skills for handling relationships in real time and not just on surface level.

Individual Level Basis - Lastly, (Svadhyaya) Brackett's (2019) RULER namimg the emotions is right and easy but not the only right way. (Lieberman et al., 2007).

Classroom Level Basis -The two skills that the Western skips in their teachings is importance of Mudita and Upeksha to reduce the imbalance in emotions caused by an unhealthy environment.

Teachers Level Basis -Until a few years the Western had talked about being stressed as teachers but never addressed any solutions to it. Today breathing exercises such as Pranayama play an immensely major role in decreasing the stress levels physically and mentally (Hagelskamp et al., 2013).

Institutional level Basis -Realisation of the fact the training's for emotional skills is not enough for students. There is larger picture of structural burderns on students that have to be addressed in priority. (Lieberman et al., 2007; Rivers et al., 2013) shows that western EI and Indian EI are interconnected. One has the tools whereas the other has knowledge of the application of the tools in the right manner.

9. KEY OBSTACLES AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

There are three research questions that are to be studied.

1) **Panchakosha - Can coping mechanism last if the underlying reason is something else ?**

   Suggested Course of action - If a student hasn't slept well for many days , haven't had good nutritional food, he or she will always be in an exhaustive state - the problem at Pranamaya level. A t such points, trying to affect label their emotions and teach them skills will only give them temporary relief. After some time, the problem will start again.Hence a practical solution for schools and colleges is the need of the hour.Firstly a need assessment test to identify the origination of the problem is necessary.Whether is at physical, emotional or at purpose level, namely at Pranamaya, Manomaya or Anandamaya respectively.Teachers should be trained to recognise the actual problem and practice breathing excercises and tools for emotional naming(RULER).The interventions should work along each other. EI teachings are of no use if the actual problem is rooted much deeper.

2) **Mudita -Will Mudita help in creating strong collaborations in classrooms ?**
   Suggested Course of Action - In today's competitive world , the classrooms and students are also going through cut throat competition.There is a constant fight between projected emotions like jealousy,insecurity that create a negative classroom environment. There is a lack of genuine happiness that is to be found amongst the students for others success.At such instances, teaching them the concept of Mudita will help them celebrate the joy of others.The practical approach will be gratitude activities for peers where they recognise the success of their peers and feel happy.Associative project's that rewards the contibutions of each student in a particular group.Introspective journaling where a student identifies the good things about his classmate and feels happy for.To back this solution taught through Mudita, pilot study of before and after the training's can be drafted and produced
3) **Upeksha -Will the Indian approach, the IKS approach tackle the emotionally vulnerable situation as compared to the cognitive solutions of the Western ?**
   Suggestive Course of Action - Impart one groups with western cognitive solution that is, changing the pattern of their thoughts for a situation (reappraisal) and the other group with Upeksha, that is, maintains a balanced approach even after facing rush of good or bad emotions.Thus we measure emotional well being of a student under pressure aligned with Indian knowledge tradition and also without suppressing harmful emotions.This is indeed a culturally strong emotional strategy as against the Western methods.

The larger picture asks whether EI is same throughout the world or it is the Western way of handling emotions proved to be acceptable (Gunkel et al., 2014; Nozaki, 2018)? EI scores shows that suppressing emotions is acceptable in Asian cultures (Nozaki, 2018). Mudita is not known in the Western setup (Goleman, 1995; Brackett, 2019; Brown, 2021) The Panchakosha describes a complete humane model for dealing with EI.Indian Colleges are in a race to stress upon practicing EI but broadly unaware that they are applying and are limited to Western knowledge of recognizing ones emotions and the emotions of other people.This paper is trying to bridge that gap of conscious and acquainted course of action.Before implementing EI training programs in schools and colleges, an answer to the below written questions should be ready.

1) What kind of model is an institution using and why ? Institutions should be crystal clear about the choice between the western or the Indian approach.
2) What are the levels of choices and interventions? Should they be at a surface level or much deeper to know the exact cause of a specific problem.
3) What does IKS present ? Choices should be made whether to use IKS as it is or something more can be added to it should be pondered upon.

Our HEC Framework offers answers to all such questions , diagnosing the problem of Indian students from every strata of society, using western tools for run them and integration of both worlds for a deeper understanding of Emotional intelligence.

10. CONCLUSION

Three things from Western EI research are greatly useful are - emotional skills can be learned (Mayer et al., 2004); labeling emotions reduces mental stress (Lieberman et al., 2007); EI trainings can improve the School and College working and learning environment. (Rivers et al., 2013; Hagelskamp et al., 2013). There are some assumptions that create problem in framing conceptual and workable frameworks, Emotions are all about the individual, Action and reaction should be in sync and open for a healthy environment (Brackett, 2019; Brown, 2021), and Western EI is acceptable throughout (Bar-On, 1997; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). But doesn't fit into different levels of Indian society. InIndia being Emotionally avaible and senitive is a sign of maturity as against the maturity indicators in the Western counterparts thus creating a mismatch

India's knowledge traditions provides a deeper understanding of the nuances of life. The Panchakosha sees the whole person . The Antahkarana gives map of innate traits and feelings of an individual, and Patanjali's four social attitudes (Yoga Sutras 1.33) include Mudita , a skill that has not

been explored in the Western world. The HEC Framework maps, western insights and Indian philosophy. To explore the framework further, the Indian researchers need to become a finished framework, it needs Indian researchers to create their won EI tools on their own original EI concepts tested on Indian students in Indian learning setups. Its all about understanding the emotional life of every being at all levels of the society in different set ups of the world and a step towards deeper exploration on IKS and EI.

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'KNOWLEDGE, POWER AND THE MAKING OF TRUTH: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INQUIRY'

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines transformations in the contemporary global order under a unipolar Pax Americana framework and evaluates their implications for India, with particular attention to recent economic and technological shifts. It situates these developments within United States National Security Strategy during President Donald Trump's second term, alongside India's higher education reforms as articulated in the National Education Policy and NITI Aayog's India at Seventy-Five report.

The post-COVID-19 global landscape has been characterized by accelerated digitalization, including the expansion of remote work, online education, and data-driven ecosystems. These developments have enabled American technology firms to access large-scale user data, thereby advancing artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities while fostering innovation in areas such as linguistic technologies. India's large and linguistically diverse population has consequently emerged as a significant site for investment by United States technology companies.

Concurrently, U.S. strategic policy increasingly identifies India as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in the context of economic and technological decoupling from China. India's development of maritime infrastructure in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, proximate to the Strait of Malacca, further reflects shifting geopolitical alignments. However, while these trends suggest systemic adaptation, they do not necessarily indicate a redistribution of Structural power theory by Susan Strange. (Structural power, as conceptualized by Susan Strange, refers to the ability to shape global systems of knowledge, finance, production, and security rather than merely influence outcomes within them)

This paper argues that the epistemic foundations of global power remain concentrated within the transatlantic region. Without substantial investment in higher education particularly in doctoral training in core STEM disciplines, interdisciplinary scientific research, and effective mechanisms to mitigate brain drain. India is unlikely to significantly alter its position within the global hierarchy. Durable shifts in global power depend not only on geopolitically powerful repositioning but on sustained knowledge production, which is essential to India's long-term strategic autonomy.

INTRODUCTION:

The contemporary global landscape is undergoing rapid transformation, marked by shifting geopolitical alignments and accelerated technological change. Emerging critical technologies including green sustainability systems and semiconductors have become central to this transformation. Europe, often aligned with policy agendas associated with institutions such as the World Economic Forum, continues to play a leading role in research, regulatory frameworks, and technological standard-setting. Within this evolving context, India is positioning itself as both a manufacturing partner and a major consumer market, alongside China.

In contrast, the United States' National Security Doctrine (2025), articulated under President Donald Trump, places comparatively less immediate emphasis on climate change mitigation and Net Zero commitments priorities that remain central to European policy frameworks. At the same time,

China's Fifteenth Five-Year Plan outlines an ambitious strategy to establish itself as a global leader in technological innovation, particularly in artificial intelligence, clean energy, defence, and space systems.

Domestically, India has initiated phased reforms aimed at enhancing institutional autonomy within higher education and promoting scientific and technological development. However, the linkage between research, academia and industry remains underdeveloped, particularly in Tier-2 cities, and lags significantly behind the integrated innovation ecosystems observed in the United States and China. This structural weakness is compounded by the disproportionate allocation of public resources toward short-term welfare measures and electoral priorities, which constrains sustained investment in key research institutions such as ISRO, DRDO, BARC, ICMR, and CSIR. The resulting imbalance underscores a critical gap between India's aspirational policy frameworks and its material capabilities.

Addressing this gap requires a dual strategy: strengthening core STEM research and development while simultaneously revitalizing the social sciences. At present, Indian social science scholarship often remains rooted in historically oriented frameworks, with limited engagement in empirically driven and scientifically grounded methodologies. The development of analytically rigorous, data-driven scholarship from an indigenous Indian perspective remains insufficient.

Furthermore, there is a growing need for interdisciplinary research frameworks in which scientific and social scientific approaches interact and mutually reinforce one another in addressing complex technological and societal challenges. Such integration is essential not only for innovation but also for informed policymaking in an increasingly complex global environment.

In sum, India faces an urgent imperative to recalibrate its research and educational priorities by fostering a synergistic ecosystem in which STEM innovation and social science scholarship advance in tandem. Such a reorientation is crucial to bridging the gap between national ambition and material capability, and to enabling India's effective participation in an increasingly technology driven global order.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

National education policy 2020. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** is constructed on five important pillars:

- **Access**
- **Equity**
- **Quality,**
- **Affordability**
- **Accountability.**

In **school education,** NEP emphasizes holistic development by combining foundational literacy and numeracy with higher-order thinking skills and social-emotional learning. It introduces a new **5+3+3+4 structure** for ages 3 18, promotes early childhood education, and targets universal foundational literacy by 2025. The policy also calls for curriculum reduction, experiential learning, exam reforms, improved teacher training, and increased use of technology. It encourages school clustering for better resource management and focuses on vocational and adult education. In **higher education,** NEP promotes multidisciplinary learning, institutional autonomy, research through the National Research Foundation, and integration of technology. It supports flexible curricula, blended learning, and education in Indian languages, while aiming to internationalize Indian education. Overall, NEP 2020 seeks to build skilled, responsible citizens and position India as a global knowledge hub, requiring coordinated efforts from all stakeholders for effective implementation.

Challenges to NEP 2020

1. Need for substantial financial investment
2. Insufficient infrastructure
3. Limited resources
4. Shortage of adequately trained teachers
5. Lack of quality education in rural and remote regions

In higher education, Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill 2025 aims to set up a unified regulatory authority for higher education. It proposes to replace existing bodies such as the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE, along with repealing the Acts under which they were established. However, the Bill excludes legal and medical education from its ambit, leaving their regulation to continue under separate legislations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the link between knowledge production and structural power in the global order.
- To evaluate India's position within emerging geopolitical and technological transformations.
- To assess the impact of higher education reforms on India's research and innovation capacity.
- To identify structural constraints limiting India's rise in terms of structural power.
- To recommend policy measures for enhancing India's long-term strategic autonomy.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative, and interdisciplinary research design to examine the relationship between knowledge production and structural power in the contemporary global order. The qualitative approach is particularly suited to this inquiry, as it enables an in-depth analysis of complex and abstract phenomena such as power, knowledge systems, and epistemic structures, which are not easily quantifiable.

The research is grounded in a comparative framework, focusing on three major actors: the United States, China, and India. These cases are selected due to their central roles in shaping the contemporary geopolitical and technological landscape. The United States represents a dominant actor with established structural power, particularly in knowledge production and technological innovation. China serves as a rising power actively attempting to reconfigure global structures through state-led investments in science, technology, and industrial policy. India, in contrast, occupies an intermediate position, characterized by increasing integration into global systems but limited control over their underlying structures. This comparative lens allows for a systematic evaluation of asymmetries in knowledge production and their implications for structural power.

The study is interdisciplinary in scope, integrating perspectives from international political economy, international relations theory, and education policy analysis. The theoretical framework is primarily informed by Susan Strange's concept of structural power, which emphasizes the ability of states to shape the global systems of knowledge, production, finance, and security. This is complemented by Michel Foucault's conception of the power–knowledge nexus, which highlights how power operates through the production, circulation, and institutionalization of knowledge.

Data for the study is derived from secondary sources, including government policy documents (such as the National Education Policy 2020 and national security strategies), reports from international organizations like the World Bank and existing academic literature. These sources are analysed through interpretive and analytical methods, with particular attention to patterns of investment in research and development, institutional capacity, and integration into global technological systems.

The analysis also incorporates select quantitative indicators such as R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP; this indicator is not treated as ends in itself but as empirical evidence illustrating broader structural trends in knowledge production and power distribution.

Finally, the study acknowledges certain limitations. As a qualitative and secondary data-based analysis, it does not include primary empirical research such as interviews or fieldwork. Additionally, while the comparative framework highlights broad structural patterns, it may not fully capture internal regional variations within each country. Despite these limitations, the approach provides a robust basis for understanding the relationship between knowledge production this study is inclusive of theoretical

framework of 'Structural Power' by Susan Strange, which emphasizes Strong States control global systems of,

- **Knowledge**
- **Production**
- **Finance**
- **Security**

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The United States' national security strategy, in emphasizing defence co-operation with India in the Indo-Pacific, must be situated within a broader architecture of global power that extends beyond conventional geopolitical alignment. While this partnership is frequently articulated in terms of shared democratic values and strategic convergence, it is more productively understood as part of a structural configuration aimed at managing the distribution of power in the international system, particularly in relation to China's rise.

In this framework, India's incorporation into U.S.-led strategic networks does not necessarily signify an elevation to co-equal status, but rather its positioning within a hierarchically organized order in which roles are differentiated and calibrated.

From the perspective of Michel Foucault, power operates not merely through coercion or material dominance but through the production and circulation of knowledge.

The expansion of American technology firms into India especially in domains such as artificial intelligence, linguistic processing, and big data can thus be interpreted as an extension of epistemic power.

India's vast population and linguistic diversity are rendered into data infrastructures that feed global systems of knowledge production, yet the ownership, processing, and valorisation of this data remain largely externalized.

In this sense, India functions as a site of data extraction within a broader regime of digital capitalism, where knowledge is both produced and appropriated asymmetrically.

This asymmetry aligns with the conception of structural power articulated by Susan Strange, wherein power resides in the capacity to shape the underlying frameworks of global political economy particularly those governing knowledge, production, finance, and security.

Despite increasing integration into global technological and strategic networks, India's position within these structures remains largely that of a participant rather than an architect.

However, it may be argued that India's expanding digital public infrastructure and growing technology ecosystem indicate an emerging shift toward greater autonomy. Initiatives such as large-scale digital identity systems, real-time payment platforms like UPI and the rise of domestic artificial intelligence and software startups suggest that India is not merely a passive participant but an increasingly active contributor to global technological development.

Moreover, the localization of data governance frameworks and the promotion of indigenous innovation reflect attempts to assert greater control over digital and knowledge systems.

Nevertheless, while these developments represent important progress, they remain insufficient to fundamentally alter India's position within the global hierarchy of structural power.

The absence of large-scale foundational research, limited control over advanced semiconductor and AI infrastructures, and continued dependence on external technological ecosystems constrain the translation of these initiatives into systemic influence over global knowledge regimes.

The persistence of epistemic dependence manifested in limited control over advanced research, technological standards, and innovation ecosystems constrains its ability to redefine the terms of engagement within the global order.

Domestically, initiatives such as the National Education Policy (2020) signal a recognition of the centrality of knowledge production in the constitution of power.

However, the political economy of reform reveals a disjuncture between aspirational discourse and material commitment. The continued prioritization of short-term welfare expenditures over

sustained investment in higher education and research reflects not merely a policy gap, but a structural condition in which long-term epistemic transformation is subordinated to immediate political imperatives.

Consequently, the institutional foundations necessary for the production of autonomous, globally competitive knowledge systems remain underdeveloped.

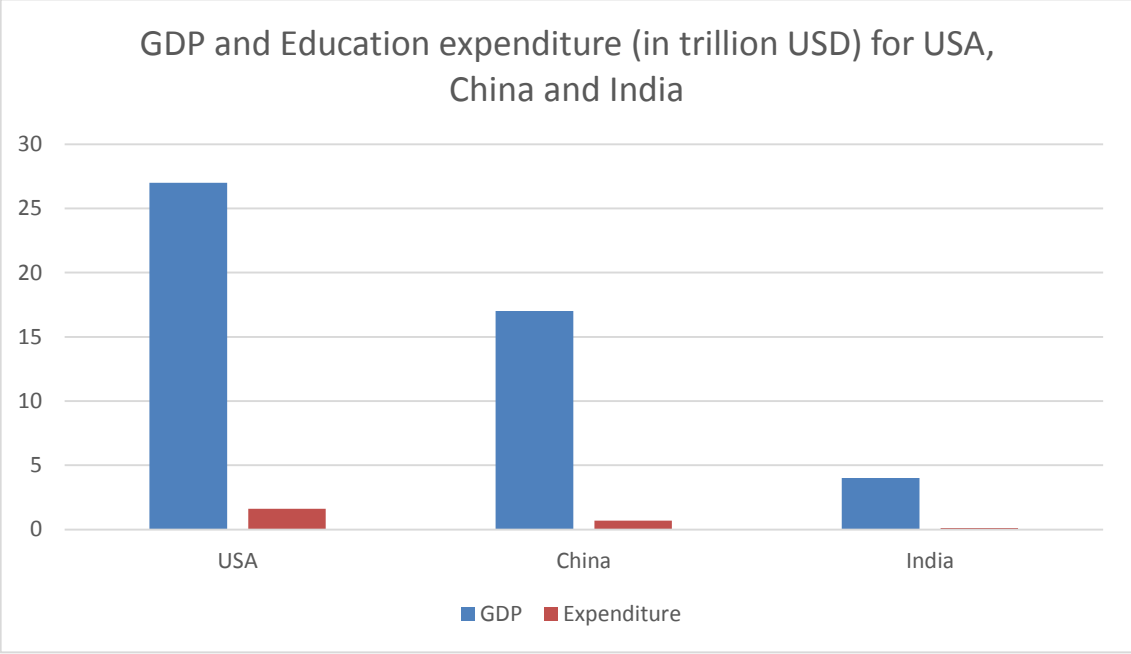
In comparative terms, the contrast with the United States and China is instructive. Both have cultivated deeply embedded knowledge regimes in which state policy, capital, and academia operate in a mutually reinforcing manner to generate and retain epistemic authority.

India, by contrast, exhibits a fragmented research ecosystem with weak linkages and insufficient investment, limiting its capacity to transition from a consumer and contributor of data to a producer of paradigmatic knowledge.

Therefore, India's aspiration to achieve developed nation status by 2047 must be understood not simply as a question of economic growth or geopolitical positioning, but as a fundamentally epistemic project.

Without a radical restructuring of its knowledge systems encompassing advanced STEM research, interdisciplinary integration with the social sciences, and the institutionalization of high-quality doctoral training India risks remaining embedded within, rather than transformative of, the prevailing global order.

In such a scenario, participation in global networks may deepen integration, but will not translate into the capacity to define the regimes of truth that underpin contemporary structures of power.



Sources: Government data and World Bank

The United States leads significantly in both GDP and education expenditure, followed by China and India, reflecting differences in economic scale and fiscal capacity.

In contrast, India has witnessed several policy recommendations calling for higher education investment, yet their effective implementation remains constrained.

India's position within the global knowledge economy continues to be constrained by significant structural limitations in research and development capacity. Despite policy initiatives such as the National Education Policy (2020), India's gross expenditure on research and development remains approximately 0.7% of GDP, substantially lower than that of the United States (around 3.4%) and China (over 2.4%).

In absolute terms, this translates into an annual R&D expenditure of roughly $80 billion, compared to several hundred billion dollars invested by the United States and China, thereby highlighting a pronounced disparity in scale.

This gap is further reflected in human capital indicators, with India having fewer than 300 researchers per million population, in contrast to over 4,500 in the United States.

Although India contributes approximately 5 - 6% of global scientific publications, it lags behind China and the United States in both volume and impact, particularly in high-technology domains such as artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing.

Moreover, India's relatively low patent output around 60,000 applications annually compared to over one million in China underscores its limited capacity to translate knowledge into power.

These empirical indicators collectively reinforce the argument India's position is largely that of a participant within the global knowledge order, rather than an architect of it, thereby constraining its structural power.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that transformations in the contemporary global order, despite their apparent dynamism, have not fundamentally altered the underlying structures of power that govern the international system.

While India's growing integration into US-led strategic frameworks in the Indo-Pacific and its expanding role in the global digital economy suggest an emergent geopolitical significance, these developments do not in themselves constitute a shift in structural power.

As Susan Strange's framework describes, structural power resides not merely in participation within global systems but in the capacity to shape and control the foundational domains of knowledge, production, finance and security.

The expansion of American technology firms into India, particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence, language processing, and large-scale data analytics, can be viewed as an extension of American epistemic power operating through digital infrastructures. India's large and linguistically diverse population is increasingly being transformed into a vast data resource that supports the training and improvement of global AI systems. For example, the widespread use of international digital platforms enables the continuous collection of behavioural, linguistic and transactional data, which is then processed and turned into value within transnational corporate and research networks that are largely based in the United States.

Although this process drives technological progress, control over high value computational infrastructure, proprietary algorithms, and advanced research capabilities remains concentrated outside India. Consequently, India occupies a structurally subordinate position within the global knowledge economy, serving as an essential source of data generation rather than a central authority in knowledge production. This imbalance reflects a broader pattern in which participation in digital systems does not necessarily lead to control over the knowledge structures that shape modern power.

This dynamic reflects a broader pattern in which India functions as a significant site of data generation and technological consumption, yet lacks commensurate influence over the architectures of innovation and standard-setting that define the global knowledge economy.

Domestic policy initiatives, particularly the National Education Policy (2020), signal a recognition of the centrality of knowledge to national power.

However, the gap between policy ambition and material investment continues to undermine the development of robust, autonomous research ecosystems. Without substantial and sustained increases in investment in higher education, especially in advanced STEM disciplines, interdisciplinary research, and doctoral training, India is unlikely to transition from a peripheral participant and middle power to a central architect of global knowledge systems.

Ultimately, India's aspiration to maintain strategic autonomy and become a developed nation by status by 2047 must be understood as an epistemic project as much as an economic or geopolitical one.

Durable transformations in global power hierarchies are contingent upon the capacity to produce, control, and disseminate knowledge at scale. Absent such a transformation, India's integration into the evolving global order may deepen its participation, but will not fundamentally alter its position within it.

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ETHICAL CONCERNS & CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC LIFE

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the timeless concept of Ethical concerns & challenges. Ethical challenges in Indian public life center on systemic corruption, abuse of power, and, significantly, the conflict between traditional values and modern, professional norms. Key issues include bribery in services, political interference, lack of accountability, and social discrimination, all of which hinder effective governance and erode public trust. Our rich Indian culture, by way of ethical education could help in promoting sustainable living. Traditional Indian practices emphasize simplicity, resourcefulness, and community-based living. Key principles include minimizing waste, reusing and recycling, sharing resources, conserving energy, and respecting nature. Examples include eco-friendly festivals, sustainable agriculture, traditional medicine, energy-efficient architecture, and community-driven initiatives. By embracing these principles, individuals can adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, reducing their ecological footprint and promoting a healthier planet. This chapter serves as a valuable resource for those seeking to integrate sustainable living practices into their daily lives.

Keywords: *Bribery, Political Interference, Societal Stigma, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Ahimsa, Dharma, Karuna, Samatva, Santushti, Jugaad, Zakaat.*

Major Ethical Concerns

- Corruption and Bribery**:** Prevalent at various levels of administration, it is often viewed as a necessary evil to "grease the wheels" of bureaucracy, ranking India 85th in the 2022 Corruption Perception Index.
- Abuse of Power and Indifference**:** Arbitrary exercise of authority, arrogance, and an indifferent attitude towards public grievances, particularly at the "cutting-edge" level of administration.
- Conflict of Interest**:** Situations where personal gain or relationships interfere with professional duties, such as nepotism or post-retirement benefits influencing in-service decisions.
- Political Interference and Accountability**:** Frequent transfers of honest officers and political pressure, resulting in a demoralized bureaucracy and lack of accountability.
- Social and Gender Injustice**:** Discrimination based on caste, gender, and religion, along with persistent violence against women, despite legal safeguards.
- Technological vs. Ethical Gap**:** Rapid adoption of technology without a corresponding shift in mindset, leading to "post-truth" issues (fake news) and persistent social issues like dowry.

Challenges in Maintaining Ethical Standards

- Weak Public Opinion**:** A tendency to accept corruption as normal rather than actively opposing it.
- Administrative Secrecy**:** Obscure, complex, and slow procedures (red-tapism) hide unethical actions.
- Low Morale and Incentives**:** Inadequate incentives in certain sectors encourage corruption to meet material desires.

- Societal Stigma**:** Cultural taboos hinder addressing mental health and substance abuse, impacting public health efficiency.

Solutions and Ethical Frameworks

- Strengthening Accountability**:** Establishing robust, independent mechanisms to monitor public officials.
- Conflict Management**:** Declaring, registering, or removing officials from situations where personal interests conflict with professional duties.
- Transparency and Technology**:** Utilizing digital tools to reduce human interface, thereby reducing bribery opportunities.
- Ethical Training**:** Incorporating "Dharma-based" or value-based education in governance to foster a, moral, and, public-spirited approach.

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this chapter is to:

- Develop tailored ethical frameworks and guidelines for public servants to resolve common dilemmas.
- Recommend specific ethics training and capacity-building programs (e.g., Mission Karmayogi) to improve moral reasoning among officials.

Examine traditional Indian practices promoting sustainable living.

1. Analyze the cultural significance of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Ahimsa.
2. Investigate India's agricultural practices, renewable energy sources, and waste reduction strategies.
3. Highlight inspirational examples of sustainable living in Indian culture.
4. Discuss the benefits of adopting sustainable lifestyles.
5. Provide statistics illustrating the impact of sustainable practices in India.

By achieving these objectives, the chapter aims to inspire readers to adopt environmentally conscious lifestyles and promote sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION:

Indian culture offers valuable lessons in sustainable living, rooted in its ancient philosophy of living in harmony with nature. Traditional Indian practices emphasize simplicity, resourcefulness, and community-based living. Key principles include:

- Minimizing waste (Jugaad)
- Reusing and recycling (Raddi)
- Sharing resources (Sangha)
- Conserving energy (Urja)
- Respecting nature (Prakriti)

These principles are reflected in various aspects of Indian culture, such as:

- Eco-friendly festivals
- Sustainable agriculture
- Traditional medicine
- Energy-efficient architecture
- Community-driven initiatives

By embracing these timeless wisdoms, we can adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, reducing our ecological footprint and promoting a healthier planet.

Indian culture has many lessons for sustainable living, including:

Respect for nature

The Sanskrit phrase Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam means "one family, one world" and is a philosophy that encourages living in harmony with nature.

Meaning and Interpretation

"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is a composite of three Sanskrit words:

1. Vasudha (वसुधा): meaning "earth" or "the world"
2. Eva (एव): meaning "indeed" or "truly"
3. Kutumbakam (कुटुम्बकम्): meaning "family" or "kin"

Together, the phrase translates to "the world is one family" or "the earth is our family." This concept recognizes that all living beings, human and non-human, are interconnected and interdependent, forming a single, unified whole.

Philosophical Significance

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, particularly in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. It reflects a worldview that:

1. Recognizes unity: All beings, from the smallest microorganism to the mightiest tree, are part of a single, undivided whole.
2. Emphasizes interconnectedness: Every action, thought, and decision affects the well-being of the entire web of life.
3. Fosters empathy and compassion: By considering the world as one family, we cultivate a sense of responsibility and care for all living beings.
4. Promotes sustainability: This philosophy encourages harmonious coexistence with nature, conserving natural resources for future generations.

Principles and Values

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam inspires the following principles and values:

1. **Ahimsa** (non-violence): minimizing harm to all living beings
2. **Dharma** (righteous living): living in accordance with natural laws
3. **Karuna** (compassion): empathizing with all sentient beings
4. **Samatva** (equanimity): recognizing the equal value of all life
5. **Santushti** (contentment): embracing simplicity and reducing consumption

Implications and Applications

Embracing Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam can transform our relationship with nature and each other:

1. **Environmental stewardship**: conserving natural resources, reducing waste, and mitigating climate change
2. **Social justice**: promoting equality, fairness, and compassion in human societies
3. **Economic sustainability**: adopting circular economies and responsible consumption patterns
4. **Personal growth**: cultivating mindfulness, empathy, and self-awareness
5. **Global citizenship**: recognizing our shared humanity and responsibility towards the planet

CONCLUSION

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam offers a powerful vision for living in harmony with nature and each other. By embracing this philosophy, we can:

1. Recognize our place within the natural world
2. Cultivate empathy and compassion for all living beings
3. Adopt sustainable practices and lifestyles
4. Foster global cooperation and understanding

In essence, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam reminds us that our individual well-being is inextricably linked to the well-being of the world around us. By embracing this ancient wisdom, we can create a more harmonious, equitable, and thriving world for all.

Balanced diets

Traditional Indian diets include a variety of food groups like grains, vegetables, legumes, and spices, along with lots of medicinal herbs and spices.

Traditional Indian diets, also known as Ayurvedic diets, have been revered for centuries for their emphasis on balance, variety, and holistic well-being. These diets typically comprise a diverse array of food groups, carefully selected to nourish both body and mind.

Key Components:

1. **Grains**: Whole grains like rice, wheat, barley, and millets provide fiber, carbohydrates, and essential nutrients.
2. **Vegetables:** A colorful range of vegetables, including leafy greens, root vegetables, and cruciferous vegetables, offer vital vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
3. **Legumes**: Lentils, chickpeas, and beans are rich in protein, fiber, and minerals, making them a staple in Indian cuisine.
4. **Spices and Herbs**: Turmeric, cumin, coriander, ginger, and cinnamon are used not only for flavor but also for their medicinal properties.
5. **Dairy and Fats**: Ghee (clarified butter), milk, yogurt, and oils like coconut and sesame provide essential fatty acids and nutrients.
6. **Fruits and Nuts**: Fresh fruits, nuts, and seeds offer vital vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats.

Medicinal Herbs and Spices:

1. **Turmeric**: Anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.
2. **Ginger**: Digestive aid and anti-inflammatory.
3. **Cumin**: Digestive aid and immune booster.
4. **Coriander**: Digestive aid and antioxidant.
5. **Ashwagandha**: Stress relief and adaptogenic properties.
6. **Triphala**: Digestive aid and detoxifier.

Principles of Ayurvedic Dietetics:

1. **Seasonal Eating**: Consuming seasonal produce to align with nature's rhythms.
2. **Individual Constitution**: Tailoring diets to individual doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha).
3. **Balance of Six Tastes**: Incorporating sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent flavors.
4. **Eating with Awareness**: Savoring food, eating mindfully, and avoiding overeating.

Benefits:

1. **Improved Digestion**: Balanced gut health and reduced digestive issues.
2. **Boosted Immunity**: Enhanced resistance to diseases.
3. **Weight Management**: Sustainable weight loss and maintenance.
4. **Mental Clarity**: Improved focus, concentration, and mood.
5. **Overall Well-being**: Enhanced physical, mental, and emotional health.

Incorporating Ayurvedic Principles:

1. Consult with an Ayurvedic practitioner or registered dietitian.
2. Start with small changes, incorporating new foods and spices gradually.
3. Experiment with traditional Indian recipes.
4. Focus on whole, unprocessed foods.
5. Practice mindful eating and self-care.

By embracing the principles of traditional Indian diets, individuals can cultivate a deeper connection with their body, mind, and environment, leading to optimal health and well-being.

Vegetarian and plant-based options

These options reduce carbon footprints and offer many flavorful choices.

Agricultural practices

India's agricultural practices include crop rotation, using cow dung as manure, and celebrating agricultural festivals.

India's agricultural practices are deeply rooted in tradition, sustainability, and cultural significance. Here's an overview:

Traditional Practices:

1. **Crop Rotation**: Rotating crops to maintain soil fertility, reduce pests, and promote biodiversity.
2. **Organic Manuring**: Using cow dung (gobar), compost, and green manure to enrich soil.
3. **Mulching**: Retaining moisture and suppressing weeds with organic mulch.
4. **Intercropping**: Growing multiple crops together to maximize space and resources.

Cow-Based Agriculture:

1. **Cow Dung Manure**: Utilizing cow dung as fertilizer and pesticide.
2. **Urine-Based Pesticides**: Using cow urine as a natural pesticide.
3. **Oxen for Plowing**: Employing oxen for plowing and transportation.

Agricultural Festivals:

1. **Makar Sankranti**: Celebrating the harvest season and new beginnings.
2. **Pongal**: Honoring the sun god and agricultural prosperity.
3. **Baisakhi**: Marking the beginning of the harvest season.
4. **Navaratri**: Celebrating the nine divine nights of agricultural growth.

Benefits:

1. **Soil Conservation**: Traditional practices help maintain soil health.
2. **Biodiversity**: Crop rotation and intercropping promote biodiversity.
3. **Water Conservation**: Mulching and organic farming reduce water usage.
4. **Climate Resilience**: Sustainable agriculture helps mitigate climate change.
5. **Cultural Preservation**: Agricultural festivals preserve India's cultural heritage.

Challenges:

1. **Climate Change**: Rising temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns.
2. **Water Scarcity**: Insufficient water resources for irrigation.
3. **Soil Degradation**: Intensive farming practices harm soil health.
4. **Market Fluctuations**: Unstable market prices affect farmers' livelihoods.

Future Directions:

1. **Integrated Farming Systems**: Combining traditional and modern practices.
2. **Precision Agriculture**: Leveraging technology for efficient farming.
3. **Organic Farming**: Promoting chemical-free agriculture.
4. **Farmers' Empowerment**: Enhancing farmers' knowledge and skills.

India's agricultural practices blend tradition, sustainability, and innovation. By building on these strengths and addressing challenges, India can ensure a food-secure future.

Recycling and upcycling

Recycling and upcycling have been integral to Indian culture for centuries, reflecting the country's resourceful and sustainable lifestyle.

Traditional Practices:

1. **Raddi** (rag-picking): Collecting and reusing old clothes, fabric scraps, and paper.
2. **Kabaad** (scrap) collection: Gathering metal, plastic, and glass waste for recycling.
3. **Jugaad** (improvisation): Finding creative solutions to reuse and repurpose materials.

Textile Upcycling:

1. **Rug-making**: Transforming old clothes into colorful rugs and mats.
2. **Quilting**: Stitching together fabric scraps to create warm blankets.
3. **Bag-making**: Upcycling old clothes into reusable bags.

Home Decor Upcycling:

1. **Pottery repurposing**: Turning broken pots into planters, vases, or decorative items.
2. **Wooden crate reuse**: Converting crates into shelves, tables, or storage units.
3. **Metal crafting**: Transforming scrap metal into decorative items or utensils.

Festive Upcycling:

1. **Diwali lanterns**: Creating lanterns from recycled paper, cloth, or metal.
2. **Ganesh Chaturthi decorations**: Upcycling materials for eco-friendly decorations.

Inspirational Examples:

1. **Gond artists**: Transforming waste materials into vibrant artwork.
2. **Bengal's Kantha embroidery**: Stitching together old fabric scraps to create beautiful quilts.
3. **Rajasthan's Bagru printing**: Upcycling old clothes into colorful textiles.

Benefits:

1. Reduces waste and promotes sustainability.
2. Conserves natural resources.
3. Encourages creativity and resourcefulness.
4. Supports local artisans and communities.

Indian Philosophy:

1. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (3Rs) aligns with Indian values of simplicity and minimalism.
2. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) promotes waste management and recycling.
   India's rich cultural heritage of recycling and upcycling serves as a model for sustainable living, inspiring a new generation to adopt eco-friendly practices.

Renewable energy sources

India uses renewable energy sources and local materials for food production, storage, and processing. Renewable energy sources have been an integral part of Indian culture for centuries, reflecting the country's commitment to sustainability and environmental harmony.

Traditional Renewable Energy Sources:

1. **Solar Energy**: Ancient Indian architecture incorporated solar design, maximizing natural light and heat.
2. **Wind Energy**: Windmills (called "jhoola" or "charkhi") were used for irrigation and grinding grain.
3. **Hydro Energy**: Ancient Indians harnessed river water for irrigation and power.
4. **Biomass Energy**: Agricultural waste was used for cooking and heating.
5. **Geothermal Energy**: Natural hot springs were used for heating and medicinal purposes.

Inspirational Examples:

1. Ancient Indian text, Rigveda, describes solar-powered chariots.
2. The iconic Jal Mandir temple in Rajasthan uses solar reflection for lighting.
3. Traditional Indian homes (called "vastu") incorporate natural ventilation and cooling.
4. India's first wind farm was established in Tamil Nadu in 1993.

Cultural Significance:

1. Diwali, the festival of lights, symbolizes victory over darkness, promoting solar energy.
2. Hindu scriptures emphasize environmental conservation and sustainability.
3. Ancient Indian philosophy, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (one world family), encourages global cooperation for environmental protection.

Benefits:

1. Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.
2. Enhances energy security and independence.
3. Creates jobs and stimulates local economies.
4. Preserves natural resources for future generations.

India's rich cultural heritage and commitment to renewable energy sources serve as a model for sustainable development.

Reducing food waste

Reducing food waste is deeply ingrained in traditional Indian culture, reflecting the country's values of resourcefulness, compassion, and sustainability.

Traditional Practices:

1. **Sharing excess food**: Distributing leftover food to family, friends, and neighbors.
2. **Food reuse**: Repurposing excess food into new dishes, like converting yesterday's rice into today's breakfast.
3. **Composting**: Turning food waste into nutrient-rich fertilizer for gardens.
4. **Gifting food**: Offering food to those in need, especially during festivals and special occasions.

Cultural Significance:

1. **Anna Danam**: The act of sharing food is considered a sacred duty in Hinduism.
2. **Seva**: Selfless service, including food sharing, is a core principle in Sikhism.
3. **Zakat**: Muslims donate excess food to the needy during Ramadan.
4. **Ahimsa:** Jains emphasize minimizing waste and sharing resources.

Inspirational Examples:

1. **Langar:** Sikh community kitchens provide free meals to all, regardless of background.
2. **Annakshetra**: Hindu temples distribute free food to the needy.
3. **Food banks**: Organizations collect and distribute excess food to those in need.
4. **Mid-day meal programs**: Government initiatives provide meals to underprivileged children.

Benefits:

1. Reduces food waste and environmental impact.
2. Supports food security and sustainability.
3. Fosters community bonding and social responsibility.
4. Promotes cultural values and traditions.

Indian Proverbs:

1. "Atithi devo bhava" (Guest is God) emphasizes sharing food with others.
2. "Roti, kapda, makaan" (Food, clothing, shelter) highlights basic needs.

Reusing things

Reusing things is also deeply ingrained in traditional Indian culture, reflecting the country's values of resourcefulness, sustainability, and minimalism.

Traditional Practices:

1. **Repurposing old clothes**: Transforming old clothes into new items like quilts, rugs, or bags.
2. **Reusing containers**: Using metal, clay, or wooden containers for storing food, water, or other household items.
3. **Reviving furniture**: Repairing and repainting furniture to extend its lifespan.
4. **Sharing tools**: Sharing tools and equipment among neighbors and community members.
5. **Composting**: Turning organic waste into fertilizer for gardens.

Selling off items

In India, selling off items to scrap dealers for recycling is a common practice, known as "kabaadi" or "raddi" collection. This practice promotes sustainability, reduces waste, and generates income.

Types of items sold:

1. Old clothes (for rag-picking or recycling)
2. Newspapers, magazines, and cardboard (for paper recycling)
3. Utensils, metal scraps, and broken appliances (for metal recycling)

4. Glass bottles and containers (for glass recycling)
5. Electronic waste (e-waste) like old phones, computers, and televisions.

Benefits:

1. Reduces waste and clutter in homes
2. Generates income for individuals and families
3. Conserves natural resources by recycling materials
4. Supports sustainable livelihoods for scrap dealers and recyclers
5. Helps reduce pollution and environmental impact

Scrap dealers' role:

1. Collecting items from households, offices, and markets
2. Sorting and categorizing materials for recycling
3. Selling materials to recycling units or manufacturers
4. Providing employment opportunities for marginalized communities

Digital platforms:

1. Online marketplaces for selling second-hand items
2. Mobile apps for scrap collection and recycling
3. Social media groups for exchanging or selling items

Inspirational examples:

1. Kabaadiwalla Connect (Chennai-based initiative)
2. Raddi Connect (Mumbai-based startup)
3. Scrapyard - The Recycling Hub (Delhi-based initiative)

Statistics:

1. India recycles 30% of its waste (Source: MoEFCC)
2. Informal recycling sector employs 4 million people (Source: ILO)
3. Recycling industry worth ₹40,000 crores (Source: FICCI)

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ETHICAL CRISES AND FUTURE ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC LIFE IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has significantly transformed public life by increasing economic integration, political interdependence, technological advancement, and global communication. While it has created new opportunities for development and cooperation, it has also generated serious ethical crises in public life. Corruption, corporate influence on public policy, growing social and economic inequality, decline in transparency, and weakening of accountability have eroded public trust in public institutions. Market-oriented governance and global economic pressures often shift priorities away from public welfare, creating ethical conflicts.

At the same time, globalization presents important future ethical challenges. The use of artificial intelligence and digital surveillance in governance raises concerns about privacy, fairness, and accountability. Climate change governance, global migration, and the spread of misinformation further complicate ethical decision-making in public life. This paper examines both present ethical crises and future ethical challenges in public life under globalization and highlights the need for ethical leadership, transparent institutions, strong accountability mechanisms, and active citizen participation to sustain democracy, social justice, and sustainable development in a globalized world.

Keywords: *Globalization, Public Life, Ethics, Ethical Crises, Governance, Accountability, Transparency, Corporate Influence, Social Inequality, Future Ethical Challenges*

INTRODUCTION:

Globalization has brought profound changes to public life by increasing economic integration, technological connectivity, and political interdependence across nations. Public life, which includes governance, public administration, political leadership, media, and civil society, plays a crucial role in shaping societal development. Ethics in public life ensures that power is exercised responsibly, decisions are taken in the public interest, and democratic values are upheld. However, the forces of globalization have also intensified ethical challenges such as corruption, corporate influence on policy-making, growing social and economic inequality, declining transparency, and weakening accountability. These ethical crises have significantly eroded public trust in public institutions. In addition, emerging developments such as artificial intelligence, digital surveillance, climate change governance, and global migration present complex future ethical challenges. Therefore, examining ethical crises and future challenges in public life within the context of globalization is both timely and necessary.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To examine the concept of ethics in public life within the context of globalization.
2. To analyze the major ethical crises affecting public life in the era of globalization.
3. To study the impact of globalization on governance, accountability, and public trust.
4. To identify emerging and future ethical challenges in public life.

5. To evaluate the role of ethical leadership and institutions in addressing ethical issues.
6. To suggest measures for strengthening ethical values and good governance in public life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Existing literature highlights that globalization has significantly influenced ethics in public life by reshaping governance structures and accountability mechanisms. Scholars emphasize that increased corporate influence, market-oriented reforms, and transnational governance have intensified ethical crises such as corruption, inequality, and erosion of public trust. Studies also note emerging ethical concerns related to digital governance, data privacy, and environmental responsibility. Overall, the literature stresses the importance of ethical leadership, transparent institutions, and strong regulatory frameworks to address current and future ethical challenges in public life.

METHODOLOGY:

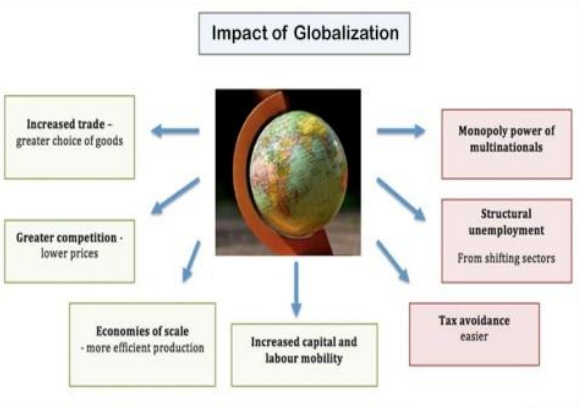
The study is based on a qualitative and descriptive research approach. Secondary data have been collected from books, research journals, government reports, and credible online sources. Content analysis is used to examine ethical crises and future ethical challenges in public life in the context of globalization.

Concept of Globalization and Public Life :

Globalization can be understood as the process through which economies, societies, cultures, and political systems become increasingly interconnected and interdependent. It involves free movement of goods, capital, technology, information, and sometimes labor across national borders.

Public life in the era of globalization is no longer limited to the nation-state. Decisions taken by global corporations, international organizations, and transnational networks often influence national policies and local communities. This shift has altered the ethical responsibilities of public institutions and leaders.

In traditional governance systems, accountability was largely national and local. Under globalization, ethical responsibility has become more complex due to shared authority, global markets, and international pressures. As a result, public life faces ethical dilemmas that require both national integrity and global moral responsibility.



Importance of Ethics in Public Life:

Ethics is the foundation of public life. It ensures legitimacy, justice, and trust in governance. In the era of globalization, ethics has become even more important due to the following reasons:

1. **Protection of Public Interest:** Ethics ensures that decisions serve citizens rather than private or corporate interests.
2. **Trust in Institutions:** Ethical conduct strengthens citizens' confidence in public institutions.
3. **Democratic Stability:** Ethical governance prevents abuse of power and authoritarian tendencies.

4. **Social Justice:** Ethics promotes fairness, equality, and inclusion in policy-making.
5. **Global Responsibility:** Ethics guides states and institutions to act responsibly in global affairs.

Without ethical standards, globalization can increase exploitation, inequality, and injustice.

Analysis:

Ethics in public life refers to the moral principles and values that guide the conduct of individuals and institutions responsible for governance and public service. In the context of globalization, the concept of ethics has become more complex due to increased economic integration, technological advancement, and the growing influence of global actors on national decision-making. Globalization has expanded opportunities for development but has also created ethical dilemmas by prioritizing market efficiency and competitiveness over public welfare. As a result, ethical decision-making in public life increasingly requires balancing global pressures with local responsibilities and social justice.

The major ethical crises affecting public life in the era of globalization include corruption, abuse of power, corporate influence on public policy, and widening social and economic inequality. Complex financial systems and transnational networks have made corruption more difficult to control, while powerful corporate interests often influence policy-making at the expense of public interest. These ethical failures weaken democratic institutions and reduce the credibility of governance systems.

Globalization has also significantly impacted governance, accountability, and public trust. While new technologies and global best practices have improved administrative efficiency, they have also reduced transparency in certain areas. Decision-making processes have become more centralized and distant from citizens, leading to a decline in accountability and public confidence in institutions.

Emerging and future ethical challenges further complicate public life. The increasing use of artificial intelligence, digital surveillance, and data-driven governance raises serious concerns regarding privacy, fairness, and accountability. Additionally, global issues such as climate change, migration, and misinformation require ethical responses that go beyond national boundaries.

Ethical leadership and strong institutions play a critical role in addressing these challenges. Leaders guided by integrity, transparency, and public service values can strengthen ethical governance. Institutional mechanisms such as independent oversight bodies, ethical codes, and legal frameworks are essential for maintaining accountability.

Finally, strengthening ethical values in public life requires ethical education, transparent governance practices, active citizen participation, and responsible use of technology. Together, these measures can promote good governance and restore public trust in a globalized world.

Measures to Address Ethical Crises and Future Challenges:

1. Ethical education and value-based training
2. Strong legal and institutional frameworks

3. Transparent and accountable e-governance
4. Regulation of corporate influence
5. Ethical use of technology
6. Global cooperation based on shared moral values
7. Leadership by ethical example

Future Ethical Challenges in Public Life:

Artificial Intelligence and Automated Decision-Making

The use of artificial intelligence in governance raises ethical concerns related to transparency, accountability, bias, and loss of human judgment. Ensuring fairness and moral responsibility in automated systems will be a major future challenge.

Data Privacy and Digital Surveillance

Digital governance relies on large-scale data collection. While data improves efficiency, it also threatens privacy and individual freedom. Misuse of surveillance technologies can lead to authoritarian control, making ethical regulation essential.

Climate Change and Environmental Ethics

Globalization has accelerated environmental degradation. Ethical questions arise regarding responsibility, sustainability, and intergenerational justice. Public life must address climate change through ethical policies that balance development and environmental protection.

Global Migration and Human Rights

Global migration due to conflict, poverty, and climate change raises ethical challenges related to human dignity, inclusion, and social cohesion. Public institutions must protect migrant rights while maintaining social stability.

Crisis of Ethical Leadership

Future public life risks a decline in ethical leadership due to populism, short-term political gains, and media pressure. Ethical leadership grounded in values and public service will be crucial to guide societies through global uncertainty

Ethical Crises in Public Life in the Era of Globalization:

Corruption and Abuse of Power

Corruption remains one of the most serious ethical crises in public life. Globalized financial systems, offshore accounts, and weak regulatory mechanisms have made corruption more complex and transnational. Abuse of power by public officials for personal or political gain undermines democracy and public trust.

Corporate Influence on Public Policy

Global corporations exert significant influence on public policies through lobbying, political funding, and economic pressure. While private investment is essential for development, excessive corporate influence often prioritizes profit over public welfare, environmental protection, and labor rights. This creates ethical conflicts between private interests and the common good.

Growing Social and Economic Inequality

Globalization has generated economic growth, but its benefits are unevenly distributed. The widening gap between rich and poor represents a major ethical crisis. Public institutions often fail to ensure equitable distribution of resources, leading to social exclusion and injustice.

Decline of Transparency and Accountability

Complex global governance structures and public-private partnerships often reduce transparency. Decision-making processes become distant from citizens, weakening democratic accountability. Lack of transparency encourages unethical practices and erodes public confidence.

Ethical Challenges in Media and Information

Digital globalization has revolutionized communication. However, misinformation, fake news, sensationalism, and political manipulation through media platforms distort public opinion. Ethical standards in journalism and public communication are increasingly compromised.

Ethical Challenges in Public Administration:

Public administrators face increasing ethical pressure due to globalization. They must balance efficiency with social justice, economic growth with public welfare, and political demands with professional integrity. Market-oriented reforms, privatization, and international commitments often create conflicts between ethical responsibility and institutional constraints.

Government Policy:

Government policy refers to the principles, laws, and actions formulated by the government to regulate society and promote public welfare. In the context of ethics in public life, government policies aim to ensure transparency, accountability, integrity, and good governance. Under globalization, policies are increasingly influenced by international agreements, economic competition, and technological change. Ethical government policies seek to balance economic development with social justice, protect citizens' rights, reduce corruption, and regulate corporate influence. Effective implementation of ethical policies strengthens public trust, democratic institutions, and responsible governance in a globalized world.

CONCLUSION:

Globalization has profoundly transformed public life by creating new opportunities for economic growth, technological progress, and global cooperation. However, it has also intensified ethical crises such as corruption, corporate influence, social and economic inequality, and declining transparency in governance. These challenges have weakened public trust in institutions and raised serious concerns about accountability and democratic values. At the same time, emerging developments such as artificial intelligence, digital surveillance, climate change, and global migration present complex ethical challenges for the future. Addressing these issues requires a strong ethical foundation in public life. Ethical leadership, transparent institutions, effective legal frameworks, and active citizen participation are essential to ensure responsible governance. Government policies must prioritize public interest, social justice, and sustainability over narrow economic gains. Strengthening ethical values in public life is crucial for preserving democracy, promoting social harmony, and achieving sustainable development in an increasingly globalized world.

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Research Paper Competition for Teachers

KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND THE MAKING OF TRUTH: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between knowledge, power, and truth has become a central theme in contemporary social theory and interdisciplinary research. This study explores how knowledge systems are shaped by social, political, and institutional structures and how these systems influence the construction of truth within society. The study argues that knowledge is not merely an objective representation of reality but is produced within networks of power that shape social discourse and institutional practices. The paper also investigates how contemporary digital technologies and global communication networks influence the production and dissemination of knowledge. Through an interdisciplinary theoretical analysis, the research demonstrates that truth is often constructed through institutional authority, cultural norms, and discursive practices rather than purely empirical observation. The findings highlight the importance of critical inquiry, intellectual autonomy, and transparent knowledge systems in democratic societies. Understanding the dynamic relationship between knowledge and power is essential for addressing issues related to misinformation, epistemic inequality, and digital governance in the modern world.

KEYWORDS: *Knowledge, Power, Truth, Discourse, Epistemology, Interdisciplinary Studies.*

1. INTRODUCTION

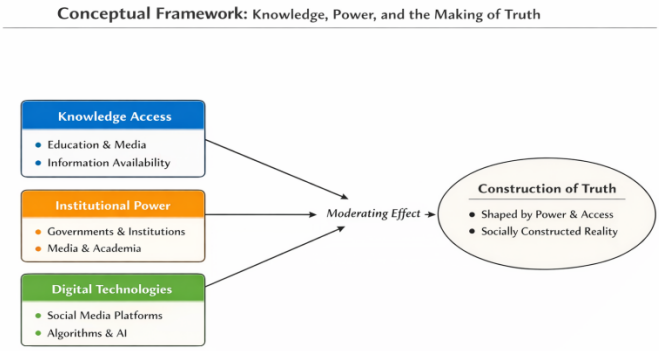
Knowledge has long been considered a foundation of social organization and intellectual development. Across disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and political science, scholars have examined how knowledge systems shape human understanding and influence social institutions. However, knowledge production does not occur in isolation; it is embedded within structures of power that determine which ideas are legitimized and which are marginalized.

The concept of the relationship between knowledge and power was extensively developed by Michel Foucault, who argued that knowledge and power are mutually reinforcing forces that shape social realities. According to Foucault, knowledge cannot be separated from power relations because institutions that produce knowledge—such as universities, governments, and scientific communities—also exercise authority over the interpretation of truth.

In this context, truth is not simply discovered but constructed through discourse, institutional practices, and historical conditions. This perspective challenges traditional views of knowledge as purely objective and emphasizes the role of social processes in shaping intellectual frameworks.

The purpose of this study is to examine how knowledge systems interact with power structures to shape the construction of truth in contemporary society.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between **knowledge access, institutional power, and digital technologies** in shaping the **construction of truth** in contemporary society. The framework is interdisciplinary and integrates perspectives from sociology, media studies, and information studies.

The diagram contains **three independent variables** placed on the left side:

1 Knowledge Access

This variable represents individuals' ability to obtain information through education systems, media sources, and the availability of knowledge resources. Access to knowledge enables individuals to interpret information, form opinions, and participate in social discourse. Increased access to information contributes to broader awareness and understanding of social realities.

2 Institutional Power

Institutional power refers to the influence of organizations such as governments, universities, media institutions, and research bodies in shaping knowledge production. These institutions play a crucial role in determining which forms of knowledge are recognized as legitimate and credible. Through policies, discourse, and authority, institutions regulate the dissemination of information and influence public perception of truth.

3 Digital Technologies

Digital technologies include social media platforms, search engines, algorithms, and artificial intelligence systems that facilitate information exchange. These technologies influence how knowledge is accessed, filtered, and distributed. They also shape public discourse by determining which information becomes visible or widely accepted in digital environments.

In the framework, **arrows connect these three variables to the central dependent variable**, indicating that they collectively influence the process of truth formation.

Dependent Variable

Construction of Truth

The dependent variable represents how truth is socially formed and interpreted. The framework suggests that truth is not simply objective but is shaped by access to information, institutional authority, and digital communication systems. The interaction of these factors creates a socially constructed understanding of reality within society.

Moderating Effect

The diagram also highlights a **moderating effect**, where digital technologies influence the relationship between knowledge access, institutional power, and truth formation. Digital platforms amplify information flows, shape narratives, and affect how individuals evaluate and interpret knowledge.

Overall Interpretation

The conceptual framework demonstrates that **truth emerges from the interaction between knowledge availability, institutional authority, and technological mediation**. By analyzing these relationships, the study aims to understand how knowledge systems and power structures influence the production and acceptance of truth in modern societies.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between knowledge, power, and truth has long been a central concern in social and philosophical research. Contemporary studies continue to draw heavily on the theoretical framework of Michel Foucault, who argued that knowledge and power are mutually constitutive and that truth is produced within specific social and institutional contexts. According to this perspective, knowledge is not purely objective but is shaped by discursive practices and power relations that define what societies accept as truth (Nwadinihu, 2025).

Recent interdisciplinary scholarship highlights the importance of discourse in shaping knowledge production. Discourse, in Foucauldian terms, refers not only to language but also to the broader systems of practices and institutional structures through which knowledge is produced and legitimized. Through these discourses, societies determine what counts as legitimate knowledge and who has the authority to produce it (Ali, Liaqat, & Ali, 2024).

Several studies published after 2020 have expanded the Foucauldian framework to examine how knowledge operates within modern institutions such as education systems, medical institutions, and legal structures. These institutions play a critical role in constructing social norms and shaping individuals' identities by defining categories such as normality, deviance, and expertise. As a result, institutional authority often determines which forms of knowledge become dominant in society (Poorghorban, 2023).

Contemporary sociological research also emphasizes that power should not be understood solely as domination or repression. Instead, power is embedded in social relationships and practices that simultaneously constrain and enable individuals. From this perspective, knowledge production is a dynamic process influenced by both structural power and individual agency. This interpretation suggests that truth is continually negotiated through social interactions and institutional frameworks rather than being a fixed or universal reality (Haugaard, 2022).

Recent scholarship further highlights the role of **strategic ignorance** in the production of knowledge and power. While traditional studies focus on how knowledge provides power, new research argues that the deliberate avoidance or withholding of information can also serve as a powerful strategy in hierarchical systems. Individuals or institutions may maintain authority by controlling access to information or by ignoring inconvenient knowledge that challenges existing power structures (McGoey & colleagues, 2024).

Another important development in the literature is the examination of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in shaping contemporary regimes of truth. In the digital era, knowledge production is increasingly mediated by algorithms, data systems, and digital platforms. Technology companies and algorithmic systems influence what information is visible, credible, and widely accepted, effectively acting as new epistemic authorities in society. These systems can shape public discourse and influence how truth is constructed and disseminated in the digital information environment (Munn, Magee, & Arora, 2023; Torkestani & Mansouri, 2025). Interdisciplinary studies in science and technology studies (STS), ethics, and social sciences further emphasize that knowledge systems embedded in artificial intelligence and data infrastructures can reproduce existing power inequalities. Researchers argue that algorithmic decision-making processes often reflect the biases and priorities of the institutions that design them, thereby reinforcing dominant power structures. Consequently, scholars advocate for inclusive data governance, transparency, and ethical oversight to ensure that technological knowledge systems do not marginalize vulnerable groups (Weinberg, 2022).

Overall, the literature from 2020 to 2025 demonstrates that the relationship between knowledge, power, and truth remains highly relevant in contemporary interdisciplinary research.

Scholars increasingly emphasize that truth is not merely discovered but is socially constructed through networks of institutions, technologies, and discursive practices. By examining these dynamics across different fields—including sociology, philosophy, digital studies, and political theory—researchers provide deeper insights into how knowledge systems shape societal structures and influence the formation of truth in modern societies.

4) HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

A **hypothesis** can be described as a preliminary assumption or proposed explanation developed to clarify a particular phenomenon or to predict the relationship between two or more variables. It is generally formulated after reviewing existing theories, observations, or previous research findings. The purpose of a hypothesis is to provide a clear direction for investigation so that it can be examined and verified using empirical data and appropriate statistical techniques.

Based on the topic, the following hypotheses are proposed for empirical examination:
Hypothesis
H_0 (Null Hypothesis): Digital technologies and online platforms do not significantly improve access to knowledge and information.
H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Digital technologies and online platforms significantly improve access to knowledge and information.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In simple terms, research methodology explains **how the research is carried out** and why specific methods are chosen for the investigation. It ensures that the study is conducted in a logical, scientific, and reliable manner, enabling the researcher to draw valid conclusions from the collected data. By following an appropriate research methodology, researchers can maintain accuracy, consistency, and credibility in their findings.

5.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the interaction between knowledge production, power relations, institutional authority, and discourse in shaping truth.

5.2 Sources of Data

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Primary Data

Primary data for the study were collected using a **structured questionnaire** designed to obtain respondents' perceptions and opinions regarding the research topic. The questionnaire included a set of carefully formulated questions and statements based on the objectives of the study. Most of the questions were measured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, which allowed respondents to express their level of agreement with each statement. The use of a structured questionnaire ensured uniformity in responses and helped in collecting reliable and quantifiable data from the selected participants.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were gathered from various **academic and scholarly sources** to support the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the research. These sources included **research articles, books, academic journals, conference papers, and online academic databases**. Secondary data helped in understanding existing theories, reviewing previous studies, and developing the conceptual framework of the research. The use of secondary sources also provided a strong foundation for interpreting the primary data collected during the study.

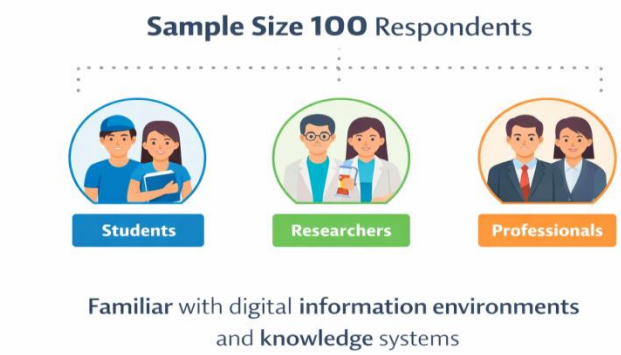
5.3 Sampling Design

The study employs a **convenience sampling technique**, which allows the researcher to collect data from

5.4 Sample Size-

For the purpose of this study, a sample of **100 respondents** was selected. The respondents include students, researchers, and professionals who are familiar with digital information environments and knowledge systems.

Figure 1- Conceptual Framework



5.5 Digital Technologies and the Transformation of Truth

The rise of digital communication technologies has significantly altered the dynamics of knowledge production. Social media platforms allow individuals to share information globally, challenging traditional authorities such as academic institutions and news organizations.

However, digital environments also create new challenges, including:

- misinformation and fake news
- algorithmic manipulation
- information overload
- declining trust in institutional knowledge

These developments highlight the need for stronger digital literacy and ethical information governance.

6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1 Access Digital Platforms

Table 1-

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
I regularly access digital platforms to obtain knowledge and information	4	6	15	45	30	100
Digital technologies have improved access to knowledge resources	3	5	20	42	30	100
Online platforms help individuals share knowledge more easily	2	8	18	46	26	100

Interpretation

The table indicates that a majority of respondents agree that digital platforms have improved access to knowledge. Around 75–80% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, showing that digital technologies play a significant role in knowledge dissemination.

2 Knowledge and Social Understanding

Table 2-

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Knowledge helps individuals understand social realities better	3	5	12	50	30	100
Educational institutions influence the knowledge people accept as true	4	7	20	42	27	100
Research and scientific studies shape public understanding of truth	5	8	18	44	25	100

Interpretation

The results reveal that most respondents believe knowledge plays an important role in shaping social understanding. Nearly **70–80% of participants agree** that institutions such as universities and research organizations influence the knowledge that people accept as truth.

3 Power Structures and Knowledge

Table 3-

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Governments influence the dissemination of information in society	6	10	20	40	24	100
Media organizations shape public perception of truth	5	9	18	45	23	100
Institutional authority determines which knowledge becomes widely accepted	7	11	22	38	22	100

Interpretation

The data show that respondents recognize the role of power structures in knowledge dissemination. A large proportion of participants agree that government institutions and media organizations influence how knowledge and truth are communicated to the public.

4 Digital Information Environment

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Digital platforms provide faster access to information	2	6	14	48	30	100
Misinformation can spread quickly through digital media	3	5	12	44	36	100
It is important to verify information obtained from online sources	2	4	10	46	38	100

Interpretation

The table indicates that respondents strongly recognize the role of digital platforms in information dissemination. A large majority also acknowledge the risk of **misinformation and emphasize the importance of verifying online information**.

Hypothesis testing table (H1–H5 acceptance/rejection)
Percentage, Mean Score and Rank Analysis

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean Score	Rank
I regularly access digital platforms to obtain knowledge and information	4	6	15	45	30	3.91	I
Digital technologies have improved access to knowledge resources	3	5	20	42	30	3.91	I
Online platforms help individuals share knowledge more easily	2	8	18	46	26	3.86	II

Mean Score = 391 / 100 = **3.91**

Interpretation

The table shows that the statements "I regularly access digital platforms to obtain knowledge and information" and "Digital technologies have improved access to knowledge resources" obtained the highest mean score of 3.91 and ranked first, indicating strong agreement among respondents regarding the importance of digital technologies in accessing knowledge.

The statement **"Online platforms help individuals share knowledge more easily"** received a **mean score of 3.86 and ranked second**, suggesting that respondents also agree that online platforms facilitate knowledge sharing, though slightly less strongly compared to the other statements.

Overall, the analysis indicates that **digital technologies and online platforms play a significant role in enhancing knowledge accessibility and information sharing.**

Result of Hypothesis Testing

Since the mean scores (3.86–3.91) are greater than 3, the respondents show agreement with the statements.

Therefore:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected**
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted**

This indicates that digital technologies and online platforms significantly enhance access to knowledge and support knowledge sharing among individuals**.**

8. CONCLUSION

This study highlights that knowledge and truth are not purely objective constructs but are shaped by complex interactions between social institutions, political authority, and communication systems. The concept of power/knowledge provides an important framework for understanding how truth is constructed and contested in modern societies.

In an era characterized by rapid technological change and information abundance, critical awareness of knowledge systems is essential for promoting transparency, democratic discourse, and intellectual freedom. Future research should explore how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data influence knowledge production and the formation of truth.

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HIDDEN PERSUASION IN TOBACCO MARKETING: SURROGATE ADVERTISING, DARK PATTERNS, AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN INDIAN PUBLIC LIFE

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ABSTRACT

While there are laws such as the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, to curb this, India has over 267 million tobacco users and is still the second largest producer of tobacco in the world. In this paper, we critically analyse two less researched forms of tobacco industry advertising regulation circumvention surrogate advertising and digital dark patterns. The research investigates adolescent susceptibility, misleading digital interfaces in tobacco-related advertising, the prevalence and types of surrogate advertising, and regulatory gaps. Method A mixed method design was employed, utilizing secondary data analysis (content analysis of advertising, policy documentation, WHO [World Health Organization] publications, judgments from 2003-2024) and primary data from a structured survey of 480 participants from India, aged 18-35. Results 64% of digital platforms adopted dark pattern tactics, and 78.3% of youth associated surrogate product with parent tobacco brand. Regression analysis Health literacy and sensitivity to surrogate branding were significantly negatively correlated ($r = -0.61$, $p < 0.01$). The report reveals major regulatory gaps in cross-border advertising, influencer marketing and digital platforms. The paper advocates a Tripartite Ethical Governance Model (TEGM) comprising behavioural, technical and legislative measures. By categorizing different types of dark patterns and providing evidence based recommendations for regulatory reforms, these contributions advance marketing ethics, public health policy, and digital governance.

Keywords : *Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, Surrogate advertising, Dark Patterns, Tobacco.*

1. INTRODUCTION

India is the second largest producer of tobacco products in the world, and tobacco is a leading cause of preventable death worldwide, accounting for 8 million deaths annually (WHO, 2023; Pahari et al., 2023; Theilmann et al., 2022). Tobacco consumption, including smokeless tobacco, is still common in the population despite laws such as the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, which bans direct and indirect advertising and mandates health warnings on packaging (Suchiti Chandra et al., 2021; Freeman et al., 2022). Indirect advertising of tobacco products by displaying tobacco brand names and logos on consumables such as paan masala, cardamom, or mouth fresheners increases brand recall among youth and indirectly promotes its use (Root et al., 2021; Kapoor et al., 2021; Katharia, 2025). Brand recognition is boosted and tobacco use is normalized through event sponsorships and celebrity endorsements (Singh & Sharma, 2025; Himanshi & Dahiya, 2024)Dark patterns are intentional user interface designs that influence users to take certain actions, a consequence of the booming growth in digital platforms. Influencer campaigns, false age verification, native advertising and others are exploiting cognitive biases and making consumers more vulnerable (Zahratunnisa et al., 2025; Bongard-Blanchi and Rossi, 2021; Mathur et al., 2021; Narayanan et al.,

2020). Children exposed to social media are more likely to participate in these secret activities, according to a handful of studies (de Haro et al., 2024; Clendennen et al., 2022; Bahl et al., 2023; Kong et al., 2022). The surrogate advertising and dark patterns are still emerging concepts in Indian scenario but are commonly found in industry practice; bulk of the research leans towards traditional tobacco control measures such as taxes, packaging, and point of sale regulations (Chengappa & Rao, 2024; Ghose & Datta, 2018). To contribute to the marketing ethics, public health and digital governance discourse, this paper critically analyses the surrogate advertising and digital dark patterns as the instruments to sustain tobacco visibility in India by examining their effects on consumer perception and behaviour as well as by exposing the lacunae in the regulatory framework.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tobacco Marketing Regulation: International- Indian Scenario:

The WHO FCTC (2003), which mandates the implementation of total bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship has been the driver of global tobacco control (Freeman et al., 2022). Research shows that comprehensive TAPS bans lead to a substantial reduction in tobacco use (Wakefield et al., 2010; Henriksen, 2012) and also reduce youth exposure to (Henriksen, 2012) and availability of tobacco through youth access (Wakefield et al., 2006). The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003 brings India in line with these standards, however, there is a lack of uniform enforcement. Industry adaptation strategies, the lack of adequate enforcement, and the existence of loopholes that have allowed for indirect advertising, advertising at points of sale, and advertising through tobacco brand names around banned places often undermine partial bans (Suchiti Chandra et al., 2021; Ghose & Datta, 2018; Freeman et al., 2022).

Surrogate advertising:

Concept and Empirical evidence Surrogate advertising is increasingly being used in India and South Asia as an essential tool to bypass regulations and at the same time to enhance brand visibility and recall among youngsters (Rout et al., 2021; Abin Jose & Roy, 2020). However, indirect advertising persists for the same reason that many consumers can confidently associate surrogate brands with the tobacco products from which they are spun off (Katheria, 2025; Riwaria & Shah, 2024). Celebrity endorsements and event sponsorship (421; 68) strengthen these ties to brand and consumer loyalty. Regional and international studies on surrogate advertising reiterate how it compromises the effectiveness of tobacco control, while continuously taking advantage of regulatory loopholes in the form of brand extensions and indirect marketing (Bhatia & Sarkar, 2023; Kapoor et al. , 2021).

Dark Patterns in Digital Marketing:

Brignull (2010) defined dark patterns as deceptive designs that modify the user's actions and appearance regularly without the user's awareness. A user who is illiterate in digits is likely to be victimized (Zahratunnisa et al, 2025), and their movement in the digital environment confuses them to make decisions and makes them more impulsive (Mathur et al. 2019; Sin et al., 2022).

Tobacco promotion:

Tobacco marketing is nevertheless over-represented on social media and digital platforms (de Haro et al., 2024; Clendennen et al., 2022) and its contributions to the tobacco uptake link to underlying associations between juvenile tobacco uptake and awareness and access to tobacco-related products. Influence marketing and secretly inserting ads are two many things that are enabled through the lack of enforcement on the regulation of the internet (Bahl et al., 2023; Kong et al., 2022).

Views on Tobacco Marketing:

There are ethical concerns relating to tobacco marketing coverage. Tobacco advertising contributes to significant social harm, particularly to marginalized populations (Hajat et al., 2021).

Deontological perspectives on surrogate advertising:

Its inherent dishonesty affecting perception and breaking the transparency barrier. Virtue ethics highlight the organization's responsibility to be transparent and socially responsible, this is often missing from tobacco marketing practices (Ghose & Datta, 2018). From a communitarian perspective, marketing aggressiveness exacerbates public health problems, particularly in developing countries such as India where literacy levels and awareness are deficient (Stead et al., 2016).

3. RESEARCH GAP

The existing literature review on tobacco control in India has certain gaps. Most of the literature on surrogate advertising still focuses on the traditional media, with a dearth of contemporary research on the use of this strategy on digital media or its application directed at young consumers. Investigation in this area has received little attention, and only focus on dark patterns in the context of e-commerce. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, and World Health Organization standards are the centre of tobacco regulatory research, although it often fails to address the challenges of regulating those practices in an online space. Along these lines, literature on teen consumption tends to differentiate complications, not examining how dark patterns, in conjunction with surrogate advertising, works to influence youth. Also, there is lack of synthesis including ethical concerns and influencers participation in promotion of tobacco-related products. On the whole, the academic world has yet to cultivate a lucid and multi-dimensional perspective on how to analyse these new dilemmas.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES - This study incorporates five key objectives.

1. To Identify and classify surrogate advertising strategies adopted by Indian tobacco companies from 2010-2024.
2. To identify and classify digital dark patterns in marketing platforms proximate to the tobacco.
3. To examine the impact of surrogate advertising and digital dark patterns on attitudes and intentions (n=18–35) of young Indian consumers.
4. To develop and test a normative Tripartite Ethical Governance Model (TEGM) for the regulation of tobacco advertising in India.
5. To formulate evidence-based policy suggestions for law reform and regulation with special focus on the 2003 Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA).

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This paper contributes to advancing tobacco control, marketing ethics, and digital governance in India by conceptualising dark-patterns in tobacco marketing, offering empirical evidence of young (18-35 years old) people's vulnerability to surrogate advertising of tobacco, and developing a tripartite model (Tripartite Ethical Governance Model, TEGM) that integrates legal, technological, and behavioral interventions and is both theoretically and practically viable.

6. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES: The hypotheses are as follow:

H1: Effect of Surrogate Advertising on Brand Recall

H_0: Youth tobacco brand recall is not influenced by surrogate advertising to a significant extent.

H1: Youth tobacco brand recall is enhanced significantly by the surrogate advertising.

H2: Influence of digital dark patterns on consumer behavior

H_0: Digital dark patterns do not have a significant effect on consumers of tobacco-related products.

H_1: Digital dark patterns have a significant impact on consumer behavior towards tobacco related products.

H3: Role of health literacy in vulnerability reduction

H_0: There is no association between health literacy and susceptibility to surrogate advertising and digital promotion of tobacco.

H_1: Health literacy is significantly and negatively associated with vulnerability to surrogate advertising and digital promotion of tobacco.

H4: The Effect of Exposure to Social Media on Brand Association

H_0: Social media exposure does not have a significant impact on the association between surrogate products and tobacco brands.

H_1: Social media exposure significantly increases the association between surrogate products and tobacco brands.

H5: Ethics Awareness and Regulation Support

H_0: There is no substantial effect of tobacco marketing ethical considerations on support for tighter regulation.

H_1: Concerns about the ethics of tobacco advertising significantly increase support for stricter regulation.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design - This study applies a convergent mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), integrating quantitative survey data and systematic content analysis in one unified analytical framework. The study is based on the idea of pragmatic pluralism, which supports the use of multiple methods on the basis of their suitability for accomplishing specific research tasks. This approach enables a profound understanding of surrogate advertising and digital dark patterns from behavioral as well as regulatory vantage points.

7.2 Data Sources - The study is based in the primary as well as the secondary data. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 480 respondents across India. The survey consisted questions on demographic profile, media behavior, awareness of brands, perceptions about tobacco brands, exposure to digital dark patterns, and health literacy. Secondary Information Content analysis of advertisements (2018-2024), related regulatory and policy documents (e.g., Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, ASCI guidelines, notifications from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, World Health Organization FCTC reports, the EU Digital Services Act (2022), and the Draft Dark Pattern Guidelines (India, 2023). Supplementary quantitative data was obtained from GATS-2 (2016-17), NFHS-5 (2019-21) and business reports. Secondary Information Content analysis of advertisements (2018–2024), related regulatory and policy documents (e.g., Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, ASCI guidelines, notifications from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, World Health Organization FCTC reports, the EU Digital Services Act (2022), and the Draft Dark Pattern Guidelines (India, 2023). Supplementary quantitative data was obtained from GATS-2 (2016–17), NFHS-5 (2019–21) and business reports.

7.3 Sample Method - This study was using purposive sampling in order to select participants with diverse linguistic and social background from different states of India. The study population was aged 18–35 years, as they are considered to be the most vulnerable group for tobacco advertisement. The survey consisted of a sample size of n = 480, and the questionnaire was pretested among 40 respondents prior to the actual data collection. The validity of the instument was also established with a Cronbach alpha = 0.84 indicating adequate internal consistency .

7.4 Methods of analysis - The research methodology involves qualitative and quantitative methods for analyses. Descriptive and reliability analysis for the questionnaire data for the quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS. The content and quality of advertisements between 2018 and 2024 were reviewed by a systematic coding method. With two independent coders, inter-rater reliability was calculated by using Cohen's kappa ($\kappa = 0.79$), which indicates substantial agreement. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify common themes, narratives and forms of persuasion in the advertising.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

8.1 Surrogate Advertising and Brand Continuity -The results show that the effect of brand is mainly preserved across substitutes. A majority of them (78.3%) indicated alternative products for a particular tobacco brand. This shows high brand recall which can be associated with visual identity features like logos, colors, and fonts. The uniformity across media also suggests that alternative branding is an extension of earlier brand communications.

8.2 Surrogate Advertising and Brand Association Continuity - The findings reveal a strong brand carry over through surrogate products. A large number of respondents, 78.3%, accurately selected surrogate products for the particular tobacco brand. This shows there is a strong recall of the brand which can be linked to visual identity elements like logos, colours and fonts. The consistency across media suggests that surrogate branding is a continuation of earlier brand messages.

8.3 Emergence of Standardized Patterns in Digital Design - The existence of numerous categories of dark patterns highlights the systematized nature of digital marketing interfaces. Paid placements, hidden funding, and confirmshaming mechanisms appeared on numerous sites. These patterns illustrate a design-led approach where the way content is displayed, the interface is organised and the user navigates are predetermined in ways which users simply do not question.

8.4 Impact of Subject-Level Factors (Health Literacy and Awareness) - The response is dependent on health and the awareness of the respondents as according to the results. Lower health literacy was linked to higher saliency, while awareness was associated with more critical processing of the ad. This implies that people vary in their capacity to detect and assess covert ads.

8.5 Correspondence to Theoretical Models (SAMM and DPIM) - The prevailing pattern is consistent with the theoretical construct proposed in the study. The Surrogate Advertising Mechanism Model (SAMM) has proven effective for brand recall through associative memory and by the number of times a message is delivered. The Interface, Temporal and Motivational Components within digital environments-Dark Influence Model (ITM-DPIM) is based on three dimensions (interface, temporal and motivational) and as such it is a three-dimensional model of user engagement.

8.6 Ethical Issues and Consumer Response- The findings highlight key ethical concerns among participants regarding the transparency and fairness of marketing practices**.**The use of surrogate branding and covert advertising tactics raises questions about what the consumers are aware of and who they are. Respondents who are more concerned about ethics tend to support stronger regulation, indicating a link between perceptions and policy preferences.

8.7 Weaknesses in Regulation - In the digital age, the analysis points to shortcomings in existing regulations, particularly with regard to digital media and cross-platform advertising. Traditional COTPA advertising restrictions are poorly applicable to new digital formats. Cross-border issues such as influencer marketing, algorithm-based viewability, and unpatched content are not adequately addressed by the law.

8.8 Synergistic Integration under the TEGM Model - The Tripartite Ethical Governance Model (TEGM) provides a comprehensive lens through which these results can be viewed. The legal-regulatory, techno-platform, and behaviour-educative subsystems that matched under the overarching category stemming from the data. The findings suggest that these are playing out in harmony with the wider marketing of the company.

9. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Content analysis of advertisements suggested tobacco parent brands in India promoted eleven surrogate product categories, the most frequent of which were music and entertainment events (28.3%), packaged drinking water(21.2%), elaichi/mouth freshener (18.4%), clothing and living items (14.6%), and soda/energy drinks (8.9%). 87.3% of these ads also contained at least one element that was quite similar to that of the parent company (brand colors, typefaces, or design motifs), further reinforcing the associative transfer model. These include ITC's Wills Lifestyle and Kings Apparel, Royal

Stag's bottled drinking water and music CDs, and Marlboro Classics Apparel in television, print, digital and retail. The coding reliability was considerable (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.79$).

Survey results found the highest level of surrogate brand recall among 18 to 35 year olds, with 78.3% correctly linking the surrogate product with its parent brand. "Heavy social media users" (more than 4 hours per day) showed an increase in recall to 84.7% with 62.1% initially finding these companies on the web. Regression analysis revealed three significant predictors of exposure to the social media platform ($\beta = 0.43$) prior brand knowledge ($\beta = 0.38$) and low health literacy ($\beta = -0.29$) highlighting the protective role of consumer education.

This study provides the first taxonomy of dark patterns in India-based DTMs that consists of eight categories: confirmshaming age gates, disguised advertisements, roach-motel opt-outs, social proof manipulation, misdirection, deceptive privacy practices, concealed sponsorship, and bait-and-switch schemes. These strategies systematically undermine users' ability to discern by exploiting cognitive biases, UI design, and social cues. Interviews with experts revealed shortcomings in regulation—such as fragmented jurisdictions, COTPA's outdated definitions, and weak enforcement—that make the operation of digital surrogate advertising uncertain.

10. CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

10.1 Attempt of Surrogate Advertising Mechanism Model (SAMM) - The Surrogate Advertising Mechanism Model (SAMM) explains how surrogate products maintain tobacco brand equity under advertising bans. It is based on associative network memory theory, social learning theory, and the elaboration likelihood model.

Stages of SAMM:

- Brand Schema Seeding - the tobacco brand builds association memory networks by prior advertising.
- Surrogate Product Launch –- a non-tobacco product using the same or very similar branding elements (such as logo, colors, typeface).
- Priming and Activation - The experience of using the surrogate product naturally prompts users to think of the original tobacco brand.
- Attitude Transfer - Positive imagery, aspirational traits and the personality of the brand associated with the surrogate product is transmitted to the tobacco brand.
- Moderators - Health literacy (negative), social media usage (positive), peer norms (positive), and parental monitoring (negative).

10.2 The Dark Pattern Influence Model (DPIM) - The Dark Pattern Influence Model (DPIM) describes the mechanisms through which digital marketing takes advantage of cognitive biases to influence user behavior. It is based on the dual process theory of leadership cognition (CCT) wherein a fast and easy to process mode of thought (System 1) is contrasted with slower and more effortful mode of thought (System 2).

Layers of Influence:

Interface Layer -Visual and layout elements direct the focus of attention (e.g., hidden advertisements, misleading prompts).

Layer Temporal - Time (that is, temporal) mechanisms (such as countdowns, flash sales) generate urgency to make a decision fast.

Motivational Layer - Social identity and aspirational cues (lifestyle branding, influencer endorsements) are more engaging and persuasive.

These levels are activated at the same time, unbeknownst to the consumer, to influence their purchase decisions, while avoiding conscious detection.

10.3 Tripartite Ethical Governance Model (TEGM) - The tripartite ethical governance model (TEGM) combines governance mechanisms to the effect of managing ethical, regulatory and technological issues in tobacco marketing.

Pillars of TEGM:

Regulatory legal - the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), as well as rules on digital marketing, should be amended to impose penalties and regulations for multiple platforms.

Technology Platform - Implement AI surveillance, allow for algorithmic transparency and platform accountability to identify and neutralize surrogate advertising and dark maneuvers.

Behavioral-Educational- Rally the media literacy, health education, and vaccination protocols to educate the public regarding the falsifying nature of advertising.

Ethical rationale -The use of dark patterns and surrogate advertising undermines the principles of fairness, honesty, and non-exploitation by exploiting cognitive biases, especially among the youth and individuals with low health literacy.

11. DISCUSSION

The research focuses on regulation arbitrage, whereby tobacco companies exploit gaps between traditional regulations and the possibilities offered by digital marketing, for example on social media, over-the-top providers, and online shops. They are brand loyal consumers and 78.3% of age group 18–35 are aware of surrogate brands, there is also a strong positive relationship between social media usage and brand recall ($r = 0.51$, $p<0.001$). Digitally-executed dark patterns also manipulate cognition, impairing their capacity to make informed choices and causing them to be subject to epistemic injustice, particularly youth and those with low health literacy. India could learn from the global best practices particularly from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and Thailand in terms of strengthening its digital tobacco regulations and protecting youth from exposure.

12. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is a demonstration of the way tobacco marketing in India has shifted towards covert digital marketing strategies such as surrogate products, tobacco with shapes, colours, and brand imagery that can easily be linked to the banned brand etc on social media to avoid compliances and exploit cognitive weaknesses. The findings show that a substantial share of the youth (78.3% of 18–35 years) is able to identify surrogate brands, thereby indicating a dismal scenario about protection and enforcement for consumers. The study offers three new models: the India Tobacco Dark Pattern Taxonomy, the Surrogate Advertising Mechanism Model (SAMM), and the Tripartite Ethical Governance Model (TEGM), which together supply the means to analyze and regulate digital tobacco marketing. Successful governance will require coordination across the legal, technological, and educational domains to ensure full and ethically sound regulation, reduction in youth exposure, and mitigation of the public health risks associated with new tobacco advertising methods. Recommended policies are as follows:

- In line with the Tripartite Ethical Governance Model (TEGM), the Report urges seven key reform principles to improve digital tobacco control
- Amend the COTPA to explicitly cover social media, OTT platforms, influencer marketing and digital-native promotions.
- Apply a statutory surrogate brand test to identify non-tobacco products with high brand similarity.
- Create liabilities rules for the digital platforms to be accountable for tobacco content hosted.
- Introduce AI based regulatory supervision for real time monitoring of digital ads and deceptive behaviors.
- Ban misleading design that changes behavior or limits understanding for making informed decisions.
- Support youth-oriented media literacy efforts to increase awareness of digital marketing techniques.
- Take inoculation steps to preemptively combat manipulative marketing tactics.

13. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- Longitudinal studiestracking exposure to surrogate advertising and tobacco use.
- Conduct neurocognitive and behavioral studies to examine brand recall and effect.-
- Conduct cross-national comparisons of regulations to identify best practices.-
- Run algorithmic analyses of social media to investigate the amplification of tobacco advertising. Evaluate the application of the TEGM model in pilot regulatory settings.

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ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how emotional intelligence (EI) influences teacher effectiveness and how it affects fostering a supportive learning environment. To shed insight on the critical role emotions play in the educational setting, the study examines the relationship between teaching competence, emotional intelligence, and the general learning environment. Drawing from Daniel Goleman's model, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, the research report expands upon the framework of emotional intelligence theory. The authors examine how emotional intelligence affects instructional strategies and classroom dynamics using this theoretical framework. The study investigates the various elements of emotional intelligence (EI)—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills and their direct and indirect effects on teaching efficacy through an extensive examination of the literature. The results show that teachers with high emotional intelligence (EI) are better able to manage stress, settle disputes, and foster a stimulating and encouraging learning environment, all of which improve student outcomes and overall academic performance. In order to generate emotionally intelligent teachers who can handle the demands of contemporary education, the paper's conclusion emphasizes the importance of including EI training within teacher education programs and continuing professional development.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Teacher Effectiveness, Education, Social-Emotional Learning, Classroom Management, Teacher-Student Relationships.*

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, indicators including student academic performance, subject matter competence, and teaching methodologies have been used to gauge each person's efficacy. Recent studies, however, emphasize how crucial teachers' emotional intelligence is in influencing the learning process. Daniel Goleman popularized the idea of emotional intelligence, which includes the capacity to identify, comprehend, and control one's own emotions as well as those of others. In the context of education, emotional intelligence (EI) helps teachers establish rapport with students, control classroom dynamics, and foster a positive learning environment. EI is a critical component of teacher effectiveness in the twenty-first century since its incorporation into teaching techniques has been associated with increased student engagement, less behavioral problems, and higher levels of student accomplishment. In addition to having an impact on their capacity to build trusting relationships with students, teachers' emotional intelligence also affects their instructional strategies, classroom management approaches, and general effectiveness as teachers. A more caring and encouraging learning environment can result from both understanding and controlling one's own emotions as well as identifying and sympathizing with students' emotional states. Additionally, emotional intelligence gives teachers the skills they need to handle difficult circumstances and disputes, which eventually helps to create a peaceful and effective learning environment. The many aspects of emotional intelligence, including emotional self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills, as well as their dynamic implications on teacher-student interactions, will be examined throughout this study work. We will also look into the possible contribution of emotional intelligence to reducing teacher burnout and enhancing job satisfaction, both of which are essential for maintaining a long and rewarding teaching career.

Background

As mentors and knowledge facilitators for their students, teachers are at the front of the educational system. Teachers must effectively engage and motivate their students in addition to imparting subject matter expertise in order to foster a learning environment. In this process, emotions are crucial because they affect students' motivation, engagement, and receptiveness. The key to fostering a healthy classroom environment is a teacher's capacity to recognize and control their own emotions as well as correctly understand and react to those of their students.

he connection between emotional intelligence and teacher effectiveness has been the subject of numerous studies. Positive student outcomes are strongly correlated with teachers who possess high emotional intelligence, according to these studies. In order to promote open communication, mutual respect, and trust, teachers with high emotional intelligence (EI) typically establish sympathetic and supportive learning environments. Additionally, they are better able to handle disagreements, offer helpful criticism, and modify their teaching methods to meet the demands of a wide range of students.

Justification

Human behavior and performance have been found to be significantly influenced by emotional intelligence (EI). Teachers are crucial in influencing their students' academic and emotional growth in the educational setting. Therefore, it becomes essential to comprehend the connection between emotional intelligence, teacher effectiveness, and classroom climate in order to establish a favorable and supportive learning environment. The review study paper "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Teacher Effectiveness and Classroom Climate" explores this important subject with the goal of offering insightful information to scholars, educators, and policymakers alike.

1. **The Significance of Emotional Intelligence in Education**: Emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognize, comprehend, control, and articulate emotions in oneself and others. High emotional intelligence instructors are better able to deal with difficult situations, establish relationships with pupils, and show empathy and support—all of which contribute to increased teacher effectiveness.
2. **Effect on Teacher-Student Relationships**: Creating a positive classroom environment depends heavily on the quality of the teacher-student relationship. Higher emotional intelligence teachers are better able to build relationships with their students, which boosts motivation, engagement, and trust.
3. **Classroom Management and Emotional Control**: A crucial component of good teaching is classroom management. Even in trying circumstances, teachers with emotional intelligence are better able to control their emotions and react to student conduct in a more constructive way. Effective emotional control improves the classroom environment by encouraging more concentration and lowering disruptive behaviors.
4. **Teacher Well-being and Resilience**: Teaching may be a hard job that frequently results in stress and exhaustion. Teachers' resilience and general well-being are enhanced by emotional intelligence, which serves as a buffer against the negative effects of stress. Teachers who are aware of and control their emotions are less likely to become emotionally exhausted, which leads to higher job satisfaction and retention.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate the idea of emotional intelligence in the context of education and how it might affect interactions between teachers and students.
2. To evaluate the numerous aspects of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, and their connection to the efficacy of teachers.
3. To investigate the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and the caliber of their teaching methods.
4. To look into how emotionally intelligent educators efficiently manage difficult situations and classroom dynamics.

5. To determine how emotional intelligence contributes to good teacher-student interactions and the development of a supportive learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence: Definition and Components

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to perceive, assess, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. Goleman (1995) identifies five key components of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components collectively enable individuals to navigate social complexities, manage stress, and make informed decisions. In the teaching profession, these skills are invaluable for creating a positive classroom environment, facilitating effective communication, and fostering meaningful relationships with students and colleagues.

EI and Classroom Management

Effective classroom management is a cornerstone of teacher effectiveness. Teachers with high EI are adept at recognizing and addressing emotional cues from students, allowing them to preemptively manage potential disruptions and maintain a conducive learning environment. According to Brackett and Salovey (2006), emotionally intelligent teachers are more capable of implementing proactive strategies that promote student engagement and minimize behavioral issues. By understanding the emotional underpinnings of student behavior, these teachers can tailor their approaches to meet individual needs, thereby enhancing overall classroom dynamics.

Teacher-Student Relationships

The quality of teacher-student relationships significantly impacts student motivation and academic achievement. Empathy, a critical component of EI, enables teachers to connect with students on a personal level, fostering trust and respect. Research by Jennings and Greenberg (2009) indicates that teachers who demonstrate high levels of empathy are more effective in creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment. This emotional connection not only enhances student engagement but also contributes to the development of students' own emotional competencies.

Adaptability and Stress Management

Teaching is a profession characterized by high levels of stress and unpredictability. Emotionally intelligent teachers exhibit greater adaptability, allowing them to respond effectively to changing circumstances and unforeseen challenges. They employ self-regulation techniques to manage stress, maintain composure, and sustain their teaching effectiveness under pressure. As highlighted by Parker, Summerfeldt, and Hogan (2004), teachers with high EI are less prone to burnout and more likely to exhibit resilience, which is essential for long-term career sustainability and effectiveness.

Impact on Student Outcomes

The influence of teacher EI extends to student outcomes, both academically and socio-emotionally. Emotionally intelligent teachers are better equipped to recognize and address the diverse emotional needs of their students, leading to improved academic performance and enhanced social-emotional development. Studies by Hughes and Kwok (2007) demonstrate a positive correlation between teacher EI and student achievement, highlighting the role of emotionally intelligent teaching practices in fostering a holistic educational experience.

EI in Teacher Education and Professional Development

Given the significant role of EI in teacher effectiveness, integrating EI training into teacher education programs is imperative. Professional development initiatives that focus on enhancing teachers' emotional competencies can lead to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes. According to Elias et al. (1997), comprehensive professional development programs that

include EI training components contribute to the development of more effective and emotionally competent educators.

Gaps in Literature

While existing research underscores the importance of EI in teaching, there remains a paucity of longitudinal studies that explore the long-term impacts of EI on teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Additionally, there is a need for more empirical studies that investigate the specific mechanisms through which EI influences teaching practices and classroom dynamics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The only source of data the researcher used was secondary. Secondary data gathered from journals, publications, published and unpublished papers. The data will be collected with the help of secondary data collection techniques. Secondary data will be used in this research and is collected through published and unpublished sources which include the internet, magazines, journals, research publications and so on.

Why Emotional Intelligence Matters for Teachers?

Teachers with strong emotional intelligence can more easily create solid, trusting relationships with students. Instead of responding sharply, they respond empathetically. A simple change in response can change the entire class environment. When students feel understood and emotionally supported, they are more engaged and motivated to learn.

Emotional intelligence also helps teachers manage classroom behaviour calmly and thoughtfully, addressing the root causes of disruptions rather than reacting impulsively. Emotional intelligence is not just an add-on skill but a fundamental part of effective teaching. It influences everything from classroom management to student engagement and academic success By cultivating their own emotional intelligence and fostering it in their students, teachers create a positive, empathetic learning environment that benefits everyone involved. This human-centred approach to education equips students with the emotional tools they need to thrive both in school and in life.

Impact Of Low Emotional Intelligence In Teachers

Teachers with greater emotional intelligence evidence greater management of discipline in the classroom (Valente, Monteiro & Lourenco, 2019). By contrast, low emotional intelligence leaves teachers more prone to experience tension in the classroom, discomfort that impacts the general milieu of the room and impacts every interaction with their children. Additionally, teachers with low emotional intelligence obtained higher scores in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, anxiety, depression, and stress, and lower scores in personal accomplishment. Emotional intelligence provides teacher flexibility in responding to the emotional challenges of children and teens (Valente, Veiga-Branco, Rebelo, 2020). It supports greater understanding of a child's emotional state of mind, thus fostering an increased capacity for empathy. It helps to foster calm rather than emotional tension, and a degree of equanimity that is contagious in the classroom and essential for a self-regulating learning environment. In effect, teachers with higher emotional intelligence practice more integrating and compromising strategies for conflict management (Valente and Laurenco, 2020). Additionally, such teachers enhance the emotional intelligence of their children by modeling such behavior.

Need For Enhancing Emotional Intelligence In Teachers

Through training in emotional intelligence, teachers can enhance their capacity for managing difficult emotions that might arise in their interactions with students, parents, and others—and support effective education of their children. The need for emotional education is further supported by recent research indicating that teachers are increasingly having to respond to physical aggression and other threats in the classroom (McMahon, Worrell, & Reddy, et. al., 2024).

Such skills allow a teacher to be more fully present with their emotions, those of the student, and in their interactions. This is essential for establishing a safe arena for learning. Enhancing emotional intelligence should be a requirement for all teachers.

The Role Of Emotional Intelligence In Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness

1. **Improving Communication Capabilities**
   A key component of good education is effective communication. Teachers who are emotionally intelligent are able to communicate effectively and quickly address the needs of their students because they have improved communication skills. They are skilled at encouraging open communication, offering helpful criticism, and actively listening, all of which provide a more dynamic and interesting learning environment.
2. **Encouraging a Happy Learning Environment**
   Positive and inclusive learning environments are greatly enhanced by teachers who possess strong emotional intelligence. Their capacity to control their emotions and show empathy helps pupils feel safe and included, which is crucial for successful learning. By attending to the emotional needs of their students, these educators promote involvement, teamwork, and a positive outlook on education.
3. **Encouraging the Resolution of Conflict**
   Any classroom setting will inevitably have conflicts. Teachers with emotional intelligence are adept at resolving conflicts by using techniques that reduce hostilities and foster understanding. Their ability to retain composure and objectivity in the face of dispute contributes to a peaceful classroom environment, which reduces disturbances and keeps the emphasis on learning goals.
4. **Encouraging Student Involvement and Motivation**
   One of the main factors influencing student success is motivation. By identifying each student's unique talents and areas for development, emotionally intelligent teachers can excite and motivate their students. These educators create a sense of self-efficacy and intrinsic drive through individualized assistance and encouragement, which boosts student engagement and academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

By giving teachers the tools they need to control classroom dynamics, forge close bonds with students, and adjust to the constantly shifting needs of the educational environment, emotional intelligence plays a crucial part in improving teacher effectiveness. Together, the elements of emotional intelligence (EI)—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—help teachers foster a supportive and encouraging learning environment, successfully engage pupils, and preserve their own wellbeing. To build emotionally intelligent teachers who can flourish in their positions and have a positive impact on student outcomes, EI training must be incorporated into teacher education and professional development programs. To further establish EI's significance in the field of education, future studies should investigate its long-term effects on instructional strategies and student performance. The findings presented in this paper demonstrate that emotionally intelligent teachers possess the ability to understand and regulate their own emotions, which allows them to respond to challenging situations with empathy and composure. This, in turn, positively influences student-teacher interactions, leading to improved communication, trust, and overall satisfaction in the classroom. Furthermore, emotionally intelligent teachers are better equipped to recognize and address the emotional needs of their students. By being attuned to their students' emotions, they can tailor their teaching methods and provide appropriate support, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional safety within the classroom.

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APOCALYPSE IS HERE AND NOW: A FOUCAULDIAN INQUIRY OF THE DYSTOPIAN NOVEL PROPHET SONG

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ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to theorise modern Apocalypse as a gradual administrative process rather than a dramatic series of future collapses portrayed by Paul Lynch in his Booker Prize-winning (2023) dystopian novel Prophet Song. The study also explores the discursive construction of 'Apocalypse' discourse. Drawing empirical illustrations from Foucault's theoretical framework of the classic mechanism of knowledge/Power and the regimes of truth[1] (Remember, he states that power operates not through spectacle but through system). And Achille Mbembe's theory of Necropolitics: the right to kill by the sovereignty. Drawing from qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology and the close textual analysis method, the researcher analyses how Prophet Song differs from traditional dystopian novels as it critiques how the state normalises emergency powers and how information is controlled and governed by building 'fear' as truth and 'surveillance'(Bio-politics) as discipline. The state authoritarians construct a discourse on systematic manufacture of truth through bureaucratic language. The present study seeks to theorise modern Apocalypse as a deliberately constructed knowledge system that normalises state emergency, disappearance, and fear as regimes of truth.

Keywords: *Apocalypse, knowledge, regimes of truth, surveillance, dystopia, discipline.*

INTRODUCTION:

Against the backdrop of encroaching dark terror and faceless, timely administrative apocalypse on the threshold, in the name of Nationalist Alliance Party (NAP), Paul Lynch's *Prophet Song* builds escalating fear and suspicion that ends with 'nowhere to go' with the dark, chilling realities of fascist Ireland. With authoritarianism taking over, bureaucratic processes normalise emergency powers through the mechanism of surveillance that regulates subjectivity. Focusing on political repression, power/knowledge dynamics, and family resistance, Lynch commands the readers to experience the process of administrative apocalypse as a regime of truth. The present research is relevant considering the present global terror of totalitarian 'state of exception' producing militarism, fear and theorising how apocalypse is discursively manufactured from 'inside', rather than outside (Mbembe 40).

The objective of the study is to examine how power constructs knowledge in *Prophet Song* in ways that threaten Democratic values and civic Liberty through the lens of Michel Foucault's significant concepts of power/knowledge dynamics, manufacture of the regime of truth and the concept of Biopower, and Panopticon and Discipline. In addition, the researcher also relies on the theory of Necro-politics propagated by Achille Mbembe to theorise modern Apocalypse as an administrative process, and discursive manufacture of truth that controls narrative and 'death-world'. While identifying the biopolitical apocalypse in *Prophet Song*, the study tries to construct how the bureaucrats become demigods to govern not only law but controlling ordinary lives, too. The close thematic analysis of *Prophet Song* establishes how state authority normalises emergency, controls information and produces fear.

Existing scholarship on Apocalypse literature has either explained Biblical revelation or has established it as chaotic and catastrophic events that predict 'end of time' or 'time of the end'. Very few

contemporary scholars have tried to explore the modern Apocalypse. There still exists a research gap in exploring Administrative, Discursive and Biopolitical Apocalypse in *Prophet Song* that will be addressed through integrating mainly the theories of Foucault, Mbembe, and the theories of Arendt. The research will establish *Prophet Song as an* exploration of the discursive construction of Apocalypse discourse as a locally produced catastrophe. The research will also examine how the novel explores state administrative oppression, discursive and biopolitical apocalypse.

METHODOLOGY

The research incorporates a qualitative, interdisciplinary, textual analysis. Based on the Foucauldian theoretical framework of Power/knowledge, biopolitics, and the regimes of truth, and Mbembe's theory of necropolitics, the paper examines how society degrades into dystopia when the evils of power give political autonomy to authorities. The theory of Arendt is cursorily referred to for further arguments. Gender studies, migration studies, feminist studies, or Marxist studies are excluded from this research.

DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE REVIEW

Dystopian literature originates from Utopian fiction of authors like H.G. Wells and William Morris in the early 20th century. However, in ancient times, Plato explained this concept in his seminal work *Republic*[2]. John Stuart Mill, inspired by Thomas More, coined the word 'Dystopia' in 1868 to denounce the government's Irish land policy. But there is no such notion of a 'just society' that prevails. Therefore, we must build a non-utopian society, a less free and less perfect society. Later, the writers started creating a 'futuristic world' through dystopian literature that denies 'No place' or 'a free world.' Thus, the belief that there is a dystopia in every generation was established. Dystopian novels, centring around 'Fanaticism', are mostly influenced by political philosophy or a critique of political tyranny.

Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) is a critique of the totalitarian regime that overpowers all aspects of society through technocratic methods. Media outlets deliver manufactured consent to their audiences. The scholarly study of George Orwell's *1984* (1949) examines how the totalitarian state maintains constant observation over its citizens. The state uses Newspeak to exert power over people and conducts institutional processes to alter facts. Margaret Atwood, in her breathtaking *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), creates the dystopian imaginary, totalitarian world of Gilead, which presents the subjugation of women. It is also a critique of the dynamics of Gender roles and putting patriarchy into the centre of absolute power. *The Road* (2006), by Cormac McCarthy, depicts the heart-wrenching struggles of a father-son duo in a socially disrupted and morally dead world. This mysterious and faceless apocalypse in the imagined world depicts how the father-son's lives are darkened. It's a diseased world; morally, physically and psychologically. Thus, the novel depicts a post-apocalyptic world that brings no hope. Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014) is a tale of the importance of art, memory, and community. Mandel asks a pertinent question: why should we survive? The foundation of human life is based on love for art, music and literature that civilises a person. However, to survive, one must work. For her, to be ultra-modern is to be lost as a human. The novel projects the advent of technology as a slow or quiet apocalypse.

None of the previous scholarship identified the representation of apocalypse as a gradual administrative process that operates within established democratic institutions. *Prophet Song* departs from both classical and post-apocalyptic traditions by situating catastrophe as a local event within the ordinary rhythms of civic life. The novel portrays the apocalypse through three channels: the world entering a permanent emergency state, the government creating false realities, and the government using biopolitical methods to destroy family protection.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Michel Foucault: Power and knowledge

Foucault conceptualises how Power and knowledge are inextricably intertwined. He challenged conventional ideas that power was top-down and not even hierarchical (Recall the feudal system) and

asserted that power circulates. There is a machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible Corpus of knowledge. He asserts that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and truth. This gives birth to 'subjectivity' (Foucault 29). Later, Foucault asserted that Power and knowledge work through language, a bourgeois language.

Regime of Truth

Foucault's Regimes of Truth links the notion of truth to the explicitly political notion of Regime. Foucault asserted that the complex relationship between power and knowledge is to be understood through the structures and procedures that produce knowledge and determine what is considered true or false**.** The discourse of the manufacture of truth is not a static entity but rather a dynamic construct mostly influenced by historical contexts and power relations. Power creates beliefs, and these beliefs, with consensus, construct truth continuously. If an individual accepts it, he is treated normal if not, he is labelled as abnormal and a threat to the sovereignty of the state. Modernity is defined as the moment when power is a matter of the administration of life.

Biopolitics

For Foucault, 'Body politic is a set of material elements and techniques'(28) and serves as a weapon to the power-knowledge relations that 'invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge'(28). Further, he explains that 'there is the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power' (29).

Panopticon: Discipline and surveillance

The Panopticon is a mechanism of exerting power externally for political dominance.

The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad; in the peripheric ring, one is total seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen (202).

Through gaze, without physical confrontation, the citizens' corrective behaviour is achieved. While exercising power over men, Foucault talks of two ways: 'of controlling their relations and of separating out their dangerous mixtures.' (198). For state authorities, Discipline refers to a set of procedures, techniques, mechanisms, and the level of their application and targets that produce desired psychological results. Thus, the individual is created by social order, not by punishment enacted on the body, but on his 'soul' (remember 'the body and the soul, as principles of behaviour', (128).

Achille Mbembe: Necro-politics

Achille Mbembe coined the concept of Necropolitics in his 2003 essay "Necropolitics". It expands on Foucault's concept of Biopower. Foucault discusses power over life through Biopolitics, whereas Mbembe discusses power over death through Necropolitics. Sovereignty is defined by the power to kill or let live, through the creation of 'deathworlds.'

Thematic Analysis

Administrative Apocalypse

A sudden emergence of NAP's (National Alliance Party) into power in Lynch's dystopian *Prophet Song* reflects the gradual authoritarian takeover that normalises bureaucratic violence and produces fear through surveillance, discipline, tyranny of a totalitarian state. Foucault, in his Discipline and Punish, explains, 'power operates through a system, not spectacle', and how 'power isn't top-down but circular/relational with no single centre[3].' In Prophet Song, Grade National Service Bureau (GNSB), a secret police system developed by the Emergency State, is not 'the usual crowd', but the state's informants. NAP implements the Emergency Powers Act, with which impending terror followed by fear and anxiety. Eilish senses "something bad has to come into the house…something formless yet felt" (Lynch 3), and that makes her uneasy. Slowly, this fear engulfs not only her family but the whole

country. The totalitarian state's bureaucrats, 'almost faceless in the dark' (Lynch 1), are at the threshold, searching for Mr Larry Stack, the deputy general secretary of the Teachers' Union of Ireland. Larry Stack, a teacher and believer in 'constitutional rights', thinks it's his moral responsibility to resist the oppressive power of the State through protest. The bureaucrats warn Larry about his "behaviour looks like the conduct of someone inciting hatred against the state (as he doesn't surrender), someone sowing discord and unrest (11) …the person will be serving enemies of the state" (11). Bureaucratic violence systematically silences such threats either by abduction, 'unlawful detention', disappearance, arrest or murder by the state (Recall Jim). "They are lifting people from everywhere now". The judiciary is silenced, scientists are made to go on long leaves (remember Alice Dealy), special powers are exercised, and "the world gives to chaos" (45). Larry is systematically erased with no traces, his name removed from all the documents from everywhere, an 'invisible Killing', as quoted by Mbembe (83). (Local) Military commanders have the discretionary freedom to decide whom to shoot and when (83). Bureaucracy is, for Arendt, a new device for political organisation and as a 'principle of foreign domination' (Arendt 185). Hannah Arendt rightly calls these bureaucrats the 'breakers of law' (185). Well, Lynch critiques propulsive, tyrannical government, "the stale that speaks through the uniform" (119).

With no public trial or execution, a silent, secret elimination without any violence involved, de-individualised 'killing becomes precision-targeted' (Mbembe 82). Administrative Erasure of the 'abnormal' citizens is so normalised that the authorities exercise the power to develop a mechanism for 'industrialising of death' (Jim's murder) and dehumanisation, politics is a form of war,' now (66) and a city to 'point zero in history' in the words of Hannah Arendt. Mbembe asserts that the state's primary concern in the late-modern era is not always the optimisation of life but often the instrumentalisation of death (Remember, 'The right to kill' 70). NAP bureaucrats 'Want to exterminate us like rats", Gerry mutters (227). They want to seize power, which, for Foucault, is 'capillary' in nature, that it enters the very psyche of the individuals, influencing their gestures, hampering their daily behaviour. "Citizens are made to feel guilty when it is an evil that has been done to us" (48). (Recall Bailey wetting his bed, insulting Eilish, 'You are not my mother and how Molly keeps asking Eilish to do something to get her dad back home).

The administrative framework of state-sanctioned disappearances and dehumanisation (Recall the episode of wounded Bailey, how in the middle of the night he is shifted to military hospital and later Eilish finds him in the morgue all bruised) thus, becomes normal; an 'organisational disequilibrium' and the 'death of public organisations', a naked display of power and authoritarian dictatorship, to quote Anne Fennimore & Arthur Sementelli. This 'Administrative evil may surface when organisational dynamics merge with a tendency to dehumanise or demonise a vulnerable group (Fennimore & Sementelli 5). Political violence and the state's production of fear have made the country a 'monster', with 'an air of hysteria in the country' resulting in 'civil unrest' and disturbing 'the old world of law'. In Mbembe's words, this discursive mechanism is 'the working of the specific structure of terror' (Mbembe 80). Medical services are controlled by emergency powers. The apocalypse occurs when all administrative safeguards are removed to uncover the actual "necropolitical" systems that operate under those protections. Mbembe says, Sovereignty exists as a state that uses human life to create operational power and eliminates human bodies through physical destruction. Further, he explains it isn't a sudden external disaster, but a slow, systematic collapse of the rule of law and democratic values in the hands of a totalitarian government. He goes beyond what Foucault propagated through his concept of biopower when he asserts,

My concern is those figures of sovereignty whose central project is not the struggle for autonomy but the generalised instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations (Mbembe 68).

The sovereign state of Ireland creates a confused, corrupt, grotesque and 'death-world'. Bailey's mysterious death is read as 'sovereignty means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not' (80).

Discursive Apocalypse

Regime of Truth

NAP employs its administration to establish new facts about the world while its members commit acts of violence. The institutional authority controls and manufactures what society accepts as true. Larry tells Eilish, 'You know how they work, what it is they are after, they gather information, they do so discreetly, and I suppose you have to give it to them one way or another… (Lynch 5). The mechanism of surveillance is so subtle and all-pervasive that Larry knows their power to seek information and to control it. 'This surveillance is an act that gives supplemental provision and power to GNSB for the maintenance of public order' (11).

Thus, dynamics of power and knowledge turn the ordinary lives into a nightmare through the manufacture of regimes of truth, control over information, power of surveillance. Though the conversation between Eilish and Michael Given, Lynch sheds light on how the regime of truth mechanism works: "They are controlling the newsrooms" (36), "foreign news channels are prohibited", "One must always suspect they are listening" (34). Foucault says, 'Power and knowledge feed upon each other'. There is a machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible Corpus of knowledge. Power creates belief, and that belief constructs truth. Mark's phone search history of 'beheadings and murder, videos of beheadings and summary executions on phone normalise fear and 'death has entered…' (83-84), "Viral messages are being sent from phone to phone" (74). Foucault seemed to have warned the modern age that what we understand by knowledge is not the neutral tool for liberation but the sophisticated instrument of power. Manufacture of truth through fear, violence and death is the everyday practice in present-day Dublin. As per Foucault,

It is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge (Foucault 28).

Power is, thus, constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and truth. Simon, Eilish's father, explains how a change in ownership changes everything that was known as knowledge, how the mechanism of discursive manufacture of truth becomes a new reality.

We are both scientists, Eilish, we belong to a tradition but tradition is nothing more than what everyone can agree on – the scientists, the teachers, the institutions, if you change ownership of the institutions then you can change ownership of the facts, you can alter the structure of belief, what is agreed upon, that is what they are doing, Eilish, it is really quite simple, the NAP is trying to change what you and I call reality,…if you say one thing is another thing and you say it enough times, then it must be so, and if you keep saying it over and over people accept it as true…(Lynch 20)

For Mbembe, when the state uses its own self-referential truth system to enforce its death-function process and employs all the death management to control its citizens, and turns it into an everyday process, it enters its Administrative Apocalypse phase. It isn't a sudden external disaster, but a slow, systematic collapse of the rule of law and democratic values in the hands of a totalitarian government. He goes beyond what Foucault's concept of biopower, when he asserts,

My concern is those figures of sovereignty whose central project is not the struggle for autonomy but the generalised instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations (Mbembe 68).

Biopolitical Apocalypse: Panopticon, Discipline and Surveillance

For Foucault,

Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise (Foucault 170)

The gaze is alert and is everywhere. To understand how power is exerted on its subjects, Foucault says,

Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time, it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them (187).

Foucault's concept of the Panopticon is overwhelming in Prophet Song. The mechanism of surveillance is so subtle and all-pervasive that Larry knows the state's power to seek information and control it.

'This surveillance is an act that gives supplemental provision and power to GNSB for the maintenance of public order' (Lynch 11). Foucault asserts, 'The disciplinary institutions secreted a machinery of control that functioned like a microscope of conduct'(Foucault 173). Foucault develops the concept of Biopower in his History of Sexuality primarily as a will to knowledge. The Anatomo-politics of the Human Body is,

The submission of bodies through the control of ideas; the analysis of representations as a principle in a politics of bodies that was much more effective than the ritual anatomy of torture and execution (102).

The modern Panoptic power of the State closely classifies the citizens' behaviour from normal to abnormal through surveillance by the GNSB military. GNSB's surveillance mechanism, in the words of Mbembe, is 'not only amounts to control, surveillance, and separation but is also synonymous with isolation (81). The Stack family is isolated by the state. Larry has disappeared, Mark's head is down, he is underground, Bailey is shifted to the military hospital at midnight and later found dead in the morgue. Simon leaves home, never to return. The citizens observe the transition from managing life (Recall biopolitics by Foucault) to sovereignty over death (necropolitical destruction) via official channels. This 'new physics of power' that converts into tyranny, operates daily and manufactures truth in a way that alters reality itself and ordinary citizens are gripped with fear of being watched. Panopticon, for Foucault remains mandatory to exert power over citizens. The parked black car in front of Eilish's house, 'unmarked cars that pull up silently and lift people off the street…who don't return home again' (76), 'marksmen on rooftops', 'cameras recording faces', 'men pointing long-range cameras' (87-88) are nothing but the normalisation of surveillance. Through the conversation between Larry and Eilish, it is evident that their privacy is compromised by the oppressive regime's omnipresent surveillance apparatus when Eilish discovers her phone is tapped (Recall the Gaze).

She looks at the phone and reaches back into the call, following her voice into Larry's phone, the signal has to be relayed to reach Larry's mobile, it is picked up and relayed through a network transmitter (14).

Different tools of surveillance in monitoring citizens with tracking devices embedded in their IDs are so penetrating and internalised that Larry thinks for a while these two detectives have a power to roam freely inside his thoughts' (10). The episode between two detectives and Larry is a commentary on how the mechanism of the panopticon 'automatizes and individualises power' of the NAP (Foucault 202). Further, Foucault continues,

Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere: 'A considerable body of militia, commanded by good officers and men of substance', guards at the gates, at the town hall and in every quarter to ensure the prompt obedience of the people…(195).

Moreover, the "panoptic" power of the state, according to Foucault, enables the state to observe and classify citizens and permits the state to erase them from society through non-violent methods of governmental control. He adds,

The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad; in the peripheric ring, one is total seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen (202).

The episode between two detectives and Larry is a commentary on how the mechanism of the panopticon 'automatizes and individualises power' of the NAP (Foucault 202).

Surveillance is one of them. Power becomes automated without the involvement of human factors. 'Two GNSB secret police officers, Eilish passport office experience of 'full security and background check' by producing ID because she is the wife of a detained man. Mark's passport renewal is denied, and Bailey's passport application is rejected. Hospital authorities require Public Service numbers, without which admission is denied (Bailey, being a minor, isn't allowed to be hospitalised).

"The state has special powers and has silenced the judiciary", says Michael (39). And later, he stops attending the calls of Eilish. Individuals lose their sense of agency and become one with the

bureaucratic manufacture of fear and violence. ATMs are out of power. Eilish's way back home is blocked by a huge military truck. The citizen's identity reduces to an ID. Eilish's elder son Mark's entry into the rebel army shows how power circulates, making individuals the carriers of it and targets of it. When Bailey is wounded in the airstrike with a shrapnel embedded in his skull, he needs to be hospitalised at Crumlin 'if not then Temple Street' for surgery. He is taken to St. James Hospital but requires Bailey's security ID public service number to get admitted through the roadblocks.

CONCLUSION

The above analysis of *Prophet Song* theorises that the apocalypse does exist as an ongoing state of existence which arises from the power structures of governments rather than existing as a future catastrophic event. Democratic systems suffer from destruction when emergency laws and bureaucratic processes become standard procedures through administrative methods. The discursive mechanisms developed by Michel Foucault create systems of truth that transform dissent into silence, validating authority. The state uses biopolitical control methods, which Achille Mbembe describes as necropolitical, to decide who lives and dies while creating an environment that makes certain people into targets for state violence so much so that they cannot even migrate out of the borders. The processes demonstrate that apocalypse occurs in the present time through a gradual institutional process, which breaks down reality because those in power use crises as a method to control governance and the citizens are left to go nowhere.

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1. The regime of truth is the mechanism developed by Michel Foucault during his works between 1975 and 1980 for the first time in his Discipline and Punish. This is closely intertwined with his Power/knowledge relationships/ Each society has its own regime of truth. The state employs a system of administrative disciplinary procedures for the production, control, distribution, broadcasting and functioning of statements that later become knowledge, a corpus of knowledge.
2. Plato's Republic, written around 360 B.C.E., is considered one of the most significant classics of world literature on Western philosophy. The book explores the nature of law and justice, the ideal state and the role of a monarch who must be a philosopher. He must fuse moral with political, and his political regime must reflect his personal virtues towards self-expression that binds him with his subjects and vice-versa. Thus, the monarchy tries to construct Utopia, a just society.
3. Michel Foucault develops his conceptual distinction between sovereign power and disciplinary power. Sovereign power is centred around a monarch who regulates his subjects, a power that is exerted hierarchically (Recall feudal system), whereas disciplinary power is circulatory, and society controls the individuals through the techniques of surveillance, knowledge, the right to establish the truth.

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STRUCTURING TRUTH AND POWER THROUGH COMMUNICATION: EMPATHY AND INFLUENCE IN THE GANDHIAN WAY

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to evaluate Gandhi's position as a public communicator, picking out his ability to integrate of truth, empathy, and non-violence as foundational elements of constructive communication. It also justifies how Gandhi developed comprehensive communicative strategies by adhering to Satyagraha, moral courage, and linguistic simplicity that enabled him to connect with diverse audiences across socio-political boundaries. By situating Gandhian communication within contemporary concerns such as misinformation, media distrust, and post-truth discourse, the study foregrounds the continued relevance of his methods in current times. Drawing upon theoretical insights from thinkers like Noam Chomsky and classical rhetoric, the paper instigates a debate and substantiate that Gandhi's model represents an ethical and transformative paradigm of communication. Gandhi's emphasis on experimentation on truth, empathic listening, inclusivity, and moral responsibility projects a viable framework for creating a credible and harmonious ecosystem for an effective modern communication.

Keywords: *communication, non-violence, empathy, satyagraha, truth, rhetoric, media ethics, inclusivity, public discourse.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

"Every man should expend his chief thought and attention on the consideration of his first principles: are they or are they not rightly laid down? and when he has shifted them, all the rest will follow"

\- PLATO, Cratylus

Alignment of ideas, translating them into words, and finally drawing out communicable and meaningful sentences, in all seriousness, need constant engagement with the system that a language dictates. Gandhi, probably, was deft in ignoring these dictations of the system of language while animating his ideas with words, and he did it freely and deliberately. This attitude and self-confidence of his, regarding his own indulgence in thinking, speaking and writing gained him the status as a gifted commentator and communicator. One is amazed to note his scope and range of communication that counts and contrasts- from speaking with the poorest and the richest, commoner and emperor, urchins and wise, children and adults, criminals and holy men, we name and he has one to show us. The astounding capability that he had for imaging and assimilating facts with reality into a final mode of communication, was one of his basic individuality, putting him on par with great thinkers of today's world.

> "The different images of Gandhi merely show how difficult it is to access his character and personality. It is, however, necessary to accept his profound integrity as thinker and as a seeker of truth. (Iyer,8)

It is said that believing in change prompts one to be engaging in constant experimentation and Gandhi was no exception. He experimented with everything, from evaluating his own internal power to weighing how his moral force structuring 'fearlessness' within himself. The basic attitude of Gandhi was

that he was a constant learner and experimenter, practically a fieldsman, one who had mastered the art of endearing people of all class and hue. He said of himself:

> "I am not built for academic writings, action is my domain." (Harijan, March 1946)

Therefore, the structure of "truth" is empirical, experimental, situational, and conditional; while "empathy" is preconditional in the search of it (truth).

> "I claim for them, nothing more than does a scientist who, though he conducts his experiments with the utmost accuracy, forethought and minuteness, never claims any finality about his conclusions,… (Gandhi, *Autobiography* xiii)

Years ago, did Gandhi not sound similar to the line spoken by one of his greatest admirers, Steve Jobs, in his Stanford Commencement speech- "Stay hungry, stay foolish?" (Jobs)

In recent times there is a huge deficit of trust between media and public in reference to the prevalent ecosystem of information- spanning social media, TV news, and digital platforms, owned by corporate houses and obsessed with profit-making objectives, these agencies promote harmful, divisive and often inaccurate content, prioritizing engagement over accuracy and ethical reporting. This environment, prevailing across, the globe is characterized by polarization, the rapid spread of misinformation, and content designed to trigger intense emotions like anger and fear. In this post-truth world, where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion and truth becoming secondary to ideological fabrication, Gandhi's way of communication seems to be the only detoxifying agent. The need of the hour is to encompass the Gandhian paradigm- communication through a 'non-violent language' propelled and backed by a 'strong, moral force'. More so, theoretically it is essential to generalize Gandhian way of communication for communion and commonness.

2. FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS OF GANDHIAN COMMUNICATION:

Gandhi had recognized that the structure of "truth" needed the properties of language devised within the limits of its mechanism. The structuring of truth, for Gandhi, starts with self-purification, that is being experimented by self-suffering. Truth is the enhancement of the understanding of the world on part of every individual and this *satya* is structured by the virtue of satyagraha. He explains:

> "If anything that I write in these pages should strike the reader as being touched with pride, then he must take it that there is something wrong with my quest, and that my glimpses are no more than mirage. Let hundred like me perish, but let truth prevail. Let us not reduce the standard of truth even by hair's breadth…" (Gandhi, xiv)

Such was the self-imposed test and evaluatory method Gandhi prescribed for each one of us to define the standard of truth at our end. Gandhi, therefore, laid more importance to the semantic and the syntactic configuration of language. What Chomsky has said now, Gandhi had imagined years ago while shaping what is known today is "language of non-violence".

> "The tests typically had to do with what I have called elsewhere the 'creative aspect of language use', a normal feature of every usage: the fact that it is typically innovative, guided but not determined by internal state and external conditions, appropriate to circumstances…" (Chomsky 3)

Communication, therefore, in any condition, according to Gandhi must be aimed at generating 'peace and harmony' which can be achieved only by the establishment and usage of the 'language of non-violence' that endorses truth and elucidates it. So, Gandhi agrees with the theoretical postulation of Chomsky with a caveat of 'suffering' to gain truthful dialogue. Gandhi said:

> "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast scale as I could." (Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers* 43)

The other side of non-violent language is admission, confession, gratefulness and recognition to the ideas of others which we use for our own conveniences. Gandhi is quite strict and honest in making it clear for all that due credit must be given to the originator of such ideas and thought, hence, he wrote,

> "These views are mine, and yet not mine. They are mine because I hope to act according to them. They are also part of my being. But yet they are not mine because I lay no claim to originality. They have been formed after reading several books that which I dimly felt received support from these books." (Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*)

Therefore, Gandhi recognizes truth as natural and untruth as structured maliciously and used for creating disharmony and anarchy.

3. NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION AND MORAL FORCE

Gandhi says the medium for dispensation of truth is non-violence or ahimsa that is the course book principle for a satyagrahi. And the 'soul force' (satyagraha) is much more creative and the praxis of it is like the safety valve of any unwanted condition and prevention to all kinds of oppressions.

> "However, non-violence means more than the mere absence of violence. It is something more positive, more meaningful than that for the true expression of non-violence is compassion. Some people seem to think that compassion is just a passive, emotional response rather than rational stimulus to action. But to experience genuine compassion is to develop a feeling of closeness to others as Gandhi did combine with a sense of responsibility for their welfare." (Dalai Lama ix)

The problematic here for the practitioner is not to follow the canons of non-violence as an order but to set an orderly life and create a conducive matrix so that the principles of non-violence are internalized. Gandhi, thereby, structures the basic difference between a timid, weak and coward individual, and a strong, fearless and positive thinking one. His Highness Dalai Lama finds the core human value to be acquired first to train the heart more than mind, to practice non-violent communication i.e "compassion", the foundation of "empathy" ready to be the "co-sufferer". In simple terms, empathy germinates out of love and fellow-feeling. When one loves, all "appreciation" as a virtue blooms and non-violence is fed with truth ultimately making it inseparable from the individual. Narayan Desai justifies: "Non-violence to him (Gandhi) was a law of life- a law that ruled mutual relationship with fellow human beings as well as with nature. His aspiration was to be one with even the smallest creatures on earth…; it was the positive manifestation of love that could move mountains." (Desai xiii)

4.1 Structuring Power: Not a Megaphone:

Unlike the common and ordinary understanding of 'power', Gandhi thought of power for the powerless and for those who were on the margin. His philosophy flowed from the idea of 'non-attachment' and 'non-possession'. Hence, power is not a means to control or dominate others but to empower 'the others', to rise them to the pedestal pf equality. Gandhi believed that true power is derived from truth *(satya)* and non-violence *(ahimsa)* making it perennial and not ephemeral.

Gandhi's concept of power is like oceanic circle that broadens the structure of power involving multitudes of people across caste, class, gender. Power for Gandhi was never unitary and concentrative in the hands of a few, and on the other hand he advised everyone to participate in the process of decentralization and channelize power (not exclusively political or economic) that exhibited vulgarity and meanness, finally leading to violence, suppression, oppression and exploitation. It is for this Gandhi wanted the unitary power system rested with the villages. That's why his understanding of power did not rest on the top but came from the bottom.

4.2 Virtue as Power:

Gandhi never thought virtue to be a passive cult in humanity, on the other hand, he finds it to be a curious mixture of morality and ethicality harnessed in individual character that follows truth and non-violence. Hence for Gandhi, a powerful individual is a virtuous one, an epitome of nobility

possessing the desire of understanding other's sufferings and ready to act on the half of such people for the mitigation of these.

> "In Plutarch's eyes Gandhi would be held in high esteem for his efforts to benefit the impoverished masses, peasants, workers, untouchables, minorities, women, prisoners, and other victims of direct and structural violence. Although victimized himself by racism and colonialism, Gandhi's defense of sufferers in every sector of society can be recognized as extending far beyond the bounds of self-interest". (Paige 192)

Gandhi offered his legendary 'talisman' to everybody whenever one was faced with any dichotomy relating to right and wrong. He advised to think of the last man, the weakest and poorest whether our action had any adverse effect on them. Therefore, Gandhi's concept of power is structured in the spirituality of individual's thinking. He always thought of the authoritarian structure of power to be "soul-less machine". He proved that non-violent communication was more powerful and more creative than violent and dictatorial power. He offered the tool for "soul-force" to empower the powerless that "cuts without wounding". The sacred power, according to Gandhi rested with the trustees and caretaker of the society who censored the vulgarity and negative effects of the so-called powerful ones. We can say that Gandhian concept of power is structured in the module of benevolence of service to the humanity. Everything Gandhi was practicing, was a symbol of power. "Gandhi's various symbolic communicative practices-silence, fasting, walking, and clothing- in addition to his oratorial skills, all had significance that made them much more than practices. As Allan Campbell Johnson, Mountbatten's press attaché observed in his diary-

> "The whole of Gandhi's life is a study in the art of influencing the masses, and judging by the success he has achieved in this mysterious domain, he must be accounted one of the greatest artists in leadership of all time. He has genius for acting through symbols in which all can understand." (Joseph 45)

That is the power of Gandhi's appeal to masses through his communicative absoluteness and the honesty on his part never to be attached with power.

5. Gandhi as a Public Communicator

Gandhi has been known as a 'master communicator'. His success as a communicator was due to the various strategies that he insightfully designed and practiced. When Gandhi spoke with people, it had an electrifying effect on the listeners and there lied his self-testing method to confirm its impact. And the best part was Gandhi would speak with all kinds of people starting from an ordinary person to the high and mighty. It is beyond anybody's imagination to assess the range and quality of the audience that Gandhi communicated with. The best part of his communicative capacity was his ability to connect with people and convince them and motivate them to act with him. In fact, Gandhi had great passion to learn languages (He had learned eight of them – Gujarati, English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Persian, Latin and French). Gandhi's writing reveals the sincerity and genuineness of his concerns for his listeners.

Gandhi's silence also spoke volumes. At a time, when there was hardly any electronic or social media and English print was confined to the literate few, one clarion call from Gandhi brought the whole sub-continent to the standstill.

Some of the important features of Gandhi as a public speaker are the following:

5.1 A Fearless Communicator:

Fear is a mental impediment which restricts one to think and express freely. Gandhi, as he has described in his autobiography, was timid in early part of his life. He realized the effect of fear and developed, and strengthened his spiritual strength to be fearless. Therefore, fearlessness is more fundamental to Gandhian thought. This, Gandhi attained by following the path of righteousness as the call of his inner consciousness. According to Gandhi, the position assigned to this divine quality 'fearlessness' is reasonable. The way to find truth is not an easy task, and certainly not for cowards. So a person with the quality of fearlessness can proceed to find truth. Gandhi said :

> "It's easy to stand in the crowd but it takes courage to stand alone." He further said – "fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral."

Again he said :

> "Fearless connotes freedom from all external fear- fear of disease, bodily injury or death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on." (*Young India*, 1930). "Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realized the Supreme, as it implies the height of freedom from delusions."

Be it in his Avatar of a politician or a social reformer or a journalist, Gandhi had scanty fear or confusion with regard to telling the truth to the people and practicing it himself. As a strong propagator of free speech, free press and the independence of institution of the Editor, Gandhi totally opposed unwarranted restrictions on media. He wrote in Young India (August 7, 1924)

> "The editor of daily newspaper when he begins writing his leading article does not weigh his words in golden scales. He may be betrayed into a hasty word. Must he pay for it even though he did it obviously in good faith without malice and in public interest? These liable actions are calculated to demoralize Indian Journalism and make public criticism over-cautious and timid. I am no lover of irresponsible or unjustifiably strong criticism. But caution to be beneficial must come from within and not superimposed from without." (Gandhi, *Young India*)

The British brought in the Press Act of 1910, in the face of growing opposition. The Act sought to impose heavy security deposit to open a printing press. Thereby the press freedom and freedom of speech could be muzzled and the expression of the Indians could be curtailed.

At such hard time, Gandhi not only used power of his pen against the same but also accepted the charges of sedition and contempt of court as a mark of protest and went behind the bars. He never undermined the values of journalism to reach out to the masses with his views on many burning issues, even as he led crusade against the foreign rule.

Gandhi always oriented his public communication with the questions of suffering people. That was how he was able to garner supporters for the cause in India and abroad. In a cabled message to the people of the United States in 1930, as he launched his Civil Disobedience Movement against British rule, he just said:

> "I want world sympathy in this battle of right against might."

And we all know the living Gandhi, that time, had inspired the entire Civil Rights, Movement in the US led by many great black leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King.

5.2 Innovatively Insightful:

Ideas and insights are time and age specific although those may be used in different perspectives in different modules in different times. Gandhi said he was not deviating the core principles and values of the culture of India. Rather Gandhi, as a communicator, would bring his disagreement on some of the fault lines, found in religion and society before people- such as- caste, gender, class and so on. Thereby Gandhi proposed a new theory of – *"communication essentially as sharing."* Gandhi admitted that what he said were not new but how he had said, the time and context mattered the most. But his ideas, that as a journalist and public communicator he developed were insightful and freshly structured. Gandhi was able to connect and influence his audience by restructuring their world views.

The oldest and the most detailed book on human communication is Aristotle's 'Rhetorica' Aristotle believed that rhetoric or communication is an art and it should be developed by communicator in order to persuade his audience.

> "Aristotle defined rhetoric as the art of persuading the audience. He identified three means or factors that can persuade the audience to a desired action: the

> character of the communicator, his sense of logic, and his ability to rouse emotions in the audience." (Aristotle)
>
> Gandhi fitted into them as a suitable emulator.

6. Key Features of Gandhian Communication:

6.1 Clarity of message:

Gandhi's ability of using language was remarkable. He would use mainly three languages such as Gujarati, Hindi (or Hindustani), and English for the purpose of public communication, both as a speaker and as a journalist but his love for vernacular language was boundless. He would advocate for the use of these regional languages for public communication. He guessed much before independence that the role of English in free India was to be in a limited extent. It is justified by Leela Gandhi :

> "In colonial India, Gandhi's regular invectives against English education revealed a similar belief in the legitimate cultural primacy of Indian literatures and languages. In anticipation of post-independence India, where English would remain the privileged language of administration and the ruling elite, he objected with some fervour to 'the harm done by this education received through a foreign tongue … It has created a gulf between the educated classes and the masses. We don't know them and they don't know us". (Gandhi qtd. in Gandhi 147)

The best thing about Gandhi's style of communication was his ability to use a particular language suitable for a target audience at a specific time and purpose. Above all his communication was marked by SIMPLICITY and CLARITY. He knew it well that for any message to reach a wider audience, it must be easy to understand. Hence, Gandhi communicated his message clearly and concisely, avoiding unnecessary jargons or complexity.

6.2 Non-violent Communication:

Gandhi was basically a soft-spoken individual. We have not read in his writings or heard him using a harsh and derogatory language in his public discourse. The principle of non-violence was the core of Gandhi's personality. So, Gandhi's language as a public communicator was oriented by his ingrained virtu of "Ahimsa". He believed in resolving conflicts and advocating for change through peaceful means. Therefore, Gandhi chose to have non-confrontational and constructive communicative method. Thereby, he built consensus and resolved disputes.

6.3 Speak Write, and Lead :

"My life is my message", (Gandhi) Gandhi said in Bengal, on being asked to give a message to the people of India. Gandhi led an exemplary life and always embraced the principles that he preached. The credibility of him lied in his writing and speeches and especially so in his actions. Gandhi gave a "talisman" to the people who were self-obsessed and doubtful. There was hardly any difference between his words and actions as he had nothing to hide. Therefore, as a communicator, Gandhi won the agreement and confidence of people who he interacted with influence and changed them without their notice.

6.4 Inclusivity:

The very humane tendency of Gandhian communication lies in its "inclusivity" or "inclusiveness". The term means the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. To be inclusive, one needs to practice empathy and appreciation as a principle in thought and action. Gandhi's minimalistic life was marked by his self-less service to humanity and limited wants in material term. He did not fight for rights of Kings, aristocrats and the rich but for the poor and ordinary men. So, his actions such as the Salt March or the rejection of Foreign Goods or even Swadeshi Movement, all went well with his speech and writings as a public communicator. In fact, Gandhi's approach was inclusive, aiming to represent the interests of all sections of people, regardless of their belief or background. Gandhi, as a public

communicator, always wanted to bridge the divides that Indian society had in that point of time. His favourite prayers – "*Vaishav Jana Toh*..." or "*Raghupati Raghav…"* or *"Tat Sat Narayan Toh…"* or the *"Sarva Dharma Prarthana"* demonstrated the Gandhian communicative tools for uniting people. For Gandhi it's less "I" and more "you" and "we"-that fostered a sense of belongingness. As a communicator, Gandhi tried to be non-partisan and free from prejudices – his post Prarthana addresses were the records.

6.5 Empathic Listening:

Empathic listening bridges an emotional connection with the other person(s). Gandhi was a great listener who showed empathy for others' concerns. He understood the power of active listening in building trust and rapport. Gandhi was a brilliant public and mass communicator who demonstrated his ability for such act by exhibiting a strong and principled character, a reasonable and logical mind, a very wide reading, an insightful thinking, answering thousands of letters and meeting hundreds of people. His brand of communication and journalism was a tool for serving the society by making them aware of their problems and arousing good ideas to make humanity and environment co-existing in a sustainable way.

In Young India (1925), Gandhi wrote:

> "To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The readers can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and vocabulary. It is training form. It enables me to peep into myself and make vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is terrible ordeal but fine exercise to remove these weeds." (Gandhi, *Young India*)

Gandhi was undoubtedly the most persuasive, effective and mesmerizing public communicator who spoke and wrote not for himself but for the cause of humanity.

CONCLUSION:

In the annals of history, Gandhi's legacy as a public communicator will be recognized for his ability to merge ethics with expression, transforming it into a tool for social changes. His structuring and defining of truth, non-violence, empathy, and inclusivity offers a holistic model that transcends time and space to recommend solutions to many of the current problems. Gandhi's approach emphasizes responsibility, introspection, human connection and rectification.

In current time of internet, speed, and declining trust, Gandhian communication takes us in the path of Digital Satyagraha, and Digital Ahinsa an antidote to fake news and misinformation. It will also restore authenticity and integrity. His insistence on aligning thought, speech, and action accentuate the moral dimension of communication, and inter-human relationship making it not merely a skill but a disciplined practice. Ultimately, Gandhi's communicative philosophy remains a powerful guide for fostering dialogue, understanding, and collective well-being in contemporary society.

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Research Paper Competition for Teachers

THE FICTION FIX: BOOSTING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN A DIGITAL WORLD

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ABSTRACT

The digital age has basically changed the way how we engage with fiction, most importantly influencing our emotional states and our overall well-being. Through our interactions with fictional narratives across diverse digital platforms, we kind of participate in a form of emotional simulation that can to a certain amount shape our emotional intelligence and resilience. Emotional intelligence means the capacity to recognize, comprehend, and regulate our emotions, and is therefore crucial for successfully navigating intricate social dynamics and achieving holistic well-being. Due to this reason, fiction offers individuals to explore and comprehend emotions within a secure context by enabling to simulate and experience emotions that might otherwise be difficult to process, all while avoiding the potential hazards of real-world encounters. Theoretical frameworks, including Emotional Intelligence Theory, Simulation Theory, Affect Theory, Reader-Response Theory, and Cultural Materialism, offer valuable perspectives on the underlying mechanisms of this process.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Fictional narratives, Holistic well-being, Digital age, Emotional simulation.*

INTRODUCTION:

The digital age today has restructured the way we consume and interact with fiction to a profound extent by impacting our emotional landscapes and overall well-being. As we immerse ourselves in fictional narratives on various digital platforms, we engage in a form of emotional simulation that can shape our emotional intelligence and resilience to some extent. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our emotions making it a vital aspect of navigating complex social interactions and attaining holistic well-being. So, fiction here serves as a unique platform for individuals to explore and understand emotions in a safe environment, allowing us to simulate emotions which are difficult to process and experience them all without the risks associated with real-life encounters.

Theoretical frameworks such as Emotional Intelligence Theory, Simulation Theory, Affect Theory, Reader-Response Theory, and Cultural Materialism provide valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying this process. They all suggests that engagement with fictional narratives enables individuals to develop empathy, regulate emotions, and enhance Emotional intelligence. As digital culture is evolving continuously, it can be studied that by understanding the role of fiction in emotional simulation has increasingly become important for promoting emotional education and its well-being.

This research investigates the role of fiction in emotional simulation by examining how its engagement with fictional narratives can enhance and contribute to holistic well-being today. This

study aims to highlight the potential of fiction as a tool for emotional education and well-being, ultimately contributing to a more emotionally intelligent and resilient society.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The aim of this study is to understand the role of fiction in emotional simulation by examining how engagement with fictional narratives can enhance Emotional intelligence and contribute to holistic well-being in the digital age. By taking the support of the theories such as Emotional Intelligence Theory, Simulation Theory, Affect Theory, Reader-Response Theory, and Cultural Materialism, it explores the impact of digital fiction on emotional intelligence and resilience while considering factors such as empathy development, emotional regulation, and emotional exploration. Plus, to identify the potential of fiction as a tool for emotional education and well-being in the digital era.

Significance of the Study:

The significance of the study includes its contribution to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between culture, emotions, and technology by examining the intersections of fiction, emotional intelligence, and digital culture, Overall, it has the potential to contribute to a more emotionally intelligent and resilient society, where individuals can navigate the complexities of the digital age with greater emotional awareness and well-being**.** This study has significance as it holds importance in contributing to our mental balance making are ourselves and society a more resilient one to situations that can affect our all over emotional well-being.

Theoretical Framework: Integrating Perspectives on Fiction as Emotional Simulation:

This study draws on a combination of theories that collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how fiction serves as emotional simulation and enhancing emotional intelligence leading to the contribution of holistic well-being in the digital age. The theory of Emotional Intelligence explains that it involves the development of emotional awareness, empathy, and regulation which are important for achieving emotional balance by navigating complex social interactions. Fiction provides a platform for individuals to simulate and navigate complex emotional experiences, fostering emotional intelligence and promoting more resilience.

As we become intelligent emotionally it somehow affects our emotional well-being as we feel composed and are aware of the limitations of emotions to be experienced in a particular amount. This eventually will lead us to take decision on daily basis appropriately as we are not under heavy influence of feelings so, as a result for the maintenance and regulation of our proper functioning of emotions the intelligence of it has the key role to play and if works in a way proper, it eventually impacts our mental health.

Fiction as means of regulation:

Viewing fiction means allowing something imaginary that has zero real life relevance to enter our mind in the form of thoughts. Thoughts that are the reason which decides how an individual would feel when experienced. If a person who has reality that is harsh to digest would like to explore through fiction the world he/she would like to have in possible reality. And once the particular fiction is been consumed the emotions are experienced of other kind that are absent in actual reality and thus, the emotions are regulated leaving the individual feel expressed emotionally. This somehow makes the person emotionally intelligent as the integration of sentiments are undergone with episodes in a form of fiction.

Through the lens of Simulation Theory which views that readers simulate characters emotions and engages with fictional narratives on an emotional level. This simulation enables individuals to develop empathy and understand diverse perspectives that contribute to enhanced emotional intelligence. As readers immerse themselves in fictional worlds, they experience emotions that are socially and culturally constructed, as proposed by Affect Theory (Tomkins, 1962). Emotions circulate socially and culturally, influencing individual experience and shape cultural attitudes and emotional

norms. Fiction serves as a channel for emotional transmission, allowing readers to tap into the emotional currents of their culture.

Affect theory explains that human emotions are biologically displayed by an instant reaction rather than just conscious thoughts, which means that our feelings are biological and that acts primary and naturally. As fiction works as a route for emotional passway affect theory justifies it by real manifestations.

Reader-Response Theory (Iser, 1978) highlights the active role of readers in constructing emotional meaning from fictional narratives. The reader brings that content to life and reader's own experiences, emotions and cultural background. Meaning emerges through reader engagement and that fosters emotional awareness and empathy, contributing to development of emotional intelligence. However, this process does not occur in a vacuum, as Cultural Materialism (Williams, 1977) suggests that emotional structures are shaped by digital and capitalist systems, influencing how individuals experience and regulate emotions. By wearing the lens of reader response if the person is creating a meaning, then through cultural materialism the experiences are shaped by culture and socially created norms. This perspective underscores the need to consider the broader cultural context in which fiction is consumed and emotional intelligence is developed.

By integrating these theories, we gain a refined understanding of how fiction serves as emotional simulation, enhancing emotional materialism and promoting well-being. This framework provides a foundation for exploring the intersections of fiction, emotional intelligence, and digital culture, highlighting the potential of fiction as a tool for emotional education and well-being in the digital era.

Primary sources include collection of poetry by Rupi Kaur:

Milk and Honey

A digital Poetry of Emotional Expression. It is a widely circulated poetry collection that gained popularity through digital platforms. It serves emotional simulation that engages readers with trauma, love and self-healing. Its theoretical application can be studied through affect theory which circulates emotions rapidly through digital media, reader-response Theory as it the poems are highly subjective involving an emotional engagement.

Its contribution to well-being involves encouragement of emotional articulation that validates personal experiences and makes emotional discourse approachable.

CONCLUSION:

This study has examined how fiction contributes to simulation of emotions, by promoting holistic well-being in the digital age by enhancing sentiments. Combining these insights from Emotional Intelligence Theory, Simulation Theory, Affect Theory, Reader-Response Theory, and Cultural Materialism, this study has shown that fiction offers a unique space and platform for individuals to explore and navigate complex emotions, fostering emotional intelligence and emotional resilience.

Findings of this research work highlights fiction's potential as a valuable and an important resource for emotional education and well-being in the digital era. Engaging with fictional narratives that allows people to develop empathy, regulate emotions, and strengthen EI, ultimately contributing to a more emotionally resilient society. This research also underscores the importance of considering the broader cultural context, including digital and capitalist influences, when exploring how fiction impacts emotional intelligence.

The implications of this are also significant such as educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals can harness fiction and can use it as a good option to promote emotional education and well-being. Integrating emotional education and digital literacy into school curricula we can empower individuals to search and navigate the digital world with greater emotional awareness and resilience.
This study deepens our understanding of how fiction, emotional intelligence, and digital culture intersect, showcasing fiction's potential as a powerful tool for emotional exploration and well-being in this age of digital influence.

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"EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:CULTIVATING HOLISTIC WELL-BEING IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION"

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ABSTRACT

Holistic well-being encompasses physical vitality, psychological resilience, emotional balance, social connectedness, and purposeful living. In the context of higher education, true student flourishing requires more than academic excellence—it demands the cultivation of competencies that enable individuals to navigate life's complexities with wisdom, compassion, and authenticity. This research paper examines emotional intelligence as a foundational framework for developing holistic well-being among college and university students in India. Drawing on positive psychology, contemplative traditions, and contemporary research, this study demonstrates how emotional intelligence competencies—self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, relationship skills, and purposeful motivation—serve as essential building blocks for comprehensive human development. The paper explores how systematic cultivation of these competencies enhances not merely the absence of distress, but the presence of vitality, meaning, engagement, and flourishing. Through examination of theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and practical applications, this research proposes an integrated approach to embedding emotional intelligence development throughout the student experience. The findings reveal that institutions prioritizing emotional competency development produce graduates who demonstrate superior academic performance, deeper interpersonal relationships, greater life satisfaction, stronger ethical orientation, enhanced creativity and innovation, and sustained capacity for lifelong growth. This paper contributes to reconceptualizing higher education's mission beyond knowledge transmission toward holistic human development, positioning emotional intelligence as the cornerstone of this transformative vision.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Holistic Well-being, Flourishing, Higher Education, Student Development, Positive Psychology, India*

1. INTRODUCTION: REDEFINING SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

What does it mean for a student to truly succeed in higher education? Traditional metrics focus narrowly on grades, degrees, and job placements—important outcomes, certainly, but insufficient measures of human flourishing. A student might graduate with honors yet feel emotionally disconnected, socially isolated, or purposeless. Conversely, holistic well-being encompasses a richer conception of success: students who thrive intellectually while also developing emotional wisdom, nurturing meaningful relationships, discovering purpose, cultivating resilience, and experiencing joy and vitality in their daily lives.

The concept of holistic well-being draws from multiple wisdom traditions. Ancient Indian philosophy speaks of 'svastha'—a state of being established in one's true self, encompassing physical health, emotional balance, mental clarity, and spiritual connection. Contemporary positive psychology defines flourishing through PERMA: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. Indigenous educational philosophies worldwide emphasize the development of the whole

person—head, heart, hands, and spirit. What unites these perspectives is recognition that human beings are integrated wholes, not merely intellects to be trained but complete persons to be nurtured.

Emotional intelligence emerges as the foundational competency enabling holistic development. It represents the bridge between intellectual knowledge and lived wisdom, between understanding concepts and embodying values, between individual achievement and collective thriving. Students with well-developed emotional intelligence don't just perform well academically—they engage deeply with learning, form authentic connections with peers and mentors, navigate challenges with resilience, make ethical decisions aligned with values, and cultivate meaning and purpose in their pursuits. In essence, emotional intelligence provides the soil in which holistic well-being takes root and flourishes.

This paper explores how Indian higher education institutions can systematically cultivate emotional intelligence as the foundation for holistic student development. It moves beyond deficit-focused approaches that merely address problems toward strength-based paradigms that actively foster flourishing. The goal is not simply to reduce distress but to cultivate vitality; not merely to prevent failure but to enable excellence; not just to help students survive college but to empower them to thrive in it and beyond.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: EI AND HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

2.1 Understanding Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence, as conceptualized by Daniel Goleman, encompasses five interrelated competencies that together enable individuals to live with awareness, intention, and wisdom. Self-awareness involves recognizing emotions as they arise, understanding their sources and effects, and developing accurate self-assessment. This foundational competency enables students to make conscious choices rather than reactive responses, to understand their strengths and growth edges, and to align actions with values.

Self-regulation encompasses managing disruptive emotions, maintaining emotional balance under stress, demonstrating adaptability, and sustaining optimism and hope. Rather than suppressing emotions, self-regulation involves skillful relationship with emotional experience—neither overwhelmed by feelings nor disconnected from them, but able to experience emotions fully while maintaining equilibrium and choice in response.

Motivation in the EI framework refers not to external rewards but to intrinsic drive—the passion for learning itself, commitment to personal and collective excellence, resilience in pursuing meaningful goals, and readiness to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth. Emotionally intelligent students demonstrate what psychologist Carol Dweck calls growth mindset, viewing abilities as developable through effort rather than fixed traits.

Empathy—the capacity to sense others' emotions, understand diverse perspectives, and respond with compassion—forms the bridge to social competence. In educational contexts characterized by increasing diversity, empathy enables students to engage across differences, build inclusive communities, and develop the intercultural competencies essential for 21st-century citizenship. Finally, social skills encompass the practical abilities to communicate effectively, manage conflicts constructively, inspire and influence others positively, build collaborative relationships, and work effectively in teams.

2.2 The Architecture of Holistic Well-being

Holistic well-being comprises multiple interconnected dimensions. Physical well-being includes not just absence of illness but vitality, energy, and the capacity to engage fully with life. College years profoundly shape lifelong health habits—sleep patterns, exercise routines, nutritional choices, and stress management practices established during this period often persist throughout adulthood. Emotional well-being involves experiencing the full spectrum of emotions appropriately—joy and contentment in positive circumstances, sadness and anger in response to loss or injustice—while maintaining overall psychological balance and the capacity to recover from setbacks.

Intellectual well-being extends beyond academic achievement to include curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, and love of learning for its own sake. Students experiencing intellectual flourishing engage deeply with ideas, make connections across disciplines, ask meaningful questions, and develop sophisticated understanding rather than merely accumulating information. Social well-being encompasses the quality of relationships and sense of belonging. Humans are fundamentally social beings; meaningful connections with others profoundly influence happiness, health, and life satisfaction. Students who cultivate authentic friendships, respectful relationships with faculty, and sense of community within their institutions experience greater overall well-being.

Spiritual or existential well-being involves developing sense of meaning, purpose, and connection to something larger than oneself. This dimension need not be religious—it includes finding personal significance in one's studies, contributing to causes beyond self-interest, developing ethical frameworks, and cultivating practices that provide perspective and grounding. Students with strong existential well-being report greater life satisfaction, resilience during difficulties, and sustained motivation even when facing challenges.

2.3 How EI Enables Holistic Flourishing

Emotional intelligence serves as the integrating force enabling development across all well-being dimensions. Consider physical well-being: self-awareness helps students recognize when stress is accumulating or health habits are deteriorating. Self-regulation enables choosing healthy responses to stress rather than maladaptive coping like substance use or sleep deprivation. Motivation sustains commitment to wellness practices even when immediate rewards aren't apparent. Students with high

EI make healthier lifestyle choices not from external pressure but from authentic self-care.

For intellectual flourishing, emotional competencies prove equally essential. Self-awareness enables students to recognize when confusion or frustration signals genuine learning opportunities rather than personal inadequacy. Emotional regulation allows maintaining focus and persistence through difficult material. Empathy and social skills enable collaborative learning, where students teach and learn from each other. Research consistently shows that positive emotions broaden thinking and enhance creativity—emotionally intelligent students create conditions for deeper, more innovative intellectual work.

Social well-being depends fundamentally on emotional intelligence. Empathy enables understanding others' experiences and responding appropriately. Social skills facilitate clear communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Self-awareness prevents projecting one's insecurities onto relationships. Students with developed EI build more authentic, satisfying friendships characterized by mutual support, honest communication, and genuine care. They navigate the complex social dynamics of college life—roommate conflicts, group projects, romantic relationships, social hierarchies—with greater skill and less distress.

Existential well-being emerges through the self-awareness that clarifies personal values and the motivation that aligns actions with those values. Emotionally intelligent students engage in meaningful self-reflection, ask significant questions about purpose and contribution, and develop ethical frameworks grounded in both reason and compassion. They experience their education not as mere credential acquisition but as preparation for purposeful living.

3. THE EVIDENCE: EI'S IMPACT ON STUDENT FLOURISHING

3.1 Academic Excellence and Engagement

Contrary to outdated notions positioning emotion and intellect as opposing forces, research demonstrates that emotional intelligence enhances academic performance. A meta-analysis by MacCann et al. (2020) examining 158 studies with over 42,000 students found that emotional intelligence predicts academic achievement with effect sizes comparable to those of cognitive intelligence and conscientiousness. The relationship holds across educational levels, cultures, and academic disciplines.

The mechanisms are straightforward. Students with strong emotional regulation maintain focus during study sessions, manage test anxiety effectively, and persist through difficult material. Those with high motivation engage deeply with learning rather than merely pursuing grades. Emotionally intelligent students seek help when needed, form effective study groups, and maintain productive relationships with instructors. They experience learning itself as rewarding, creating positive feedback loops that sustain engagement.

Beyond grades, emotional intelligence predicts deeper forms of academic engagement. Research on flow states—those experiences of complete absorption where time disappears and performance peaks—shows that EI competencies facilitate entering and sustaining flow. Self-awareness helps students identify optimal challenge levels, emotional regulation maintains the focus flow requires, and intrinsic motivation provides the drive. Students who regularly experience flow in their academic work report greater learning, creativity, and satisfaction.

3.2 Psychological Well-being and Resilience

Students with higher emotional intelligence consistently report greater life satisfaction, more positive emotions, and stronger sense of psychological well-being. A longitudinal study by Saklofske et al. (2012) tracked university students over four years and found that EI assessed at entry predicted psychological well-being throughout college, with effects strengthening over time. Importantly, EI predicted not just lower negative emotions but higher positive emotions and greater life satisfaction—the presence of flourishing, not merely the absence of distress.

Resilience—the capacity to navigate adversity and emerge strengthened—depends heavily on emotional competencies. Research by Frederickson (2001) demonstrates that positive emotions broaden thinking and build psychological resources, creating upward spirals where resilience begets more positive experiences, which further strengthen resilience. Emotionally intelligent students cultivate this upward spiral through practices like gratitude, savoring positive experiences, and reframing challenges as growth opportunities. When setbacks occur—failed exams, rejected applications, ended relationships—high-EI students process emotions healthily, maintain perspective, learn from experience, and move forward constructively.

The concept of post-traumatic growth—the phenomenon where individuals emerge from difficult experiences with greater strength, wisdom, and appreciation for life—illustrates resilience's transformative potential. Studies show that emotional intelligence facilitates post-traumatic growth by enabling individuals to process difficult emotions, find meaning in adversity, and integrate challenging experiences into evolving life narratives. College inevitably involves difficulties; emotionally intelligent students transform these into catalysts for development.

3.3 Social Connectedness and Relationship Quality

The quality of students' relationships profoundly influences their college experience and overall well-being. Research by Lopes et al. (2004) found that students with higher emotional intelligence reported more positive interactions with friends, less conflict in relationships, and greater perceived support from their social networks. Peer nominations confirmed these self-reports: high-EI students were rated by peers as more agreeable, less aggressive, and more prosocial.

Romantic relationships during college years offer important opportunities for developing intimacy, commitment, and relationship skills. Studies examining emotional intelligence in college romantic relationships find that couples where both partners demonstrate high EI report greater relationship satisfaction, more effective conflict resolution, and more secure attachment. The empathy and communication skills central to EI enable partners to understand each other's needs, express affection appropriately, and navigate inevitable disagreements constructively.

Faculty-student relationships, often overlooked in discussions of college social life, significantly influence academic engagement and career development. Emotionally intelligent students are better able to seek mentorship, communicate needs clearly, receive feedback constructively, and maintain appropriate professional boundaries. They view faculty as resources for growth rather than judges to

impress or avoid, creating relationships characterized by authentic learning rather than performative achievement.

3.4 Purpose, Meaning, and Ethical Development

Research on purpose and meaning reveals that students with clear sense of purpose demonstrate higher academic motivation, greater persistence, better health behaviors, and stronger overall well-being. Emotional intelligence facilitates purpose development through self-awareness that clarifies values and interests, intrinsic motivation that sustains engagement with meaningful pursuits, and empathy that connects personal purpose to collective good. Students develop purpose not in isolation but through exploration, reflection, and integration of experience—processes requiring emotional competencies.

Ethical development during college years shapes lifelong moral orientation. Research by Rest (1986) identified four components of moral functioning: moral sensitivity (recognizing ethical dimensions of situations), moral judgment (determining right action), moral motivation (prioritizing ethical values), and moral character (implementing ethical decisions despite obstacles). Each component involves emotional intelligence. Empathy enables moral sensitivity by facilitating awareness of how actions affect others. Self-awareness clarifies personal values underlying moral judgment. Intrinsic motivation provides moral motivation. Self-regulation and resilience comprise moral character.

Studies examining ethical behavior among college students find that those with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate greater integrity in academic contexts, less likelihood of cheating, more willingness to intervene in ethical violations, and stronger commitment to social responsibility. Emotionally intelligent students make ethical choices not from fear of consequences but from authentic commitment to values and concern for others—sustainable foundations for lifelong ethical living.

4. the indian context: opportunities and challenges

4.1 Cultural Strengths Supporting EI Development

Indian culture offers rich resources for emotional intelligence development. The emphasis on family and community naturally cultivates social awareness and relationship skills. The philosophical traditions of yoga and meditation, now validated by neuroscience research, provide sophisticated practices for developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, and equanimity. Concepts like 'seva' (selfless service) align with empathy and social responsibility. The spiritual traditions across India's diverse religious landscape offer frameworks for finding meaning, purpose, and connection to something transcendent.

The respect for teachers embedded in Indian culture, exemplified by the guru-shishya tradition, creates potential for meaningful mentoring relationships. The practice of joint families, while evolving, has historically provided students with models of emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and empathy through observing family dynamics. The artistic traditions—classical music, dance, visual arts—develop emotional expression and aesthetic sensitivity. These cultural assets, when thoughtfully integrated into educational contexts, can powerfully support emotional intelligence development.

4.2 Navigating Cultural Tensions

Simultaneously, certain aspects of contemporary Indian educational culture present challenges. The intense competition for limited seats in prestigious institutions creates pressure that can undermine well-being. When success is defined narrowly through examination results, students may neglect emotional, social, and physical development. The emphasis on family honor and meeting parental expectations, while motivating, can also create stress when students' authentic interests diverge from family preferences.

Traditional gender norms influence emotional expression, with young men often discouraged from showing vulnerability and young women's assertiveness sometimes challenged. The stigma surrounding mental health and emotional struggles discourages help-seeking. The pedagogical

emphasis on rote learning over critical thinking can limit development of the questioning, reflective mindset emotional intelligence requires. Addressing these challenges doesn't mean rejecting Indian culture but thoughtfully evolving it—honoring timeless wisdom while adapting to contemporary realities.

4.3 Current Initiatives and Emerging Trends

Progressive Indian institutions are pioneering holistic approaches to student development. The National Education Policy 2020 explicitly recognizes the importance of social-emotional learning and holistic development, providing policy framework for systemic change. Universities like Ashoka, FLAME, and Azim Premji University have embedded life skills, ethics, and reflective practices into curricula. IITs and NITs increasingly offer wellness centers, counseling services, and stress management programs. Several institutions have introduced courses on happiness, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence.

Corporate India's growing emphasis on emotional intelligence in hiring has created market pressures encouraging educational institutions to develop these competencies. Organizations like Art of Living, Heartfulness, and Vipassana have brought contemplative practices to millions of Indians, including college students. This cultural shift creates receptivity to emotional intelligence initiatives that might have faced skepticism a generation ago. The challenge now is scaling promising practices and embedding them systematically throughout higher education.

5. A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK: CULTIVATING EI FOR HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

5.1 Curricular Integration: Credit-Bearing Courses

The most sustainable approach involves integrating emotional intelligence development into formal curriculum through mandatory credit-bearing courses, ideally during the first year when students are establishing college routines and most open to new experiences. These courses should be experiential rather than purely didactic, emphasizing practice over theory. A well-designed semester-long course might include weekly modules on self-awareness through contemplative practices like journaling, meditation, and mindful movement; emotional literacy through learning to identify, label, and express emotions accurately; stress physiology and evidence-based stress management techniques; cognitive restructuring and growth mindset development; interpersonal communication including active listening, assertiveness, and feedback; empathy cultivation through perspective-taking and service learning; conflict resolution and negotiation skills; relationship building and maintenance; meaning and purpose exploration; and integration through developing personal wellness plans.

Assessment should emphasize growth and self-reflection rather than normative comparison. Students might maintain reflective journals documenting emotional awareness and regulation experiences, complete self-assessments at multiple time points showing development, demonstrate competencies through presentations or role-plays, and develop personalized emotional wellness plans for sustaining practices beyond the course. The goal is not to grade emotional intelligence but to support its development through structured learning experiences.

5.2 Co-Curricular Programming: Workshops and Activities

Beyond formal courses, institutions should offer rich co-curricular opportunities for developing emotional intelligence. Regular workshops might address specific competencies or challenges: managing academic stress and exam anxiety, building healthy relationships and intimacy, developing leadership presence and influence, navigating cultural and family expectations, discovering purpose and calling, practicing mindfulness and meditation, cultivating gratitude and positive emotions, and developing emotional agility. Scheduling these workshops strategically—stress management before examinations, relationship skills at the start of academic years, purpose exploration during career decision periods—increases relevance and attendance.

Student organizations focused on wellness, mindfulness, social service, arts, and outdoor activities naturally develop emotional intelligence. Institutions should actively support these groups,

recognizing their developmental value. Participation in cultural activities—music, dance, theater, creative writing—develops emotional expression and aesthetic sensitivity. Service-learning programs connecting students with community needs cultivate empathy and social responsibility. Outdoor adventure programs build resilience, teamwork, and confidence. Sports teach emotional regulation under pressure, team collaboration, and graceful winning and losing.

5.3 Peer Learning Communities

Peer relationships offer powerful contexts for emotional learning. Structured peer mentoring programs can support first-year students' transition to college while developing mentors' leadership and empathy. Training senior students as wellness peers creates near-peer support networks where students feel comfortable discussing challenges. Small peer discussion groups, facilitated by trained student leaders, create spaces for authentic sharing and mutual support around themes like managing academic pressure, navigating family expectations, exploring identity, or building meaningful relationships.

Residential colleges and living-learning communities, when thoughtfully designed, become laboratories for emotional and social development. Regular floor meetings addressing community issues teach conflict resolution and democratic decision-making. Resident advisors trained in emotional intelligence can model healthy emotional expression, facilitate difficult conversations, and create inclusive community cultures. The diversity of perspectives students encounter in residence halls—across regions, religions, languages, socioeconomic backgrounds—naturally develops empathy and intercultural competence when supported by appropriate programming and facilitation.

5.4 Faculty Development and Pedagogical Innovation

Faculty profoundly influence students' emotional and intellectual development. Professional development programs should support faculty in developing their own emotional intelligence while learning to create emotionally supportive learning environments. Workshops might cover understanding emotional dimensions of learning, recognizing and responding to student distress, providing feedback that promotes growth, creating psychologically safe classrooms, facilitating difficult discussions, and balancing high expectations with compassionate support.

Pedagogical practices can intentionally develop emotional intelligence. Collaborative learning activities require students to practice communication, perspective-taking, and conflict resolution. Reflective writing assignments encourage self-awareness and integration of learning. Authentic assessments connecting course content to real-world challenges cultivate purpose and meaning. Case-based learning addressing ethical dilemmas develops moral reasoning. Discussion-based seminars practice active listening and respectful disagreement. Creative projects enable emotional expression. Service-learning links intellectual development to social responsibility.

5.5 Institutional Culture and Environmental Design

Perhaps most importantly, institutions must cultivate cultures that value holistic development alongside academic excellence. This begins with mission statements and strategic plans explicitly prioritizing student flourishing. It continues through policies—reasonable academic workloads, flexible deadlines for students facing difficulties, grade distributions that don't force competition, diverse pathways to success. It manifests in resource allocation—counselling centers with adequate staff, wellness facilities, contemplative spaces, support for student activities developing emotional and social competencies.

Physical environments shape emotional experience. Campuses should include quiet spaces for reflection, natural settings that restore attention and reduce stress, social gathering spaces that facilitate connection, and aesthetically designed environments that inspire and uplift. Institutional communications should celebrate diverse forms of success—not just academic achievements but also service contributions, creative accomplishments, personal growth, and acts of kindness. When students

regularly see their institution honoring these values through words and actions, they internalize holistic development as legitimate and valuable.

6. ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Assessing holistic well-being and emotional intelligence development requires moving beyond traditional metrics. While maintaining academic indicators like grades and retention, institutions should also track validated measures of well-being including subjective well-being scales measuring life satisfaction and positive/negative emotions, flourishing scales assessing PERMA dimensions, resilience measures evaluating capacity to navigate adversity, relationship quality assessments examining social connectedness, and purpose measures exploring meaningfulness and direction. Emotional intelligence can be assessed through self-report instruments like the EQ-i or TEIQue, ability-based tests like the MSCEIT, and multi-ratter 360-degree assessments.

Qualitative methods provide rich understanding of student experiences. Focus groups exploring students' sense of belonging, challenges, and sources of support yield insights quantitative measures miss. Reflective essays and portfolios reveal developmental trajectories. Alumni interviews examining how college experiences shaped long-term flourishing provide longitudinal perspective. These qualitative data complement quantitative metrics, together creating comprehensive pictures of how well institutions support holistic development.

Perhaps most important is creating cultures of continuous improvement where assessment data inform program refinement. Regular evaluation cycles should ask: Are students developing emotional competencies? Do they report greater well-being? What practices prove most effective? Which students benefit most and least? What barriers impede access? This evidence-based approach ensures programs evolve based on what actually works rather than assumptions about what should work.

7. CONCLUSION: TOWARD FLOURISHING EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Higher education stands at a crossroads. One path continues prioritizing narrow academic outcomes, measuring success through grades and placements, and treating students as minds to be trained. The other path embraces a richer vision—developing whole human beings who think critically and feel deeply, achieve excellence and maintain balance, succeed individually and contribute collectively. This second path requires reconceptualising education's fundamental purpose from mere knowledge transmission to holistic human development, with emotional intelligence as the cornerstone.

The evidence compellingly demonstrates that emotional intelligence enables flourishing across all dimensions of well-being. Students with developed emotional competencies achieve greater academic success while also experiencing deeper relationships, stronger resilience, clearer purpose, and more positive emotions. They engage meaningfully with learning, navigate challenges skilfully, contribute positively to communities, and live with greater authenticity and vitality. These outcomes transcend individual benefit—emotionally intelligent graduates become professionals who lead with wisdom and compassion, citizens who engage constructively across differences, and human beings who live purposefully and joyfully.

Implementing comprehensive emotional intelligence initiatives requires courage and commitment. It means expanding definitions of academic success, allocating resources to holistic development, training faculty in new competencies, and creating cultures that value emotional wisdom alongside intellectual achievement. The challenges are real—resource constraints, competing priorities, cultural resistance, assessment complexities. Yet institutions pioneering these approaches demonstrate feasibility and effectiveness. What's needed now is will—will to prioritize long-term flourishing over short-term metrics, to invest in comprehensive development, and to embrace education's transformative potential?

Indian higher education, drawing on rich cultural traditions of holistic development while embracing contemporary insights, is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation. The philosophical foundations already exist—ancient wisdom recognizing the interconnection of intellectual, emotional,

physical, and spiritual dimensions of human existence. What's needed is systematic application of these insights within modern institutional contexts. When colleges and universities commit to cultivating emotional intelligence as foundation for holistic well-being, they honor education's highest calling—not merely preparing students for careers, but empowering them for lives of meaning, contribution, and joy.

For teachers, academic leaders, and policy-makers, cultivating emotional intelligence among students is not an additional responsibility but an extension of education's ethical mandate to nurture whole human beings capable of intellectual excellence, emotional wisdom, and social responsibility.

The question facing Indian higher education is not whether students deserve opportunities for holistic flourishing—clearly they do. The question is whether institutions will accept responsibility for systematically providing those opportunities. Every student who graduates emotionally competent, psychologically resilient, socially connected, and purposefully directed represents a success far beyond any grade point average. In developing emotional intelligence in our students, we don't just improve individual lives—we transform society one flourishing graduate at a time, creating ripples of well-being that extend far beyond campus boundaries into families, workplaces, communities, and future generations. This is education's ultimate promise and responsibility.

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सार्वजनिक जीवनामध्ये नैतिकता : चिंतन आणि आव्हाने

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प्रस्तावना (Introduction) :

राष्ट्रांची शक्ती नाणि स्वातंत्र्य जर मनामनांत जर ठेवायचे असेल अबाधित
तर मनामनात काही गोष्टी जगल्याच पाहिजेत सदोदित
जीवनमूल्य आणि चारित्र्य निष्ठेने जपले जाईल तोपर्यंत
अनिवार संकटांतही ते राष्ट्र-ती प्रजा उन्नत असेल तोपर्यंत

- लेखक अज्ञात

मानवी जीवनाकडे दोन प्रकारांनी पाहता येते एक नैतिक दुसरे भौतिक. नितीमय जीवन जगण्यासाठी निष्ठा, श्रध्दा, तपश्चर्या, सहनशीलता इत्यादीची आवश्यकता असते तर भौतिक जीवनात उपभोगानांच प्राधान्य असते. प्रत्येक व्यक्तीने स्वतःच्या जीवनाची विशिष्ट दृष्टी निश्चित केली पाहिजे. मानवामध्ये विशिष्ट जीवनदृष्टी आली नाही तर त्याच्या मनात दूसरे 'वाद' (isms) प्रवेश करतात. मानवानं सत्तेच्या वावटळीत सापडून कसे चालेल? दुसऱ्या वादांच्या वावटळीत मानय गुंतला की, त्याचे जीवन विफल झालेच म्हणून समजा “Isms corrupt people's mind power corrupts only its possessors” सत्तेच्या वावटळीत सापडल्याने व्यक्तीने अथवा त्याच्या पाच-दहा सहाय्यकांचे जीवन नाश पावते, तर वादाची विद्युत आबालवृध्दाची मन कंपीत करते, त्यांच्या जीवनाचे नुकसान करते.

माणसाने नैतिक व्हावे ही नैतिक दृष्टी आहे. नैतिकता हा अतिशय महत्वपूर्ण विषय आहे. 'नैतिकता' शब्दाचा अर्थ केवळ स्त्री-पुरुष संबंध इतकाच नाही नेतिकतेचा अर्थ प्रथम 'अस्मीता जागरण' असा होतो. 'मी कोणीतरी आहे जोपर्यंत आकलन होत नाही तोपर्यंत माणून नितीमान असूच शकत नाही. मी प्रवाहपतित नाही होणार, मला कुठलीही वासना खेचून नाही नेणार. मला काही स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व आहे. मला काही स्वतंत्र बैठक आहे. मला काही स्वतंत्र जीवन आहे. हे जर समजत नसेल तर तो माणूस नितीमान राहू शकत नाही. नितीमत्तेची पहिली कसोटी म्हणजे माणसाला अस्मिता पाहिजे. Philosophy च्या दृष्टिकोनातून कांटने absolute नितीबद्दल सांगितले आहे की, मी कोणाला वापरणार नाही आणि मला कोणाला वापरु देणार नाही. ह्या बैठकीवर निती उभी राहिली पाहिजे. मी कोणालाच माझ्या स्वार्थाकरिता वापरणार नाही तसेच मी वापरला जाणार नाही, ही जी एक प्रभावी जीवननिष्ठेची बैठक आहे.

सिमेंट काँक्रीटची ती आमच्या जीवनात उभी राहणे आवश्यक आहे. एखादी शंभराची नोट जर आमची बैठकच हरवत असेल तर जीवनात स्थैर्य कसं असणार? आपली अस्मिता कशी राहणार?

धर्म म्हणजे काय? गंध लावणे म्हणजे धर्म नव्हे. पुष्कळ लोक धार्मिक आहेत प्लेटो, ॲरिस्टॉटल धार्मिक होते, तात्विक होते, पण त्यांनी कधी गंध लावले नव्हते. गंध लावलेलीच माणसे धार्मिक असतात असे नाही. अर्थात गंथ लावू नये असे माझे मत नाही. ती एक बुध्दीपूजा आहे. परंतु धर्म म्हणजे काय? धर्मातील पहिली गोष्ट म्हणजे 'मी कोणीतरी आहे. कुठल्याही वासनेने यावं आणि मला वापरुन टाकावे याकरिता मी आलेलो नाही. मला काही निश्चित जीवन आहे हे समाजावतो तो धर्म. 'माझे अस्मिता जागरण हा धर्म आहे. मी आहे तसाच दुसरा आहे ही दुसरी गोष्ट धर्म शिकवतो. तू जसा आहे तसाच दुसरा आहे. मग दुसऱ्याशी वागताना विचार कर. तुझी जशी अस्मिता तुटता कामा नये, तशी त्याचीही तुटता कामा नये. हा दुसरा विचार आहे. तिसरा विचार आहे की. हे जगच evolve झालेले नाही created आहे. जग उत्पन्न असेल तर त्याचा जो उत्पादक आहे त्याच्याशी कुठल्या संबंधाने तू बघशील? कसा संबंध जोडशील? ह्या तीन बाबी ज्या व्यक्तीच्या जीवनात असतात तो धार्मिक आणि नैतिक समजावा ! त्याच्या जीवनात आणि तो ज्या समाजात राहतो त्या समाजात धर्म पाहायला मिळतो. आज एक नवीन तत्वज्ञान उदयास आले आहे. तत्वज्ञान म्हणून ते चांगले विचारार्ह आहे. त्यामध्ये संप्रज्ञतेवर (awarness) जागरुक समजुतीवर मानवी जीवनाचा विकास अवलंबून आहे असे सांगण्यात येते. संप्रज्ञतेसाठी शांत, स्तब्ध (quite) बसून जागरुक समजून आणण्याचा प्रयत्न करा असे सांगतात. आपल्या तत्वज्ञानात आणखी एक पायरी वर चढण्यास सांगण्यात येते ती म्हणजे 'जागरुक सावधानता' (Bewarness) ही साधली पाहिजे कारण केवळ कृती होऊ शकत नाही.

बीजसंज्ञा (Key-Words) : माणूस, सार्वजनिक मानवी जीवन, नैतिकता, धर्म, सद्गुण, मानवी मूल्ये.

शोधनिबंधाची उद्दिष्टे (Objectives of Research paper) :

१. मानवी मूल्याच्या संदर्भात नैतिकतेची संकल्पना स्पष्ट करणे
२. सामाजिक-राजकीय मानवी मूल्यांना स्पष्ट करणे
३. वर्तमानकालीन मानवी जीवनातील मूल्ये व नैतिकता यावर प्रकाश टाकणे
४. मानवी जीवनात श्रेष्ठ मूल्यांची प्रासंगिकता स्पष्ट करणे.
५. मानवी जीवनातील नैतिक मूल्यांच्या वृध्दीकरिता शिफारशी सुचविणे,

सद्गुण म्हणजे मानवी मूल्ये ! :

'जीवन हे तुझचं आहे
तुच त्याचा खरा पूजारी
तुलाच चालायची आहे
जीवनाची ही वाट काटेरी'

आणि या काटेरी वाटेवरुन खंबीरपणे व यशस्वीरित्या चालण्यासाठी मानवाचे जीवन स्थिर व सुखी व्हायला हवे. सपूर्ण भौतिक जीवन हे आध्यात्मिक जीवनाचाच एक भाग आहे. कृतज्ञता. अस्मिता, नम्रता, तेजस्विता, तपस्विता, तत्परता आणि भावपूर्णता यांचे संयुक्त रसायन म्हणजे चारित्र्य म्हणजेच शील. 'शील परम भूषणम' (शील माणसाचे भूषण आहे). शीलवान व्यक्ती मूलतः नैतिक समजली जाते.

१. कृतज्ञता :

कृतज्ञता म्हणजे आपल्यावर केलेल्या उपकारांची जाणीव ठेवणे. आपल्यावर धर्म, संस्कृती, महापुरुष, समाज. राष्ट्र, कुटुंब, आई-वडील, आप्तजन, शेजारी आणि भगवंताचे अगणित उपकार आहेत. त्यांची जाणीव ठेवून ह्या सर्व घटकांना आपल्याला जे देता येईल त्यांच्यासाठी जे करता येईल ते करीत राहणे व सतत ऋणीच राहणे म्हणजेच कृतज्ञता. कृतज्ञता ही माणसाची खरी ओळख आहे.

2. अस्मिता :

मी कोणीतरी आहे. मला स्वतंत्र जीवन आहे. नाहं पशू नाह पक्षी, अहं मनुष्या (मी पशु नाही. पक्षी नाही, माणूस आहे) याचे भान ठेवून माणसासारखे जीवन जगणे आणि इतरांना सुध्दा माणसासारखी वागणूक देणे याचे नाव अस्मिता. स्वतःच स्वतःला ओळखणे, स्वतःच्या 'स्व' ची जाणीव ठेवणे म्हणजे अस्मिता.

3. तेजस्वीता :

तेजस्वीता म्हणजे वीरवृत्ती-प्रतिकारक्षमता. समाजामध्ये असणारे अज्ञान, अन्याय, असत् याविषयी लढण्याची वृत्ती. समाजाला ज्ञानाच्या प्रकाशात आणण्यासाठी प्रयत्नरत राहणे, स्वतः न्यायी राहून दुसऱ्याला न्यायपूर्ण जीवनाच्या प्राप्तीसाठी संघर्ष करणे 'सत्यमेव जयते' तत्वानुसार नेहमी सत्याच्या बाजूने लढणे म्हणजे प्रतिकारक्षमता, म्हणजे प्रतिकार क्षमता म्हणजेच तेजस्वीता होय.

4. तपस्वीता :

'तपो व्दंव्द सहनम' अर्थात ज्या ठिकाणी सुख आणि दुःख या दोन्ही गोष्टी सहन केल्या जातात त्याचे नाव तप. जीवनात येणाऱ्या सुखाने जास्त उल्हासित होणार नाही तर दुखाने खचून जाणार नाही. जीवनात स्थितप्रज्ञता बाळगणं म्हणजे तपस्वीता, तप म्हणजे साधना, तप म्हणजे जाणीवपूर्वक दुःख उचलण्याची दुःख झेलण्याची तयारी.

5. तत्परता :

माणसाने जीवनात तत्पर असणे आवश्यक आहे. 'कल करे सो आज, आज करे सो अभी' हे तत्व जीवनात बाळगून स्वतःसाठी आणि समाजासाठी आवश्यक ती सेवा बिनाविलंब उपलब्ध करुन देणे म्हणजे तत्परता होय.

6. नम्रता :

नम्रता म्हणजे लीनता-दिनता किंवा दुर्बलता नव्हे. श्रेष्ठासमोर नम्र होणे-लिन होणे म्हणजे नम्रता. स्वतःला. श्रेष्ठ किंवा मोठे न समजता आपल्यापेक्षाही श्रेष्ठ आणि ज्ञानी लोक जगात आहे याचे भान जीवनात प्रत्येक क्षणाला ठेवणे व श्रेष्ठाचा सन्मान करणे म्हणजे नम्रता होय.

7. भावपूर्णता :

भावपूर्णता म्हणजे दुसऱ्याविषयी आदराची, पूजनीयतेची भावना असणे. दुसरा हा दुसरा नसून माझाच भाऊ आहे. 'सारे भारतीय माझे बांधव आहेत' असे फक्त वाचण्यासाठी नव्हे तर कृतीसाठी आहे. अशा भ्रातृभावाला वृध्दिंगत करणे म्हणजे भावपूर्णता.

अशा सर्व सद्‌गुणांना जीवनात बाळगल्यास स्वतःमध्ये मानवी मूल्याची जोपासना तर समाजात नैतिकता व मानवता निर्माण हाईल. 'Life is game and play it' जीवन एक कोडे आहे. जीवन एक प्रवास आहे. जीवन एक संघर्ष आहे. जीवन एक सौंदर्य आहे. जीवन एक प्रेम आहे, जीवन एक काव्य आहे, जीवन एक ग्रंथ आहे, जीवन एक विचार आहे अशा जीवनाला विधायक दृष्टिकोन, उत्तम चरित्र, प्रयत्नवाद यांची जोड देऊन जगात आपल्यापेक्षाही विद्वान व ज्ञानी लोक आहेत याचे प्रत्येक क्षणाला भान ठेवल्यास उत्तम जीवनाची प्राप्ती, नैतिक जीवनाची निर्मिती आणि मानवी जीवनात मानवी मूल्यांची प्रस्थापना निश्चित आहे.

राजा कालस्य कारणम् :

युरोपमध्ये 'King can do no wrong' ही म्हण फार प्रचलित आहे. राजा कधीही काही चुकीचे करीत नाही पण हा अभारतीय विचार आहे. असले गुढ़तेचे वलय भारताच्या राजाच्या आजुबाजुला नव्हते. जो राजा प्रतिज्ञेचे पालन करीत नाही तो प्रतिज्ञाभ्रष्ट समजला जातो. असे तो असत्य कथन वा असत्य संग्रही करु शकत नाही. काळाचे कारण राजा की, राजाचे कारण काळ (परिस्थिती / समय?) काळाचे कारण नेता की. नेत्याचे कारण काळ? साम्यवादी विचारश्रेणोशी आपल्याच येथे मतभेद आहे. परिस्थिती नेत्याला जन्म देते की. नेता परिस्थिती निर्माण करतो जर साम्यवाद्यांची ही मान्यता खरी असेल तर साम्यवादी क्रांती जेथे भांडवलशाहीचा उदय झालेला नव्हता अशा रशियातच का झाली? इंग्लंड, अमेरिका, जर्मनी अथवा दुसऱ्या कोणत्यातरी देशात का झाली नाही. रशियन क्रांतीमागे लेनिनचे महान व असामान्य नेतृत्व उभे होते. लेनिनच्या नेतृत्वामुळेच रशियात सफल साम्यवादी क्रांती जन्माला आली. अर्थात अशी परिस्थिती नेतृत्व निर्माण करते. 'वर्तितव्यं सदा राजा गर्भिणी सहधर्मिणाम' गर्भवती स्त्री ज्या रितीने स्वतःच्या बालकाची काळजी घेते. स्वतःच्या भावी संतानाशिवाय दुसऱ्या कोणत्याही गोष्टीचा विचार करीत नाही. त्याचप्रमाणे राजानेही प्रजेची काळजी वाहली पाहिजे. त्याने प्रजेकडे पुत्रवत् पाहिले पाहिजे. राज्यशास्त्राचा हा नियम आहे. राज्यसत्ता धारण करणाऱ्यावर फार मोठी जबाबदारी असते. राजा रक्षक असला पाहिजे भक्षक नव्हे. ज्या राजाचे जीवन त्यागमय असते, तो सर्वथा प्रजेच्या कल्याणासाठीच कार्य करतो तोच राजा कर्तव्यनिष्ठ व त्यागी ठरतो. अर्थातच राजाच्या जीवनात मानवी मूल्यांचा आणि नैतिकतेचा अंर्तभाव असणे आवश्यक ठरते. तरच समाजाला अपेक्षीत नेतृत्व प्राप्त होत असते. जी काळाची आवश्यकता असते- 'राजा कालस्य कारणम्'

निष्कर्ष :

माणसाने माणसास मारु नये. एका व्यक्तीने दुसऱ्या व्यक्तीला त्रास देऊ नये. हा विचार आता चर्चेचा राहिला नाही. कदाचित पूर्वीच्या काळात हा चर्चचा विषय असेलही पण अनंत काळापर्यंत बुध्दीवादी संमजस्य आणि संत महात्म्यांनी केलेल्या तपश्चर्यमुळे हा विचार प्रत्येक व्यक्तीच्या रक्तात इतका भिनला आहे की, दृष्टातील दृष्ट हरामखोरातील हरामखोर माणूस सुध्दा हा सिध्दांत मान्य करतो की, दुसऱ्याला मारु नये, कष्ट, त्रास देऊ नये । सदगुणांचे सामाजिकरण होय. ह्या पध्दतीने सद्गुणांचे सामान्यिकरण होण्यास फार काळ लागतो. पिढ्यामागून पिढ्या गेल्यानंतर प्रत्येक गुण अशारितीने स्थिर होतो. व्यक्ती कितीही स्वार्थी, अंहकारी असो तिलाही ही गोष्ट मान्य करावीच लागते की, दुसऱ्याला पण अधिकार आहे.

माणसाच्या जीवनात असंतोष, संघर्ष हवा. जीवनात असंतुष्टता आणि गडबड हवीच. जॉन स्टुअर्ट मिल म्हणतो की, "I Shall be a dissatisfied socrates than an satisfied' संतुष्ट डुक्कर होण्यापेक्षा असंतुष्ट सॉक्रेटीस होणे चांगले. मनात कोणतीतरी समस्या आहे, गडबड आहे. काही साधावयाचं आहे, पण काही सुचत नाही, कोणालातरी विचारावे असे वाटते, कोणापाशी तरी जाऊन 'शिष्यस्तेहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम' असे म्हणावेसे वाटते. जीवनात कोडे असेल तर तसेच जीवन चांगले. ह्या सृष्टीत आल्यावर प्रत्येकाने कसे वागावे ह्याची काही आचारसंहिता (Code of life) असेलच की नाही? भारतात आपलेच राज्य आहे पण त्यात कसे राहायचे याची संहिता आहेच; तर मग हे सर्व निर्माण करणाऱ्या भगवंताची एक संहिता असेल की नाही? ज्या ठिकाणी आपण काही करत नाही, कर पण भरत नाही त्या ठिकाणी जीवन चालविणाऱ्या शक्तीची काही संहिता असलीच पाहिजे.

जीवनात सद्गुणांच्या प्राप्तीद्वारे मानवाचे ठायी देवत्त्व आले पाहिजे अशी देवाची इच्छा आहे. ज्याप्रमाणे आपली इच्छा असते की, माझा मुलगा माझ्यापेक्षा सरस ठरला पाहिजे, कमीत कमी माझ्या एवढ़ा तरी झाला पाहिजे. त्याचप्रमाणे भगवंताची सुध्दा इच्छा आहे की, मानवात देवत्व आले पाहिजे. त्याकरिता आवश्यकता आहे. ती मानवी जीवनात सद्गुणांची, नैतिकतेची किंवा मानवी मूल्यांच्या संवर्धनाची!

When wealth is lost nothing is lost,
When health is lost something is lost,
But When character is lost everything is lost.

शिफारशी :

१. मानवी मूल्यावर चर्चा करण्याकरिता ग्रामीण पातळीवर सभा, चर्चासत्रे आयोजित करणे आवश्यक आहे.
२. मानवी मूल्यांवर चिकित्सक अभ्यास करण्यासाठी गाव तेथे समिती असावी. अर्थात तज्ञ लोकांनी एकत्र येऊन विचार विनिमय करावा.
३. गावा-गावांत मानवी मूल्यांची जोपासना आणि नैतिकता संवर्धनाकरिता आध्यात्मिक बाल संस्कार केंद्रे उभारणे आवश्यक आहे.

४. मानवी मूल्यांची बीजे खोलवर रुजविण्याकरिता प्राथमिक व उच्च शिक्षण स्तरावरील अभ्यासक्रमात मानवी मूल्य आवश्यक विषय असावा.

५. आज सर्वात जास्त आवश्यकता मानवी मूल्यांची आहे ती तर तरुण पिढीला ! त्यार्कारता तरुणांच युवाकेंद्र निर्माण करण्यात यावे.

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सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता: आव्हाने आणि उपाय

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गोषवारा (Abstract):-

सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकतेचा अर्थ समाज, प्रशासन आणि राजकारणात उच्च आदर्श आणि प्रामाणिकपणाचे पालन करणे असा आहे. हे केवळ वैयक्तिक गुण नसून निकोप लोकशाहीचा पाया आहे. जेव्हा आपण सार्वजनिक पदावर असतो, तेव्हा आपले निर्णय केवळ स्वतःलाच नाही तर संपूर्ण समाजाला प्रभावित करतात. त्यामुळे सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकतेचा विचार ही आजच्या काळातील सर्वात मोठी गरज आहे. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकतेचा संबंध त्या नैतिक तत्त्वांशी आणि मानकांशी आहे जे सार्वजनिक पदांवर बसलेल्या व्यक्तींच्या वर्तनाचे मार्गदर्शक ठरतात. हे केवळ कायद्याचे पालन नसून कर्तव्यनिष्ठा, सत्यनिष्ठा आणि पारदर्शकतेचे मिश्रण आहे. लोकशाही समाजात शासनाची वैधता जनतेच्या विश्वासावर अवलंबून असते आणि हा विश्वास तेव्हाच टिकू शकतो जेव्हा सार्वजनिक जीवन नैतिक मूल्यांनी परिपूर्ण असेल. सध्याच्या काळात सार्वजनिक जीवनात नैतिकता टिकवून ठेवणे हे एक कठीण आव्हान बनले आहे. सार्वजनिक पैशांचा गैरवापर आणि सत्तेचा चुकीचा वापर हे सर्वात मोठे आव्हान आहे. जेव्हा सत्तेची सूत्रे अनैतिक हातांत असतात, तेव्हा संपूर्ण प्रशासकीय व्यवस्थेची नैतिकता धोक्यात येते. स्पष्ट देखरेख यंत्रणेच्या अभावामुळे अधिकारी आणि राजकारणी आपल्या जबाबदारीतून पळ काढतात, ज्यामुळे व्यवस्थेत शिथिलता येते. डिजिटल युगात डेटाची गोपनीयता आणि माहितीचा गैरवापर हे नैतिकतेचे नवीन संकट म्हणून समोर आले आहे. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकता म्हणजे प्रामुख्याने स्वतः पेक्षा सर्वांना वर मानण्याची भावना आहे. याचा आधार सत्यनिष्ठा, पारदर्शकता आणि जबाबदारी हा आहे. एका लोकसेवकाकडून किंवा राजकारण्याकडून अशी अपेक्षा केली जाते की त्याने कोणताही भेदभाव न करता न्यायपूर्ण निर्णय घ्यावेत. नैतिकतेचा अर्थ हा देखील आहे की, व्यक्तीच्या बोलण्यात आणि वागण्यात समानता असावी.

बीज शब्द (Keywords):- चारित्र्यसंपन्नता, वस्तुनिष्ठता, उत्तरदायित्व, पारदर्शकता, निस्वार्थीपणा, हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष, साध्य, साधन, नैतिक द्विधा, भ्रष्टाचार.

प्रस्तावना (Introduction):-

लोकशाहीचे यश आणि समाजाची प्रगती ही केवळ उंच इमारतींवरून किंवा आर्थिक आकडेवारीवरून मोजली जात नाही, तर त्या समाजाच्या सार्वजनिक जीवनात असलेली नैतिकता आणि चारित्र्य बळावरून मोजली जाते. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकता म्हणजे वैयक्तिक स्वार्थाच्या पलीकडे जाऊन सामूहिक कल्याणासाठी समर्पित होणे होय. हा तो अदृश्य धागा आहे जो शासन, प्रशासन आणि जनता यांच्यातील विश्वासाचे नाते जोडून ठेवतो. प्राचीन काळापासूनच भारतीय दर्शनात 'यथा राजा तथा प्रजा' या माध्यमातून हे स्पष्ट करण्यात आले आहे की, सार्वजनिक पदांवर बसलेल्या व्यक्तींचे वर्तन हे समाजासाठी एक मानक (आदर्श) असते. परंतु, समकालीन जगामध्ये वाढती भौतिकवादिता, सत्तेची लालसा आणि भ्रष्टाचार यांनी नैतिक मूल्यांसमोर गंभीर संकट उभे केले आहे. आज साध्य प्राप्त करण्याच्या धडपडीत साधनांच्या पवित्रतेचा विसर पडला आहे. अशा परिस्थितीत हा प्रश्न अत्यंत समर्पक ठरतो की, आपण अशा व्यवस्थेकडे वाटचाल करत आहोत का जिथे मूल्ये केवळ पुस्तकांपुरती मर्यादित आहेत, की आपण ही आव्हाने स्वीकारून एका नीतिमान भविष्याचा पाया रचू शकतो.

उद्दिष्टे (Objectives):-

- **प्राथमिक उद्देश जनता आणि शासन यांच्यातील वाढती अविश्वासाची दरी दूर करणे हा आहे. जेव्हा सार्वजनिक पदांवरील व्यक्ती नैतिक असतात, तेव्हा सामान्य नागरिकाचा व्यवस्थेवरील विश्वास वाढतो.**
- **प्रशासनात पारदर्शकता, उत्तरदायित्व आणि कार्यक्षमता आणणे, जेणेकरून सरकारी योजनांचा लाभ कोणत्याही भेदभावाशिवाय समाजातील शेवटच्या घटकापर्यंत पोहोचू शकेल.**
- **सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकतेचा उद्देश अशी प्रणाली निर्माण करणे आहे, जिथे निर्णय जात, धर्म किंवा वैयक्तिक संबंधांऐवजी वस्तुनिष्ठता आणि निष्पक्षतेच्या आधारावर घेतले जातील.**
- **सत्तेचा गैरवापर रोखणे हा नैतिकतेचा एक अनिवार्य उद्देश आहे. हे अधिकाऱ्यांना आर्थिक आमिषे आणि अनैतिक दबावांपासून दूर राहून आपले कर्तव्य पार पाडण्यासाठी प्रेरित करते.**
- **सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकतेचा उद्देश समाजासमोर एक आदर्श ठेवणे हा आहे. जेव्हा उच्च पदावर बसलेले नेते आणि अधिकारी नैतिक असतात, तेव्हा संपूर्ण समाज त्याच दिशेने प्रेरित होतो.**

गृहीतके (Hypothesis):-

- **राजकीय इच्छाशक्ती आणि नेतृत्वाच्या वचनबद्धतेशिवाय प्रशासकीय नैतिकता पूर्णपणे लागू करणे शक्य नाही.**
- **जर सार्वजनिक सेवांमध्ये डिजिटल तंत्रज्ञान आणि पारदर्शकता (ई-गव्हर्नन्स) वाढली, तर भ्रष्टाचारात घट होते आणि नैतिक मूल्यांमध्ये वाढ होते.**

संशोधन पद्धती (Research Methodology):-

प्रस्तुत संशोधनात 'सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकता' यांसारख्या गुणात्मक आणि संवेदनशील विषयाच्या अभ्यासासाठी एका पद्धतशीर आराखड्याची आवश्यकता आहे. सद्यस्थितीत सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिक मूल्यांची स्थिती काय आहे, याचे सविस्तर वर्णन करणे गरजेचे आहे. ज्या आधारावर 'वर्णनात्मक संशोधन' आणि 'विश्लेषणात्मक संशोधन' पद्धती अत्यंत उपयुक्त ठरू शकतात.

आव्हाने

भ्रष्टाचाराचे वाढते जाळे:-

भ्रष्टाचार म्हणजे सत्तेचा दुरुपयोग, ज्यामध्ये वैयक्तिक हितसंबंधांना जबाबदाऱ्यांपेक्षा वर मानले जाते. सरकार आणि व्यवसाय यांसारख्या प्रभावशाली संस्थांद्वारे लाचखोरी, फसवणूक आणि पक्षपात यांसारख्या कृत्यांतून हे प्रकट होते. याचे गंभीर सामाजिक आणि आर्थिक परिणाम होतात, ज्यामुळे लोकशाही आणि जनविश्वासाचा ऱ्हास होतो, तसेच दुर्बल घटकांसाठी महत्त्वपूर्ण सेवांपर्यंत पोहोचणे मर्यादित होते. हे एका संथ विषासारखे आहे जे कोणत्याही राष्ट्राची आर्थिक, सामाजिक आणि नैतिक मुळे पोखरत जात आहे. भ्रष्टाचार तेव्हा होतो जेव्हा सत्तेत बसलेले लोक दुसऱ्यांचे नुकसान करून स्वतःच्या फायद्यासाठी आपल्या अधिकारांचा गैरवापर करून घेतात. जेव्हा एखादी व्यक्ती लाच घेऊन, निर्णयांमध्ये फेरफार करून किंवा इतर फसवणूक किंवा बेकायदेशीर क्रियाकलापांमध्ये सामील होऊन निर्णयांवर प्रभाव टाकते, तेव्हा तो सत्तेचा दुरुपयोग मानला जातो. वर्तमान काळात भ्रष्टाचाराचे जाळे इतके संघटित आहे की सामान्य माणसाला आपले कायदेशीर काम करून घेणेही कठीण होत चालले आहे.[1]

सध्याच्या काळात समाजातील प्रतिष्ठेचा निकष व्यक्तीच्या चारित्र्याऐवजी तिची संपत्ती बनला आहे. या स्पर्धेत लोक योग्य-अयोग्य यातील फरक विसरून धनसंचय करण्यात मग्न आहेत. सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रातील कामांमधील क्लिष्टता आणि गोपनीयता भ्रष्टाचाराला पोषक वातावरण निर्माण करते. जेव्हा भ्रष्ट व्यक्तींना योग्य वेळी शिक्षा मिळत नाही, तेव्हा त्यांचे मनोबल वाढते आणि व्यवस्थेबद्दलची भीती संपते. अनेकदा कनिष्ठ स्तरावरील कर्मचारी आपल्या मूलभूत गरजा पूर्ण करण्यासाठी भ्रष्टाचाराचा आधार घेतात. लाचखोरीचा सर्वात वाईट परिणाम देशातील खालच्या स्तरावर होतो. सरकारच्या कल्याणकारी योजनांचा पैसा पात्र लोकांपर्यंत पोहोचण्याऐवजी मध्यस्थच हडप करतात. यामुळे अनेकदा आर्थिक विषमता वाढते आणि परकीय गुंतवणूक निरुत्साहित होते. जेव्हा एखाद्या व्यक्तीकडे पात्रता असूनही

[1] मोइली, एम. वीरप्पा (२००७) - *शासन में नैतिकता: द्वितीय प्रशासनिक सुधार आयोग की चौथी रिपोर्ट*. भारत सरकार: प्रशासनिक सुधार और लोक शिकायत विभाग, पृष्ठ १३-१५.

शिफारस आणि लालसेला महत्त्व दिले जाते, तेव्हा देशाच्या प्रतिभेचे मोठ्या प्रमाणावर नुकसान होते, ज्यामुळे राष्ट्राच्या प्रगतीत अडथळा निर्माण होतो.[2]

सरकारी भ्रष्टाचार तेव्हा होतो जेव्हा सत्ताधारी पक्ष अधिक हस्तक्षेप आणि व्यापक भूमिका बजावतो. सरकारी भ्रष्टाचाराच्या रूपांमध्ये नातेवाईकवाद (भाई-भतीजावाद), लाचखोरी, वशिलेबाजी, अपहार आणि चाटुकारिता यांचा समावेश होतो. उदाहरणार्थ, एखादा सरकारी अधिकारी आपल्या प्रभावाचा आणि सत्तेचा गैरवापर करून कुटुंबातील सदस्यांची उच्च पदांवर नियुक्ती करू शकतो. इतर प्रकरणांमध्ये, अधिकारी सत्तेवर टिकून राहण्यासाठी निवडणूक निकालांवर प्रभाव टाकण्याचा किंवा विरोधकांना नुकसान पोहोचवण्याचा प्रयत्न करू शकतात. भ्रष्टाचाराचे हे जाळे तोडण्यासाठी बहुआयामी दृष्टिकोनाची आवश्यकता आहे. ई-गव्हर्नन्स आणि डिजिटल पेमेंटला प्रोत्साहन देऊन मानवी हस्तक्षेप कमी केला जाऊ शकतो, ज्यामुळे लाचेची शक्यता किमान होते. भ्रष्टाचारविरोधी कायदे अधिक कडक करण्याची आणि जलद गती न्यायालयांच्या माध्यमातून दोषींना शिक्षा देण्याची गरज आहे. समाजात बालपणापासूनच प्रामाणिकपणाची मूल्ये रुजवावी लागतील. माहितीचा अधिकार यांसारख्या साधनांचा वापर करून जनतेने प्रशासनात पारदर्शकतेची मागणी केली पाहिजे.[3] भ्रष्टाचाराचे वाढते जाळे ही केवळ एका व्यक्तीची समस्या नसून ती एक सामूहिक सामाजिक विकृती आहे. हे केवळ कायद्याच्या जोरावर जिंकता येणार नाही; त्यासाठी नीतिमत्ता आणि नागरिक सजगता अनिवार्य आहे. जेव्हा प्रत्येक व्यक्ती 'मी लाच देणार नाही आणि घेणार नाही' असा संकल्प करेल, तेव्हाच आपण भ्रष्टाचारमुक्त आणि समृद्ध राष्ट्राची कल्पना करू शकतो.

हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष:-

सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकतेसमोर असलेल्या सर्वात मोठ्या आव्हानांपैकी एक म्हणजे 'हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष'. ही स्थिती तेव्हा उद्भवते जेव्हा एखाद्या व्यक्तीचे वैयक्तिक हित त्याच्या सार्वजनिक कर्तव्यांच्या निष्पक्ष पालनामध्ये अडथळा आणतात. जेव्हा एखादा लोकसेवक किंवा निर्णय घेणाऱ्या पदावर बसलेली व्यक्ती अशा स्थितीत असते, जिथे त्याच्या निर्णयामुळे त्याला, त्याच्या कुटुंबाला किंवा मित्रांना प्रत्यक्ष अथवा अप्रत्यक्ष आर्थिक लाभ मिळू शकतो, तेव्हा त्याला हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष असे म्हणतात. येथे ती व्यक्ती लोकहित आणि स्वहित यांच्यात अडकते. सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रात एखाद्या सरकारी निविदा प्रक्रियेत स्वतःच्याच एखाद्या कंपनीची किंवा कुटुंब अथवा मित्राच्या कंपनीची निवड करणे; खाजगी संस्थांकडून महागड्या भेटवस्तू किंवा वस्तू स्वीकारणे, ज्यामुळे भविष्यात त्या व्यक्तीच्या निर्णयांवर प्रभाव पडू शकतो; सरकारी उच्च पदावर असताना एखाद्या खाजगी कंपनीसाठी सल्लागार म्हणून काम करणे; किंवा सेवानिवृत्तीनंतर लगेचच अशा खाजगी कंपनीत उच्च पद स्वीकारणे, ज्या कंपनीला त्याच्या सेवाकाळात आर्थिक लाभ पोहोचवला गेला असेल, ही या संघर्षाची काही उदाहरणे आहेत.

आर्थिक हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष वैयक्तिक आणि संस्थात्मक अशा दोन्ही प्रकारचा असू शकतो. वैयक्तिक हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष तेव्हा होतो जेव्हा प्रकाशन प्रक्रियेत सामील असलेल्या एखाद्या व्यक्तीला आर्थिक लाभ मिळतो किंवा मिळण्याची अपेक्षा असते, ज्यामुळे एखाद्या विशिष्ट प्रकाशनावरील त्याच्या कार्यावर परिणाम होऊ शकतो. शैक्षणिक संशोधनामध्ये, असे आर्थिक संबंध संस्थात्मक हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष निर्माण करू शकतात, जिथे संस्थेच्या किंवा तिच्या प्रतिनिधींच्या आर्थिक हितांमुळे निर्णय घेण्याची प्रक्रिया प्रभावित होऊ शकते. संस्थात्मक हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष तेव्हा निर्माण होतो, जेव्हा एखाद्या संस्थेचे किंवा तिच्या अधिकाऱ्यांचे आर्थिक हितसंबंध संशोधनाच्या निष्कर्षांवर अयोग्य प्रभाव टाकण्याची किंवा नैतिक चिंता निर्माण करण्याची क्षमता ठेवतात; विशेषतः मानवी विषयांवर आधारित अभ्यासांमध्ये हे अधिक प्रकर्षाने जाणवते. हे वाद सामान्यतः तेव्हा उद्भवतात जेव्हा एखादा संशोधन प्रकल्प एखाद्या आविष्काराचे, उत्पादनाचे, औषधाचे, सेवेचे किंवा तंत्रज्ञानाचे मूल्यमापन, पडताळणी, चाचणी किंवा प्रयोगाच्या माध्यमातून एखाद्या बाह्य संस्थेला थेट फायदा पोहोचवतो आणि त्या संस्थेत मूळ संस्थेचे आर्थिक हितसंबंध गुंतलेले असतात. अशा आर्थिक हितसंबंधांमध्ये बाह्य संस्थेकडून मिळणारे परवाना शुल्क किंवा रॉयल्टी, किंवा बाह्य संस्थेतील मालकी हक्क यांचा समावेश असू शकतो, परंतु ते केवळ इतक्यापुरतेच मर्यादित नाहीत. जेव्हा एखाद्या संशोधन प्रकल्पात मानवी विषयांचा समावेश असतो आणि संस्थेचे त्यात आर्थिक हित गुंतलेले असते, तेव्हा असा हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष अयोग्य मानला जातो.

[2] कित्ता.

[3] संथानम, के. (१९६४) - *भ्रष्टाचार निवारण समिति की रिपोर्ट*. भारत सरकार: गृह मंत्रालय, पृष्ठ ७-११.

दुसऱ्या प्रशासकीय सुधारणा आयोगाने आपल्या चौथ्या अहवालात यावर उपाय म्हणून स्पष्ट मार्गदर्शक तत्त्वे दिली आहेत: लोकसेवकांनी स्वतःची आणि कुटुंबाची मालमत्ता तसेच व्यावसायिक हितसंबंधांची आगाऊ घोषणा केली पाहिजे.[4] जर एखाद्या निर्णय प्रक्रियेत वैयक्तिक हितसंबंध गुंतलेले असतील, तर त्या व्यक्तीने स्वतःला त्या प्रक्रियेतून बाजूला करून घेतले पाहिजे. नागरी सेवा नियमावलींतर्गत हितसंबंधांच्या संघर्षाची स्पष्ट व्याख्या केली पाहिजे आणि त्यावर निर्बंध लादले पाहिजेत.[5] हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष ही भ्रष्टाचाराची पहिली पायरी आहे. हे रोखण्यासाठी विवेकबुद्धीच्या आवाजा सोबतच मजबूत कायदेशीर चौकटीची आवश्यकता आहे.

मूल्यांचा ऱ्हास:-

भारताच्या सार्वजनिक जीवनातील अत्यंत चिंतेचा विषय म्हणजे 'मूल्यांचा ऱ्हास' होय. याचा अर्थ सत्यनिष्ठा, प्रामाणिकपणा, परोपकार आणि सेवाभाव यांसारख्या मूल्यधिष्ठित तत्त्वांचे पतन होणे आणि त्यांच्या जागी स्वार्थ, भौतिकवाद आणि संधीसाधूपणा वाढीस लागणे हा आहे. व्यक्तीच्या चारित्र्याच्या पतनाचा परिणाम समाजात वाढणारे गुन्हे, भ्रष्टाचार, वृद्धांविषयीचा अनादर आणि तरुणांमधील वाढती अस्वस्थता या रूपाने स्पष्टपणे दिसून येतो. मानवी मूल्यांचा विचार केल्यास, जी मूल्ये मानवी जीवनाच्या नैसर्गिक आणि सुव्यवस्थित संचालनासाठी आवश्यक असतात, त्यांना 'मानवी मूल्ये' म्हटले जाते. दैनंदिन जीवनात आपण योग्य-अयोग्य, श्रेष्ठ-कनिष्ठ, स्वीकारार्ह-त्याज्य इत्यादींचे जे निर्णय घेतो, त्यांचा आधार मानवी मूल्येच असतात. ज्या निकषांच्या कसोटीवर एखाद्या घटनेची सत्यता, व्यक्ती आणि समाजावर होणारा कल्याणकारी किंवा अकल्याणकारी परिणाम किंवा एखाद्या वस्तूच्या गुणांची श्रेष्ठता मोजली जाते, त्यांना 'मूल्ये' म्हणतात. मूल्यांनुसारच कोणत्याही वस्तू किंवा व्यक्तीचे गुण, दोष, योग्यता इत्यादींची ओळख पटवून त्यांचे महत्त्व प्रस्थापित केले जाते.[6]

दुसऱ्या प्रशासकीय सुधारणा आयोगाने आपल्या अहवालात मूल्यांच्या पुनरुत्थानासाठी खालील सुचविले आहे: केवळ औपचारिक नव्हे, तर व्यावहारिक स्तरावर लोकसेवकांना सार्वजनिक सेवेच्या मूल्यांप्रती वचनबद्ध करणे;[7] प्राथमिक स्तरापासूनच नैतिक मूल्यांना अभ्यासक्रमाचा अनिवार्य हिस्सा बनवणे; सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रातील उच्च पदांवर कार्यरत व्यक्तींनी स्वतः नैतिक आदर्श सादर करणे आवश्यक आहे, जेणेकरून समाज त्यांचे अनुकरण करेल.

उपाय

मूल्यधिष्ठित शिक्षण:-

शिक्षणाचा खरा अर्थ केवळ साक्षरता किंवा पदवी मिळवणे हा नसून, व्यक्तीच्या अंगभूत कौशल्यांचा विकास करून त्याला एक उत्तम माणूस बनवणे हा आहे. स्वामी विवेकानंद यांनी म्हटले होते की, "शिक्षण ते आहे, जे चारित्र्य निर्माण करते, मनाची शक्ती वाढवते आणि बुद्धीचा विस्तार करते."[8] आजच्या धावपळीच्या जीवनात, जेव्हा सार्वजनिक जीवनात भ्रष्टाचार, स्वार्थ आणि नैतिक अध:पतनाचा बोलबाला आहे, तेव्हा 'मूल्यधिष्ठित शिक्षणाची' प्रासंगिकता अधिकच वाढली आहे. मूल्यधिष्ठित शिक्षण ही अशी पद्धती आहे जी विद्यार्थ्यांच्या बौद्धिक विकासासोबतच त्यांच्या नैतिक, राष्ट्रीय, सामाजिक आणि आध्यात्मिक विकासावर अधिक भर देते. सध्याच्या आपल्या शिक्षण प्रणालीने कुशल इंजिनिअर, डॉक्टर आणि व्यवस्थापक तर दिले आहेत, पण एक संवेदनशील माणूस घडवण्यात कुठेतरी कमतरता राहिली आहे. जेव्हा एखादी शिक्षित व्यक्ती आपल्या बुद्धीचा वापर स्वतःच्या स्वार्थासाठी किंवा भ्रष्टाचारासाठी करते, तेव्हा ती व्यक्ती समाजासाठी सर्वात जास्त घातक ठरते. म्हणूनच, मूल्यांना शिक्षणाच्या केंद्रस्थानी आणणे अनिवार्य आहे.[9]

सार्वजनिक जीवनात सत्यनिष्ठा, पारदर्शकता आणि उत्तरदायित्वाचा अभाव असण्याचे मुख्य कारण म्हणजे बालपणातच नैतिक पाया कमकुवत असणे, असे दिसून येते. मूल्यधिष्ठित शिक्षण खालील प्रकारे या आव्हानांवर उपाय शोधते: शिक्षणाच्या माध्यमातूनच जेव्हा 'प्रामाणिकपणा हेच सर्वोत्तम धोरण' हा भाव अंतर्मनात रुजतो, तेव्हा भविष्यातील लोकसेवक भ्रष्टाचार किंवा आमिषांपुढे झुकत नाही.

[4] कित्ता, पृ. ३५.
[5] कित्ता, पृ. ३५-४०.
[6] कित्ता, पृ. १३-१८.
[7] कित्ता
[8] स्वामी विवेकानंद (संकलित विचार) (१९३०) - स्वामी विवेकानंदांचे शिक्षणविषयक विचार, रामकृष्ण मठ किंवा रामकृष्ण मिशन प्रकाशन, नागपूर.
[9] कित्ता, पृ. १३६-१४०.

मूल्यधिष्ठित शिक्षण विद्यार्थ्याला समाजातील शेवटच्या घटकाप्रती संवेदनशील बनवते. यामुळे सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रातील पदांवर बसलेल्या व्यक्तींमध्ये सेवेची भावना निर्माण होते, सत्तेचा अहंकार नाही. न्याय, स्वातंत्र्य, समानता आणि बंधुत्व यांसारख्या घटनात्मक मूल्यांचे शिक्षण एका न्यायपूर्ण समाजाच्या स्थापनेत सहाय्यक ठरते. शिक्षक हाच विद्यार्थ्याचा सर्वात मोठा मार्गदर्शक असतो. जर शिक्षकांनी स्वतः नैतिक मूल्यांची जोपासना केली, तर विद्यार्थी त्यांचे अनुकरण करतील. शैक्षणिक संस्थांसोबतच आपल्या कुटुंबातही नैतिक वातावरण निर्माण करावे लागेल, कारण मूल्यांची सुरुवात ही स्वतःच्या घरापासूनच होते.[10]

मूल्यधिष्ठित शिक्षण हा काही अल्पकालीन उपाय नसून, ती एक निरंतर चालणारी प्रक्रिया आहे. ही येणाऱ्या भविष्यकाळातील पिढीच्या मानसिक विचारसरणीला अद्ययावत करण्याची प्रक्रिया आहे. जर आपल्याला सार्वजनिक जीवन पूर्णपणे भ्रष्टाचारमुक्त आणि नैतिक बनवायचे असेल, तर नैतिक समाजाची निर्मिती केवळ कायद्यांनी शक्य नाही; तर मूल्यधिष्ठित शिक्षणाने सुसंस्कृत झालेल्या नागरिकांद्वारेच ती शक्य होऊ शकते.

प्रशासकीय सुधारणा:-

कोणत्याही लोकशाही राष्ट्राची प्रगती ही त्याच्या प्रशासकीय व्यवस्थेची कार्यक्षमता, बुद्धिमत्ता आणि कर्तव्यदक्षता यावर अवलंबून असते. भारतासारख्या लोकसंख्याबहुल देशात प्रशासन हे केवळ धोरणे लागू करण्याचे माध्यम नसून सामाजिक न्याय सुनिश्चित करण्याचे एक साधन देखील आहे. सद्यस्थितीत सार्वजनिक जीवनात पसरलेला भ्रष्टाचार, दप्तरदिरंगाई आणि नैतिक अध:पतन पाहता प्रशासनात सुधारणा करणे अनिवार्य झाले आहे. प्रशासकीय व्यवस्थेला जास्तीत जास्त पारदर्शक, उत्तरदायी आणि नैतिक बनवणे हा याचा मुख्य उद्देश आहे. भारतीय स्वातंत्र्यापासूनच भारतात प्रशासकीय सुधारणांची गरज भासली आहे. या आधारावर संथानम समिती (१९६४) पासून ते द्वितीय प्रशासकीय सुधारणा आयोगापर्यंत (२००७), भारतीय तज्ज्ञांनी वारंवार असा इशारा दिला आहे की, जर प्रशासकीय चौकटीत आमूलाग्र बदल केले गेले नाहीत, तर सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रातील जनतेचा लोकशाहीवरील विश्वास उडेल. सध्याच्या काळात भ्रष्टाचाराचे जाळे तोडण्यासाठी केवळ कायदे आणि नियम पुरेसे ठरत नाहीत, तर संपूर्ण कार्यपद्धतीतच सुधारणांची आवश्यकता आहे.[11]

प्रशासकीय सुधारणांच्या माध्यमातून प्रशासनात अशा प्रकारचे सुनियोजित बदल घडवून आणले जातात, ज्यामुळे प्रशासकीय क्षमतांमध्ये वाढ होते आणि निर्धारित उद्दिष्टे गाठण्याच्या दिशेने वाटचाल करणे सुलभ होते. आर्थिक व सामाजिक उद्दिष्टे साध्य करण्यासाठी प्रशासकीय क्षेत्र दक्ष आणि तत्पर असणे गरजेचे आहे. जर तसे नसेल, तर अपेक्षित सुधारणा करणे आवश्यक ठरते. प्रशासकीय सुधारणांच्या माध्यमातून कोणताही विभाग किंवा संघटना गरजेनुसार बदलता येते. सामान्यतः योजनांचे अपेक्षित परिणाम न मिळाल्यास किंवा सार्वजनिक हिताच्या कल्याणकारी कार्यक्रमांच्या अंमलबजावणीत हलगर्जीपणा दिसून आल्यास, प्रशासकीय सुधारणांची प्रक्रिया अवलंबली जाते; ही प्रक्रिया विकसित देशांमध्येही दिसते आणि विकसनशील देशांमध्येही. प्रशासकीय सुधारणा म्हणजे केवळ फाईल्स आणि नियमांमधील बदल नसावा, तर ती मानसिकता परिवर्तनाची प्रक्रिया असायला हवी. जेव्हा प्रशासन शासका ऐवजी जनसेवकाच्या भूमिकेत येईल, तेव्हाच सार्वजनिक जीवनात नैतिकतेचा उदय होईल. मजबूत प्रशासकीय सुधारणाच भ्रष्टाचारमुक्त आणि विकसित भारताचा पाया रचू शकतात.[12]

उत्तरदायित्व निश्चित करणे:-

भारत ही लोकशाहीची जननी आहे आणि सरकारचे उत्तरदायित्व हे लोकशाही सरकारचे एक महत्त्वाचे वैशिष्ट्य आहे. भारतीय लोकशाहीमध्ये शक्ती ही जनतेने दिलेली ठेव आहे, जी ती लोककल्याणाच्या सेवेसाठी आपल्या प्रतिनिधींकडे आणि प्रशासकांकडे सोपवते. या प्राप्त झालेल्या शक्तीसोबत उत्तरदायित्वाचे तत्त्व अनिवार्यपणे जोडलेले असते. उत्तरदायित्वाचा अर्थ असा आहे की, सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रातील पदावर बसलेल्या प्रत्येक व्यक्तीला आपल्या निर्णयांसाठी, कृतींसाठी आणि त्यांच्या होणाऱ्या परिणामांसाठी जनता किंवा कायद्यासमोर उत्तरदायी असावे लागेल. जेव्हा कधी शासनामध्ये उत्तरदायित्वाचा अभाव असतो, तेव्हा सत्ता निरंकुश होते आणि भ्रष्टाचाराचे जाळे पसरू लागते. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील उत्तरदायित्व केवळ कागदी नियमांपुरते मर्यादित नाही, त्याचे तीन मुख्य पैलू आहेत:

[10] राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति २०२०, शिक्षा मंत्रालय (पूर्ववर्ती मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय), भारत सरकार, २०२०, पृ. ३६-३८.

[11] कित्ता, पृ. १३-१८.

[12] संथानम, के. (१९६४). *भ्रष्टाचार निवारण समिति की रिपोर्ट*. गृह मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार.

१. **प्रशासकीय उत्तरदायित्व:** लोकसेवकांनी त्यांच्या वरिष्ठांप्रती आणि विहित नियमांप्रती जबाबदार असणे.
२. **विधायी (कायदेमंडळ) उत्तरदायित्व:** मंत्री आणि सरकारचे संसद किंवा विधानसभेप्रती उत्तरदायी असणे, जे लोकशाहीचा आत्मा आहे.
३. **सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व:** नागरिक आणि नागरी समाजाद्वारे थेट प्रशासनाला प्रश्न विचारणे. यामध्ये 'सोशल ऑडिट' (सामाजिक अंकेक्षण) सारख्या प्रक्रियांचा समावेश होतो.

द्वितीय प्रशासकीय सुधारणा आयोगाने आपल्या चौथ्या अहवालात शासनातील नैतिकता स्पष्ट केले आहे की, भारतात उत्तरदायित्वाच्या मार्गात विवेकाधीन अधिकारांचा दुरुपयोग ही सर्वात मोठी बाधा ठरते. आयोगाच्या मते, जिथे नियम स्पष्ट नसतात, तिथे अधिकारी आपल्या मर्जीनुसार वागतात, ज्यामुळे उत्तरदायित्व संपुष्टात येते.[13] उत्तरदायित्व अधिक प्रभावी बनवण्यासाठी खालील सुधारणा आवश्यक आहेत:

- **कामगिरी आधारित मूल्यमापन:** लोकसेवकांची पदोन्नती केवळ सेवाज्येष्ठतेवर (Seniority) अवलंबून न राहता, त्यांनी केलेल्या कामाच्या प्रत्यक्ष निकालांच्या आधारे असावी.
- **व्हिसलब्लोअर संरक्षण:** भ्रष्टाचार उघड करणाऱ्या व्यक्तींना पूर्ण संरक्षण देणे आवश्यक आहे, जेणेकरून ते निर्भयपणे भ्रष्टाचाराविरुद्ध लढू शकतील.
- **ई-गव्हर्नन्सचा विस्तार:** आधुनिक तंत्रज्ञानाच्या माध्यमातून मानवी हस्तक्षेप कमी करून 'डिजिटल उत्तरदायित्व' निश्चित केले जाऊ शकते.[14]

उत्तरदायित्व ही केवळ प्रशासकीय प्रक्रिया नसून ती एक नैतिक प्रतिज्ञा आहे. सार्वजनिक सेवेचा खरा अर्थ हा जनतेची सेवा करणे हाच आहे, केवळ स्वतःचा स्वार्थ साधणे नव्हे, हे यातून सुनिश्चित होते. जोपर्यंत उच्च पदावर बसलेल्या व्यक्तींच्या मनात चुकीचे काम केल्यावर मिळणाऱ्या दंडाची भीती आणि कारभारात पारदर्शकतेचे वातावरण नसेल, तोपर्यंत सार्वजनिक जीवनात नैतिकतेची पुनर्स्थापना होणे शक्य नाही. एक सुजाण नागरिक आणि पारदर्शक यंत्रणाच भारताला भ्रष्टाचारमुक्त बनवू शकते.

नागरिक चेतना:

भारतातील नागरिक वर्तणुकीची समस्या समजून घेण्यासाठी त्याच्या ऐतिहासिक-सामाजिक संरचनेचा विचार करणे आवश्यक आहे. भारतीय समाजात दीर्घकाळ जातीवर आधारित श्रमविभागणी अस्तित्वात होती, ज्यामध्ये स्वच्छता आणि साफसफाईशी संबंधित कामे विशिष्ट समुदायांपुरती मर्यादित केली गेली होती. या ऐतिहासिक व्यवस्थेने हळूहळू एक मानसिकता निर्माण केली की, साफसफाई करणे हे दुसऱ्या कोणाचे तरी काम आहे. जगातील कोणत्याही देशाची राज्यघटना आणि कायदे केवळ कागदी दस्तऐवज बनून राहतात, जर त्या देशाचा नागरिक आपल्या अधिकारांविषयी आणि कर्तव्यांविषयी जागरूक नसेल. नागरिक चेतना म्हणजे समाजाप्रती उत्तरदायित्वाची भावना आणि सार्वजनिक जीवनात होणाऱ्या घडामोडींविषयी जागरूकता निर्माण करणे होय. जेव्हा नागरिक जागरूक असतो, तेव्हा तो शासनाला उत्तरदायी बनवण्यात आपली भूमिका बजावतो आणि अनैतिकतेविरुद्ध एक भक्कम भिंत उभी करण्यास सक्षम होतो. वास्तविक पाहता, लोकशाहीच्या यशाचा निकष मजबूत सरकार नसून जागरूक नागरिक हा असतो. सार्वजनिक जीवनात पसरलेला भ्रष्टाचार, राजकारणाचे गुन्हेगारीकरण आणि मूल्यांचा ऱ्हास यांसारख्या आव्हानांवर सर्वात प्रभावी उपाय 'नागरिक चेतना' हाच आहे. याचे महत्त्व खालील मुद्द्यांवरून समजून घेता येईल:

१. **भ्रष्टाचारावर अंकुश:** एक जागरूक नागरिक लाच देण्यास नकार देतो आणि भ्रष्ट कृत्ये उघड करण्याचे धाडस दाखवतो. जेव्हा जनता शून्य सहनशीलता धोरण अवलंबते, तेव्हा भ्रष्टाचाराचे जाळे आपोआप कमकुवत होऊ लागते.
२. **उत्तरदायित्वाची (जवाबदेहीची) मागणी:** नागरिक चेतनेमुळेच जनता माहितीचा अधिकार यांसारख्या साधनांचा वापर करून प्रशासनाकडून कामांचा हिशोब मागू शकते.
३. **निवडणूक जागरूकता:** जागरूक मतदार जात, धर्म किंवा आमिषांच्या आधारावर मत न देता उमेदवाराचे चारित्र्य आणि योग्यता पाहून मतदान करतो. यामुळे राजकारणाच्या गुन्हेगारीकरणाला आळा बसतो.

[13] कित्ता, पृ. २२-२५.
[14] कित्ता

द्वितीय प्रशासकीय सुधारणा आयोगाने आपल्या चौथ्या अहवालात शासनातील नैतिकता नागरी चेतनेला लोकशाहीचा रक्षक मानले आहे. आयोगाच्या मते, नागरी चेतना वाढवण्यासाठी खालील पावले उचलणे आवश्यक आहे:

- **सोशल ऑडिट (सामाजिक अंकेक्षण):** जेव्हा सरकारी योजनांचे निरीक्षण थेट ग्रामसभा किंवा नागरिकांद्वारे केले जाते, तेव्हा भ्रष्टाचाराला वाव कमी मिळतो. हे नागरी चेतनेचे एक व्यावहारिक उदाहरण आहे.
- **नागरिक हक्क सनद:** कोणती सेवा किती वेळात मिळायला हवी, हे नागरिकांना माहित असायला हवे. आपल्या हक्कांबद्दलचे हे ज्ञान म्हणजेच 'चेतना' होय.
- **शिक्षण आणि प्रसारमाध्यमे:** नागरिकांना त्यांच्या घटनात्मक अधिकारांविषयी आणि नैतिक कर्तव्यांविषयी शिक्षित करणे, ही शैक्षणिक संस्था आणि स्वतंत्र प्रसारमाध्यमांची जबाबदारी आहे.[15]

सध्याच्या काळात जनतेची उदासीनता ही नागरिक चेतनेची सर्वात मोठी शत्रू ठरत आहे. 'मला काय देणे-घेणे' अशी मानसिकता अनैतिक घटकांना फोफावण्याची मोठी संधी देते. या तंत्रजालाच्या युगात दिशाभूल करणारी चुकीची माहिती देखील नागरिक चेतनेला भ्रमित करत आहे. नागरिक चेतना केवळ मतदानाच्या दिवसापुरती मर्यादित न राहता, ती सार्वजनिक जीवनातील निरंतर सहभागाची प्रक्रिया असायला हवी. थॉमस जेफरसन यांनी नागरिक चेतनेच्या संदर्भात म्हटले होते की, स्वातंत्र्याची किंमत ही निरंतर सतर्कता आहे. जर आपल्याला सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रात नैतिक आणि भ्रष्टाचारमुक्त भारत हवा असेल, तर आपल्याला मूक प्रेक्षकाऐवजी सक्रिय नागरिक बनावे लागेल. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नागरिक चेतना हाच तो प्रकाश आहे, जो सार्वजनिक जीवनातील अंधकार दूर करून नैतिकतेचा मार्ग सुलभ करू शकतो.

निष्कर्ष:-

सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकता केवळ नियमांचे पालन केल्याने येत नाही, तर ती आंतरिक विवेकातून येते. यासाठी कडक कायद्यांसोबतच नैतिक शिक्षण आणि पारदर्शकतेला प्रोत्साहन देणे गरजेचे आहे. जोपर्यंत सार्वजनिक जीवनात स्वतःपेक्षा समाजाची भावना जागृत होणार नाही, तोपर्यंत ही आव्हाने कायम राहतील. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकता हे केवळ एक प्रयोजन नसून ती एक निरंतर चालणारी प्रक्रिया आहे. हे कायदा आणि वैयक्तिक चारित्र्य यांच्यातील संतुलन आहे. महात्मा गांधींनी म्हटल्याप्रमाणे, "जगात प्रत्येकाच्या गरजेसाठी पुरेसे आहे, पण कोणाच्याही लोभासाठी नाही." जर आपल्याला न्यायपूर्ण आणि समृद्ध समाज हवा असेल, तर आपल्याला सार्वजनिक पदांवर बसलेल्या व्यक्तींकडून सर्वोच्च नैतिक मानकांची मागणी करावी लागेल आणि स्वतःही एक जागरूक नागरिक म्हणून त्या मूल्यांचे पालन करावे लागेल. नैतिकता हाच तो प्रकाश आहे जो लोकशाहीचे भविष्य उज्ज्वल करू शकतो. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिकता हा कोणताही पर्याय नसून ती एक गरज आहे. जर आपल्याला न्यायपूर्ण आणि विकसित समाजाची निर्मिती करायची असेल, तर आपल्याला वैयक्तिक स्वार्थाचा त्याग करून सार्वजनिक कल्याणाला प्राधान्य द्यावे लागेल. नैतिकतेशिवाय प्रशासन निर्जीव आहे आणि राजकारण दिशाहीन. सरतेशेवटी, सार्वजनिक जीवनातील शुद्धता हाच राष्ट्राच्या प्रगतीचा खरा निकष आहे.

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सारांश

सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता ही लोकशाही जीवन पद्धती असणाऱ्या प्रत्येक राष्ट्राची प्राथमिक अट आहे. प्रशासन, राजकारण, निर्णय निर्धारण, कायदे निर्मिती, आरोग्य, पर्यावरण आणि प्रसार माध्यमांच्या सार्वत्रिक प्रक्रियेत नितीमत्ता अग्रस्थानी असावी लागते. सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेची संकल्पना तात्त्विक, प्रशासकीय आणि व्यवहार्य स्तरांवर स्पष्ट करून तिच्यासमोरील समकालीन आव्हानांचे विश्लेषण करणे म्हणूनच अगत्याचे ठरते. प्राचीन भारतीय परंपरा तसेच अरिस्टॉटल, कांट आणि गांधी यांच्या सारख्या विचारवंतांच्या तत्वज्ञानाच्या आधारे नीतिमत्तेचे नैतिक अधिष्ठान समजून घेणे शक्य आहे. आधुनिक काळात कूपर, रोहर, थॉम्पसन, बर्क, रॉल्स आणि अमर्त्य सेन यांच्या सिद्धांतांच्या आधारावर मूल्यांची उपेक्षा, कर्तव्याचे संकट आणि सामाजिक न्यायातील अपयशाचे विश्लेषण करणे हे सुद्धा गरजेचे ठरते. जागतिकीकरण, समाज माध्यमे, सार्वजनिक आरोग्य व पर्यावरणीय धोरणांतील नैतिक द्वंद्वाचा विचार सुद्धा करणे सुद्धा अत्यावश्यक आहे. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्तेची आव्हाने बहुआयामी व संरचनात्मक असून, मूल्याधिष्ठित शिक्षण, नैतिक नेतृत्व आणि संस्थात्मक संस्कृतीद्वारेच अधिक विश्वासार्ह व लोकाभिमुख सार्वजनिक नितीमुल्ये निर्मिले जाऊ शकते. या सर्व पृष्ठभूमीवर प्रस्तुत संशोधन निबंधात यासर्व घटकांचे चिकित्सकपणे विश्लेषण करण्यात आलेले आहे.

प्रस्तावना:

लोकशाही शासनव्यवस्थेचे यश केवळ घटनात्मक चौकट, कायदे किंवा प्रशासकीय संरचना यांवरच अवलंबून नाही. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील मुलभूत नीतिमत्तेच्या आधारावरही लोकशाहीच्या यशस्वीतेचे मोजमाप होत असते. सार्वजनिक पदांवर आरूढ व्यक्तींचे वर्तन, निर्णयनिर्धारण प्रक्रियेत मूल्यांचे योगदान, तसेच सार्वजनिक हिताला दिलेले प्राधान्य हे घटक लोकशाहीतील विश्वास, अधिमान्यता आणि स्थिरता यांचे मूलभूत आधार ठरतात. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता म्हणजे केवळ वैयक्तिक सद्वर्तन नव्हे, तर शासन, प्रशासन आणि समाज यांच्यातील नैतिक बंधाची एकात्म संरचना होय.

भारतीय महान तात्विक परंपरेत सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचा विचार प्राचीन काळापासून आढळतो. कौटिल्याच्या अर्थशास्त्रात राजाचे कर्तव्य, प्रशासकीय वर्तन आणि जनकल्याण यांना नैतिक अधिष्ठान देण्यात आले आहे. पाश्चात्त्य आदर्शवादात सुद्धा नितीमत्ता महत्वाची मानली गेलेली आहे. अरिस्टॉटलची 'सद्गुण नीतिमत्ता' आणि कांटची 'कर्तव्यवादी संकल्पना' सार्वजनिक चारित्र्याच्या महत्त्वावर भर देते. आधुनिक काळात जॉन रॉल्स, अमर्त्य सेन, टेरी कूपर आणि डेनिस

थॉम्पसन यांसारख्या विचारवंतांनी सार्वजनिक निर्णयप्रक्रियेत न्याय, उत्तरदायित्व आणि मूल्याधिष्ठान यांचे सैद्धांतिक स्पष्टीकरण दिले आहे. या विचारपरंपरेमुळे सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता ही केवळ नैतिक आदर्श न राहता धोरणात्मक आणि प्रशासकीय गरज म्हणून समोर येते.

समकालीन काळात सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्तेसमोरील आव्हाने अधिक तीव्र आणि क्लिष्ट होत चालली आहेत. सत्तेचे केंद्रीकरण, राजकीय हस्तक्षेप, प्रशासकीय कार्यक्षमतेचा अतिरेक, भ्रष्टाचार, हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष आणि कर्तव्यभावनेचा अभाव यांमुळे नैतिक मूल्यांना दुय्यम स्थानी ढकलण्यात आले आहे. जागतिकीकरण, तंत्रज्ञान, माध्यम आधारित समाजरचना आणि डिजिटल संवादव्यवस्थेमुळे सार्वजनिक क्षेत्राचे स्वरूप पूर्णतः बदलले असून नैतिक निर्णयप्रक्रिया अधिक आव्हानात्मक ठरली आहे. सार्वजनिक आरोग्य, पर्यावरणीय संरक्षण आणि विकास धोरणांमध्येही अल्पकालीन स्वार्थ आणि दीर्घकालीन नैतिक जबाबदाऱ्या यांतील तणाव प्रकर्षाने दिसून येतो. नीतिमत्ता ही केवळ बंधनांची अंमलबजावणी नसून मूल्याधिष्ठित निर्णय, नैतिक नेतृत्व आणि संस्थात्मक संस्कृती यांवर आधारित असते, अशी संदर्भासह भूमिका या संशोधनातून स्पष्ट करण्यात आलेली आहे.

मुख्य शब्द; सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्ता, लोकशाही मूल्ये, सार्वजनिक हित, सामजिक न्याय, मूल्याधिष्ठित शासन

s

संशोधनाची उद्दिष्ट्ये:

१. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्तेची संकल्पना, स्वरूप आणि व्याप्तींचे तात्त्विक विश्लेषण करणे.
२. प्राचीन भारतीय व पाश्चात्त्य राजकीय विचारांतील सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेच्या संकल्पनांचा तुलनात्मक अभ्यास करणे.
३. आधुनिक प्रशासकीय व राजकीय व्यवस्थेमध्ये नीतिमत्तेची भूमिका आणि महत्त्व स्पष्ट करणे.
४. सार्वजनिक निर्णयप्रक्रियेत उद्भवणाऱ्या नैतिक संघर्षांचे आणि मूल्यद्वंद्वांचे विश्लेषण करणे.
५. जागतिकीकरण, माध्यमे, तंत्रज्ञान, सार्वजनिक आरोग्य व पर्यावरण धोरणांतील नैतिक प्रश्नांचा आढावा घेणे.

सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतीमत्तेचे चिंतन:

प्राचीन भारतीय परंपरेत सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्तेचा विचार हा केवळ तात्त्विक किंवा धार्मिक उपदेशापुरता मर्यादित नव्हता. राज्यकारभार, प्रशासन आणि लोककल्याणाशी नीतीमत्तेचे घट्ट असे नाते होते. कौटिल्याचे अर्थशास्त्र या परंपरेतील सर्वात शास्त्रशुद्ध आणि व्यवहाराभिमुख ग्रंथ ठरतो. राज्याला नैतिक अधिष्ठान असलेली संस्था मानून कौटिल्य राजाला प्रजेचा विश्वस्त ठरवतो. 'प्रजासुखे सुखं राज्ञः, प्रजानां च हिते हितम्' हे सुप्रसिद्ध वचन अर्थशास्त्रात आढळते, प्रजेचे सुख हेच राजाचे सुख असून प्रजेच्या हितातच राजाचे हित सामावलेले आहे.[१] ही संकल्पना आधुनिक सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेतील लोककल्याणकारी राज्य, उत्तरदायित्व आणि सार्वजनिक हित या तत्त्वांशी थेट सुसंगत आहे. आजच्या काळात भारताचा 'शाश्वत विकास ध्येय' (SDG) निर्देशांकातील प्रगती आणि लोककल्याणावरील वाढता खर्च याच 'प्रजाहिता'च्या तत्त्वाचा विस्तार मानला जाऊ शकतो. प्राचीन भारतात सत्तेची वैधता केवळ बळावर नसून नैतिक कर्तव्यपूर्तीवर आधारित होती.[२] कौटिल्याच्या अर्थशास्त्रात प्रशासकीय आचरण आणि नीतिमत्ता यांना विशेष महत्त्व देण्यात आले आहे. अमात्य, महामात्र, करसंकलन अधिकारी आणि न्यायाधिकारी यांचे वर्तन नैतिक, प्रामाणिक आणि प्रजाहित जपणारे असले पाहिजे, असा

कौटिल्याचा आग्रह होता. सार्वजनिक संपत्तीचा अपव्यय, लाचलुचपत आणि अधिकारांचा गैरवापर हे केवळ प्रशासकीय दोष नसून ते राज्याच्या नैतिक पायाला हादरा देणारे प्रकार मानले गेले आहेत.[३] सद्यस्थितीत, 'ट्रान्सपरन्सी इंटरनॅशनल'च्या २०२३ च्या अहवालानुसार, भ्रष्टाचार आकलन निर्देशांकात (CPI) भारत १८० देशांमध्ये ९३ व्या क्रमांकावर आहे, जे कौटिल्याने वर्तवलेल्या प्रशासकीय आव्हानांची आजही आठवण करून देते. भ्रष्टाचाराला प्रतिबंध घालण्यासाठी कौटिल्याने गुप्त निरीक्षण, चौकशी यंत्रणा आणि दंडव्यवस्था यांचा सखोल विचार मांडला आहे. विशेषतः कौटिल्य भ्रष्टाचाराला मानवी प्रवृत्तीशी जोडून अत्यंत वास्तववादी निरीक्षण नोंदवतो की, जसे पाण्यातील मासा पाणी पितो की नाही हे ओळखणे कठीण आहे, तसेच अधिकारी सार्वजनिक धनाचा अपहार करतो की नाही हे ओळखणे अवघड आहे.[४] या गुंतागुंतीला आळा घालण्यासाठी आधुनिक काळात भारतात दरवर्षी ४ ते ६ दशलक्ष माहिती अधिकार (RTI) अर्ज दाखल केले जातात आणि दरमहा सुमारे १२ अब्ज UPI व्यवहारांद्वारे आर्थिक पारदर्शकता आणण्याचा प्रयत्न केला जात आहे. म्हणूनच प्राचीन भारतीय नीतिमत्ता ही आदर्शाचा केवळ कल्पना विलास नसून मानवी व्यवहाराच्या वास्तवाशी संबंधित होती.

दंडनीती आणि धर्मनीती यांचे संतुलन हे कौटिल्याच्या सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचे सर्वोत्तम वैशिष्ट्य होते. दंड म्हणजे केवळ शिक्षा नसून तो सामाजिक सुव्यवस्था, न्याय आणि लोककल्याणाचे प्रथम साधन आहे, असे कौटिल्य स्पष्ट करतो.[५] परंतु दंडाचा अतिरेक झाल्यास राज्य दडपशाहीकडे झुकते आणि दंडाच्या अभावात अराजकता निर्माण होते, म्हणून दंडाचा उपयोग विवेक, प्रमाणबद्धता आणि नैतिकता यांवर आधारित असावा, असे प्रतिपादन कौटिल्याने केले आहे. धर्मनीती ही कौटिल्याने धार्मिक कर्मकांडापुरती मर्यादित नसून सत्य, न्याय, करुणा, कर्तव्यभावना आणि लोककल्याण यांवर आधारित नैतिक चौकट म्हणून समजावली आहे.[६] त्यामुळे सुशासन म्हणजे केवळ कार्यक्षम प्रशासन नव्हे, तर नैतिक मूल्यांवर आधारित राज्यकारभार होय, ही संकल्पना प्राचीन भारतीय परंपरेत स्पष्टपणे विकसित झालेली दिसून येते आणि ती आजच्या सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिक संकटांच्या परिप्रेक्षातून सुद्धा तितकीच मार्गदर्शक ठरते.

पाश्चात्त्य आदर्शवादात मॅकियाव्हेलीचा 'द प्रिन्स' हा ग्रंथ सत्तेच्या वास्तववादी राजकारणाचे दर्शन घडवतो. या ग्रंथात नैतिकता आणि सत्तेच्या गरजा यांच्यातील संघर्ष प्रकर्षाने दिसून येतो.[७] सार्वजनिक जीवनात उद्दिष्टे साध्य करण्यासाठी नैतिक तडजोड कितपत योग्य आहे, हा प्रश्न मॅकियाव्हेली उपस्थित करतो. उदाहरणार्थ, 'रिपोर्टर्स विदाऊट बॉर्डर्स'च्या २०२३ च्या अहवालानुसार, जागतिक पत्रकारिता स्वातंत्र्य निर्देशांकात १८० देशांमध्ये भारत १६१ व्या क्रमांकावर आहे, जे लोकशाहीतील वास्तववादी राजकारण आणि नैतिक संवादातील संघर्षाचे एक आधुनिक उदाहरण ठरते. त्यामुळे सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेच्या अध्ययनात वास्तववाद आणि आदर्शवाद यांचा संघर्ष समजून घेणे महत्वाचे ठरते.

आधुनिक प्रशासकीय नीतिमत्तेच्या सैद्धांतिक मांडणीत टेरी एल. कूपर यांचे द रिस्पोन्सिबल एडमिनीस्ट्रेटर हा ग्रंथ अत्यंत मूलभूत मानला जातो. कूपर यांच्या मते सार्वजनिक प्रशासक हे केवळ नियम, कायदे आणि आदेश यांची यांत्रिक अंमलबजावणी करणारे घटक नसून ते नैतिक विवेक असलेले निर्णयकर्ते आहेत. प्रशासनातील प्रत्येक निर्णय हा नैतिक स्वरूपाचा असतो, कारण तो थेट सार्वजनिक हित, सामाजिक न्याय आणि लोकांच्या जीवनावर परिणाम घडवून आणतो.[८] भारताच्या संदर्भात विचार केल्यास, प्रशासकीय यंत्रणेने 'थेट लाभ हस्तांतरण' द्वारे कोट्यवधी रुपयांची गळती रोखून सामाजिक न्यायाची अंमलबजावणी केली आहे, तरीही 'ऑक्सफॅम'नुसार भारतातील वरच्या १% लोकांकडे ४०% पेक्षा जास्त संपत्ती असणे, हे प्रशासकीय निर्णयांसमोर सामाजिक न्यायाचे मोठे आव्हान असल्याचे दर्शवते. वैयक्तिक नैतिक मूल्ये, संस्थात्मक अपेक्षा आणि व्यापक सामाजिक कर्तव्ये यांच्यामध्ये प्रशासक निरंतर ताणतणाव अनुभवतो या ताणतणावात संतुलन साधण्याची क्षमता हीच जबाबदार प्रशासनाची वास्तविक कसोटी असल्याचे कूपर अधोरेखित करतात.

कायदा आणि नीतिमत्ता यांतील सहसंबंधाचे सखोल विवेचन जॉन ए. रोहर यांच्या 'इथिक्स ऑफ ब्युरोक्रॅटस' या ग्रंथात आढळते. रोहर यांच्या मते कायद्याचे पालन करणे ही सार्वजनिक पदाधिकाऱ्यांची आवश्यक अट असली, तरी ती नीतिमत्तेची पुरेशी अट नाही.[९] एखादी कृती कायदेशीर असू शकते, पण ती नैतिकदृष्ट्या योग्यच असेल असे नाही, हे ते भक्कमपणे स्पष्ट करतात. सार्वजनिक अधिकारी हे केवळ राजकीय नेतृत्वाचे आज्ञाधारी साधन नसून संविधानिक मूल्यांचे रक्षक आहेत, असे रोहर यांचे प्रतिपादन आहे.[१०] भारतातील न्यायालयांमध्ये प्रलंबित असलेले ५ कोटींहून अधिक खटले आणि दरवर्षी राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोगाकडे प्राप्त होणाऱ्या ७०,००० ते ८०,००० तक्रारी हे सिद्ध करतात की केवळ कायदेशीर प्रक्रिया असणे म्हणजे न्याय मिळणे नव्हे. त्यामुळे प्रशासकीय नैतिकतेचा वास्तविक आधार राज्यघटना, लोकशाही मूल्ये, मूलभूत अधिकार आणि सार्वजनिक हित या तत्त्वांमध्ये शोधला पाहिजे.

शासनव्यवस्थेतील नैतिक अधःपतनाचे वास्तववादी चित्रण पॉल एच. डग्लस यांच्या 'इथिक्स इन गव्हर्नमेंट' या ग्रंथात आढळते. यात भ्रष्टाचार, हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष, पक्षपात आणि जबाबदारीचा अभाव या समस्यांचा सविस्तर ऊहापोह करण्यात आला आहे.[११] सद्यस्थितीत, 'ट्रान्सपरन्सी इंटरनॅशनल'च्या २०२३ च्या भ्रष्टाचार आकलन निर्देशांकात १८० देशांच्या यादीत भारत ९३ व्या क्रमांकावर आहे, जे डग्लस यांनी मांडलेल्या 'संस्थात्मक रचनेतील दोषां'चे आधुनिक प्रतीक मानले जाऊ शकते. डग्लस यांच्या मते सार्वत्रिक जीवनातील नैतिक संकटे ही फक्त काही व्यक्तींच्या चारित्र्यदोषांमुळे निर्माण होत नाहीत, तर ती मुख्यत्वे संस्थात्मक रचना, कमकुवत नियंत्रण व्यवस्था आणि अपुरी उत्तरदायित्व प्रणाली यांचे परिणाम असतात त्यामुळे नैतिकतेचा विचार करताना वैयक्तिक सद्गुणांबरोबरच प्रशासकीय सुधारणा, पारदर्शकता आणि सक्षम संस्थात्मक चौकट निर्माण करणे अत्यावश्यक ठरते. याच धर्तीवर भारतात प्रशासकीय पारदर्शकता वाढवण्यासाठी दरवर्षी दाखल होणारे ४ ते ६ दशलक्ष माहिती अधिकार अर्ज हे सक्षम संस्थात्मक चौकट निर्माण करण्याच्या दिशेने उचललेले एक मोठे पाऊल आहे.

प्रशासकीय जबाबदारीचा सखोल आणि मूल्याधिष्ठित विचार जॉन पी. बर्क यांच्या 'ब्युरोक्राटीक रिस्पोन्सिबिलीटी' या ग्रंथात आढळतो.[१२] बर्क यांच्या मते प्रशासकांची जबाबदारी ही केवळ वरिष्ठ अधिकारी, मंत्री किंवा सरकारपुरती मर्यादित नसून ती समाज, लोकशाही मूल्ये, संविधानिक तत्त्वे आणि भावी पिढ्यांपर्यंत विस्तारित असते. प्रशासन हे दीर्घकालीन सार्वजनिक परिणाम घडवणारे यंत्र असल्याने प्रशासकांनी तात्कालिक आदेशांपेक्षा व्यापक सार्वजनिक हिताचा विचार करणे आवश्यक आहे. ही व्यापक जबाबदारी स्वीकारणे म्हणजेच प्रशासकीय नीतिमत्तेचा स्वीकार होय, कारण नीतिमत्ता ही केवळ वैयक्तिक सद्गुण न राहता सार्वजनिक कर्तव्याची जाणीव बनते. त्यामुळे बर्क यांची मांडणी आधुनिक लोकशाहीतील उत्तरदायी प्रशासनाच्या संकल्पनेला नैतिक अधिष्ठान पुरवते. परंतु, भारतीय न्यायव्यवस्थेत प्रलंबित असलेले ५ कोटींपेक्षा जास्त खटले हे 'भावी पिढ्यांच्या' न्याय मिळण्याच्या अधिकारासमोरील मोठे संकट दर्शवतात. भारतात प्रति १ लाख लोकसंख्येमागे केवळ १५२ पोलीस कर्मचारी असणे (UN शिफारस २२२ आहे), यांसारख्या प्रशासकीय मर्यादांमुळे व्यापक सामाजिक कर्तव्ये पार पाडताना नैतिक ताण निर्माण होतो.

सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचा तात्त्विक पाया मजबूत करणाऱ्या ग्रंथांमध्ये जॉन रॉल्स यांचे 'ए थेओरी ऑफ जस्टीस' हे कार्य अत्यंत महत्त्वाचे मानले जाते. रॉल्स न्यायाला 'निष्पक्षतेचा न्याय' म्हणून परिभाषित करतात आणि समान स्वातंत्र्य, समान संधी तसेच दुर्बल व वंचित घटकांच्या हिताचे संरक्षण ही सार्वजनिक धोरणांची नैतिक कसोटी असल्याचे स्पष्ट करतात.[१३] त्यांच्या मते सामाजिक व आर्थिक असमानता तेव्हाच नैतिकदृष्ट्या योग्य ठरते, जेव्हा ती समाजातील सर्वात दुर्बल घटकांच्या लाभासाठी उपयोगी पडते. सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता ही याच नैतिक न्यायाच्या संकल्पनेतून आकार घेताना दिसते. मात्र, 'ऑक्सफॅम'च्या २०२३ च्या अहवालानुसार, भारतातील सर्वात श्रीमंत १% लोकांकडे देशाच्या एकूण संपत्तीच्या ४०% पेक्षा

जास्त हिस्सा आहे, जी आर्थिक विषमतेची भीषणता दर्शवते. नीती आयोगाच्या आकडेवारीनुसार, भारतातील १४.९६% लोकसंख्या अजूनही बहुआयामी गरिबीत आहे, ज्यामुळे 'समान संधी' आणि 'वंचित घटकांचे संरक्षण' या रॉल्सच्या तत्त्वांची अंमलबजावणी करणे हे सार्वजनिक प्रशासनापुढील मोठे नैतिक आव्हान ठरते.

व्यक्तिस्वातंत्र्य आणि सामाजिक हित यांतील समतोलाचा सखोल विचार जॉन स्टुअर्ट मिल यांच्या 'ऑन लिबर्टी' या ग्रंथात आढळतो. मिल यांच्या मते राज्यसत्ता किंवा समाजाला व्यक्तीच्या स्वातंत्र्यावर बंधनात्मक मर्यादा घालण्याचा अधिकार केवळ तेव्हाच आहे, जेव्हा एखाद्या व्यक्तीच्या कृतीमुळे इतरांना प्रत्यक्ष नुकसान पोहोचते.[१४] सध्याच्या जागतिक प्रेस फ्रीडम इंडेक्समध्ये (२०२३) भारत १८० देशांत १६१ व्या क्रमांकावर असणे, हे अभिव्यक्ती स्वातंत्र्य आणि सत्तेच्या नैतिक मर्यादांमधील संघर्षाचे आधुनिक उदाहरण आहे. सार्वजनिक जीवनात सत्तेचा उपयोग करताना व्यक्तिस्वातंत्र्याचे उल्लंघन होऊ नये, ही नीतिमत्तेची मूलभूत अट असल्याचे मिल अधोरेखित करतात. बहुसंख्येच्या मताच्या आधारे अल्पसंख्याकांवर अन्याय होऊ नये, यासाठी नैतिक मर्यादा आवश्यक असल्याचे ते स्पष्ट करतात.

कर्तव्य, विवेक आणि मानवमूल्यांचा उच्च स्तर इमॅन्युएल कांट यांच्या कर्तव्यवादी नीतिमत्तेत स्पष्टपणे दिसून येतो. कांट यांच्या मते नैतिक कृतीचे मूल्य हे तिच्या परिणामांवर नव्हे, तर ती कोणत्या तत्त्वांवर आधारित आहे यावर अवलंबून असते.[१५] राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोगाकडे दरवर्षी प्राप्त होणाऱ्या ७०,००० ते ८०,००० तक्रारी प्रशासकीय प्रक्रियेत 'मानवी प्रतिष्ठा' जपण्याच्या कांटच्या तत्त्वापुढील मोठी आव्हाने अधोरेखित करतात· सार्वजनिक सेवकांनी कर्तव्य बजावताना स्वार्थ, लाभ किंवा दबाव यांपेक्षा नैतिक नियमांना प्रतम स्थानी ठेवले पाहिजे. ही भूमिका कांट सार्वजनिक जीवनासाठी दिशादर्शक ठरते. 'मानवाला केव्हाही केवळ साधन म्हणून नव्हे, तर नेहमीच उद्दिष्ट म्हणून वागवावे' हा कांटचा मूलभूत नैतिक आदेश सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेची सर्वोच्च पातळी दर्शवतो.

ॲरिस्टॉटलची सद्गुण नीतिमत्ता सार्वजनिक जीवनात चारित्र्याच्या महत्त्वावर अधिक भर देते. 'निकोमाचीन इथिक्स' या ग्रंथात ॲरिस्टॉटल स्पष्ट करतो की, सुशासनासाठी केवळ चांगले कायदे पुरेसे नसून सद्गुणी नागरिक आणि शासक असणे आवश्यक आहे.[१६] भारताच्या संसदीय लोकशाहीत महिलांचे केवळ १४.४% प्रतिनिधित्व असणे, हे ॲरिस्टॉटलने मांडलेल्या 'सर्वसमावेशक सद्गुणी नेतृत्वा'च्या आणि समान संधीच्या वास्तवातील कमतरता दर्शवते. न्याय, संयम, धैर्य आणि विवेक हे सद्गुण सार्वजनिक जीवनात सातत्याने आचरणात आणले गेले तरच राज्य नैतिकदृष्ट्या सुदृढ राहू शकते. ॲरिस्टॉटलच्या मते कायदे हे चारित्र्य घडविण्याचे साधन असले, तरी प्रत्यक्ष आचरण व्यक्तीच्या नैतिक सवयींवर अवलंबून असते.

सार्वजनिक आरोग्य क्षेत्रात नीतिमत्तेचे प्रश्न विशेषतः अधिक गुंतागुंतीचे स्वरूप धारण करतात. टॉम एल. ब्यूचॅम्प आणि जेम्स एफ. चाइल्ड्रेस यांनी 'प्रिन्सिपल्स ऑफ बोयोकेमिकल इथिक्स' या ग्रंथात स्वायत्तता, उपकार, अहिंसा आणि न्याय ही चार मूलभूत तत्त्वे मांडली आहेत.[१७] सद्यस्थितीत, भारताचा सार्वजनिक आरोग्य खर्च जीडीपीच्या केवळ २.१% आहे आणि देशात १,१६१ लोकांमागे एक डॉक्टर उपलब्ध आहे, जे आरोग्य संसाधनांच्या 'न्याय्य' वाटपातील आव्हाने अधोरेखित करतात. ही तत्त्वे सार्वजनिक आरोग्य धोरणांना नैतिक चौकट प्रदान करतात. महामारीच्या काळात लसीकरण, निर्बंध आणि संसर्ग नियंत्रणाच्या उपाययोजना राबविताना सार्वजनिक हित आणि वैयक्तिक स्वातंत्र्य यांतील संघर्ष प्रकर्षाने दिसून येतो. भारतात ३० कोटींहून अधिक आयुष्मान कार्डे जारी करणे हा याच नैतिक चौकटीतून आरोग्य सेवा सर्वसमावेशक करण्याचा एक प्रयत्न आहे. अशा परिस्थितीत निर्णय केवळ तांत्रिक किंवा प्रशासकीय न राहता गहन नैतिक विवेकावर आधारित असणे आवश्यक ठरते.

पर्यावरणीय नीतिमत्तेचा चिंतन करताना महात्मा गांधींचे *'हिंद स्वराज'* हा चिंतनग्रंथ मार्गदर्शक ठरतो. गांधी आधुनिक औद्योगिक विकासावर टीका करताना सांगतात की, अनियंत्रित भौतिक प्रगती ही नैतिक अधःपतनास कारणीभूत ठरते.[१८]

आजच्या काळात, जगातील ५० सर्वाधिक प्रदूषित शहरांपैकी ३९ शहरे भारतात आहेत आणि देश दरवर्षी सुमारे ३.५ दशलक्ष टन प्लास्टिक कचरा निर्माण करतो, जे गांधींनी वर्तवलेल्या पर्यावरणीय संकटाची भीषणता स्पष्ट करतात.विकास आणि नैतिकता यांचा समतोल साधला नाही तर सार्वजनिक जीवनात विषमता, शोषण आणि अन्याय वाढतो, ही गांधीवादी भूमिका आजच्या पर्यावरणीय संकटांच्या पार्श्वभूमीवर अधिक सुसंगत ठरते. निसर्गाचे अतिरेकी शोषण म्हणजे केवळ वर्तमानातील समस्या नसून भावी पिढ्यांच्या हक्कांवर होणारा अन्याय आहे, ही निश्चित गांधींच्या विचारांतून स्पष्टपणे व्यक्त होते.

वर्तमान काळात प्रसार माध्यमे आणि सोशल मीडिया हे सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेसमोर नवीन आणि गंभीर आव्हाने व्यापक स्वरुपात उभे ठाकलेले आहेत. माहितीचा अपप्रचार, द्वेषपूर्ण भाषण, अफवा आणि खोटी प्रतिमा निर्माण करणे यामुळे लोकशाही संवादाचे नैतिक अधिष्ठान कमकुवत होत आहे. युर्गेन हाबर्मास यांच्या 'द स्ट्रकचरल ट्रान्स्फरमेशन ऑफ द पब्लिक स्फेअर' या ग्रंथात सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र हे विवेकी, सत्याधिष्ठित आणि नैतिक संवादावर आधारित असले पाहिजे, अशी भूमिका मांडलेली आहे.[१९] मात्र, भारतात ८२० दशलक्ष इंटरनेट वापरकर्ते आणि ५३० दशलक्ष व्हॉट्सॲप वापरकर्ते असताना, माहितीचा अपप्रचार आणि अफवांचा वेग प्रचंड वाढला आहे. मात्र डिजिटल माध्यमांच्या अतिरेकामुळे हा विवेकी संवाद भावनाविवश आणि ध्रुवीकरणाकडे झुकत असल्याचे दिसून येते. त्यामुळे आधुनिक सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचा प्रश्न हा केवळ व्यक्तींच्या वर्तनापुरता मर्यादित न राहता माध्यमांची जबाबदारी, माहितीची सत्यता आणि लोकशाही संवादाची नैतिक गुणवत्ता यांच्याशी थेट जोडला गेला आहे.

डिजिटल प्रसार माध्यमे आणि सोशल मीडियाच्या युगात सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिक अधःपतन अधिक तीव्र स्वरूपात होताना दिसून येते. माहितीची प्रचंड गती, भावनिक आशय आणि दृश्य प्रभाव यांमुळे विवेकी संवादाऐवजी प्रभावाधारित संवाद वेगाने वाढत चालला आहे. या संदर्भात मॅन्युएल कॅस्टेल्स यांचा 'कम्युनिकेशन पॉवर' हा ग्रंथ महत्त्वाचा ठरतो. कॅस्टेल्स यांच्या मते आधुनिक समाजात सत्ता ही केवळ राज्यसंस्थांकडे न राहता संवादाच्या नियंत्रणात केंद्रित झाली आहे.[२०] माध्यमे आणि डिजिटल नेटवर्क्स लोकमत घडविण्याची क्षमता ठेवतात त्यामुळे सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेवर त्यांचा खोल परिणाम होतो.[२०] जेव्हा संवाद सत्याऐवजी अफवा, द्वेष आणि दिशाभूल यांवर आधारित होतो, तेव्हा सार्वजनिक जीवनातील विश्वास, उत्तरदायित्व आणि नैतिकता ढासळते. एनसीआरबी च्या आकडेवारीनुसार, भारतात सायबर गुन्ह्यांच्या प्रमाणात वार्षिक २५% वाढ होत आहे, जे डिजिटल माध्यमांमधील नैतिक नियंत्रणाची गरज अधोरेखित करते.

भारतीय धर्मग्रंथांमधील मूल्ये सार्वजनिक नैतिकतेला एक सखोल आणि भक्कम सांस्कृतिक अधिष्ठान प्रदान करतात. रामायणातील मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम रामाची संकल्पना ही केवळ धार्मिक आदर्श नसून सार्वजनिक कर्तव्य, संयम, त्याग आणि लोककल्याण यांचे मूर्तिमंत उदाहरण आहे.[२१] राजा असूनही वैयक्तिक दुःख सहन करून प्रजेच्या विश्वासाचे रक्षण करणे, हे सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचे उच्च प्रतीक मानले जाते. त्याचप्रमाणे महाभारतातील नैतिक संघर्ष सार्वजनिक जीवनातील गुंतागुंत, मूल्यसंघर्ष आणि कर्तव्यदुविधा स्पष्टपणे उघड करतात.[२२] आजच्या काळात 'लोककल्याणा'च्या याच तत्त्वाचा विस्तार 'थेट लाभ हस्तांतरण' सारख्या योजनांमध्ये दिसतो, ज्याद्वारे भारतात ३४ लाख कोटींहून अधिक रक्कम थेट लाभार्थ्यांच्या खात्यात जमा झाली असून प्रशासकीय पारदर्शकता वाढली आहे. धर्म, न्याय, सत्ता आणि व्यक्तिगत नीतिमत्ता यांतील ताणतणाव महाभारतात सातत्याने दिसून येतो. त्यामुळे भारतीय परंपरेत नीतिमत्ता ही श्वेत-धवल चौकटीत न गुंतता परिस्थितीनुसार विवेकपूर्ण निर्णय घेण्यावर भर देणारी आहे, हे अधोरेखित होते.

आधुनिक काळात सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचा विचार केवळ राष्ट्र-राज्यांच्या मर्यादेत राहिलेला नाही. जागतिकीकरण, तंत्रज्ञान, आंतरराष्ट्रीय कायदे, मानवाधिकार आणि पर्यावरणीय प्रश्न यांमुळे सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्ता जागतिक स्तरावर चिंतनाचा

विषय ठरली आहे. थॉमस पॉग्गे आणि अमर्त्य सेन यांसारख्या विचारवंतांनी जागतिक न्याय, आंतरराष्ट्रीय जबाबदारी आणि भविष्यातील पिढ्यांचे हक्क यांवर भर दिला आहे.[२३] हवामान बदल, स्थलांतर, महामारी आणि डिजिटल नियंत्रण यांसारखे प्रश्न हे राष्ट्रीय धोरणांपुरते मर्यादित न राहता संपूर्ण मानवजातीच्या नैतिक जबाबदारीशी जोडले गेले आहेत. सार्वजनिक जीवनात दूरदृष्टी, आंतरराष्ट्रीय सहकार्य आणि मूल्याधिष्ठित निर्णयक्षमता विकसित करणे हीच आधुनिक आणि भविष्योन्मुख नीतिमत्तेची खरी गरज ठरते.

कायदेशीर आणि संस्थात्मक नीतिमत्ता ही लोकशाही व्यवस्थेच्या टिकावासाठी अत्यंत मूलभूत घटक मानली जाते. लोकशाहीमध्ये सत्ता ही व्यक्तींपेक्षा संस्थांकडे असावी, हा आधुनिक राज्यव्यवस्थेचा गाभा असून त्या संस्थांचे आचरण नैतिक असणे अपरिहार्य ठरते. आचारसंहिता, हितसंबंध संघर्ष प्रतिबंधक कायदे, माहितीचा अधिकार, तसेच लोकपाल, न्यायपालिका आणि नियंत्रक व महालेखापरीक्षक यांसारख्या स्वतंत्र संस्था सार्वजनिक जीवनात पारदर्शकता आणि उत्तरदायित्व निर्माण करतात. मात्र जॉन रोहर आणि डेनिस थॉम्पसन यांसारख्या विचारवंतांनी स्पष्ट केल्याप्रमाणे, केवळ कायद्यांची निर्मिती झाली म्हणजे नीतिमत्ता आपोआप निर्माण होत नाही. कायदे हे बाह्य नियंत्रणाचे साधन असतात, तर नीतिमत्ता ही अंतःप्रेरणेवर आधारित असते. त्यामुळे कायदेशीर चौकट मजबूत असली तरी नैतिक जाणीव, मूल्याधिष्ठित नेतृत्व आणि संस्थात्मक संस्कृती विकसित न झाल्यास कायदे निष्प्रभ ठरण्याची शक्यता असते. भारतात माहिती अधिकार कायद्यांतर्गत दरवर्षी सुमारे ४० ते ६० लाख अर्ज दाखल केले जातात, जे प्रशासकीय उत्तरदायित्वाचा वाढता आग्रह दर्शवतात. न्यायालयांमधील ५ कोटींहून अधिक प्रलंबित खटले हे कायदेशीर चौकटीसोबतच नैतिक जाणीव आणि संस्थात्मक संस्कृती विकसित करण्याची निकड अधोरेखित करतात.

या व्यापक संदर्भात पाहता सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता हा एक बहुआयामी आणि गतिशील विषय आहे. प्राचीन भारतीय तत्त्वज्ञानातील धर्म, कर्तव्य आणि लोककल्याणाच्या संकल्पनांपासून ते आधुनिक प्रशासनातील उत्तरदायित्व, सार्वजनिक आरोग्यातील न्याय, पर्यावरणीय शाश्वतता, माध्यमांची जबाबदारी आणि कायदेशीर संस्थांची स्वायत्तता यांपर्यंत या विषयाचा विस्तार झालेला दिसतो. या सर्व क्षेत्रांमध्ये नीतिमत्तेची आव्हाने स्वरूप बदलत असली तरी त्यांचा गाभा मानवकेंद्रित मूल्यांमध्येच आहे. 'ट्रान्सपरन्सी इंटरनॅशनल'च्या २०२३ च्या अहवालानुसार, भारताचा 'भ्रष्टाचार आकलन निर्देशांक' (९३ वा क्रमांक) सुधारण्यासाठी केवळ नियम पुरेसे नसून नैतिक चिंतन आणि लोकाभिमुख शासनव्यवस्थेची आवश्यकता आहे. अशा समग्र दृष्टिकोनातूनच सार्वजनिक जीवन अधिक नैतिक, विश्वासार्ह, पारदर्शक आणि लोकाभिमुख बनू शकते, आणि लोकशाहीची नैतिक अधिष्ठाने अधिक दृढ होऊ शकतात.

सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेपुढील आव्हाने:

सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्तेसमोरील सर्वात मूलभूत आव्हान म्हणजे प्रशासकीय निर्णयप्रक्रियेत नैतिक मूल्यांची होत जाणारी दुय्यम भूमिका होय. टेरी एल. कूपर यांच्या मते आधुनिक प्रशासक हा केवळ नियमांची अंमलबजावणी करणारा यंत्रमानव नसून तो नैतिक विवेक असलेला निर्णयकर्ता असतो.[२४] तथापि, प्रत्यक्ष प्रशासनात संस्थात्मक दबाव, राजकीय हस्तक्षेप आणि कार्यक्षमतेचा अतिरेक यांमुळे नैतिक विचारप्रक्रिया दुर्लक्षित राहते. परिणामी अनेक सार्वजनिक धोरणे कायदेशीर चौकटीत बसणारी असली, तरी ती नैतिकदृष्ट्या प्रश्नांकित ठरतात. जॉन ए. रोहर हे अधोरेखित करतात की, कायद्याचे पालन ही नीतिमत्तेची किमान अट आहे; मात्र संविधानिक मूल्यांशी निष्ठावंत असणे ही सार्वजनिक अधिकाऱ्यांची खरी

नैतिक जबाबदारी ठरते. प्रत्यक्षात मात्र प्रशासक अनेकदा कायदा आणि मूल्ये यांतील संघर्ष टाळण्यासाठी नैतिक तटस्थतेचा मार्ग स्वीकारतात, आणि हेच सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्तेसमोरील गंभीर आव्हान बनते.

राजकीय जीवनात सत्तेचे केंद्रीकरण, हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष आणि जबाबदारीचा अभाव ही नीतिमत्तेची प्रमुख संकटे आहेत. डेनिस एफ. थॉम्पसन यांच्या मते राजकीय निर्णयप्रक्रियेत नैतिक विचारांचा अभाव राहिल्यास लोकशाहीतील सामान्य विश्वास ढासळतो.[२५] राजकीय नेते आणि सार्वजनिक पदाधिकारी अनेकदा अल्पकालीन लाभ, निवडणूक यश किंवा पक्षीय हितसंबंध यांना प्राधान्य देतात, ज्यामुळे सार्वजनिक हित दुय्यम ठरते. या संदर्भात जॉन पी. बर्क यांनी मांडलेली प्रशासकीय जबाबदारीची संकल्पना अत्यंत महत्त्वाची ठरते, कारण प्रशासकांची जबाबदारी ही केवळ वरिष्ठ अधिकारी किंवा राजकीय नेतृत्वापुरती मर्यादित न राहता समाज, लोकशाही मूल्ये आणि भावी पिढ्यांपर्यंत विस्तारलेली असते.[२६] ही व्यापक जबाबदारी स्वीकारण्यात होणारी अपयशे ही सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिक अधःपतनाची ठळक लक्षणे मानली जातात.

सार्वजनिक आरोग्य आणि पर्यावरणीय धोरणांमध्ये नीतिमत्तेची आव्हाने अत्यंत तीव्र स्वरूपात प्रकट होतात. ब्यूचॅम्प आणि चाइल्ड्रेस यांनी मांडलेली स्वायत्तता, उपकार, अहिंसा आणि न्याय ही चार मूलभूत नैतिक तत्त्वे महामारी, लसीकरण, उपचारांचे प्राधान्य आणि मर्यादित संसाधनांचे वाटप यांसारख्या परिस्थितींमध्ये परस्पर संघर्षात येतात.[२७] उदाहरणार्थ, सार्वजनिक आरोग्याच्या नावाखाली वैयक्तिक स्वातंत्र्यावर निर्बंध घालणे नैतिकदृष्ट्या कितपत योग्य आहे, हा प्रश्न कोविड-१९सारख्या महामारीत प्रकर्षाने पुढे आला. याच वेळी पर्यावरणीय नीतिमत्तेच्या संदर्भात रॉबिन ॲटफिल्ड विकास आणि नैतिक जबाबदारी यांचा समतोल अधोरेखित करतात.[२८] गांधीवादी विचारधारेनुसार निसर्गाचे अति-शोषण म्हणजे भावी पिढ्यांवरील अन्याय होय. परंतु आधुनिक विकास मॉडेल अल्पकालीन आर्थिक लाभांना प्राधान्य देत दीर्घकालीन नैतिक परिणामांकडे दुर्लक्ष करते.

कायदेशीर आणि संस्थात्मक पातळीवर पाहता आचारसंहिता, आंतरराष्ट्रीय नैतिक संहिता आणि भ्रष्टाचारविरोधी कायदे अस्तित्वात असूनही सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिक आव्हाने कायम आहेत. संयुक्त राष्ट्रांनी स्वीकारलेली सार्वजनिक अधिकाऱ्यांसाठीची आचारसंहिता ही जागतिक स्तरावर नैतिक प्रशासनासाठी महत्त्वाची चौकट प्रदान करते.[२९] त्याचप्रमाणे ओईसीडी आणि युरोपियन युनियनने सार्वजनिक सेवेमध्ये नैतिक मानदंड प्रस्थापित करण्याचे प्रयत्न केले आहेत.[३०] मात्र या सर्व उपाययोजनांची प्रभावी अंमलबजावणी ही राजकीय इच्छाशक्ती, संस्थात्मक स्वायत्तता आणि प्रशासकीय संस्कृतीवर अवलंबून असते. ट्रान्सपरन्सी इंटरनॅशनलच्या अहवालांनुसार भ्रष्टाचार हा केवळ वैयक्तिक अपप्रवृत्ती नसून तो अनेकदा संस्थात्मक स्वरूप धारण करतो.[३१] जेव्हा नैतिक मूल्ये संस्थात्मक संस्कृतीचा भाग बनत नाहीत. नियम आणि कायदे हे केवळ औपचारिक दस्तऐवज ठरतात आणि सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता कागदापुरतीच मर्यादित राहते.

एकूणच सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्तेसमोरील आव्हाने ही बहुपातळी, बहुआयामी आणि सतत बदलणारी आहेत. प्रशासन, राजकारण, सार्वजनिक आरोग्य, पर्यावरण, माध्यमे आणि जागतिक व्यवस्था या सर्व क्षेत्रांमध्ये नीतिमत्ता ही केवळ आदर्श संकल्पना न राहता प्रत्यक्ष संघर्षाचा विषय बनली आहे. अमर्त्य सेन यांच्या मते न्याय्य समाजासाठी केवळ संस्थात्मक रचना पुरेशी नसून नैतिक मूल्यांवर आधारित सार्वजनिक विवेक आवश्यक आहे.[३२] या आव्हानांना सामोरे जाण्यासाठी कायदे आणि नियम महत्त्वाचे असले तरी ते अपुरे ठरतात.

समारोप:

सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नीतिमत्ता ही लोकशाही व्यवस्थेच्या स्थैर्याची, विश्वासार्हतेची आणि वैधतेची मूलभूत अट आहे. प्रस्तुत अभ्यासातून असे स्पष्ट होते की नीतिमत्ता ही केवळ वैयक्तिक सदाचाराची बाब नसून ती प्रशासन, राजकारण, न्यायव्यवस्था, माध्यमे, सार्वजनिक आरोग्य आणि पर्यावरणीय धोरणे या सर्व क्षेत्रांशी निगडित असलेली एक व्यापक संस्थात्मक व सामाजिक संकल्पना आहे. प्राचीन भारतीय विचारपरंपरेतील धर्म, कर्तव्य आणि लोककल्याण यांपासून ते पाश्चात्त्य तत्त्वज्ञानातील न्याय, उत्तरदायित्व आणि मानवी प्रतिष्ठेच्या संकल्पनांपर्यंत सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचा सैद्धांतिक पाया अत्यंत समृद्ध आणि मूल्याधिष्ठित आहे. तथापि, सत्तेचे केंद्रीकरण, भ्रष्टाचार, हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष, माध्यमांचा दुरुपयोग, जागतिकीकरणामुळे निर्माण झालेले नैतिक ताण आणि अल्पकालीन विकासाच्या धोरणांनी सार्वजनिक जीवनातील नैतिक अधिष्ठान कमकुवत केले आहे. या पार्श्वभूमीवर केवळ कायदे, नियम आणि आचारसंहिता पुरेसे ठरत नाहीत, तर मूल्याधिष्ठित शिक्षण, नैतिक नेतृत्व, पारदर्शक व उत्तरदायी संस्थात्मक संस्कृती आणि सक्रिय नागरिक सहभाग यांची आवश्यकता प्रकर्षाने जाणवते. सार्वजनिक नीतिमत्तेचा प्रश्न हा प्रत्यक्षात लोकशाहीच्या गुणवत्तेशी निगडित आहे. त्यामुळे न्याय, समानता आणि सार्वजनिक हित यांवर आधारित निर्णयप्रक्रिया विकसित केल्यासच अधिक विश्वासार्ह, लोकाभिमुख आणि मानवकेंद्रित शासनव्यवस्था घडू शकते.

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सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता: चिंतन, संघर्ष और अंतर्मन का संवाद

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1. सार (Abstract):-

वर्तमान वैश्विक और भारतीय परिप्रेक्ष्य में सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता का प्रश्न अत्यंत जटिल और बहुआयामी स्वरूप ग्रहण कर चुका है। यह संकट केवल राजनीतिक और प्रशासनिक तंत्र तक सीमित नहीं रहा, बल्कि शिक्षा व्यवस्था, न्यायिक प्रक्रियाओं और सामाजिक व्यवहार के प्रत्येक स्तर पर गहराई से अनुभव किया जा रहा है।

प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र में नैतिकता के इस बहुआयामी संकट का विश्लेषण बाह्य संरचनात्मक (संवैधानिक एवं संस्थागत) तथा आंतरिक मनोवैज्ञानिक (अंतर्मन एवं चेतना) दृष्टिकोणों के समन्वय के माध्यम से किया गया है। विशेषतः भगवत गीतामें वर्णित अर्जुन और कृष्ण के संवाद को "बाह्यमन" और "अंतर्मन" के रूपक के रूप में प्रस्तुत करते हुए आधुनिक शिक्षक, विद्यार्थी और नागरिक के नैतिक द्वंद्व को स्पष्ट किया गया है।

इसके अतिरिक्त भारतीय संविधान में निहित न्याय, स्वतंत्रता, समानता और बंधुत्व जैसे मूल्यों तथा राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 के आदर्शों के संदर्भ में वर्तमान शिक्षा व्यवस्था की चुनौतियों का समालोचनात्मक परीक्षण किया गया है।

अध्ययन का निष्कर्ष यह प्रतिपादित करता है कि सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता का वास्तविक पुनर्स्थापन केवल बाह्य नीतिगत सुधारों से संभव नहीं है, बल्कि इसके लिए व्यक्ति के अंतर्मन में नैतिक चेतना के जागरण की आवश्यकता है।

Keywords :-

नैतिकता, सार्वजनिक जीवन, शिक्षा व्यवस्था, संवैधानिक नैतिकता, अंतर्मन, भगवत गीतानैतिक द्वंद्व.

2. प्रस्तावना (Introduction)

सार्वजनिक जीवन केवल शासन, प्रशासन या राजनीतिक प्रक्रियाओं तक सीमित अवधारणा नहीं है, बल्कि यह समाज के प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के विचार, व्यवहार, निर्णय और उत्तरदायित्व का समग्र प्रतिबिंब है। किसी भी राष्ट्र की वास्तविक प्रगति केवल आर्थिक विकास या तकनीकी उन्नति से नहीं मापी जा सकती, बल्कि यह इस बात पर निर्भर करती है कि उस समाज के नागरिक कितने नैतिक, उत्तरदायी और संवेदनशील हैं।

वर्तमान युग में, जहाँ एक ओर मानवता अभूतपूर्व वैज्ञानिक और तकनीकी प्रगति की ओर अग्रसर है, वहीं दूसरी ओर सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता का संकट एक मौन लेकिन गंभीर चुनौती के रूप में उभर रहा है। यह

संकट प्रत्यक्ष रूप से दिखाई न देते हुए भी शिक्षा, न्याय और सामाजिक संबंधों की जड़ों को भीतर से कमजोर कर रहा है।

आज का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न यह नहीं है कि "कानून क्या कहता है", बल्कि यह है कि "मनुष्य का अंतर्मन उसे क्या करने के लिए प्रेरित करता है।"
यहीं से नैतिकता का वास्तविक विमर्श प्रारंभ होता है।

भारतीय दार्शनिक परंपरा में भगवत गीताको नैतिक जीवन का मार्गदर्शक ग्रंथ माना गया है। इसमें अर्जुन और कृष्ण के मध्य संवाद केवल एक ऐतिहासिक प्रसंग नहीं, बल्कि मानव जीवन में उत्पन्न होने वाले नैतिक द्वंद्व का प्रतीक है। अर्जुन का संशय और कृष्ण का मार्गदर्शन आज भी प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के भीतर घटित होने वाली प्रक्रिया को प्रतिबिंबित करता है।

इसी प्रकार, भारतीय संविधान केवल एक विधिक दस्तावेज नहीं, बल्कि एक नैतिक संहिता है, जो न्याय, स्वतंत्रता, समानता और बंधुत्व जैसे मूल्यों के माध्यम से एक आदर्श समाज की परिकल्पना प्रस्तुत करता है। तथापि, इन मूल्यों को व्यवहार में उतारना आज भी एक बड़ी चुनौती बना हुआ है।

विशेष रूप से शिक्षा व्यवस्था, जो समाज के नैतिक निर्माण की आधारशिला मानी जाती है, वर्तमान में गहन परिवर्तन और दबावों के दौर से गुजर रही है। सेमिस्टर प्रणाली, प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक परीक्षाओं का बढ़ता प्रभाव, तथा परिणाम-केंद्रित दृष्टिकोण ने शिक्षा के मूल उद्देश्य, चरित्र निर्माण, को प्रभावित किया है। शिक्षक, जो कभी समाज के नैतिक मार्गदर्शक थे, आज प्रणालीगत दबावों के कारण अपने मूल दायित्वों से विचलित होते दिखाई देते हैं।

इस संदर्भ में यह शोधपत्र एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न उठाता है, क्या केवल बाहरी नियमों और नीतियों के माध्यम से नैतिक समाज का निर्माण संभव है, या इसके लिए व्यक्ति के अंतर्मन में स्थित "कृष्ण" को जागृत करना आवश्यक है?

यह अध्ययन इसी प्रश्न के उत्तर की खोज का एक प्रयास है, जिसमें शिक्षा, संविधान और भगवत गीताके समन्वय के माध्यम से सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता के संकट का गहन विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत किया गया है।

3. अनुसंधान पद्धति (Research Methodology)

प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र गुणात्मक (Qualitative) तथा विश्लेषणात्मक (Analytical) अनुसंधान पद्धति पर आधारित है, जिसका उद्देश्य सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता के बहुआयामी स्वरूप का गहन अध्ययन करना है। यह अध्ययन मुख्यतः सैद्धांतिक (theoretical), दार्शनिक (philosophical) तथा विधिक (doctrinal) दृष्टिकोणों के समन्वय पर आधारित है।

इस शोध में प्राथमिक एवं द्वितीयक दोनों प्रकार के स्रोतों का उपयोग किया गया है। प्राथमिक स्रोतों के अंतर्गत भारतीय संविधान, विशेषतः उसकी प्रस्तावना, मौलिक अधिकार तथा मौलिक कर्तव्यों का अध्ययन किया गया है, जो सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिक मूल्यों की आधारशिला प्रस्तुत करते हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त भगवत गीताको एक प्रमुख दार्शनिक स्रोत के रूप में लिया गया है, जिसके माध्यम से कर्तव्य, धर्म, निष्काम कर्म तथा आत्मचेतना के सिद्धांतों का विश्लेषण किया गया है।

द्वितीयक स्रोतों में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (NEP 2020), विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग (UGC) की रिपोर्ट्स, तथा शिक्षा व्यवस्था, नैतिकता और सार्वजनिक प्रशासन से संबंधित विभिन्न शोध लेखों एवं शैक्षणिक पत्रिकाओं का अध्ययन शामिल है। इसके साथ ही डॉ. बी. आर. आंबेडकर के संवैधानिक विचारों को भी इस अध्ययन में समाहित किया गया है, जो "संवैधानिक नैतिकता" की अवधारणा को स्पष्ट करते हैं।

अनुसंधान की प्रक्रिया में तुलनात्मक (comparative) एवं व्याख्यात्मक (interpretative) विधियों का उपयोग किया गया है, जिसके अंतर्गत भगवत गीतामें वर्णित अर्जुन-कृष्ण संवाद को आधुनिक सार्वजनिक जीवन, विशेषतः शिक्षा क्षेत्र में कार्यरत शिक्षक, विद्यार्थी एवं नागरिकों के नैतिक द्वंद्व के संदर्भ में समझने का प्रयास किया गया है।

यह अध्ययन तीन प्रमुख आयामों पर केंद्रित है:-

(1) आंतरिक नैतिक चेतना

(2) बाह्य विधिक संरचना (Legal Framework),

(3) समकालीन शिक्षा व्यवस्था की चुनौतियाँ ।

इन तीनों आयामों के समन्वय के माध्यम से यह शोध यह स्थापित करने का प्रयास करता है कि सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता की स्थापना केवल बाहरी नियमों से संभव नहीं है, बल्कि इसके लिए व्यक्ति के अंतर्मन में नैतिक जागरूकता का विकास आवश्यक है।

अतः यह अनुसंधान न केवल एक विश्लेषणात्मक अध्ययन है, बल्कि एक आत्मचिंतनात्मक (reflective) प्रयास भी है, जो व्यक्ति को अपने अंतर्मन के नैतिक स्वर-अर्थात् "कृष्ण"-को पहचानने और उसके अनुसार आचरण करने की प्रेरणा देता है।

4. साहित्य समीक्षा (Literature Review)

सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता का प्रश्न प्राचीन काल से लेकर आधुनिक युग तक दार्शनिक, सामाजिक तथा विधिक विमर्श का एक केंद्रीय विषय रहा है। विभिन्न विद्वानों, दार्शनिक ग्रंथों एवं नीतिगत दस्तावेजों में नैतिकता की अवधारणा को भिन्न-भिन्न दृष्टिकोणों से स्पष्ट करने का प्रयास किया गया है।

भारतीय दार्शनिक परंपरा में *भगवत गीता* को नैतिक चिंतन का एक अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण स्रोत माना जाता है। इसमें "धर्म", "कर्तव्य" तथा "निष्काम कर्म" की अवधारणाएँ व्यक्ति को अपने कर्तव्यों के प्रति निष्ठावान रहने की प्रेरणा देती हैं। विशेष रूप से अर्जुन और कृष्ण के संवाद के माध्यम से यह प्रतिपादित किया गया है कि नैतिकता केवल बाह्य आचरण का विषय नहीं, बल्कि आंतरिक चेतना की अभिव्यक्ति है।

इस संदर्भ में गीता का निम्नलिखित श्लोक विशेष रूप से उल्लेखनीय है,

"कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥" (अध्याय 2, श्लोक 47)

अर्थात्, मनुष्य का अधिकार केवल कर्म करने में है, उसके फल में नहीं; इसलिए उसे बिना फल की चिंता किए अपने कर्तव्य का पालन करना चाहिए। यह सिद्धांत सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिक आचरण का आधार प्रदान करता है।

इसके विपरीत, आधुनिक विधिक एवं संवैधानिक परिप्रेक्ष्य में B. R. Ambedkar द्वारा प्रतिपादित "संवैधानिक नैतिकता" की अवधारणा अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। उनके अनुसार संविधान की सफलता केवल उसके प्रावधानों पर निर्भर नहीं करती, बल्कि उसे लागू करने वाले व्यक्तियों के नैतिक आचरण पर निर्भर करती है। यह दृष्टिकोण नैतिकता को व्यक्तिगत ही नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक एवं संस्थागत उत्तरदायित्व के रूप में प्रस्तुत करता है।

पाश्चात्य दार्शनिकों में Immanuel Kant ने कर्तव्य-आधारित नैतिकता (Deontological Ethics) का प्रतिपादन करते हुए यह कहा कि नैतिक आचरण का आधार "कर्तव्य" होना चाहिए, न कि उसके परिणाम। इसके विपरीत, John Stuart Mill ने उपयोगितावाद (Utilitarianism) के माध्यम से यह प्रतिपादित किया कि नैतिक निर्णयों का मूल्यांकन उनके परिणामों के आधार पर किया जाना चाहिए, अर्थात् अधिकतम लोगों के लिए अधिकतम सुख।

तुलनात्मक विश्लेषण

यदि इन पाश्चात्य दृष्टिकोणों की तुलना गीता के सिद्धांतों से की जाए, तो यह स्पष्ट होता है कि गीता का "निष्काम कर्म" सिद्धांत कर्तव्य और परिणाम के बीच संतुलन स्थापित करता है। इसमें व्यक्ति कर्तव्य का पालन करता है, परंतु परिणाम के प्रति आसक्त नहीं होता। इस प्रकार यह सिद्धांत नैतिकता का एक समन्वित दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत करता है।

शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में National Education Policy 2020 ने मूल्य-आधारित शिक्षा पर विशेष बल दिया है। इस नीति में यह स्पष्ट किया गया है कि शिक्षा का उद्देश्य केवल ज्ञानार्जन नहीं, बल्कि चरित्र निर्माण एवं नैतिक विकास भी होना चाहिए।

हालाँकि, University Grants Commission तथा अन्य शैक्षणिक रिपोर्ट्स के विश्लेषण से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि वर्तमान शिक्षा प्रणाली अधिकतर परीक्षा-केंद्रित एवं परिणाम-उन्मुख हो गई है, जिसके कारण नैतिक मूल्यों का अपेक्षित विकास नहीं हो पा रहा है।

आलोचनात्मक दृष्टिकोण

उपलब्ध साहित्य के विश्लेषण से एक महत्वपूर्ण विरोधाभास उभरता है- नीतिगत स्तर पर नैतिकता को अत्यधिक महत्व दिया जाता है, परंतु व्यवहारिक स्तर पर उसके प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन में अनेक बाधाएँ उपस्थित हैं। इसी प्रकार, न्याय व्यवस्था के संदर्भ में भी संवैधानिक आदर्शों के बावजूद न्याय में विलंब, प्रक्रियात्मक जटिलता तथा संसाधनों की कमी नैतिकता के समक्ष गंभीर चुनौतियाँ प्रस्तुत करती हैं।

समग्र निष्कर्ष (Literature Gap Analysis)

उपलब्ध साहित्य के अध्ययन से निम्न निष्कर्ष सामने आते हैं-

- नैतिकता को दार्शनिक, विधिक एवं शैक्षणिक सभी दृष्टिकोणों से व्यापक रूप से समझाया गया है।
- तथापि, इन विभिन्न दृष्टिकोणों के बीच समन्वय का अभाव स्पष्ट रूप से दिखाई देता है।

इसी अंतराल (gap) को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह शोध निम्न समन्वित दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत करता है-

गीता की आंतरिक नैतिकता + संविधान की बाह्य नैतिकता + शिक्षा की व्यवहारिक नैतिकता
इन तीनों के समन्वय के बिना सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता की समग्र एवं प्रभावी स्थापना संभव नहीं है।

5. मुख्य भाग / विश्लेषण (Main Body / Analysis)

5.1 सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता की अवधारणा

सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता का आशय उन मूल्यों, मानकों और आचरण से है, जो व्यक्ति के व्यवहार को समाज के व्यापक हित के अनुरूप निर्देशित करते हैं। नैतिकता केवल व्यक्तिगत सद्गुणों तक सीमित नहीं रहती, बल्कि यह सामाजिक संस्थाओं-राजनीति, प्रशासन, न्यायव्यवस्था और शिक्षा-के संचालन का आधार भी बनती है।

भारतीय संदर्भ में नैतिकता का आधार दो प्रमुख स्रोतों में दिखाई देता है, एक ओर भगवत गीताका दार्शनिक दृष्टिकोण, और दूसरी ओर भारतीय संविधान का विधिक ढाँचा। जहाँ गीता व्यक्ति के आंतरिक आचरण को नियंत्रित करती है, वहीं संविधान बाह्य सामाजिक व्यवस्था को व्यवस्थित करता है।

5.2 संवैधानिक मूल्यों और नैतिकता का संबंध

भारतीय संविधान की प्रस्तावना में निहित न्याय, स्वतंत्रता, समानता और बंधुत्व के आदर्श केवल विधिक सिद्धांत नहीं, बल्कि नैतिक मूल्य हैं। ये मूल्य नागरिकों के आचरण को दिशा प्रदान करते हैं और सार्वजनिक जीवन को नैतिक आधार देते हैं।

मौलिक अधिकार व्यक्ति को स्वतंत्रता और गरिमा प्रदान करते हैं, जबकि मौलिक कर्तव्य नागरिकों को सामाजिक जिम्मेदारी का बोध कराते हैं। इस प्रकार अधिकार और कर्तव्य के बीच संतुलन ही नैतिक समाज की आधारशिला है।

किन्तु व्यवहारिक स्तर पर यह संतुलन कई बार बिगड़ता हुआ दिखाई देता है। न्यायालयों में लंबित मामलों की संख्या, प्रशासनिक प्रक्रियाओं की जटिलता तथा निर्णयों में पारदर्शिता की कमी यह दर्शाती है कि संवैधानिक आदर्शों को व्यवहार में लागू करना एक गंभीर चुनौती है।

5.3 गीता का नैतिक दर्शन और आंतरिक चेतना

भगवत गीतामें वर्णित अर्जुन और कृष्ण का संवाद मानव जीवन के नैतिक द्वंद्व का प्रतीक है। अर्जुन उस बाह्यमन का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं जो भावनाओं, भय और भ्रम से प्रभावित होता है, जबकि कृष्ण अंतर्मन की उस स्थिर और विवेकपूर्ण चेतना का प्रतीक हैं जो व्यक्ति को धर्म और कर्तव्य के मार्ग पर चलने के लिए प्रेरित करती है।

गीता का "निष्काम कर्म" सिद्धांत यह स्पष्ट करता है कि व्यक्ति को अपने कर्तव्य का पालन बिना फल की अपेक्षा के करना चाहिए। यह सिद्धांत सार्वजनिक जीवन में कार्य करने वाले प्रत्येक व्यक्ति-चाहे वह शिक्षक हो, प्रशासक हो या न्यायाधीश-के लिए नैतिक मार्गदर्शक के रूप में कार्य करता है।

5.4 शिक्षा व्यवस्था में नैतिकता का संकट

वर्तमान समय में शिक्षा व्यवस्था अनेक संरचनात्मक परिवर्तनों से गुजर रही है। सेमिस्टर प्रणाली, प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं का बढ़ता प्रभाव, तथा व्यावसायिक दृष्टिकोण ने शिक्षा के मूल उद्देश्य को प्रभावित किया है।

शिक्षा अब ज्ञानार्जन और व्यक्तित्व विकास के बजाय परिणाम और रोजगार पर अधिक केंद्रित हो गई है। इसके परिणामस्वरूप विद्यार्थियों में प्रतिस्पर्धा की भावना तो बढ़ी है, परंतु नैतिक मूल्यों का विकास अपेक्षित स्तर पर नहीं हो पा रहा है।

शिक्षक, जो समाज में मूल्य निर्माण के प्रमुख स्तंभ माने जाते थे, आज प्रशासनिक दबाव, संसाधनों की कमी और परिणाम आधारित मूल्यांकन प्रणाली के कारण अपने नैतिक दायित्वों को पूर्ण रूप से निभाने में कठिनाई अनुभव कर रहे हैं।

5.5 न्याय व्यवस्था और नैतिकता की चुनौती

न्याय व्यवस्था किसी भी समाज की नैतिकता का दर्पण होती है। यदि न्याय प्रणाली प्रभावी और निष्पक्ष है, तो समाज में नैतिक विश्वास बना रहता है।

किन्तु वर्तमान परिदृश्य में न्याय प्राप्ति में विलंब, प्रक्रियात्मक जटिलता और संसाधनों की असमानता के कारण आम नागरिक को न्याय पाने के लिए लंबे समय तक संघर्ष करना पड़ता है।

यह स्थिति एक नैतिक विरोधाभास को जन्म देती है, जहाँ व्यक्ति को न्याय प्राप्त करने के लिए कई बार अन्याय सहन करना पड़ता है। यह न केवल विधिक प्रणाली की चुनौती है, बल्कि नैतिकता की भी परीक्षा है।

5.6 समन्वित दृष्टिकोण: आंतरिक और बाह्य नैतिकता का संतुलन

यदि सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता को प्रभावी रूप से स्थापित करना है, तो आंतरिक और बाह्य दोनों प्रकार की नैतिकता के बीच संतुलन आवश्यक है।

संविधान बाह्य नियंत्रण और व्यवस्था प्रदान करता है, जबकि गीता आंतरिक चेतना और आत्मनियंत्रण को विकसित करती है। इन दोनों का समन्वय ही एक संतुलित और नैतिक समाज की स्थापना कर सकता है।

6. आलोचनात्मक विश्लेषण (Critical Analysis)

सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता के संदर्भ में एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न यह है कि नैतिकता के अभाव के लिए मुख्यतः कौन जिम्मेदार है, व्यक्ति या व्यवस्था?

एक ओर यह तर्क दिया जा सकता है कि यदि व्यक्ति के भीतर नैतिक चेतना का अभाव है, तो वह किसी भी व्यवस्था में अनैतिक आचरण कर सकता है। दूसरी ओर यह भी सत्य है कि यदि व्यवस्था पारदर्शी, उत्तरदायी और न्यायसंगत नहीं है, तो वह व्यक्ति को अनैतिक आचरण के लिए प्रेरित कर सकती है।

इस प्रकार, नैतिकता का संकट केवल व्यक्तिगत नहीं, बल्कि संरचनात्मक भी है।

वर्तमान शिक्षा प्रणाली इस द्वंद्व का एक स्पष्ट उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करती है। नीति स्तर पर मूल्य आधारित शिक्षा की बात की जाती है, परंतु व्यवहार में परीक्षा-केंद्रित और परिणाम-उन्मुख दृष्टिकोण को प्राथमिकता दी जाती है। यह विरोधाभास विद्यार्थियों और शिक्षकों दोनों के भीतर नैतिक भ्रम उत्पन्न करता है।

इसी प्रकार, न्याय व्यवस्था में भी संवैधानिक आदर्शों और वास्तविकता के बीच एक स्पष्ट अंतर दिखाई देता है। न्याय में विलंब और प्रक्रियात्मक जटिलता नागरिकों के विश्वास को कमजोर करती है और नैतिक निराशा को जन्म देती है।

गीता का दृष्टिकोण इस संदर्भ में एक महत्वपूर्ण मार्गदर्शन प्रदान करता है। यह व्यक्ति को बाहरी परिस्थितियों से परे जाकर अपने कर्तव्य और नैतिकता के प्रति समर्पित रहने की प्रेरणा देती है। परंतु यह भी ध्यान देने योग्य है कि केवल व्यक्तिगत नैतिकता पर्याप्त नहीं है; इसके साथ-साथ संस्थागत सुधार भी आवश्यक हैं।

अतः यह निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता की स्थापना के लिए दो स्तरों पर कार्य करना आवश्यक है

पहला, व्यक्ति के भीतर नैतिक चेतना का विकास, दूसरा, संस्थागत संरचनाओं को अधिक पारदर्शी, उत्तरदायी और न्यायसंगत बनाना।

इन दोनों के समन्वय के बिना नैतिकता का वास्तविक और स्थायी विकास संभव नहीं है।

7. चुनौतियाँ / समस्याएँ (Challenges / Problems)

सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता के समक्ष अनेक संरचनात्मक, संस्थागत तथा व्यक्तिगत स्तर की चुनौतियाँ उपस्थित हैं। इन चुनौतियों का विश्लेषण निम्नलिखित प्रमुख आयामों में किया जा सकता है-

(क) भ्रष्टाचार (Corruption)

भ्रष्टाचार सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता के सबसे गंभीर अवरोधों में से एक है। प्रशासनिक प्रक्रियाओं में पारदर्शिता की कमी, जवाबदेही का अभाव तथा व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ की प्रवृत्ति इस समस्या को और जटिल बनाती है। विभिन्न अध्ययनों में यह स्पष्ट हुआ है कि भ्रष्टाचार केवल आर्थिक हानि तक सीमित नहीं रहता, बल्कि यह संस्थाओं के प्रति नागरिकों के विश्वास को भी कमजोर करता है। परिणामस्वरूप, लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों का ह्रास होता है।

(ख) न्याय में विलंब (Delay in Justice)

न्यायपालिका में लंबित मामलों की बढ़ती संख्या एक गंभीर नैतिक समस्या के रूप में उभर रही है। न्याय प्राप्ति में अत्यधिक विलंब "Justice delayed is justice denied" की स्थिति उत्पन्न करता है। यह स्थिति नागरिकों के मौलिक अधिकारों के प्रभावी संरक्षण में बाधा उत्पन्न करती है तथा न्याय प्रणाली की विश्वसनीयता पर प्रश्नचिह्न लगाती है।

(ग) शिक्षा व्यवस्था में मूल्य-संकट (Ethical Crisis in Education)

वर्तमान शिक्षा प्रणाली में परिणाम-केंद्रित दृष्टिकोण, अत्यधिक प्रतिस्पर्धा तथा व्यावसायीकरण के कारण नैतिक मूल्यों का क्षरण देखा जा रहा है। सेमिस्टर प्रणाली, प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं (CET) का दबाव तथा व्यावहारिक विषयों पर असंतुलित जोर पारंपरिक ज्ञान-विषयों की उपेक्षा का कारण बन रहे हैं। शिक्षकों पर प्रशासनिक दबाव तथा संसाधनों की कमी भी उनके नैतिक दायित्वों के निर्वहन में बाधा उत्पन्न करती है।

(घ) संस्थागत जवाबदेही का अभाव

सार्वजनिक संस्थानों में जवाबदेही की कमी, निर्णय प्रक्रिया में पारदर्शिता का अभाव तथा नीतियों के प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन की कमी नैतिक संकट को और गहरा करती है।

(ङ) आंतरिक नैतिक चेतना का क्षय

नैतिकता का मूल आधार व्यक्ति की आंतरिक चेतना है। जब व्यक्ति अपने कर्तव्य और उत्तरदायित्व के प्रति सजग नहीं होता, तब बाहरी नियम भी प्रभावी नहीं रह जाते। यह आंतरिक नैतिकता का ह्रास सार्वजनिक जीवन में असंतुलन उत्पन्न करता है।

8. सुझाव / समाधान (Suggestions / Solutions)

उपरोक्त चुनौतियों के समाधान के लिए बहुआयामी तथा समन्वित दृष्टिकोण अपनाना आवश्यक है-

(क) मूल्य-आधारित शिक्षा का सुदृढ़ीकरण

शिक्षा प्रणाली में नैतिक मूल्यों, चरित्र निर्माण तथा सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व को प्राथमिकता दी जानी चाहिए। पाठ्यक्रम में नैतिक शिक्षा, जीवन कौशल तथा संवैधानिक मूल्यों को समाविष्ट किया जाना आवश्यक है।

(ख) संवैधानिक मूल्यों का प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन

न्याय, समानता, स्वतंत्रता तथा बंधुत्व जैसे संवैधानिक आदर्शों को केवल सैद्धांतिक न रखकर व्यावहारिक रूप में लागू किया जाना चाहिए। इसके लिए प्रशासनिक सुधार तथा न्यायिक प्रक्रियाओं में तेजी आवश्यक है।

(ग) न्याय व्यवस्था में सुधार

न्यायालयों में लंबित मामलों की संख्या को कम करने के लिए वैकल्पिक विवाद निवारण तंत्र (ADR), तकनीकी हस्तक्षेप तथा न्यायिक ढांचे का सुदृढ़ीकरण आवश्यक है।

(घ) प्रशासनिक पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही

ई-गवर्नेंस, सूचना का अधिकार तथा सामाजिक लेखा-जोखा (social audit) जैसे उपायों के माध्यम से प्रशासन में पारदर्शिता बढ़ाई जा सकती है।

(ङ) शिक्षक सशक्तिकरण

शिक्षकों को पर्याप्त स्वतंत्रता, संसाधन एवं प्रशिक्षण प्रदान किया जाना चाहिए ताकि वे केवल ज्ञान प्रदान करने वाले नहीं, बल्कि मूल्य-निर्माता के रूप में कार्य कर सकें।

(च) आंतरिक नैतिक चेतना का विकास

दार्शनिक और आध्यात्मिक ग्रंथों, विशेष रूप से भगवत गीताके सिद्धांतों के माध्यम से व्यक्ति में आत्मचिंतन, कर्तव्यबोध तथा नैतिक जागरूकता का विकास किया जा सकता है।

9. निष्कर्ष (Conclusion)

सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता का प्रश्न केवल बाह्य संस्थागत व्यवस्थाओं तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि यह व्यक्ति के आंतरिक चरित्र और चेतना से गहराई से जुड़ा हुआ है।

इस अध्ययन से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि नैतिकता की स्थापना के लिए दो स्तरों पर कार्य आवश्यक है- पहला, बाह्य स्तर पर संवैधानिक प्रावधानों एवं संस्थागत व्यवस्थाओं का सुदृढ़ीकरण; दूसरा, आंतरिक स्तर पर व्यक्ति में नैतिक चेतना एवं कर्तव्यबोध का विकास।

भारतीय संविधान जहाँ समाज के लिए एक विधिक एवं नैतिक ढांचा प्रदान करता है, वहीं भगवत गीताव्यक्ति के आंतरिक जीवन को दिशा प्रदान करती है।

अतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि सार्वजनिक जीवन में नैतिकता की स्थापना तभी संभव है जब बाह्य व्यवस्था और आंतरिक चेतना दोनों का संतुलित समन्वय हो।

अंततः, नैतिक समाज का निर्माण केवल नीतियों और कानूनों से नहीं, बल्कि जागरूक, जिम्मेदार और नैतिक नागरिकों के माध्यम से ही संभव है।

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11. समर्पण / आभार (Dedication / Acknowledgement)

यह शोधपत्र स्वर्गीय अधिवक्ता चंद्रकांतभाई ठक्कर की पावन स्मृति को समर्पित है, जिनका जीवन न्याय, सत्यनिष्ठा और नैतिक मूल्यों के प्रति अटूट प्रतिबद्धता का प्रेरणास्रोत रहा है।

साथ ही, इस शोधकार्य के लिए प्रेरणा प्रदान करने वाले शिक्षकों, विद्वानों तथा संस्थानों के प्रति कृतज्ञता व्यक्त की जाती है, जिनके मार्गदर्शन एवं योगदान से यह अध्ययन संभव हो सका।