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## Transformation and Restructuring of Professions in Globalizing India

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### Abstract

*The present paper is an attempt to look into the growth and development of professions in pre-independence period and a detailed analysis of changes in medical profession right from the ancient Indian society through the development of Yunani system of medicine in medieval period and the advent of modern system of medicine during the colonial period. Finally, an attempt is made to examine the growth and development of medical professions in pre-globalized independent Indian society along with the transformation and restructuring of western based medicine system by the forces of globalization and the revival and transformation of the traditional system of medicine in the era of globalization.*

*Key words: Globalization, Medical profession, Ayurveda, Yunani medicine, Medical tourism, Stratification*

Professions and professionalism have been important parameters to measure the growth and development in modern societies. The forces of globalization in last few decades are transforming and restructuring professions in both the developed and the developing societies. As professions expand their network beyond the boundaries of nation-states in order to develop the requisite skills needed to compete at global level, some new dimensions are added to the traditional notion of the profession and professionalism. The transnational flows of people, ideas and objects have repercussions for the professions and professionals located in different parts of the globe. Growth of new communication technologies and global environmental issues paved the way for the emergence of new professional groups and restructuring of the existing professions in the globalizing world. The multidimensional process of globalization has provided a new dynamicity to the professional groups in performing their roles as well as in maintaining the ethics of professionalism. Information and communication technology play a vital role not only in the task of performing their day to day professional role but also in updating professional knowledge and skills. The present paper is aimed to analyze the transformation and restructuring of the professions in India focusing on the medical profession only which is now passing through the process of globalization for last three

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decades. First of all, an attempt is made to look into the growth and development of professions in pre-independence period. Thereafter, a detailed analysis of changes in medical profession is made right from the ancient Indian society, covering the development of Yunani system of medicine in medieval period and the modern system of medicine during the colonial period. Finally, the growth and development of medical professions in pre-globalized independent Indian society are discussed along with the transformation of western based medicine system by the forces of globalization and the revival and transformation of the traditional system of medicine in the era of globalization.

## I

Indian society has a long history. In ancient period, there is evidence of some institutions of higher learning and specialized professions based on the practice of specialized knowledge. Apart from learning of common sense knowledge through participation in everyday life and hereditary based transmission of skills from one generation to the other, there are numerous references of an ancient institution of education, namely, *ashram* – a specific place where education was imparted by a person called *rishi* (sage, one who is practicing the life of simplicity and renunciation) *who was the head of that ashram* and his associates called *Munis* (thinkers, having deep knowledge of both the physical and spiritual world). These residential institutions were located in the forests and had patronage of the various kings. These *rishis and munis* had specialization in different fields. There are also incidences when after completion of basic education in a particular *ashram*, a rishi referred his student to go to some other *rishi* for getting specialized training. The students were admitted in these *ashramas* at the age of 12 years through a ceremony called *Upnayan Sanskar or Diksha* (by putting a sacred thread by the rishi to be worn on the body all the time and has to be changed time to time following a particular method prescribed for it). Thereafter, the head of the institution became the *guru* (teacher) and the admitted child *shishya* (disciple) for the whole life-span. This *guru-shishya* tradition still continues in spiritual world even today. Later on, these *ashramas* were converted into *gurukuls* (traditional educational institutions where traditional form of knowledge both worldly and other worldly is imparted). The period of stay in these institutions was for a period of about 12 years. After completion of education in these institutions a student was supposed to return and engaged in an economic pursuit as per his specialized knowledge in a particular field. In every *ashrama* there were a number of specialized teachers imparting education and vocational training to the students as per their interest and capacity. These teachers were called *acharyas* (equivalent to a university professor of today). Apart from spiritual knowledge and guidance generally given by the *Brahmins*, there were certain specialized occupations like training of operating arms, war strategies mainly allocated to *Kshatriyas*, trade and commerce allocated to *Vaishyas* and various type of services allocated to *Shudras* which included artisans and other activities. Musicians, artistic occupations were open to persons of all the above mentioned groups. However, the agricultural occupation was common to the members of all these groups. *Grams* (Villages) were self-sufficient units and had functional ties with *nagaras* (city/town). However, the king had a control over the territory of his kingdom and all the land belonged to him, the cultivators were supposed to pay tax to the king. Thus, there was some sort of division of labour not only at the village level called *Jajmani system* (see Wiser 1936; 1963; Mandelbaum 1963).

Vedic literature has been a rich source of spirituality in Indian society since Vedic period (c. 1500 – c. 600 BCE). In post-Vedic period (600–323 BCE) witnessed the rise of large, urbanized states as well as of *shramana* movements - Jainism and Buddhism - which challenged the Vedic

orthodoxy. All the knowledge that we have of the post-Vedic period comes from the Buddhist literature and the Hindu Epics. One can say post-Vedic period is Buddhist Period, and *Smriti* and *Epic* Period when other religious traditions –Jainism, Buddhism, Charvak-emerged and spread in the Indian sub-continent. These intellectual traditions gave rise to a class of profession i. e. intelligentsia, who has expert knowledge of the Vedic literature and the literature of other indigenous religions. The Mauryan period (322 – 185 B.C.E.) was ‘extremely rich in terms of literary resources of information, the most important being Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, the Buddhist texts and travel accounts. During this period, city administration was well developed. The administration was done through six committees, each one headed by an officer called *adhyaksha* or superintendent appointed by the ruler for supervising the functioning of committees related to ‘factories; foreigners; birth and death records; markets, weights and measures; inspection of manufacturing goods; and sales tax’ (Ramachandran 1989: 41). The city legal system consisted of courts at three levels: the locality, the caste and the clan level. In addition to these courts, the various occupational guilds also settled disputes among their members. The city was also a ‘centre of the manufacturing industry’ usually ‘surrounded by craft villages (more or less homogeneous in terms of occupation and specialization in some activities)’. Within the city it had ‘a number of sixty odd industries.... grouped into 11 categories:

*‘(1) textiles, (2) carpentry and woodwork, (3) metal work including smiths and jewelers, (4) stone work; (5) glass industry, (6) bone and ivory work, (7) perfumery, (8) liquor and oil manufacture, (9) leather industry, (10) clay works including pottery, terracotta figure making, modeling and brick making, and (11) other miscellaneous industries such as making garlands, combs, baskets, musical instruments, and painting’ (Ramachandran 1989: 41-42).*

Advanced level of guilds of industrial labour and merchants were in existence. Occupation wise major sections of society were:

*‘the king and his higher administrative and military officials, priests, lower administrative and military officials, independent professionals such as physicians, scribes, accountants and teachers, the mercantile community, artisans and craftsmen, public entertainers such as musicians, dancers, actors and prostitutes, and persons performing a variety of services, such as washer man, barbers and domestic servants’ (Ramachandran 1989: 42).*

By that time three international universities- *Nalanda Vishwavidyalaya*, located in the present state of Bihar (India), a famous Buddhist educational institution whose curriculum included subjects such as the [Vedas](#), logic, Sanskrit grammar, medicine and [Samkhya](#); *Takshashila Vishwavidyalaya*, located in the Rawalpindi District of the Punjab, now in Pakistan; and Vikramshilla Vishwavidyalaya located near Bhagalpur in Bihar, came into existence. Takshashila’s famous researchers and teachers include: *Panini* (the great grammarian of Sanskrit); *Kautilya*, also known as Chanakya (king-maker, astute political advisor, and author of *ArthaShastra*, c. 300 BCE); *Charaka* (the distinguished physician, whose research on the region’s flora and fauna described in his *Charaka Samhita* strengthened the development of Ayurveda); and *Jivaka* (the great physician to Gautama Buddha).

It suggests that during the Mauryan period the urban society in north India was occupationally diversified and some sort of professions were also in existence. Similar patterns of urbanization and industrialization took place in south India as well. However, due to invasion and continuous

warfare between kings resulted into decline of economic and professional activities which was further accelerated during the invasion of *Hunas*, who entertained anti-Buddhist sentiments, resulted into deliberate destruction of many Buddhist centres in north-western India and Gangetic plains. This process continues even in the Mughal period particularly in the period of Khilji dynasty. Although, some efforts were made by Emperor SherShah Suri for the first time to promote trade and commerce, followed to a great extent by emperor Akbar and his descendants (Mukherjee 2011). It is important to note that rural areas were connected with the urban centres and had economic ties with urban based industrial units but at the same time maintained their autonomy during the period of various rulers focusing mainly on agricultural activities and craftsmanship. However, urban centres had high level of prosperity through trade and commerce became the victim of invaders and cruel rulers who insisted on conversion of the local population in order to strengthen their administration and military power. But these indigenous industries continued to survive even in adverse conditions and engaged in trade and commerce activities not only within the country but also abroad particularly in the middle-east and Europe (through silk route) came into existence during the Maurya Empire.

Mishra (1961) discussed at a length the growth of Indian middle classes and argued that it can be divided into two: Old middle class and new middle class. By old middle class, he means, urban based indigenous occupational groups emerged, developed and survived in India prior to advent of East India Company and British Empire. However, New Middle Class originated as a result of colonial experience for a period of about 200 years. Thus, with the growth of modern professions, old professional groups either vanished or subjugated by the forces of westernization. The growth of professions, namely, law, medicine, teaching, and engineering was relatively low. Of these, medicine remained by far the most important, second only to law. The following table is based on the data presented by Mishra (1961:332) which gives a comparative picture of the trends in each of them in pre-independence period:

In independent India, the growth of professions took place at a faster rate and a number of institutions to impart professional education were established. As a result a sizable number of professionals (Doctors, Engineers, University Teachers, Journalists, Lawyers, etc.) emerged in post-independence period. In 1990s, India adopted the policy of Globalization, Privatization and Liberalization moving away from the model of mixed economy and introduced a number of structural reforms to cope with the process of globalization. These changes led to not only in transformation and restructuring of existing professions but also to the emergence of some new professions such as IT professionals, Environment Impact Assessment Professionals in India. Information and Communication Technology has brought information revolution in India. There has been tremendous increase in flow of information through internet based devices. The digitalization of government records and use of information services by the professionals in their everyday role performance has changed the patterns of their work organization and helping them not only in performing their professional roles more effectively but also in updating their professional knowledge by regular use of internet. For example, High Courts and Supreme Courts now upload their day-to-day orders and judgments on their websites.

The advent of multinational companies in post-globalization era has brought new opportunities not only to the urban based middle class families but also educated families of rural areas and opened the ladder of professional jobs to the youth of the diverse socio-economic background. In last three decades, the growth of professional educational institutions (mainly privately owned) has increased at a faster rate. It has motivated even parents of lower middle class and rural peasants to

admit their wards in these institutions after 12 years of schooling. The number of girl students in professional courses is now more than the boys. Five-year integrated courses of law in the Indian universities and colleges are meant to prepare a new class of law professionals mainly absorbed in the globally operating corporate sector. These changes reflect the nature of transformation and restructuring of professions in globalizing India. Due to lack of space, we shall focus only on the restructuring and transformation of medical profession in India.



### Medical Profession

The history of medicine and medical profession in India can be traced back in ancient Vedic literature, *Rig Veda*, 'data of which may mostly be referred to the latter part of the second millennium B.C.' (Basham 1977: 11). In *Rig Veda* the word '*Bhisaj*' is used which is more or less synonymous with *Vaidya*, still a standard Indian term used for the doctor of traditional type. The *bhisaj* is referred to in one passage of *Rig Veda* 'as desiring, a break, a fracture (*rutam*), in order to gain wealth, indicating that he was originally a bone-setter' (*ibid.* 11) (in contemporary Indian society the technique of bone-setting by a local specialist is still in practice but the term *bhisaj* has been disappeared in due course of time for such persons). In another hymn, he is referred as 'to as conversant with healing herbs' (*ibid.* 18). Later on another term '*cikitsaka*' (*chikitsak*) was used to refer for the person who was engaged in the profession of medicine. "By far the most common term for a medical practitioner in Kaumilya's *Arthauâstra*, however, is *cikitsaka*. This term was probably the most generic, as it covered the 'king's own physician' (*KAS* 1.19.23), various kinds of itinerant healers, army medics (10.3.47), and even veterinarians" (Olivelle 20: 1). Thus in ancient Indian society, there were three types of persons engaged in the pursuit of medicine, *Vaidya*, *Cikitsaka* and *Bhisaj*. However, the first two nomenclatures are still in existence but the third one is either disappeared or its nomenclature is changed.

In the medieval period, with the advent of foreign invaders and later on establishment of Mughal Saltanat in India, Yunani/Unani System of Medicine came into existence (Basham 1977). The Muslim physician (*tabib*) became known generally as a *hakim* ("a learned man"). 'Since his system looks back to classical Europe, the Muslim hakim in India practices Yunani (often spelled Unani)-i.e., Greek medicine, as a distinct from Ayurveda, or a hybrid Muslim-Hindu system known as *Tibb*' (Basham 1977: 39). This system of medicine flourished in medieval period under the protection of the Mughal emperors. There is no mention in Hindu texts and scriptures for the existence of a fully developed system of hospitals. On the other hand, hospitals were essential aspects of the Muslim medical system and the *tabib* is advised to visit hospitals regularly. One important feature of Muslim medicine was the development of surgery in *Tibb* system. The surgeon was called *Jirah* (phlebotomist). Thus, under the protection of the Saltanat a number of hospitals were established to provide treatment to the patients. However, *ayurvedic* medicine system also persisted in the society parallel to the *Yunani* or *Tibb* system of medicine. Much before the Mughals and British stepped into India, residential universities like Takshashila and Nalanda provided organized institutionalized training in medicine. Students were trained in both theoretical and practical aspects under the guidance of a *guru called acharya*. In the 16 century, it was the Portuguese who first introduced Western medicine into India.

In 1600, East India Company brought some medical officers who were trained doctors in western medicine. Initially, medical departments, with surgeons, were setup to provide medical

relief to the troops and employees of the East India Company. In 1785, The Company set up Medical departments in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay presidencies to look after both the military personnel and the British civilians (Mushtaq 2009). After the Mutiny of 1857 the British government took over the rule of India from the East India Company and took several initiatives for the improvement of health services such as the Indian Medical Service, the Central and Provincial Medical Services, and the Subordinate Medical Services. A public health commissioner and a statistical officer were also appointed to the Government of India (Mushtaq 2009) and opened a number of hospitals in different parts of the country, Madras (1679), Calcutta (1796), Calcutta Medical College (1835), Lahore (1860). Afterwards, a network of hospitals was set up throughout India. A nursing school in Delhi was established in 1918 and the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health was established in Calcutta in 1930 (Mushtaq 2009). As for as the status of locally rooted Ayurvedic and Yunani system of medicine during the British period is concerned, Panikkar (2009) and the following observations of Anshu, Supe are relevant:

However, during the colonial period, there was a clash of cultures where the East was seen as weak against the powerful knowledge of the West. Both groups tried to differentiate their own set of ideas from those of the other. In the East, medicine was largely pluralistic and there was awareness and acceptance of alternative traditions. Medicine was not viewed simply as a biological phenomenon and emphasis was given to a patient's societal standing, environment, and relation with the therapist. As colonial arteries hardened, claims of the Western superiority and scientific authority isolated Western medicine. Allopathic practitioners saw themselves as modernizers and often treated their indigenous counterparts with contempt for their "inferior knowledge." Local knowledge was labeled unscientific or irrational. While Western medicine was accorded the status of official medicine, the state turned discriminatory and hostile toward the other systems (Anshu and Supu 2016: 2).

The above observations reveal that there was a clash of culture between the western system of medicine and the locally rooted system of medicine during colonial period. As a result both the local system of medicines struggled for their survival in adverse political climate which continued even in post-independence period as well.

In first three decades after independence, most of the doctors were either engaged in private practice or were employed in government hospitals or educators in state owned medical colleges. In this period, the medical profession had a very high prestige and was most preferable profession in the society. As a result, the demand of science and biology stream increased at the secondary level education. The admission in medical college became highly competitive and most of the medical institutions started entrance test for admission in early 1970s. Majority of the doctors belong to the new middle class and were employed mostly in the public sector institutions. It is only with increasing commercialization of medical care that a significant proportion of doctors chose to work in the private sector.

Studies on the social background of doctors before independence reveal that most of them either belong to the old middle class or upper middle class and caste (Jeffery 1988). However, by the 1970s, the social background of doctors presented a much more mixed background, especially with affirmative policies for marginalized sections. In addition, the growth of private colleges in the western and southern states resulted in large sections of the new middle class gaining access to medical education. It also witnessed the rise of middle order castes that have acquired wealth

through commercialization of agriculture or petty business, investing in medial and other professional education in the private sector. A contrast can be seen between the doctors in terms of their salaries and working conditions. The higher salaries and easier conditions in case of doctors in private hospitals in contrast to their overworked and comparatively less-well paid counterparts in public hospitals (Baru 1998).

The growth of large private hospitals is a phenomenon appeared on the scenario in mid-1980s as a shift in the policy of the government to provide subsidies in procuring land and reduction in import duties for purchasing technologically advanced medical equipment etc., as well as exemption in taxes for promoting research and development activities. It facilitated the growth of corporate hospital as a number of national and regional business groups readily invested in these institutions with an active involvement of non-resident Indian (NRI) doctors particularly from the United States (Baru 1998). At the same time, small and medium size nursing homes were also established at the initiative of local capitalists with an involvement of local doctors serving privately as well as in public sector medial institutions on part-time basis. Prior to this most of the hospitals and nursing homes were opened by some industrial houses and trusts for charity purpose without having any objective of profit to serve the common man with limited surgical facilities. The rise of the private sector hospitals and nursing homes of different size 'altered the dynamics within the private sector and resulted in a considerable amount of competition and also pushed up the cost of medical treatment during the 1990s. These private hospitals and nursing homes attracted the upper-middle and middle classes patients who were highly dissatisfied with the hygienic condition, poor services and low reputation in the society. Even the rural and lower class patients began to prefer private nursing homes for the treatment of complicated diseases and surgical operations by the well-known specialists of different private and public sector institutions. This has given rise to a shift in the attitude and values of the general public towards medical care and they preferred good quality medical care over the poor medical care and services offered in government hospitals. Thus, a kind of consumerism has emerged in the field of medicine as the forces of globalization paved the way for the growth of private sector in health services in India. The transnational flow of the capital and doctors helped in establishing world-class medical facilities in different metropolitan centers. Consequently, a number of super and multi-specialist hospitals started to dominate in medical and health services and begin to attract the patients not only from the different remote corners of the country but also from the abroad.

Another important phenomenon in the field of medicine was the revival of the Ayurveda system of medicine. In first four decades after the independence, two locally rooted systems of medicine, namely, *Unani* and *Ayurveda* struggled for their survival against the popularity of the western system of medicine. *Hamdard* and *Tibbia* were the leading pharmacies representing the *Unani* system, while *Dabur*, *Baidyanath*, *Jhandu* and many other local pharmacies representing the *ayurvedic* system of medicine. However, they could not get much success in the decades of 1950s, 60s and 70s as they continue to rely on their traditional techniques and organizational structure.

With the phenomenon of globalization there was an unprecedented growth of information and communication technologies in India. The Indian television transformed into global television. At this juncture, a young *sanyasi* (a Hindu religious person) Ramdev founded the Divya Yog Mandir Trust in 1995 and in 1997, a new ayurvedic pharmacy-"Patanjali Ayurveda Limited (PAL)- established in the name of an ancient sage 'Maharishi Patanjali' who was one of the founders of Yoga and

Ayurveda in ancient period. The founders of this company were two youth- Ramdev (a sanyasi) and Balkrishna. Both of them studied Yoga and Ayurveda in *Kalwa Gurukul* in *Jind* district of Haryana, (a *gurukul* is a traditional form of educational institution reestablished in 19<sup>th</sup> century by Swami Dayanad Saraswati, a religious reformer and founder of Arya Samaj). Ramdev offered free yoga training to the villagers. Then both of them moved to Haridwar in Uttarakhand, where they practiced self-discipline and meditation, and spent several years to study ancient Indian scriptures at *Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya*, Haridwar (a university established by another Arya Samaj saint Swami Shradhdhanad to promote research and training in Ayurveda and Yoga in 1902). In 2003, *Aastha TV* began featuring Ramdev as a *yog guru* in its morning *yoga* slot. There, he proved to be telegenic and gained a large following, while Balkrishna appeared as an *Acharya* (equivalent to a university professor) who has an in-depth knowledge of herbs and herbal medicines in his TV show. As a result, a large number of people, celebrities from India and abroad began to attend Ramdev's Yoga camps in various towns and cities of the country. He opened a number of centres of yoga training in different parts of India and developed a large number of followers who donated liberally for the promotion of yoga and ayurved in India and abroad. Some of his yoga exercises became very popular (*Pranayama* and *Kapal bhati*) in these sessions of yoga. His popularity in media attracted many celebrities not only in India but also in foreign countries including Britain, the US and Japan across the religion. He established Patanjali Yogpeeth (a university of Yoga and Ayurveda) in 2006 at Bahadurabad, near Haridwar. They opened many dispensaries, shops and franchises in every small and big town of the country and also appointed '*baidyas*' (traditional Ayurvedic doctor) in his own established dispensaries to give free consultation regarding the herbal medicines. Later on, he also led '*swadeshi* movement' and started to produce consumer goods like toothpaste, shampoo and other cosmetic items and biscuits to noodles, and now apparel and footwear and posed a big challenge to a number of multinational companies— the likes of Unilever, Proctor & Gamble, Nestle, Hindustan Liver, Colgate - Palmolive, Johnson & Johnson. No other indigenous company has built such a well-diversified product portfolio. It has grown more than ten times in revenue in last one decade. The company has extensive sales channel including Future Group, Reliance Retail, Hyper City and Star Bazaar as well as leading e-commerce platforms.

The first ever success of an indigenous company in the field of yoga and Ayurveda has revived the age old system of indigenous knowledge and practices of medicine having roots in ancient Vedic literature, neglected for centuries for various reasons. Information and communication technologies play a vital role in the revival and steady growth of such establishment. People's cultural values and beliefs also play an important role in this process. Use of modern technology in processing and packaging the ayurvedic products tremendously helped not only in popularizing these products but also enabled to compete with MNC's products in the globalized Indian market. It coincided with the rise of cultural nationalism led by conservative political party of India and telecast of mythological soap operas on national TV followed by flood of religious channels in the very first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century and his admirers in media houses prepared the favorable ground for the success of his ventures. Thus, the forces of globalization created competition in different systems of medicines in India in terms of developing a high degree of professionalism and quality in services and products in the field of medicine in India. Thus, Manuel Castells (2000) argument that global economy has capacity to connect or include in its system all those things which are valued seems to be true in this particular case, even the elements of a traditional cultural system.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the medical services and care in the public sector as well as in the private sector were not up to international standards. As a result, many

affluent patients and politicians preferred to go abroad particularly USA for their treatment. However, in the era of globalization, tremendous development took place and the Apollo group promoted by Pratap C. Reddy during the late 1980s, has emerged as the largest private health care Corporation in Asia. In December 1999, the company expanded its operations by mobilizing capital from European, American and Japanese medical manufacturers to finance new ventures (Baru 2000). Thus, "The establishment of Apollo marked the entry of non-resident Indian doctors into medical care and signaled a recognition of a hospital as a corporate enterprise" (Baru 2000). It marked a transformation in the organizational structure of private investment in health care as well as the shift from single owner enterprises and nursing homes to corporate enterprises.

The tremendous development in medical profession of India made India today a home to host of top facilities, 'many of which also act as medical tourism facilities, attracting patients from all over the world" (Ansari and Khan 2014:65). Medical tourism in India is one of the best options available to the patients across the globe. A large number of patients visit every year for their treatment combined with the tourism in India conceptually termed as 'medical tourism'. "India now provides world class medical facilities in corporate hospitals specialized in multi-specialty health centres providing their expertise in areas of cosmetic surgery, dental care, heart surgery, coronary by-pass, heart check-up, valve replacements, knee replacements, eye surgeries, Indian traditional treatments like *ayurvedic* therapies" (Ansari and Khan 2014: 65). Health care is one of the India's largest sector in terms of revenue and employment, is expanding rapidly. One of the major factors for this phenomenon is low cost of medical treatment by world class doctors and smooth communication in English language as well as low cost of medicines, accessories and residential accommodation in hospital premise.

It shows that ancient Indian society had some sort of professions who had specialized knowledge and a specific educational institution called *ashram* to impart certain professional skills under the guidance of *rishis* and *munis*. In every field of knowledge there are references of some specific *rishis* in ancient *vedic* literature. These institutions were having liberal royal patronage from different rulers spread over in the whole Indian Territory and had very respectable status in the society. In the field of medical profession, solid evidence emerged out of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* where the reference of physicians is mentioned very clearly along with other professions. However, in post-Maurya period there has been decline in the profession due to continuous warfare between rulers of different Indian kingdoms. Later on with the advent of invaders the progress of indigenous knowledge and professional skills in ayurvedic system of medicine were hindered and the universities were destroyed. In the Mughal period, the Muslim medicine system, based on Yunani system, was promoted by rulers as a parallel system of medicine and hospitals were also established for the treatment of the patients. The major functionary was a hakim (physician). However, in long run, both the system of medicine developed harmonious relationship and exchanged their knowledge. During, the colonial period, western system of medicine was brought and established in India. This gave rise to a cultural clash between the locally rooted systems of medicines and the western system of medicine which considered as modernizer and looked local medicine systems unscientific and inferior. As a result, modern system of medicine progressed in colonial India and local systems of medicine gradually decline due to lack of protection but not totally vanished. After independence, the government preferred to promote modern system of medicine rather than indigenous medicine. However, some efforts in private sector helped the survival of Ayurvedic and Yunani systems due to their cultural roots in two major communities of India, namely, the Hindus and the Muslims respectively, who still have some faith in these systems of medicine. The medical profession in

India, thus became stratified, the modern doctors having a very high prestige and status and the traditional *vaidyas* and *hakims* having relatively inferior status in the society. The modern doctors who were mainly employed in public sector or practiced in private clinics maintained high professional standards. Therefore, a steady growth of modern medical profession can be observed in the colonial as well as in the post-independence period. However, the medical profession in India was not well equipped with advanced techniques and equipment due to lack of funds and political will as well as organization bottlenecks in the public sector. The efficient manpower of doctors migrated to the developed countries, a phenomenon called 'brain drain'.

In mid-1980s the growth of private sector took a new turn when world-class super and multi-specialty hospitals started to establish with corporate structure as result of the shift in economic policies of the country. The NRI doctors were instrumental in establishing such hospitals in collaboration with the local capitalist class. The adoption of the policy of globalization helped in import of highly advanced medical equipment and technology in this sector. The establishment of pharmaceutical hubs in different parts of India made the the cost of treatment relatively cheaper without compromising the quality. This high standard of professionalism in medical profession reversed the trend of medical tourism. Earlier the rich patients and the politicians used to visit foreign countries for their treatment but in the era of globalization patients from abroad began to visit these super and multi-specialty hospitals for their treatment. Thus, globalization has contributed significantly in achieving high standards of professionalism in private sector of medical profession. The medical facilities even in the small and medium level private nursing home and hospitals have improved tremendously in post-globalization period. These developments contribute in the high growth of Indian economy in last two decades. However, the two sectors of medical profession in India – the public and the private- have been fragmented and stratified. The private sector has developed and providing medical facilities to the rich section of the society, while the public sector medical institutions are now meant for the poor and marginalized sections of the rural and urban areas. The public sector institutions are gradually on the decline while the private sector institutions are on the rise. Therefore, the medical profession in India has on the one hand a group of doctor having high salaries and world-class infrastructural facilities and easy working conditions, while on the other, are the public sector doctors who are relatively less-paid and have hard working conditions affecting their professional commitment adversely. Another important consequence of the globalization and communication revolution in India is revival and a steady growth of an Ayurvedic company which succeeded in competing with established MNCs of foreign origin by transforming its technology and packaging techniques and using the faith belief of the local population in Ayurveda and yoga on the one hand and aggressive media advertising strategies on the other.

It is now clear from the above discussion that the medical profession in India has passed through various stages and now is restructuring and transforming itself affected by the process of globalization. Globalization has positive consequences for the professionals working in private sector hospitals and developing high standard of professionalism among them. Simultaneously, it has adverse impact on the working conditions of the doctors serving in public hospitals thereby generating low level of professional commitment among them. Theoretically, it supports the observation of Giddens (1998) that globalization may have positive consequences for one sector but negative consequences for another sector. Manuel Castells (2000) observation that global economy has the capacity to simultaneously include and exclude the people and places is also relevant in this context. The revival of traditional system of medicine through the process of globalization is an example not only of the process of inclusion of traditional medicine system in

global economy but also succeeding in a steady growth in its turnover. Thus, globalization does not essentially promote the forces of modernization but may also help in popularity and revival of traditions, if they are valuable for the growth of global economy. Moreover, globalization can also lead to stratification within a profession by having differential consequences as in case of public and private sector of medical profession in India.

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# Vedantic Philosophy and Postmodern Situation: A Synthetic Approach to Knowledge

*B.P.Badola*

## *Abstract*

*Knowledge is but a reflection on our perception of reality. Many a discourses emerged on our perceptions which ;ire blended as metaphysical, epistemological, and, ontological and so ,on. These are added with the complementary ethical-moral perspectives designed according to their fundamental perceptions. Human mind and therefore society evolved, views August Comte, from! theological to metaphysical to positivist or scientific stages. Human mind lias been tremendously creative particularly in designing huge corpus of knowledge forms and is so valued that in present context the global market is dominated try this creativity. We have excelled in knowing the temporal world and reached to the modern or ultra-modern state, however, a number issues exist as agonies and are unresolved. Modernity, says Jurgen Habermas, is an incomplete project in India". The power of science to solve all problems and the epistemic knowledge as revealing the whole reality is therefore, questionable. The postmodern situation, I think, has opened all round discourses and particularly the ontological one It has created a space for discourses beyond meta-narratives.*

*Vedantic philosophy is metaphysical that is based on the infrastructural position of spirit (Idea) and thereby perceiving the reality beyond matter or material world or influence. It is based on the independent (transcendental) state of human consciousness- liberated from the influence of matter and devoted to; social action with vigour and dedication. While the post industrial or postmodern-views seem heterological, leading to all directions, Vedantic philosophy is synoptic because it construe the image of human not as Free but liberated (Mukta) and 'Brahmic' (Univeisal) in nature. This draws the discourse on the evolution of human spirit and existence to higher forms and its praxis on wider scale, hence it has the capacity to design new synthetic existential meanine; out of the postmodern approaches of 'human-situateclness'.*

**M**y understanding of "reality hinges around the metaphysics of the reality itself. At this stage the nominal and phenomenal are not distinct (in Kantian philosophy-noumenal means, a thing as it is in itself, as distinct from a thing as it is knowable by the senses through phenomenal attributes.) Thus reality is a louical synerev of the four fundamental elements i.e., matter, mind (spirit), time and space and two important elements viz, man (human) (as instrumental element) and society (as contextual element). In other worlds these are substantial to the notion of reality. The absence of anyone of the fundamental elements will not constitute the structure of reality,! however, these four fundamental elements frame into a typical co-relationship where one element

at a given moment is placed at 'infrastructural position' and rest of the elements are at 'super structural' positions. The element situated at the 'infrastructural' position is "the independent element" and therefore, is taken as the most powerful one, hence, the source of forces or the source of the 'reasons'. Infrastructural element is so dominant that it forces and designs our perception (Darshan). This infrastructural element is the 'Creator' element i.e. creator of phenomena as and according to the attributes inherent in it. Thus we perceive the reality under the influence of infrastructural element and consequently, we have materialistic perception, (Bhautikyaadi Darshan) or spiritualistic (idealistic) perception. (Adhyatmavaadi Darshan). By putting individual with matter in infrastructure, we developed the naturalism (or romantic naturalism) and by taking society with matter in infrastructure, evolved the pragmatism, which as we know, is the basic philosophy of social sciences. In order to resolve the contradictions and antagonism between theology and science (materialism-naturalism), the 'realism' evolved through conceptualizing individual as 'human' and placed it with matter and hence the primary realism appeared as 'humanism'. These materialistic philosophies are phenomenal because perception is through senses and hence they are 'epistemological'.

The existential philosophy, on the other hand is rooted in the materialistic reality, however, it designs its paradigms on the ontological (existential) conditions of human being; matter, mind, time, space and society revolving around it. So in the existential philosophy, existence of man is at the centre or termed as 'human situated'.

The human society thus witnessed a transition from pre-industrial era to the industrial through the march of materialistic philosophies in the form of scientific knowledge, which revolutionized the world. This was the dawn of modern age or 'modernization where we all are situated. Here, we observed to use Thomas Kuhn's (1962) terminology, 'structures of scientific revolutions' as designed by the change in the worldview.

In this introduction of philosophies 'spiritualism' stands distinct from materialistic perceptions. I will follow the basic design of reality to make conspicuous for the discourse that follows in my presentation. When, mind or spirit or consciousness or idea- (which is a fundamental element of reality), is placed in the 'infrastructure position, it is to be established as 'independent' (which is always debated and misunderstood) because an independent 'spirit' only has the potential to perceive reality beyond matter (or material world) and which is now generally conceived as "metaphysical". In other words, a dependent mind or spirit is weak and neither helps us to perceive reality beyond matter nor be a creator of phenomena. Hence 'independent mind' is the core concept to the spiritualism. One pertinent thing to be kept in mind is that in Indian philosophical systems, spiritualism in general is attached as integral to religion and theology.; The fact is that spiritualism is a philosophical process of 'knowing' and not a set of rituals and belief. This independent mind is both the subject and object of knowing the reality. This is why the Brahma, sutras and Upanishads or Socrates to Shankaracharya emphasized to reveal to 'know thy self.

While remarking on Berkley's views 'that nothing exists unless it is perceived by man or God', Will Durant (1953) prophesied the decline of philosophy when he writes, 'now no doubt it is truistically tautologically, platitudinously true that nothing exists' for any mind, but that which 'that' mind perceives. But what a world away this is from the proposition so often confused with it that 'nothing exists unless it is perceived'. The problem began when 'epistemologists' grabbed the primary position of metaphysics in order to defend the mechanistic science and theologians surreptitiously

tried to usurp the metaphysics to dictate, the unreliability of science. With this background of clout around philosophy, my purpose here is to defend the need and philosophy as the root of knowledge which can be easily incorporated within the ambit of curriculum of every subject without creating any disrespect to it. It is necessary to defuse the clout created by theologians to project philosophy as the maid of theology and also to dispel the confusion created by the epistemologists to project their stand as the only truth under the blanket of terminology and methods.

Philosophy stands for incessant integrative imaginations of facts and hence clears and cleanses the subtleties of mental faculties for the exploration of truth. It is not msize to enjoy confusion rather a way out to solve the mysteries."This is quintessential to exorcise idealism (spiritualism) from theology and science from their myopia. This is the fundamental reason that idealism or spiritualism and science could not materialize their proper integration and consequently we still fail to conceptualize the holistic perspective in knowledge.

### The Postmodern Situation

'Postmodernist thinking, writes Huger J. Silverman (1990:1,2), involves rethinking finding the places of difference within texts and institutions, examining the inscriptions of indecidability, noting the dispersal of signification, identity and centered unity across a plurivalent texture of epistemological and metaphysical knowledge production....Postmodernism brings the modernist hegemony to closure. It is not a simple refusal to accept modernist principle and perspectives/ The realities of industrial society were expressed in the works and writings of scholars, practitioners and professionals touching every dimension of human life- certainties and uncertainties hope and despair, bureaucratization-, "mechanization, comforts and challenges and so on. Everything that dawn with the renaissance and science enveloped the era of industrialization through nineteenth and twentieth centuries and new normative and value patterns, new knowledge forms to look at the human existential conditions and social and wider global challenges. Postmodernism as such is not a school of thought or philosophy rather an upsurge of reactions against the unassailability of Meta narraives generated by the post-industrial conditions. It is a rethinking on the apriori beyond posteriori, and I subjectivism vis-a-vis objectivism. The postmodern situation thus has shifted the discourse from epistemological to ontological and taken the paradigms .of knowledge to much wider space. The. pre-industiiial thoughts like theology are also being revisited from this broader ontological spectrum. Hence developments in varied areas like art, literature, architecture, music, painting, fashion, experiences of space and time, identity issues, sexuality and communications; are being discussed as urgent areas of social life. Giddens (1990) presents postmodernhy as a form of life 'beyont Unodtrnity'. Postmodernity as a possible social future, a condition, a form of life that has yet to be realized, an alternative form of sociality...after overcoming the spirals of flux, turmoil and perpetual transformation that seems to be intrinsic *to* modernity. The key features attributed to postmodernity as a future-oriented project include a post-scarcity order; multi-layered democratic participation; demilitarization; and a lunnanization of technology. Barry Smart (1993:12-13) considers postmodernity in this sense 'as an example of the reconstitution of Utopian thought'.

Smart Barry (1993) draws our attention towards Max Weber's impression on 'fate of our times....by rationalization and intellectualization and above all, by the "disenchantment of the world" (Wright Mills, C.( The Sociological Imagination, 1970). The question of the fate of humanity under

the conditions of modernity draws the problematic. The more the modern world is rationalized<sup>1</sup> the less manner. (85-86) The likelihood of living life in an ethically interpretable prospects of living without certainty or necessity may cause us to respond with fear, anxiety, and insecurity, but equally it allows us to live with imagination and responsibility and as Giddens (1990:133) thinks -to assume responsibility with others for the shaping of our destiny. 'In postmodern world, writes Tayler, S.A. (1986, Postmodern Ethnography;?. 139), 'it seems as though past, present and future coexist in all discourse.'

It is evident that modernism failed the society in the west. The euphoria of enlightenment and modernity has left people disenchanted. (Doshi, S.L. 2008:6) Many writings spell this prophecy like- "The Great Transformation" (1944) by K. Polanyi, "Myth of Machine" by Lewis Mumford (1967), "The cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (1976) by Daniel Bell," "The Crisis of Our Age" by Pitirim A. Sorokin and others. Rajendra Singh'. (2001) in his work on [social movements considers modernity and postmodernity as the co-processes of most contemporary societies.

The writings of Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard reveal that postmodernity involves a questioning of a modernist epistemology based on a clear distinction between subject and object. Lyotard describes postmodernism as 'incredulity towards metanarratives. In his "Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge" (1979) he examined knowledge, science and technology in advanced capitalist societies and found the decline of very notion of society as a unified totality, e.g. the national identity. Thus in the metanarratives whether created by religion or ethics or science are challenged for their 'incredulity' so that new space of discourse be brought into the new paradigms of knowledge. Postmodernist situation thus has opened the discourse for rethinking through assailing the boundaries of grand narratives, in this very light, I am attempting to revisit the Vedantic Philosophy and its credulity or incredulity.

### **Vedantic Philosophy**

Vedanta etymologically means the last: of the corpus of Vedic literature...the body of doctrines set forth in the Upanishads. However, ideological meaning would be carrying much wider connotations. It is not engrossed with the ritualistic practices and sacrificial cults- of prayer and worship, of penance and propitiation and the like performances of everyday life. It is spiritualistic and as a question of principle of justification a priori. Its theoretical constructs and perceptual dimensions are fundamentally spiritual. (Subodh Kapoor: 2002; 1) The dynamic meaning of the Vedanta, writes Subodh Kapoor ( Encyclopedia of Indian Heritage, vol. 1) is the 'end' or "anur denotes the 'progressive' and not the catastrophic attainment. Vedanta is the main objective and final aim, the cream and essence, the guiding spirit and shaping force- in a word, nishka-tsli (Nishka Tsli) of the Vedas. They are the last literary products of the Vedic period after the Samhitas and Brahmanas.

Vedanta refers primarily to the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Brahma sutras- combinedly termed as "Prasthan Trayam". (1) Upanishad (Shrutiprasthanam)- marking the institute of revealed knowledge; (2) the Bhagavad-Gita (Smriti Prasthanam)- that of traditional knowledge; and (3) the Brahma sutras (Nyayapranasthanam)- that of philosophical knowledge. The relation that subsists between these three prasthanas is one of organic interdependence yielding a perfect concord or harmony among the constituents of Vedanta. Up-ni-shad means 'that which gets man near to God, or that which gets man near to the teacher. ...because the Upanishadic doctrines were

esoteric, that is they were very secretly taught only to the select pupil seated close to (upasanna, mental level of) the teacher.

Badarayana's Brahma sutra (also known as ..Vedanta sutras, Sharirika-sutras or Sharirika mimansa, Uttarmimajisa) undertakes this task of systematizing the various teachings o as to bring out the harmony underlying them. His Sutras being brief were liable, to different interpretations. Various commentaries (Bhashya) were written, to elaborate the doctrine of Vedanta in their own light. The author of these chief commentaries became the founder of a particular school of Vedanta Thu, schools of Shankare, Ramanuja, Madhava Vailabha, Nimbarka and many others came to fore.

The chief problem on which the schools of the Vedanta differ was: What is the nature of the relation between the Self (jiva) and God (Brahman)?

Madhava hold that-the self and God is two totally different entities; their view is called 'dualism' (Dvaita).

Shankara hold that -the two are absolutely identical; this view is known as 'monism' (Advaita).

Ramanuja 'hold mat-two (self and God) are Identical in some special sense, this view maybe called 'qualified monism' (Vishishtadvaita).

### The Problem of the Upanishads

What is the reality from which all things originate, by which all live and into which all dissolve when destroyed?

what is that by knowing which the unknown becomes known?

vWhat is by knowing which everything; can be known?

What is that by knowing which one can attain immortality? What is Brahman?

What is Atman?

**“Asato ma sad gamay; tamaso ma jyotiramaya; mrityormamritam gamaya.”** The belief in all pervasive reality called Brahman or Atman. Brahma and Atma are used synonymously in different contexts e.g., Aitareya( 1.1.1); Brhdarankya(IAI); Ghhandogya(7.25,2); Mundaka(2.2.11). In Brahadaranyak Upanishad(l. 4.10) is mentioned -'This self is the Brahman

“Sad eva idam sauirrya iclain agre asit, ekam eva advitiam

“Sarvam Khalu idani Brahma” (Chhandogya)

- v "Brahma eva idam yishvam" (Mundak)
- v 'Ayam Atma Brahma
- v 'Aham Brahmasmi

Thus interest is shifted from gods to the "Self"-the real self behind the outer sheaths (koshas). The Upanishads or Vedanta shifts the centre of interest from the **Vedic** gods to the Self of ni;in. The real self is called -Atman. The real self is pure consciousness, every particular consciousness of object being its limited manifestation. This pure consciousness is "indestructible, incessant an\* 'infinite'- Satyam, Jnanam, anantam. The self of mail is identical with the self of all beings (Sarva-bhutaama) and therefore, with God or Brahman.

**The main focus of Vedanta is 'self realization' (Atma-sakshatikaran)** as the highest of all knowledge ( Para-vidya).The method of self realization lies through the control of the lower sVif, 'its deep rooted interests and impulses and through study, reasoning and repeated meditation. (Shravana, Manana, and mdidhyasana). It is difficult path which can be followed only if one is strong and wise enough to 'reject what is pleasant

(preyas) for what is good (shieyas).

**Rituals arc inadequate and the knowledge of the self or God is the means of attaining the highest good.** The Vedic belief in sacrifices is shaken by the Upanishads which declare that with these one cannot attain the highest goal of immortality. The Mundaka Upanishad says that 'these sacrifices are like leaky rafts (i.e., they are unable to take one across the sea of worldly miseries) and those fools that take these as the superior means, suffer again the pangs of old age and death. (Mundaka 1.2,7)

Let me come to the basic design of conventional philosophy, where it was suppose to perceive the whole reality (Material as well as beyond matter) through 'independent or pure spirit or soul'. This, I am summarizing out of my understanding of Shankaracharya Bhashya on Brahma sutras as translated by George Thibaut (2004), The Life Divine of Yogi. Aurobindo Ghosh , Ishavashyopnishad, Max Mulier,F.'s Vedanta Philosophy, S. Radhakrishnan's views on Vedanta philosophy as viewed by Charles Moore (1957) and some other sources.

Sri Aurobindo, for example, is in strong opposition of Advaita Vedanta of Shamkara on several basic issues. He rejects categorically what he-considers to be the 'illusionism' of Shamkara as untrue to the Vedanta. In Shamkaracharya's opinion,- whatever is, is in reality one; there truly exist only one universal being called Brahman or Paramatma, the highest self.....The Brahman is associated with a certain power called Maya 'or Avidya to which the appearance of this entire void is due. This power cannot be called Being (Sat) for Being is only Brahman, nor can it be called non-being (Asat). It is in fact a principle of illusion created by Maya which belongs to Brahman as a Shakti (potential)....it creates Samsara or the phenomenal world. The phenomenal world or world of orHlnary experience (vyavaha-ra) thus consists of a number of individual souls, engaged in specific cognitions, volitions, and so on, and of the external material objects with which those cognitions

and volitions are concerned. Neither the specific cognitions nor their objects are real in the true sense of the world, for both are altogether due to Maya...(George Thibaut 2004; 16-17).

The non-enlightened soul is unable to look beyond Maya which like a veil, hides its true nature. Instead of recognizing itself with its adjuncts (Upadhi), the fictitious offspring of Maya, and thus looks for its true Self in the body, the sense organs, and the internal organs of specific cognition.

The soul, which in reality is pure intelligence, non-active, infinite, thus becomes limited in knowledge and power, an agent and enjoyer. Through its actions it burdens itself with merits and demerits, consequently it has to bear to enjoy in series of future embodied existences, The Lord as a retributor and dispenser- allotting to by its previous actions each soul that form of embodiment to which it is entitled (karma).

### **Sri Aurobindo's Synthetic Doctrine of Vedanta:**

Sri Aurobindo's synthetic doctrine is one which calls for universal expression of the Absolute in and the development of the Absolute through, a series of grades of reality from matter up to the Absolute spirit. He rejects categorically what he considers to be the illusionism of Sharakara as untrue to the Vedanta and as untrue to his own vision of reality. The descent of Absolute into finite, which would be inexplicable (unable to be explained) on the basis of Shankara's negative interpretation, is necessitated in Sri Aurobindo's view as the inevitable expression of the essential power of Brahman.

Sri Aurobindo thinks that 'every part of reality in some way or other is permeated by the Absolute spirit. For this reason, evolution from lower to higher forms as well as the reverse process on involution, almost inevitable, although great effort seems to separate the is demanded on the part of man to rend the veil which Absolute from the finite.

(Radhakrishnan & Charles A Moore; 1957; p.575) To attain identity with the Absolute is man's task on the earth. From mental state and ultimately to supra-mental state. This is possible through an elaborate discipline of Yoga- called integral Yoga"

Man must progress from mind to super mind and it to achieve the life of what Sri Aurobindo calls Gnostic Being or divine-life.....he insists that all ultimate truth must be achieved in this way. Reason and science are limited in their perspectives and in their possibilities and cannot achieve the mental.

Sri Aurobindo, writes Charles A. Moore (1957; 576-77) formulates a philosophy which like the rationally grounded philosophy of S. Radhakrishnan, eliminates the alleged negativism and illusionism of traditional Indian philosophy and thus prepares the way for a more positive way of life for the Indian people and which makes possible a much greater mutual philosophical understanding of India and the west, and eventually-possibly-a significant synthesis of eastern and Western thoughts.

Though generally religion is taken as the natural home of spirituality, however, Nietzsche's proclamation, that 'God is Dead' is surprisingly-infused in the Indian spiritual tradition. From the earliest days till today a large number of saints, mystics, yogis and enlightened beings have rejected organized religion both in practice and principle (M.M. Agarwal; 199S, p.49). This 1 would like to put in a synthetic reflection on knowledge, wherein we have to take the phenomenal reality along the transcendental one. for the; creation of an integral human personality, corpus of new knowledge and world! To attain the supreme realization in Veclantic tradition 'Tat tvam asi: that you are" (Chhandogya LJapanishad). This can be evinced through signification] of a Sanskrit dictum-"Asato ma Sadgamaya; Tamaso ma Jyotirgamaya; Mrityormamritam gamaya.' This dynamism of mind from material (physica state can be'explained as under.

### **The Material world and the Physical (material) mind:**

The material world or the phenomenal world is perceived through the senses and since "matter" is in the infrastructure; position and the attributes of matter dominate or permeates the concept of reality therefore, we perceive the reality as 'materialistic'. This is the realm of sciences and huge knowledge has been created in order to understand the mysteries of this physical world including human being. However, this is not the whole reality being perceived or explored. Equally important is to understand the world and human being through the 'infrastructural position of the "mind or spirit.

The material world is ephemeral or short lived because it is the basic attribute of the matter; (nature) itself. Material realities are understood therefore through 'atomization'. Change is the law of matter or nature. So is the mind or spirit dominated by the matter. Tlie material mind is therefore a dependent mind and functions under the influence of matter. The behavioural impositions due to the influence of matter create the attitude of - desire (kama) which leads to greed, anger and egoism, this leads to delusion and delusion leads to loss of reasoning and loss of reasoning ends into the loss of total being.

° Kroclhatbhavati sammoha, sammohat Smriti vibhram,

Smriti bhransad buddhinasho, buddhi nashad pranashyati." ( Bhagvad Gita)

This is in this perspective that the whole material world is termed as "unreal or Maya' or illusion as Shamkara termed it because it is not one's real self or true self i.e. independent self. Sri Aurovinclo or Swami Vivekanand or S. Radhakrishnan are not in denial of this material \world which is the phenomenal one - the Samsara or the realm of human action. Here we are concerned with the perfection in the Human action and therefore, we certainly need to explore the reality beyond matter. This phenomenal world, because is not the projection of "integral reality' therefore, it is the "Asat". This does not give us complete knowledge of our Being; hence it is "Tamas" (ignorance) and since this material world is short lived hence decay and death are its real attributes hence, this is the "realm of death" or "Mrityu loka". Since we do not perceive the reality through the true state of self, therefore, knowing through the dependent spirit is called "Ajnana or Avidya". Henceforth begins the journey "to know Thyself<sup>1</sup>. (Atma jnana).

### **To Know Thyself: Evolution from Material mind to The Higher Minds:**

In order to know the true self within you, one will have to liberate oneself from the 'influence' of matter or material world or the hollowness (illusion-Maya) of this phenomenal world. This is not-a separation from it.. This must be kept in mind that a liberated mind or being is perfectly pragmatically in association- with tin's material world with a wider-integral perception. Thus Samkhya-Vaisheshik is being taken along as integrated system of philosophy.

In order to liberate the physical mind (spirit) from the matter, one has to adopt the course of "Ashtangik Yoga" i.e., Yama, Niyama, Asana, Prannayam, Pratyahara, Dhiana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Samadhi or the state of meditation is state when, mind is 'zeroed' of the influence of matter. This "Shunya Awastha" henceforth, the 'independent mind' is attained. This independent mind is the 'Liberated mind' or 'Muktipodh'. This mind has subdued the desires and delusions (Moha) consequently tm's is called "Moksha".

The nature (attributes) of 'independent spirit' is - non-destructibility, subtly, non-duality (dvandateet), beyond the influence guna or prakriti of material attributes (gunateet) and continuous (Sanatana). This is indestructible self, subject, and actor both; perceiver of the reality within and beyond. (Ya Pashyati sail Pashyati). It is beyond the realm of death and this perceived reality is called Amn'tyu lok. The mind is in its enlightened state of evolution, hence it is called 'enlightened . state' . (Jyotirgainaya). The enlightenment is created by by one's own self hence it is called Swarg lok (swa= own self, arg- light), it must be made clear that this the real meaning of the term "Dvij" This is the second birth, the 'enlightened one'. This is where one is to be called a "Brahman" not at all in casteist terms but in higher ontological sense. This higher self- the Mukta, is the 'knower' of reality. The second and most important nature of the true self is 'integrity'. The yoga, therefore is its nature. The Vedanta is integrating and has the potential to integrate the phenomenal world and its knowledge system for better actions.

"Na jayate mriyate va kacia chinnayam bhutva bhavita van a bhuyah;

Ajo nilyah shashvatoyam purano na hanyate hanyamane sharire."

(Bhagvad- Gita; 2.20)

This is the mind which has the potentiality to enter the state of "equanimity" (Sthitprajna). This is (he.- "Sat" "Ghit" and its property is "Ananda" beyond the duality of pleasure and sorrow. The evolution of mind from Asat to Sat is the journey into "Sachchidanand". ( Asato ma sadgamaya)

"Prajahati yada Kaman sarvanpartha manogatan;

Atmnevatmana tushtah sthithprajnastadochyate." (Bhagvad-gita; 2.55)

Through the Integral .Yoga thus is attained the "enlightened State of existence" i.e., 'The Life Divine'<sup>11</sup>. Sri Aurobindo describes different forms of the liberated souls, i.e.. Higher mind to Illuminated mind to Intuitive mind and then, the super mental states which are beyond reality (Yatharthateet)- The Above Mind and The Super-Mind or the Gnostic Being. The Above mind

is God Manifest and the 'Super Mind is the Absolute Reality. But it can be perceived or realized by the higher ui liberated mind or spirit called the 'sou!'. Hence as is mentioned the Bhagvad gita :

"Uddharedatmanatmanam na atamanam avasadayet;

Atmaiva Hyatmano bandhuh atmanai.v. ripuratmanah."(Vi.5)

One should lift oneself by own efforts and should not degrade oneself; for one's own self is one's friend, and one's own self is one's enemy.

### **Vedantism and Postmodern Situation: A synthetic Approach to Knowledge:**

My descriptions will stop here and I come back to the discourse 1 initiated regarding the relevance of Vedantism and postmodern situation. I think Vedanta philosophy which emphasized on the concept of liberated mind or self, is perfectly integral in nature. It liberates not to escape rather to engage into action in this temporal world. The concept of "Sakama Karma' is created by the material existence; however, the 'Nishkama Karma' is the outcome of liberation; which is universal in nature. While scientific knowledge transformed this phenomenal world but we failed to comprehend the human spirit. The fragmented conceptualization of mind and its rejections on the world around have not strengthened the quest for understanding the existence of human being in totality.

Through Vedantism,<sup>1</sup> it is envisioned that varied ontological discourses will be integrated in a universal concept of liberation vis-a-vis freedom. Aligned with the postmodernist thinking, it will create new knowledge paradigms to address the challenges of the postmodern world.

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## Dimensions of Gender Inequality in Rural Areas of a North Indian State

Supriya Singh\*  
D.R. Sahu\*\*

### Abstract

The paper is an outcome of the wider study of social inequality in rural India. Paper studies two villages in Bighapur block of Unnao district in U.P. The inequality among rural women is not only in economic terms but it is also observed in other socio-cultural incapacibilities. In spite of similar work the wages for women are lower than for men in both the villages as per national trend. Though with the emergence of Self Help Groups in the villages many women have become empowered economically but the benefits of these groups are mainly reaped by upper caste and class women. Because of the concept of an ideal woman many women are not inclined to work outside the home even if their economic condition is not so good especially if they are from the upper caste. The present paper on the basis of intensive fieldwork and interviews tries to locate the factors which are reinforcing gender inequality at village level and are working as a constraint in liberating women both in economic as well in social terms.

**Key Words:** Gender Inequality, Ideal Woman, Self Help Groups, Socio-cultural Incapability

One of the most glaring inequalities of India and especially rural India has been gender inequality. Though in the last few years there have been many changes and even rural women have been empowered to certain extent but not to a significant level. An apparent outcome of inequality across gender is the access of education and employment opportunities. The decline in workforce participation rate of women during 2004-11, when the economy grew at its highest rate of growth provides ample evidence of the growing marginalization of women from the growth process (India Inequality Report OXFAM, 2018) which is noticeable at rural level as well. Though a large number of rural women are engaged in agriculture, but own disproportionately small percent of the land. UNICEF's focus on children and women suggests that there should be a selection of functioning (and underpinnings of these) especially relevant to women and children, including for women, health services relevant to the needs of women (maternity care), women's educational levels and their access to adult education, relative male/female rates of abuse (assault; homicide), an assessment of female political power, relative to men and at all levels (cabinet, parliament, local government, different levels of the civil service) (Frances Stewart 2013: 12). An important concern for a developing country such as India is not just the economic inequality, but the inequality which is structural and

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affects the access to basic services by its citizens (India Inequality Report OXFAM, 2018). One of the most prominent form of structural inequality is the inequality in terms of gender. The present paper tries to analyze various aspects of gender inequality prevailing in rural India by identifying various aspects of gender inequality and the relationship between different forms of inequality in rural India. The paper is based on the study of two villages- Bharthipur and Lalman Kheda in Bighapur block of Unnao district of a north Indian state, namely, Uttar Pradesh. These villages have been selected through purposive sampling and have been analyzed in terms of various dimensions of rural social inequality including gender as well as the status of women. Qualitative fieldwork method has been used to collect valid data from both the villages. Total 150 respondents have been selected for study 99 from developed village (Bharthipur) and 51 from the underdeveloped village (Lalman Kheda).

### **Aspects of Gender Inequality in Rural India**

If we go by the Marxian logic economic inequality or inequality in terms of means of production has created inequality in other fields as well. In the studied villages the inequality among women can be observed in three aspects-

#### **1. Aspects of Economic Inequality**

- (a) Inequality in Terms of Wages
- (b) Inequality in Terms of Ownership of House and land
- (c) Financial Inclusion/Exclusion through Bank Accounts
- (d) Inequality in Terms of Job Choices and Occupations

#### **2. Aspects of Social and Status Inequality**

- (a) Inequality in Terms of Horizontal and Lateral Mobility
- (b) Inequality in Household Relations or Relations at Home
- (c) Inequality in Decision Making Power
- (d) Inequality in Civil Society: Self Help Groups

#### **3. Aspects of Political Inequality**

- (a) Inequality in Voting Behavior
- (b) Inequality in Political Participation

**Aspects of Economic Inequality**

Though women in rural India have many deprivations but lack of ownership over resources and other economic activities widens the gender inequality more than any other form of inequalities. Bhowmick argues: "The status of women in society depends to a large extent on economic empowerment. If a woman is earning independently and contributing to the income of the household or if she has control over the productive or even non-productive assets of the household, her position, esteem and even power of bargaining within the household and in the community and the society at large increases" (2006: 381-382). It can be asserted that economic disparity is yielding into other kinds of inequalities at gross root levels. Economic inequality among women in rural India can be further sub-divided into four parts.

**(a) Inequality in Terms of Wages**

Wage differentials in India are higher in rural as compared to urban areas, and are higher among women than among men workers. Das (2012) considers that a simple decomposition of wage inequality by sectors reveal that a significant part of wage inequality is accounted for by inequality among individuals between rather than within sectors for every type of working person.

Sandbergen (2018:47) in his study of women workers in Jalpaguri district of West Bengal highlights that wages for women are lower than for men but that has not brought about a replacement of women doing men's wage work. In the studied villages too women are paid just half to what men are paid as labour. Before introduction of MNREGA men were paid 100 and women were paid 50 Rs. Per day. Though MANREGA has enhanced the bargaining capacity of labours but except MANREGA women are paid half of their labour cost. When asked by the employers about this disparity in income their response was that women are not physically fit for tough works so we are forced to take light works from them and because of the light nature of their work in comparison to men we pay them less. This income inequality is accepted at all levels and no women oppose about their under payment. At present men get 200 Rs. Per day for their work at the same time women are paid just 100 for whole day. This reflects a glaring inequality in terms of wages. Treas (2010:6) says that women do housework and men eschew housework, in part, to show off the feminine or masculine competence desirable for their gender. Equality could be achieved by reducing the total hours of unpaid work done, and then reducing women's hours by more than any reduction in men's hours, or reducing women's hours while men's hours stayed constant (Dex 2010:79). In spite of giving full time and toiling equally to men women in the studied villages are getting just the half what men get. As in rural India unorganized sector is prominent, which provides unequal wages and ultimately contributes in widening the gaps in wages.

**(b) Inequality in Terms of Ownership of Houses and Land**

In villages of a patriarchal society like India land is generally associated with the male member of the family and the possibility of rural women acquiring land through means other than inheritance are fewer. Though legally it may be possible for women to buy land from their own resources, but it would be constrained by the two main factors – firstly women have conditioned access to economic resources/money and secondly difficulties in undertaking land transactions

without male support [Agrawal 2008 (1996)]. In both the studied villages ownership of either land or any other assets was negligible.

If we analyze the data collected from both the villages it is clear that women hardly get property through inheritance except some exceptional cases like death of husband or in the condition when there is no male member in the family to claim for the property. The ownership of houses is mainly because of some government schemes where in the distribution of houses women are given preference. Out of one hundred fifty respondents there is only one case where property is purchased in the name of a woman that too was done to avail some redemption in stamp duty. This unequal distribution of assets is the main cause of lower economic status of women. Though some government schemes are helping in redistribution of property especially houses but that too is very limited to a particular section and class conditions. It is more symbolic than having any solid repercussion on the overall economic location in the family where they are more considered to be house maker than owner.

### (c) Financial Inclusion/Exclusion through Bank Accounts

Access to financial resources like bank is very crucial for economic empowerment of women. In both the studied villages there were only twelve respondents who were not having bank accounts. Though in lower castes there is large number of women who have bank accounts because of government schemes. Having a bank account has empowered rural women to certain level though in upper caste, women, in spite of having their personal bank accounts are unable to manage it in their own way. The main reason behind that is they are supposed to go out with men only.

**Table 1: Distribution of Bank Accounts in Both the Villages**

Caste	Not having any Account	Type of Account		
		Under any Govt. Scheme	Personal Account	Joint account with Husband
Upper Caste	1	1	40	5
Middle Caste	1	6	17	1
Lower Caste	9	25	42	0
Muslims	1	0	1	0

There is unequal distribution of banking services as well because the lower caste women find it difficult to open a general account because of their specific terms and conditions on the other hand for the upper caste women their upper class situation helps them in having a personal account.

### (d) Inequality in Terms of Job Choices and Occupations

Quoting Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2007–2012 Sanghi et al. (2015: 258) mentions that in the agriculture sector, among rural females who reported themselves as self-employed, there was an

increase in the proportion of the own account worker category both in the principal status and subsidiary status. But what is disturbing is that a large proportion of rural females in agriculture are working as unpaid helpers both in principal and subsidiary capacity.

Agriculture still employs about 75 per cent of the total female workforce in India. For rural female workers, dependence on agriculture is much higher at around 84 per cent. Data from earlier NSS rounds also showed that in 8 of the 17 major states, the share of agriculture in total female rural employment exceeded 90 per cent; in 15 states. In spite of the fact that the tertiary sector is the fastest growing sector in the Indian economy, the share of rural female workers in this sector has not improved in the post-liberalization era. This difference between rural and urban female workers is a consequence of the fact that in poor developing countries like India, the ability of rural female workers to make inter-sectoral shifts in occupation is severely limited by various social and economic factors including their education and skill level (Pal and Ghosh 2007:7).

The disadvantaged position of women is obvious from the exclusion of women from the labour market. India continues to be among the countries with lowest workforce participation of women; these have shown a decline in recent years. During 2004-2011, when the GDP grew at 8% per annum, the female labour force participation rate declined from already dismal 35% to 25% (India Inequality Report OXFAM, 2018).

Historically, women have done more housework than men because socialization practices and physiological differences linked to childbearing worked together to maximize returns to women's specialization in household work and men's specialization in market work. Brines (1994) opine in quintessence, women's performance of housework is a display of subordinate status whereas men's avoidance of (most) housework is a display of their structural and cultural power. Moreover, women's and men's socialization, human capital investments, and gendered identities and cultural mores about appropriate adult roles of women and men are embedded in historically and geographically specific gendered contexts (Sayer 2010:23).

The number of working women is very less in upper castes as women are allowed to do only government jobs or in some cases few private jobs which does not require much time. As far as the lower castes are concerned there the number of working women is much higher though majority is involved in some menial jobs or very low paid work like working as labour or involved in some agricultural work in other's field. In spite of having low profile jobs the lower caste women have more equal opportunities to opt for their livelihood in comparison to the upper caste women where their caste locations become important in deciding their nature of jobs. On economic front the lower caste women are free to choose out a job according to their conditions on the other hand the upper caste women are confined to opt certain jobs. This makes them economically fragile leading to inequality of opportunities.

Low level of mobility in the upper caste women is clear from their job choices. Only six women out of forty seven were inclined to work if they get any good job opportunity. In the lower and the middle caste the response was totally different, majority of women wanted to work if they are provided with any such opportunity. They are ready to move from village to nearby cities and if need to any place where they could get a good job. The declining female labour force participation rate along with the gender wage-gap and unequal access to decent employment opportunities has

exacerbated the economic and social disparity on gender line (India Inequality Report OXFAM, 2018:53).

### **Aspects of Social and Status Inequality**

Inequality in rural women is not only limited to economic sphere but it is also reflected in their day to day life and household sphere along with civil society organizations like the SHGs working at village level.

#### **(a) Inequality in Terms of Horizontal and Lateral Mobility**

In the studied villages, men opined that, “women should not go outside and in particular not go to the markets”. In studied villages of Unnao mostly the lower and the middle class women freely and frequently visit market places. In the upper castes, women are constrained to go out outside especially alone. As far as equality in terms of going out from home either for market or to their parental place is concerned lower caste women avail more freedom in comparison to upper caste women. More than fifty percent upper caste women have to take permission before going out from house for any work. On the contrary in the lower caste and in some middle caste except few cases no such permission is required only informing any family member is sufficient. In the upper caste thirteen respondents told that they were not allowed to go out alone without taking any male family member with them. The unequal relationship in family mainly in terms of mobility is quite obvious in the upper caste. The notion of good woman is also responsible to certain extent in depriving women from many liberties which they could have avail but are devoid of then just because they are supposed to pose themselves as good woman. Oosterbaan (2016) shows in her study that poor landless and tribal women also face restrictions of access to labour markets and wage discrimination because of the “good woman” norms imposed on them.

#### **(b) Inequality in Household Relations or Relations at Home**

If we look into the household relations in villages’ the lower caste women have a better say in their family. In terms of relationship as well the lower caste women are more equal as mostly they live in nuclear families where patriarchy and male dominance does not operate in that much complex form as it works in joint families. Structural condition of the lower castes, like small land holdings and less geographical area of the houses does not support joint family. On the contrary in the upper caste large land holdings and joint ownership of property keeps the family combined.

Though in the lower caste families it was found that thirty women out of seventy six provide better food to their male members of the family in comparison to the upper and the middle castes where there is no such differentiation. In the upper caste only one respondent told that male members are provided better food and in the lower middle caste there was no such case reported. In the lower castes out of seventy six respondents forty six said there was no such differentiation while thirty excepted that male are provided better food as they are the earning members of the family. The main reason for this is that in the upper castes the level of poverty is less and they can easily manage better food for all family members including women where as in the lower castes their earnings are no such good because of which men are proved better food than female members of the family.

**(c) Inequality in Decision Making Power**

Women, who participate in decision-making in agricultural production or cash expenditure in the home, may be said to have greater bargaining strength than those who are excluded from such decision making altogether [Agrawal 2008 (1996)]. Though in the studied villages women have participation to a certain level in agricultural activities like type of crop to be produced but as far as marketing of food grain and other income related decisions are concerned they are excluded from these. Even rural women do not have a position to take independent decisions regarding their mobility from house. Women are supposed to inform to any family members especially male whenever they go out from home for any reason.

**Table 2: Decision Making Capacity in different Castes**

<b>Caste</b>	<b>Any Male Member of the Family</b>	<b>Any Member of the family</b>	<b>Do not Inform</b>
Upper Caste	32	15	0
Middle Caste	14	11	0
Lower Caste	48	9	19
Muslims	1	1	0

The table indicates that the lower caste women hold a better position in household regarding decision making power. There are nineteen respondents who can move out independently without any prior information to the male members according to their needs.

**(c) Inequality in Civil Society: Self Help Groups**

In the village Bharthipur there are total four self help groups funded and supported by Uttar Pradesh government under rural development department. Almost every group has 20 members who have their weekly meetings at any convenient place decided by the group members. But most of the women take loan from the group for non-profitable business like marriage, illness and other household expenses, which is a measure reason of not repaying loan timely. In their findings Sandbergen (2018:51) also reveal that farm women who managed to become members of the SHG spent their credit in non-productive investments, such as basic food and clothing, repayment of debts at the grocery store and loans from relatives, home improvements, dowries, brewing alcohol, investing in the husband's business but rarely in agriculture. In the studied village as well those women who are very poor have not joined these self help groups. In that way even the benefits of the SHGs are reaped only by those women who are in a bit better economic situation to afford monthly installments to be the group member.

Different caste women have different SHG and only those women are member of these groups who belong to that particular caste. Other caste women are not entertained in these groups.

This indicates that caste inequalities are stronger enough to de-motivate women to stand on the same forum. Caste inequalities are reflected even in civil organizations. Group named *Jay Durga Ma* was formed the next year of the termination of first group by the upper caste women. The group is functioning properly from last two years. Anita Singh who has been the secretary of earlier group and was the member of the newly formed group left it recently. She recites the reasons of leaving the group mainly the resentment of their male members for going here and there for attending meetings and working outside. One elderly women respondent acclaims that it is fine with elderly women roaming around for attending meetings but as far as newlywed women are concerned they should remain at homes. The monthly meeting which is attended by all SHGs existed in the village is skipped by the SHG run by the upper caste women. *Baradari* is located at the end of the village and in an area resided by lower castes and upper caste women consider it against their status to go there for attending meetings. They attend these joint meetings of all groups only in exceptional cases and that too only one or two women are send in those meetings as representatives not all group members participate. There is no interaction between the upper caste SHG and the lower caste SHGs, though the lower caste women have vivid interaction among them and exchange ideas about functioning of their respective groups.

The main problems which the lower caste SHGs are facing is that mostly women take loan for unproductive works and later on they become unable to submit money timely which puts group in economic crisis. One lower caste SHG was ended just because its members were unable to return loans and the group was in economic crunch. Few lower caste women have left the group membership recently mainly because of this reason. Though the lower caste women are more active in the SHG activities and meetings as they have more mobility in comparison to upper caste women which is the main reason the lower caste groups are more in number and have better functioning. In spite of some problems these SHGs have provided rural women a forum to come out of their homes and involve in some economic and decision making endeavors. It has provided women economic security and has enhanced their status within and outside family. Group members feel more empowered and economically independent as now they can borrow money easily with lowest interest rates for their needs and have a group which stands with them in all odds.

### **Aspects of Political Inequality**

Political inequality among rural women can be seen in two aspects one is regarding their voting behaviors and another about their political participation both at village level and in the national politics.

#### **(a) Inequality in Voting Behavior**

Given that every adult women in India have right to use her franchise still very few women have liberty to use this right according to their respective choices. In the study it was found that mostly women vote according to the wish of the family members or of the husband in which, her choices are negligent.

**Table 3: Voting Behavior of Women of Different Castes**

<b>Caste</b>	<b>Vote According to Husbands'/Father choice</b>	<b>Vote by Their Own Choice</b>	<b>Vote after Discussing with Family members</b>
Upper Caste	14	3	30
Middle Caste	14	1	10
Lower Caste	59	13	4
Muslims	2	0	0

As the data reflects in political sphere also the lower caste women have a bit better situation in terms of voting behavior as many women in the lower caste vote according to their own choices and do not follow the family or husband's voting choices.

#### **(b) Inequality in Political Participation**

As far as political participation of women is concerned in both studied villages women have nominal say in political sphere. By now no women had ever been selected as village head, though in Bharthipur village one women had contested the village head elections but could not be elected. When asked during interview the major reason of not having a female village head the majority of male respondents said a woman is better to work at home as politics is not made for them. In Lalman Kheda village there is no self help group working. In the upper castes and the middle castes women have no political participation except casting their vote. But in the lower caste mainly the Bediya caste women have full participation in their Jati Panchayat meetings. This is the only caste in both the villages which have Jati Panchayat and most importantly women have full contribution in these Panchayats. Every meeting is attended by both men and women and any decision is taken with the consent of both the genders. Though young women have less say in Panchayat meetings elderly women are given priority in decision making.

On the basis of the above description of the findings following conclusions can be made regarding gender inequality-

- In organized sector the inequality in terms of wages is less in comparison to unorganized sector. Not only this; unorganized sector is more exploitative as well. As majority of rural women are employed in unorganized sector inequality in terms of wages is also higher in rural areas.

- Not only in terms of economy or status, women are also deprived from power as their voting choices are insignificant. Women are marginalized in both voting choices and political participation.

· In the high caste status inequality is more in comparison to economic and political inequality on the contrary in the lower castes economic inequality is higher than status and political inequality.

· The lower caste women have higher lateral mobility in comparison to their high caste counterparts. Along with this in choices and decision making power as well the lower caste women have better say in their family in comparison to the upper caste women. There can be seen inequality in terms of caste within same gender.

In terms of relationship as well the lower caste women are more equal as mostly they live in nuclear families where patriarchy and male dominance does not operate in that much complex form as it works in joint families. As structural condition of the lower caste like small and holdings and less geographical area of the houses does not support joint family.

· Though civil society organizations like SHGs working at village level have helped women in empowering them economically but at the same time it is overshadowed by inequalities between the upper and the lower caste women. It has also excluded; poor women as they find it difficult to submit monthly installments. In this way the SHGs reflect inequality both in caste and class lines in rural areas.

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## Globalization, Gender in Contemporary English Fiction : A Study of the Novel “*half girlfriend*”

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### Abstract

*The present paper makes an attempt to analyse the depiction of globalization process and gender issues in one of the most popular fiction of Chetan Bhagat's, namely, half girlfriend. The fiction deals with various gender issues emerging in the context of globalizing Indian society, particularly among the youth exposed to new communication technologies like mobile phone, sms, facebook, whatsapp, twitter etc. resulting into compartmentalization of their life into two conflicting sets of values represented by conservatism of the parents on one hand and the aspirations of new generation in the emerging new world. The approach Bhagat follows in this fiction is not only post-modernist but to some extent it is post-colonialist. The canvas of the fiction is global. The main female character of the Novel Riya Somani, daughter of a rich, Delhi based Marwari Businessman, falls in love with Madhav Jha, a small town boy (of Bihar) aspirant of taking admission like her in St. Stephens College, in her very first encounter at a basketball court. But she could not be able to define this relationship because of issues related to her social background and insisted to be remained his half girlfriend, a new concept the author introduces here to redefine the notion of 'Girl Friend', found throughout the modern western literature in context of romantic love. The author also deconstruct existing literary tradition when he attempts to mix elements of drama in structuring his fiction and adopts a post-modernist strategy. The story of a fiction runs from a small town of Bihar to Delhi then to London and back to Delhi, Patna, Dumraon and then goes to New York and finally in Dumraon i.e. on a global canvas. The characters of the fiction are also drawn globally (Bill Gates, Rohan, Shailesh etc.) as well as locally. The most important female character Riya takes feminist stand on various socio-cultural issues in the entire fiction and exposes the duality of values in Indian socio-cultural milieu, when it is exposed to the forces of globalization.*

Globalization is a process which has implications not only for social and cultural institutions of developing countries but also affects the institutions of the developed society (Singh 2007:1). It refers to the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life from cultural to criminal and financial to spiritual (Held etal 1999). Globalization incorporates many issues which have been crucial for post-modernist and feminist

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scholars in the recent past. Post Modernists (Lyotard 1979; Derrida 1974) see it as a process of deconstruction of the institutions established in the era of modernity while the feminists analyse it as a process which has opened new avenues for women in globalizing world (Desai 2009) as well as a process which has certain negative impact upon women, through their exclusion and role conflict between family and work. In India, globalization has brought new work opportunities for educated women in corporate sector and opened a new pathway of their occupational mobility in newly created job market like BPOs, and IT sector and so on. At the same time it has also changed the lifestyle and working condition of women in this sector. Globalization and Literature share some meeting points in their institutional and structural edifices. The notion of globalization can be linked with a theoretical tradition of Post Colonial theory of literary studies on the one hand and the Post Modernist Literature on the other hand (Gupta 2009).

The depiction of anti-globalization protests can be seen in the DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2005). DeLillo's belongs to the sphere of the imaginary, as it is constructed according to the exigencies of fictional structure which is sufficiently clear within that novel. Its characters as an anti-globalization (anti-capitalist) protest makes immediately sense only within artificial structure of the novel and its relationship to real protests and public gestures. Robert Newman's *The Fountain at the Centre of the World* (2003) is another example of such depictions. The novel gives description of local disenchantments and the formation of the desire for a new kind of more inclusive and wide-scale protest that lead first to the description of a protest march, a manifestation, in the town of Calderon. The novel then sweeps towards the 1999 Seattle protests, mentioning some of the other such local disaffections and search for redress that get incorporated and thus creating in its build up towards the climax concretized at Seattle. McEwan's *Saturday* (2006) and Baker's *Checkpoint* (2004) appear to convey, in the context of disquiet about the Iraq war in 2003, a sense of continuum between global politics and oppositional movements, their immediate collective manifestations in local context (in specific images of protest marches, for instance), and individual preoccupations with/engagements in these within the flow of ordinary individual lives. Gender issues and feminism are other important notions which have greatly influenced the contemporary English Literature apart from Post Modernist trends in the presentation and format of contemporary fictions. It is also important to know how the Gender issues and Feminist point of views are reflected in contemporary English Literature when the canvas and plot of the fiction is global. The contemporary English Literature depicts changes in the life style and values of Indian Middle class and presents a conflict between western and Indian cultures. This can be seen in the contemporary fictions of Indian writers like Salman Rushdie (1981), Chetan Bhagat (2014; 2016), Shashi Deshpanday (202) and others.

In the light of the above observations, the present paper makes an attempt to analyse the depiction of globalization and gender issues in one of the most popular fiction of Chetan Bhagat's, namely, *half girlfriend* (2014).

The story of a Novel deals with a Bihari boy called Madhav from a small town Dumraon, in Bihar. He has come to take admission in Sociology (Hons.) at St. Stephen's College of Delhi in sports quota. The other character, Riya Somani, the main female character of the novel, belongs to a rich Marwari, Delhi-based Businessman Family. She is also an admission seeker in English (Hons.) under sports quota. Their first encounter takes place at basketball court and they developed some sort of acquaintance with each other. Madhav didn't know English well whereas Riya did speak fluent English. Under sports quota both of them had to show performance in the field through

a basketball match. First match was between girls teams. Madhav's match was after this match. Therefore, he decided to sit there and wait for his chance. Riya, was one of the leading players of her team. She was playing very well but her teammates were performing very badly. As Madhav had been a state-level basketball player for six years, he felt disappointed with the bad performance of Riya's teammates. Then "in the seventh minute of the first half, would the college team captain overthrow the ball outside the court, where it hits my (Madhav's) head as he (Madhav) stood in the sidelines". Madhav grabbed the ball. Riya came over there to collect the ball from him. He threw the ball at her. She caught it with ease and looked at him. She could get from his throw that he (Madhav) knows the game. Madhav advised her to change her point shooter. In the remaining part of first half she was able to score one goal following his advice. In the halftime she came out to thank him and asked for some more tips. Madhav gave her some tips to reorganize her team. As a result the match ended 21-25. The newbies (Riya's team) had lost, but still kept pace with the college team- a considerable achievement. After the match Riya met him and they introduced each other. She stayed to watch his match. It was a very close match and the college team lost to newbies 25-28. Madhav scored 17 out of 28. Riya was highly impressed by his game. They departed with a hope that they would get admission in the college. Both of them got admission and from here the love story moves ahead. They met frequently on and off the court and a tension in the relationship began. Madhav treated her as a 'girlfriend' (a romantic relationship between a young boy and a young girl)

However, Riya could not be able to define her relationship with Madhav because of her social background and her reputed background of family structure. So at this level, where Riya was in love with Madhav at one side but just wanted a friendship. Madhav didn't agree with this friendship. He continuously insisted to be her boyfriend in real sense but Riya always stopped him.

Finally she agreed to be his 'half girlfriend'. She actually loves Madhav but could not express her feeling due to her social background. In the meantime Riya's Parents decided to marry her with a London based young Businessman Rohan, whose father was having a long term friendship with Riya's family. Madhav is heartbroken after hearing the news of Riya's marriage, after this he stops playing Basketball. With the completion of his Graduation he gives interview, where he did not perform well but still gets a job in a 'multinational' Bank. He decides to leave Delhi and went back to Dumraon. He has decided to work with her mother at the village based school run by his mother. While working with her mother at school they both were in need of funds to build toilets for their school. As the government authorities were unable to help in any way regarding funds, so the only hope left to them is to wait for Bill Gates to visit their school and give them funds. As if luckily Bill Gates visits Bihar with his team. For this Madhav has to arrange some activities like: songs, dance and a speech in English. For this he joins English classes at Patna. Madhav now met here Riya who was now a divorcee and was working with Nestle. Madhav helped her in settling her Apartment and in return Riya helped him in preparing speech. She even asked him to read Chetan Bhagat's Novel, so as to improve his English. The function was very successful and Bill Gates agreed to give funds for school. Riya also came to know the fact that Madhav's mother won't accept her, so he disappeared from the scene hence she decided to tell him about her fake illness through a letter and vanish from his life forever. Three years later Riya's landlord from Patna finds some of her Journals from the Apartment and hands them to Madhav. Through the Journals Madhav learns about the problems which Riya faced, domestic violence by her husband and also how his mother had told her to stay away from her. Finally, he discovered that she is alive and he started his mega search of her from Patna to New York, with the help of an aid of Bill Gate's organization and his

Hostel Friend. He finally arrived at New York and searched her every where in Night clubs as once she told him that she wanted to become a dancer in New York. But he failed in all his efforts to search her, then he got information about her. He arrived there and they met in a very dramatic situation and finally married and settled in his native place.

The fiction deals with various gender issues emerging in the context of globalizing Indian society, particularly among the youth exposed to new communication technologies like mobile phone, sms, facebook, whatsapp, twitter etc. resulting into compartmentalization of their life into two conflicting sets of values represented by conservatism of the parents on one hand and the aspirations of new generation in the globalizing world. The approach Bhagat follows in this fiction is not only post-modernist but to some extent it is post-colonialist. He introduced in this fiction the notion of *half girlfriend*, a new concept used by the author introduces to redefine the notion of *Girl Friend*, found throughout the modern western literature in context of romantic love. The author also deconstruct existing literary tradition when he attempts to mix elements of drama in structuring his fiction and adopts a post-modernist strategy. The story of a fiction run from a small town of Bihar to Delhi then to London and back to Delhi, Patna, Dumraon and then to New York and finally in Dumraon i.e. on a global canvas. The characters of the fiction are also drawn globally (Bill Gates, Rohan, Shailesh etc.) as well as locally. The most important female character Riya takes feminist stand on various socio-cultural issues in the entire fiction and exposes the duality of values in Indian socio-cultural milieu, when it is exposed to the forces of globalization.

Thus Bhagat follows not only feminist approach in building the character of Riya throughout the novel but also follow post-modern approach. He himself is one of the important character of the story. He also experimented with the novel by dividing it like a drama into Prologue, Act I, Act II, Act III and finally. Thus he mixes two different literary formats, namely drama and novel in one. In modern English literature these were mutually exclusive formats. Moreover, the author was not supposed to be a character of his novel. The process of de-differentiation and deconstruction of modernist formats are important characteristics of postmodernism in contrast to differentiation and specialization of modernity. In postmodern approach the fiction becomes a kind of autobiography. In this fiction the elements of autobiography and drama are mixed in such a way that it is difficult to distinguish between these formats. Thus cultural conflict can also be well seen in the novel. This cultural conflict between western and Indian changes the whole scenario of today's social structure and also exposes the duality of values in Indian socio-cultural milieu.

The author of the fiction himself clarifies that this fiction is dedicated to "non English-types" and divulges the sentiments and linguistic struggles of a backward rural Bhojpuri-laced Hindi-speaking boy from Bihar as he enrolls himself at the prestigious English-medium St. Stephen's College, New Delhi, and falls in love with a "high class English-speaking rich Delhi girl" schooled at Modern School, New Delhi. The girl does not admit the relationship but agrees to be his "half girlfriend". Chetan Bhagat commented, "*Half-Girlfriend*, to me, is a unique Indian phenomenon, where boys and girls are not clear about their relationship status with each other. A boy may think he is more than friends with the girl, but the girl is still not his girlfriend. Hence, I thought we needed a term like 'Half girlfriend'. Because, in India, that is what most men get.

These observations of Bhagat are important to understand the process of transformation taking place in Indian society in the era of globalization. The students of rural background are now

inspired to study in delhi based educational institutions. However, due to lack of their command on English language they have to struggle at many fronts. Apart from linguistic problems, they have to adjust culturally as well. The rural society is caste based rigid society where a boy can't think of about the relationship like 'girl friend'. But, the urban Indian society is passing through a process of transformation and urban middle class families are crazy to admit their children in English medium missionaries and public schools in order to prepare them for the hard competition in job market. Most of these schools have not only impart education in english but also have been the promoter of the west oriented modern culture. The notion of 'boy friend' and 'girl friend' alien to Indian culture has emerged prominently in most of the urban centres of the country. This has given rise to the problem the novel under study depicted. The patriarchial structure of Indian society poses further problems here. In western culture 'girlfriend' means "*girlfriend is a girl or woman with whom a boy or man having a romantic or sexual relationship*". However, Indian culture does not permit sexual relationship before marriage in contrast to the western culture where such relationship is a very normal practice. In fact, this is a cultural dilemma faced by the Indian boys who wish to have a girlfriend in western sense but the girls generally avoid sexual relationship as it may not only defame them and their family in society as it is a taboo before marriage as per traditions and culture of Indian society. It is in this context, Bhagat introduces the notion of 'half girlfriend' in his fiction. Riya also faces the same dilemma with Madhav who wish to engaged into an intimate relationship with her but she is reluctant to it.

Madhav convinced her to come in his hostel room and attempted to have intimate relationship but she strongly refused.

Thus, we can see the feminist stand of Riya which was taken by her throughout the novel. The Post-Modern approach of Literature and the literary tradition. The act wise division of the novel which was earlier characteristics of literary approach but now we can find this mixed literary approach in Post-Modern Literature where the author is not bound with the tradition, more importantly we can find this de-differentiation and deconstruction of Post-Modernism in contrast to differentiation and specialization of Modernity, where the author himself become one of the character of the novel. Thus cultural conflict can also be well seen in the novel. This cultural conflict between western and Indian changes the whole scenario of today's social structure and also exposes the duality of values in Indian socio cultural milieu.

*Note: The paper is a revised version of the paper presented at 41st All India Sociological Conference held at University of Tezpur, Tezpur in December 2016.*

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## Impact of Television on Rural Society: A Sociological Study

*Mohammad Salim*

The word Television was first used by constantin Perskyi in a scientific paper he presented at the International Electricity Congress held at Paris on 25 August 1900. Perskyi described an apparatus based on the magnetic properties of selenium, an element that helped in the transmission of pictures through electromagnetic radiation. According to Shirley Biagi, the word first appeared in the U.S. in the June 1907 issue of scientific American. Before this word became widely accepted, inventors used "telephoto", 'telectroscope', 'wireless pictures', visual wireless, visual radio, electric vision, electric telescope and other terms to describe the precursors of the television. The biggest invention was that of the iconoscope which could send not only visual images in dots through the atmosphere to distant places but also help the receiver capture signals and convert them back to visual images. Soon after World War IJ hundreds of television channels appeared and television made a significant mark on the cultural lives of Americans. With the growth of cable television, many ultra high frequency station began to rely on cable technology to carry their signals to homes. Cable television was the most important technical development in television in 1970's. Originally, cable TV was known as community Antenna Television. From 1972 onwards, cable TV was utilized by Time, Inc's Home Box Office for showing movies to subscribers who had to pay a fee every month for the service, Dozens of cable television networks offer a variety of programming through local channels to subscribers :- children's programmes, women's programmes and special programmes for ethnic minorities in U.S.

All India Radio (AIR) in collaboration with UNESCO setup a television centre in New Delhi on 15 September 1959 purely as an educational experiment. The Ford Foundation donated 250 television set to selected schools in Delhi area. In a few months, television was extended to another 250 schools. Gradually, some community sets were installed in the suburbs of Delhi. Telectubs were established for viewers to discuss programme contents, effectiveness etc. Programmes were telecast from a temporary studio in the AIR building, using a 500 watt transmitter with a range of 25 km. All the programmes were meant for children. Then some programmes came for the general public in the suburbs of Delhi. A few weeks later, there were programmes for agriculturalists in the suburban villages of Delhi. In 1972, TV stations were opened in Bombay and Madras, in 1973, a relay station started operation in Poona, a 100 miles from Bombay. On April 1, 1976, the television unit was separated from AIR and given the name 'Doordarshan' (DD) meaning door (far) and darshan meaning sight or vision. The activities of television were increased. Today, almost a thousand

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transmitters send programmes to different stations located in all the metropolitan cities, large industrial towns, state capitals and a few rural areas.

The four radio centres of New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai have the DD-1, DD-2, and DD-3 channels. There are eleven regional centres where DD-1 and DD-2 channels operate. There are also twenty one local channels, specially in the rural areas where low power transmitters (LPTs) are setup expand only with improvement in living conditions and higher standards of income through steady employment and health care. PAS-1 and PAS-4 are satellites whose transponders help in the telecasting of DD programmes in half the regions of the world.

One of the most extensive educational and social research projects, perhaps the largest national television experiment in the world, has been Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). The Indian National Satellite (INSAT) was put into orbit following the favourable results of SITE. The effectiveness of television as a medium for educating the masses in rural areas was underscored by this experiment. It was with the help of NASA, UNDP, ITU and UNESCO that the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) succeeded in launching SITE on 1 August 1975 using the US-supplied Applications Technology Satellite, ATS-6. Thousands of messages on topics generally considered development-oriented were telecast to community television sets kept in 2,400 villages in 20 districts spread across six Indian states: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. The experiment ended on 31 July 1976. The programmes telecast dealt with high-yielding varieties of seeds, better farming methods and management, family planning, public health, social and educational improvement of women and children, better learning and teaching methods.

The one-year experiment led to the unprecedented expansion of television in India. SITE influenced the course of television in India; it led to the establishment of HPT's (high-power transmitters) in most urban areas and LPTs in some selected rural areas. Eminent scientists such as Vikram Sarabhai and others saw in television a great scope for reaching the rural population with educational and scientific messages. If messages could be transmitted through images, conventional alphabet-based literacy would not act as a stumbling block, they argued. All-out efforts were made to provide the technical infrastructure in most parts of India for the spread of television.

In spite of the best intentions, the medium has reached its ultimate, real goal, namely, the marketing of products mostly affordable to the rich sectors of the urban and rural population. To look at the programme content is a futile exercise, because the most significant content is advertising. And in that television has fared extremely well. Therefore, the social effects of television will depend on the philosophy of life, attitude to social objectives and views about what will interest the maximum number of viewers prevalent among programme producers and media users and, above all, the economic status of the audience. The major trends in television content in India will depend on the major content producers, who happen to be the leading media owners of the world, who also happen to be in the rich and technologically advanced countries. In the 1960s, countries were categorized into three 'worlds': the First World of rich, technologically - advanced capitalist nations of Europe and North America; the Second World of socialist countries of Europe, particularly the countries that were led by the Soviet Union; and the Third World of mostly poor, technologically less advanced former colonies of the First World in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Cable TV has influenced local media formats, especially in the news and film entertainment provided by television and in advertising. Television in India is oriented totally towards entertainment; it has become a mini version of the cine screen. Television was introduced in India and other countries of the East with great expectations that it would become a channel for reaching their millions with highly useful and essential messages of social change. The objectives of Doordarshan, for example, are a testimony to this social purpose.

When television was introduced in India in the late 1950s, the noble goals set by the decision-makers were as follows:

- To act a catalyst for social change.
- To promote national integration.
- To stimulate a scientific temper in the minds of the people.
- To disseminate the message of family planning as a means of population control and family welfare.
- To provide essential information and knowledge in order to stimulate greater agricultural production.
- To promote and help preserve environment and ecological balance.
- To highlight the need for social welfare measures including welfare of women, children and the less privileged.
- To promote interest in games and sports.
- To create values of appraisal of art and cultural heritage.

An analysis of the programmes on Doordarshan or any other channel operating in India will convince us that the above goals are not given due importance, particularly the goals of social change, creation of scientific temper and social welfare measures. Entertainment through serials, film-derived material, sports and games is given all the importance. Social change is not even of secondary importance to the media. Instead, the main objective of every channel appears to be the advertising of goods and a few services, persuading viewers to buy them. The very *raison d'être* of television all over the world seems to be the selling of goods through persuasive and attractive commercial messages and achieved through the repeated presentation of news and views, discussions, debates, and so on.

In the 1960s, communication scholars and media experts were quite sure that television and other media of mass communication would help national development. The media were considered the prime motivators of development. Stalwarts in communication and development studies such as Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm and Everett M. Rogers, who based their theories of development and media efficacy on the important work of Walter Rostow, namely, *The Stages of Economic Growth*., stressed that the economic and technological development achieved by the Western nations were the result of increased media use. If only the people of the 'developing countries' could follow the path of modernization initiated by the West, they would leapfrog centuries of inaction and underdevelopment and reach the stage of mass consumption in which the modernized West was placed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From decade to decade, old paradigms were packaged in new

bottles under new labels and presented by the developed world for the consumption of the elite in poor countries, who made vital decisions on communication and media planning. In the 1950s, it was 'growth through psychic mobility'<sup>1</sup>; in the 1960s, it was 'education for development'; in the 1970s, it was 'satellite communication for development'; and in the 1980s and 1990s, it was "computerized communication systems". The process continues today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, under the banner of 'information technology' or IT, for streamlining administration and creating market-friendly economies through privatized micro and macro media. Today, liberalization, privatization and globalization are thriving everywhere, but the old problems of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and poor health persist.

**Objectives:**

The present study was taken with specific objectives to find out-

1. The nature and frequency of watching Television.
2. Types of programme on Television.
3. Sources of dissemination of agricultural knowledge.
4. Role of Television in the rural community.

An attempt has been made to find out the role of Television in the dissemination of agricultural knowledge in the rural society.

**Sample selection;**

For this purpose, three hundred farmers on the basis of caste, land holding and socioeconomic status of the two villages viz., Umarahan and Barain of the Chiraigaon Block of the Varanasi District have been selected.

In contemporary Indian rural society, there has been a considerable explosion of knowledge. Not only are the villages being influenced within the all pervading mass-media but there has been significant inflow in various other ways of new agricultural ideas and techniques to the farmers at the grassroot level. Sources of such dissemination of knowledge are varied, though they may be broadly classified into two channels - formal and informal. Among the informal ones, experience of the old and big farmers continue to remain as the most potential motivating and imitating factors to other cultivators in the area. Among the formal channels, radio, documentary films, and newspaper are the most influential channels which simultaneously affect a vast number of farmers scattered over a large area through indirect and impersonal ways by audiovisual aids or printed literature. With the increasing concern shown by the state in the welfare of farmers, many developmental agencies, either governmental or semi-governmental, have come up. Such agencies through direct and personal means are approaching the farmers and equipping them with new developmental techniques. Thus in recent time the farmers in the villages are exposed to various sources of dissemination of agricultural knowledge. In order to understand the impact of these sources, the respondents in the present study have been asked to specify the agency which has been most useful to them in their acquiring new agricultural knowledge.

The data gathered in this regard indicate that 13 per cent respondents have been influenced mostly by the experiences of the old or big farmers in and around their villages. There are 15.33 per cent respondents who have been influenced by newspapers, magazines and other printed materials. There are 28.33 per cent respondents who have benefited most from the specialized programmes for farmers broadcast by the radio. There are 5 per cent respondents who get new information from documentaries and films means for the agriculturists. Most of the respondents' (38.33 per cent) in the sample have accepted that they have benefited most from the developmental agencies such as block development office, co-operatives, extension centres, etc.

The break-up of the data according to the caste status of the respondents reveals that developmental agency has been noted as the main source of new agricultural knowledge comparatively in higher proportion by the high caste respondents (48.35 per cent) than the backward (34.72 per cent) and Scheduled Caste (32.31 per cent) respondents. Similarly, newspapers etc. have been considered as the most influential agency of dissemination of new agricultural knowledge by the high caste respondents (21.98 per cent). It is significant to note that among the illiterate and low income group Scheduled Caste respondents, apart from developmental agency, experienced farmers (29.23 per cent) and radio programme (30.77 per cent) have been noted as the other two important sources of new agricultural knowledge. The association is significant at .001 level.

On the basis of landholding status of the respondents it is found that big landholders (43.13 per cent) in comparatively higher proportion have admitted developmental agency as the main source of agricultural knowledge. Newspapers has been noted as the major source again by the big landholders (29.41 per cent). Experienced farmers as the source of new agricultural knowledge have counted more with the marginal (15.20 per cent) than by the small or big farmers. Radio programme is treated as the most influential source by marginal farmers (33.92 per cent). The relationship is significant at .001 level.

On the basis of socio-economic status, it is found that developmental agency is considered as the most important source by the high socio-economic status respondents (43.48 per cent), and less by medium (33.33 per cent) and low (41.40 per cent) respondents. Radio programme has been considered as the most influential source by the low socio-economic status respondents (31.85 per cent), and less by those of the other socio-economic statuses. Experienced farmers have been noted as important source by the low socio-economic status respondents (14.01 per cent). The relationship is significant at .05 level.

On the basis of adoption level of the respondents it is found that developmental agency has been considered as the most influential source by the high adopters (41.80 per cent) and less by the low (21.95 per cent) and medium (40.74 per cent) adopters. Radio programme has been noted as the major source by the high adopters (30.23 per cent), newspapers again by the high adopters (18.60 per cent) and experienced farmers by the low adopters (36.57 per cent). The association is significant at .001 level.

#### **Case No. 1:**

MN is aged 41 years. He is educated upto intermediate. He is Brahmin by caste and he own 15 acres of farm land. He is considered to be a successful farmer. His major crops are wheat

and paddy. He also raises cash crops such as potato, brinjal and tomato, etc. With adequate irrigation facility he has been able to raise double crops in a year in some of his plots. When asked to explain the sources from where he obtains new agricultural knowledge, he answered that his main source is Block Dev. Office. Sometimes he gets information from newspapers and documentary films/T.V. also. He keeps regular contacts with VLW, ADOs and other important functionaries at the block office. Each fortnight he makes a visit to the block office and discusses his problems with the block officials. He says that many new things about HYV seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc. have come to be known to him through the block office. He finds the ADO (Agriculture) and ADO (Plant Protection) of his block as most educative and informative people. He attributes his success in crop-production to the help and advice regularly given by the block officials to him.

#### **Case No. 2:**

GY is 33 years old. He is educated upto Class five and belongs to Nonia caste. He owns 2 acres of farmland. Mostly he raises cash crops such as brinjal, tomato, potato, etc. When he was approached to explain the sources of his new agricultural knowledge, he stated that he has been benefited mostly by the old and experienced farmers of the village. Whenever he faces a problem regarding cultivation, irrigation or seeds, etc., he consults the experienced farmers who tell them what to do or not to do in such circumstances. Such advice has proved beneficial to him.

#### **Case No. 3:**

TN is 40 years old. He is educated upto High School. He belongs to Kurmi caste. He owns 4 acres of land. He raises paddy and cash crops, such as potato, tomato, cabbage, etc. When he was asked to explain the sources of the agricultural knowledge, he stated that the main sources which have benefited him are the special programmes known as 'Krishi Jagat' broadcast by Television Channel and Akashvani station of Varanasi and Gorakhpur. He says that it is his habit to listen to these programmes regularly. Many new things about the cash crops pertaining to their disease and preventive cures, he has come to know through the radio programmes. Sometimes he discusses the problems with block officials but their responses are not very encouraging. He says that in radio programmes he has an opportunity to listen to those experienced farmers who have actually coped with particular problems and knowhow to solve them. In many other ways also the talks given by the experts in agriculture are very illuminating to him.

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# The Exposure of Mass Media Communication among the Youth of AWGP

Shreepal Chauhan\*

## Abstract

*Mass Media play a crucial role in today's human society. It has become a powerful instrument of social Change and influencing the daily life of the people. New communication technologies such as satellites, cable television, wireless telephony, the Internet and computers are bringing about noticeable changes in Modern society.*

*The present paper is aimed to analyze the role of mass media communication among the youth of AWGP. The study was conducted on a purposive sample of 100 youth associated with training of the Akhil Vishva Gayatri Pariwar (AWGP), Shantikunj, Haridwar in 2012 through a highly structured interview schedule. The paper is divided into three sections. First section deals with the concept of mass media. In the second section social background of the respondents is analyzed. Patterns of Mass Media Exposure are discussed in the last section.*

*It was found that the mass media exposure of the respondents was high as 88% of the respondents read Newspaper, 75% read Magazines, 67% of the respondents watch television while 58% of the respondents watch cinema. Most of the respondents (61%) use Internet and have opened their E-mail account on mail websites. As many as 43% of the respondents are using social networking site to express their views to their friends, relatives etc.*

**Key Words:** Mass Media Communication, New Media, Print Media, AWGP

The present paper is aimed to analyze the role of mass media communication among the youth of AWGP. The study was conducted on a purposive sample of 100 youth associated with training of the Akhil Vishva Gayatri Pariwar (AWGP), Shantikunj, Haridwar in 2012 through a highly structured interview schedule. The paper is divided into three sections. First section deals with the concept of mass media. In the second section social background of the respondents is analyzed. The patterns of mass media exposure are discussed in the last section.

## The Concept of Mass Media

The term 'mass communication' came into use in the late 1930s, but its essential features were already well known and have not really changed since, even if the media themselves have in

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some ways become less massive. Early mass media were quite diverse in their scale and condition of operation. For instance, popular film could be seen in village tents as well as metropolitan pictures palaces. The newspaper press ranged from popular city dailies to small local weeklies (Mc quail, 2010).

Mass media communication is considered as an important vehicle of modernity as it is an integral part of the modern communication system (Pye, 1963). It is generally assumed by a number of social scientists that mass media play an important role in the process of transformation of society from traditional society to modern society (Parsons 1951, 1964, Moore 1963, Smelser 1959, 1963, Hoselitz 1960, 1964, Eisenstadt 1966, 1970, Lerner 1958). This is the reason that growth of mass media has been an essential component of development planning in India. However, this view has been questioned by a number of scholars (Frank 1967, Amin 1974, Wallerstein, 1984) who have not only been skeptical but also critical to this kind of assumption of modernization theorists.

### **Globalization of Mass Media**

New Media has evolved as an interconnected network of audio, video and electronic communication that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and Mass communication (VOICU, 2013). New media refers to on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, and creative participation. Another aspect of new media is the real-time generation of new and unregulated content. Mc Quail (2010) notes that the expression 'new media' has been in use since the 1960s and has had to encompass an expanding and diversifying set of applied communication technologies. He further define new media as "a disparate set of communication technologies that share certain features, apart from being new, made possible by digitalization and being widely available for personal use as communication devices (Mc quail, 2010).

Most technologies described as "new media" are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, video games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs. New media does not include television programs (only analog broadcast), feature films, magazines, books, or paper-based publications – unless they contain technologies that enable digital interactivity. Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, is an example, combining Internet accessible digital text, images and video with web-links, creative participation of contributors, interactive feedback of users and formation of a participant community of editors and donors for the benefit of non-community readers (Wikipedia).

With digitalization all the media become translatable into each other—computer bits migrate merrily... A movie, phone call, letter, or magazine article may be sent digitally via phone line, coaxial cable, fiber optic cable, microwave, satellite, the broadcast air, or a physical storage medium such as tape or disk. If that's not revolution enough, with digitalization the content becomes totally plastic—any message, sound, or image may be edited from anything into anything else" (Brand, 1987). Akin to the energy generated by nuclear fusion, the communication power which can be generated by media fusion will be formidable. The ability to digitally mix all media on a common palette provides one with the ability to present and simultaneously illustrate any idea or concept with multiple windows of audio & visual, text & graphics. Multimedia offers one the unique opportunity to combine a unified field of media with an open field of experience. As defined in *Multimedia: Gateway to the Next Millennium*: "Multimedia is the next step in the social and technological evolution of publishing and sets the stage for even more profound means and experiences of communications.

Multimedia is, in the simplest terms, the digital processing of binary-coded electronic signals....of voice or data, text or images, music or video" (Rosan, 1994). Herein, it would appear that, at present, multimedia is evolving toward revolutionary status.

The mass media communication can be broadly classified into three categories namely, the broadcast media, the print media and the audio-visual media (Singh, 1995), and new media & social media.

#### **(a) The Broadcast Media (Radio)**

The broadcast media include mainly radio. Radio is an electronic auto-medium for broadcasting programme to the audience. This medium is cosmopolite in approach and is suitable for communication to millions of people widely dispersed and situated in far-flung areas availability of low cost receiving sets operated with electricity or battery helped radio to penetrate deep into the rural life. Radio is suitable for creating general awareness amongst the people, build up desirable change in attitude and reinforce learning. The medium is extremely convenient for communication in times of crises and urgent situation. People with no education or very little education and those who are not in a position to attend extension programme personally, can take full advantage of this medium and build up adequate knowledge and skill. It reaches a large number of people at a very low cost. The programmes may be listened while one is engaged in farming or household work (Kumar, 1998).

#### **(b) The Print Media**

The print media include printed matter such as newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and posters etc. which are circulated among the masses for the purpose of disseminating information. The print media has been relatively a major resource of leisure in today's modern societies. It can be broadly classified into two categories namely; newspaper and magazine. The first, newspaper is one of the important media of mass communication in modern society. The reading of newspaper has now become a part of life as it disseminates information among the masses. One of its principle functions is to process description of events into printed form. The second, magazine is a leisure time activity. The advantage of this medium is that one can read a magazine not only in the house but also outside. It not only provides information about important events but also provides entertainment. Some magazines cover the general topics while the others are devoted to specific subjects like sports, films, science and so on (Singh, 1995).

#### **(c) The Audio-Visual Media**

Television and cinema are main audio-visual media. The audio-visual media provide pictures with words and sounds effects. These media are cosmopolite in approach and can be used to create instant mass awareness. It can deal with topical problems and provide solution. They contribute information and speeds up the process of adoption.

#### **(i) Television**

Television is strong in providing the stimulus, exposing the audience to a whole of ideas and experiences. In comparison to motion picture, television can create more impact due to its flexibility, less time taken to record and telecast programmes and wider coverage. Compare to

radio, television has, however, less impact in rural India, mainly because of low availability of this medium and due to high cost receiving sets. Coverage of more area by increasing the transmission facility of television does not necessarily indicate the availability of this medium to the rural audience (Singh, 2002).

## **(ii) Cinema**

The cinema is very attractive medium for Indian masses. The main reason for its popularity is that it does not require any initial money to invest in comparison o other audio-visual media like television. Indian masses are not in a position to invest a huge amount of money on these items. Naturally, cinema going is relatively cheaper (Singh, 2002).

## **2. Social Background of the Respondents**

Social background of a person is closely related to his value orientation, role perception and role performance. It involves an analysis of his age-group, sex, language, caste, marital status, education and place. In the present paper an attempt is made to analyse the social background of the youth under study in terms of their age-group, sex, language, caste, marital status, education and place.

### **Age group**

The subject can be classified into three age groups (i) 15-20 years, (ii) 21- 30 years and (iii) 31-35 years. Most of the respondents (47%) belong to the age group of 21-30 years of age. While 42% of the respondents belong to the age group of 15-20 years of age. Those who belong to the age group of 31-35 years of age constitute 11% of the respondents.

On the basis of their age the subject can be classified into three age groups (i) 15-20 years, (ii) 21- 30 years and (iii) 31-35 years. The data suggests that about half of the respondents were youth (21-30) and about two-fifth (42%) of the respondents were below 20 years.

### **Sex**

Most of the respondents (67%) are male and the remaining 33% of the respondents are female. Sexwise distribution of the respondents indicates that the AWGP has very high representation of male youth with 67% while the representation of women is low in the AWGP.

### **Language**

Most of the respondents (85%) have their mother tongue Hindi. While 9% of the respondents have their mother tongue Gujarati. Those who have their mother tongue Ori constitute 5% of the respondents. Only 1% of the respondents have their mother tongue Marathi. The representation of Hindi language youth was highest with 85% of the respondents.

### **Caste**

More than half of the respondents (56%) belong to General category. While 36% of the respondents belong to Other Backward Classes category. Those who belong to Scheduled Caste constitute 5% of the respondents. Only 3% of the respondents belong to Scheduled Tribes. It suggests that the mission has followers in all sections of Hindu Society.

On the basis of the caste the data suggests that highest representations among the respondents is of general caste (56%) while a little less than two-fifth of the respondents (36%) were of OBC.

### **Marital Status**

Most of the respondents (85%) are unmarried while 15% of the respondents are married. As the study was of youth most of the respondents were unmarried with 85% in AWGP.

**Education**

The data reveal that more than one-third of the respondents (38%) attained education upto graduate (12+3) level. While 32% of the respondents attained education upto Intermediate (11-12) level. Those who attained education up to Post Graduate level constitute 16% of the respondents. Only 7% of the respondents attained education up to High School (6-10) level. Remaining 7% of the respondents attained Professional/Technical qualification. On the basis of the education the data suggests that majority of the respondents are highly educated while rest of them are educated up to secondary level.

**Place of Origin**

A little more than one-fourth of the respondents (28%) belong to Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand (15%) and Madhya Pradesh (15%). While 9% of the respondents belong to Gujarat followed by Jharkhand (8%), Bihar (7%) and Chhattisgarh (7%). Those who belong to Orissa state constitute 6% of the respondents. Only 2% of the respondents belong to Rajasthan followed by Maharashtra (1%), Himachal Pradesh (1%) and Nepal (1%). In order to know their place of origin data suggests that there were twelve states representation in the study. UP is the highest state with a little more than two-fifth (28%) of the respondents. It suggests that most of the respondents were from Hindi speaking states.

After analyzing the social background of the respondents, It was found that on the basis of their age the subject can be classified into three age groups (i) 15-20 years, (ii) 21- 30 years and (iii) 31-35 years. The data suggests that about half of the respondents were youth (21-30) and about two-fifth (47%) of the respondents were below 20 years. Sexwise distribution of the respondents indicates that the AWGP has very high representation of male youth with 67% while the representation of women is low in the AWGP. The representation of Hindi language youth was highest with 85% of the respondents. On the basis of the caste the data suggests that highest representations among the respondents is of general caste (56%) while a little less than two-fifth of the respondents (36%) were of OBC. As the study was of youth most of the respondents were unmarried with 85% in AWGP. In order to know their place of origin data suggests that there were twelve states representation in the study. UP is the highest state with a little more than two-fifth (28%) of the respondents.

**3. Patterns of Mass Media Exposure**

Mass Media is playing a crucial role in today's human society. It has become a powerful instrument of social change and influencing the daily life of the people. The mass media can be classified into three categories, namely the broadcast media, the print media and the audiovisual media. (Singh, 1995). The broadcast media include mainly radio. Therefore, questions related to frequency of radio listening in a week, type of programmes listen on radio, were asked. Print media include mainly newspapers and magazines. Therefore, questions related to their habits of reading newspapers, total time spend on reading newspapers in a day, types of newspaper read, and habits of reading magazines were asked. Audiovisual media include two media, namely Television and Cinema. Therefore, questions related to watching T.V., total time spend on T.V. watching in a day, place of watching television , programmes watched on television, subscriptions of Cable T.V. connections, types of Channels watched on Cable T.V., monthly frequency of cinema going, types of films preferred and language of film preferred by them were asked.

**Newspaper**

Most of the respondents (88 percent) subscribe newspaper. A little more than half (51%) of the respondents read Dainik Jagran followed by Amar Ujala (25%) and Hindustan (25%). A little less than one-fourth of the respondents (23%) read Pragya Abhiyan and Dainik Bhashkar followed by Times of India (19%). The data reveal that a little less than three-fourth of the respondents (73%)

read newspaper for less than one hour. While a little more than one-seventh of the respondents (15%) spend 1-2 hours on newspaper. Remaining 12% of the respondents don't read newspaper.

Most of the respondents (57%) are interested in reading sports, headlines (53%), spiritual articles (50%), editorial, politics and current affairs (41%) each, international issues (40%), foreign news (38%), entertainment and first page news (37%) each, stories (36%), cinema (30%), zodiac sign (29%), defense related matters (27%) and employment (23%). While advertisements (18%), business (17%), reader's column (17%) and matrimonial (2%) are read by relatively a less number of the respondents.

### **Magazines**

Most of the respondents (75 percent) subscribe magazine and only (25 percent) of the respondents do not subscribe magazine. Most of the respondents (34%) read India Today. Most of the respondents (24%) read Pratiyogita Darpan. Many types of magazines are read by the respondents. The most popular magazine among the respondents is Akhand Jyoti (72%). Yug Nirman Yojana (50%) is the second most popular magazine among the respondents. India Today (34%), Pratiyogita Darpan (24%), Balhans and Champak (15% each).

Most of the respondents (38%) spent their time in reading magazines for less than one hour. While a little less than one-fifth of the respondents (18%) spend 1-2 hours on magazines.

Most of the respondents (49%) are interested in reading Spiritual parts of a magazine while Health (38%), Literature (37%), Environment (35%) and Art & Culture (31%) are read by a good number of the respondents. Other parts of magazines such as Politics (25%) and Economy (17%) are read relatively a less number of the respondents. Only 5% of the respondents read other parts of a magazine.

### **Television**

Most of the respondents (67%) have Television set and the remaining (33%) don't have Television but even they also watch television. Most of the respondents (50%) watch T. V. 1-2 hours in a day. While 9% of the respondents watch T. V. 3-4 hours daily. Those who watch T. V. more than 4 hours in a day constitute 5% of the respondents. Remaining 36% of the respondents have no response. Most of the respondents (44%) watch T. V. Daily/regularly. While 13% of the respondents watch T. V. Rarely/occasionally. Those who watch T. V. only 5-6 days in a week constitute 7% of the respondents. Only 4% of the respondents watch T. V. 3-4 days and 1-2 days in a week. Those who do not watch T. V. are only 2% of the respondents. Remaining 26% of the respondents have no response. Most of the respondents (45%) watch TV with their family while remaining (55%) of the respondents don't watch TV with their family.

### **Cable connection/DTH (Direct to Home) services**

Most of the respondents (52%) have Cable Connection and the remaining (48%) don't have Cable Connection. A little less than one-third of the respondents (30%) have DTH connection and the remaining (70%) don't have DTH connection. The data reveal that one-tenth of the respondents (10%) have DTH Connection of Tata Sky followed by Air Tel (10%) and Dish TV (10%). While 5% of the respondents have other types of DTH Connection. Only 2% of the respondents have DTH Connection of Reliance. While 30% of the respondents have Local Dish/Cable Connection. Remaining 33% of the respondents don't have Cable Connection.

The data reveal that most of the respondents (60%) watch T. V. at home. While 10% of the respondents watch T. V. at neighbor/relatives/friends home. Those who watch T. V. at shop+home constitute 4% of the respondents. Only 1% of the respondents watch TV at shop. Remaining 25% of the respondents don't watch TV.

Most of the respondents (70%) are interested to watch News followed by Religious/Spiritual programmes (54%), Feature Film (49%), Sports (44%) and Music (42%). While Serials (33%), Mythological Programme (31%), Educational programme (30%), Debates on current affairs (29%),

Children's Programme (27%) and Dance Programme (25%) are watched by relatively a less number of the respondents. Other Programmes such as Drama, Documentary, Business/Marketing, Fashion and Interior designing are watched by only a few.

Most of the respondents (61%) are interested to watch Comedy films. While Romantic (30%), Action (28%) and Art (24%) are watch by relatively a less number of the respondents. Other types of films such as Commercial, Adults and other are watch by only a few.

Most of the respondents (73%) are preferred to watch Hindi films. Most of the respondents (24%) are interested to watch CID followed by Indian Ideal (20%) and Crime Patrol Dastak (20%). Most of the respondents (33%) are interested to watch Devon Ke Dev Mahadev. While Savdhaan India (10%), Dil Se Di Dua Saubhagyawati Bhav (9%) and Amrit Manthan (4%) are watched by relatively a less number of the respondents. Other Programmes such as Alaxmi Hamari Super Bahu, Best of Laugh India Laugh, Main Laxmi Tere Aangan Ki and Hamne Li Hai Shapath are watched by only a few.

#### **Television Channels**

Star Plus is most popular channel among the respondents (45 percent) followed by Aastha and Aaj Tak with 44 percent and 43 percent viewership respectively. Sony and D. D. National-1 are at IV rank with 40 percent viewership while Sanskar TV and Life OK are at V rank with 36 percent viewership followed by Discovery and Zee TV with 35 percent viewership each. 9XM and SUB TV are at seventh and eighth rank with 32 percent and 31 percent viewership respectively. Colors is at ninth place with 28 percent viewership followed by Zee Cinema and Star Sports with 27 percent viewership each. Cartoon Network, Max and Star Gold are at eleventh rank with 26 percent viewership each. Sahara One is at twelfth rank with 25 percent viewership followed by Star Cricket, Ten Sports and Pragma with 24 percent viewership each. MTV is at fourteenth rank with 21 percent viewership followed by NDTV India and Zee News with 20 percent viewership each. ESPN has 19% viewership. Filmi (18%), UTV Action (17%), Animal Planet (17%), Pogo (16%), ABP News (16%) and IBN7 (15%) are the channels having low viewership among the respondents. UTV Movies, Neo Sports, India TV, Sony Mix, and Star Movies have 14% viewership each. HBO and Mahua TV have 11% viewership each. All others channels - Movies OK (10%), Ten Cricket (10%), Fox Travellor (10), Zoom (9%), Channel V (9%), History TV (9%), Bindass (9%), Disney Channel (8%), ETV Gujrati (8%), BBC World (7%), UTV Stars (7%), E24 (7%), Sadhna TV (7%), Shraddha TV (7%), Hungama (6%), TV9 Gujrati (6%), NDTV 24x7 (6%) and VHI (6%) also have low viewership among the respondents.

#### **Cinema**

Majority of the respondents have the habits of cinema going (58%) and remaining a little more than two-fifth (42%) of the respondents don't have the habits of cinema going. Most of the respondents (42%) watch films on VCD/DVD and the remaining (58%) don't watch films on VCD/DVD. Most of the respondents (16%) watch films once in last one week. While 6% of the respondents watch films four times. Those who watch films three times in last one week constitute 5% of the respondents. Only 4% of the respondents watch films twice last one week. Remaining 69% of the respondents have no response. Most of the respondents (17%) watch Cinema more than four times in last three months. While 13% of the respondents watch Cinema twice. Those who watch Cinema once in last three months constitute 7% of the respondents. Only 4% of the respondents watch Cinema three times while 4% of the respondents also watch Cinema four times in last three months. Remaining 55% of the respondents have no response.

#### **Radio**

Most of the respondents that is little less than one-third (32%) have Radio Set while remaining (68%) of the respondents don't have Radio Set. About one-fifth of the respondents (17%) listen

Radio regularly and the remaining (83%) don't listen Radio regularly. A little less than one-fourth of the respondents (24%) listen Radio regularly on their Mobile Phone and the remaining (76%) don't listen Radio on their Mobile Phone.

Most of the respondents (18%) spend less than one hour in a day on Radio. While 6% of the respondents spend 1-2 hours in a day. Those who spend more than 4 hours on Radio constitute 2% of the respondents. Remaining 74% of the respondents have no response.

Most of the respondents (26%) listen News on Radio. While 20% of the respondents listen Filmi Songs, Bhajans (18%), Lokgeet (13%) and Educational Programmes (11%) on Radio. Those who listen Sports News on Radio constitute 10% of the respondents followed by Plays (10). Only 8% of the respondents listen Classical Music on Radio while 1% of the respondents listen other programmes on Radio.

#### **New Media and Social Media**

Most of the respondents (91%) have Mobile Phone while remaining (9%) of the respondents don't have Mobile Phone. Most of the respondents (41%) spend one hour in a day on Mobile Phone. While 17% of the respondents spend 1-2 hours in a day. Those who spend 2-4 hours in a day on Mobile Phone constitute 16% of the respondents. Only 6% of the respondents spend more than 4 hours in a day on Mobile Phone. Remaining 20% of the respondents have no response. Most of the respondents (16%) send 1-5 SMS in a day. While 13% of the respondents send more than 20 SMS in a day. Those who send 11-20 SMS in a day constitute 10% of the respondents. Only 6% of the respondents send 6-10 SMS in a day. Remaining 55% of the respondents have no response.

Most of the respondents (61%) use Internet and the remaining (39%) don't use Internet. Most of the respondents (52%) have Internet and the remaining (48%) don't use Internet. Most of the respondents (36%) use Internet at Mobile Phone. About one-fourth of the respondents (24%) spent one hour in a day. Most of the respondents (40%) are interested to search E-mail on Internet and Academic (34%). While News (23%), Download MP3 music (19%), Entertainment (18%), Religious/Spiritual (17%), Information (16%), Download free software (16%) and Chatting (15%) are searched by relatively a less number of the respondents. Other Programmes such as Watching Video Clips, E-commerce, Video Conferencing, Inviting and Other are searched on Internet by only a few. Most of the respondents (55%) have E-mail account on Internet while remaining (45%) don't have E-mail account on Internet.

Most of the respondents (43%) have made account on Social Networking Websites while remaining (57%) have not made account on Social Networking Websites. Most of the respondents (49%) have made their account on Facebook. While 6% of the respondents have made their account on Twitter on Social Networking Websites. Those who have made their account on YouTube constitute 4% of the respondents. Only 1% of the respondents have made their account on LinkedIn on Social Networking Websites.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The exploration of the study reveal that most of the persons associated with this type of spiritual training are youth come from upper and middle order castes background. on the basis of their place of origin it can be said that they represent twelve states of India with highest representation from Uttar Pradesh (28%). Caste wise most of them come from General Category. They are mainly youth having certain degree of education at least graduate and higher secondary level of education. Sexwise distribution of the respondents indicates that the AWGP training programme has very high representation of male youth with 67% while the representation of women is low in the AWGP training programme. The representation of Hindi language youth was highest with 85% of the respondents. As the study focused on the youth, most of the respondents were unmarried with (85%). As far as the exposure of mass media is concerned, it was found that they they have

exposure to both types of media contents- modern as well as spiritual. most of them are having mobile phones with internet connectivity. However, very few among them have internet access through computer and laptop. They are using Audio-CDs and VCDs of the programmes of AWGP and the messages of Gayatri Pariwar regularly. They subscribe magazines like India Today, Pratiyogita Darpan etc. as well as spiritual magazines Akhand Jyoti and Yug Nirman Yojana. A significant number of youth listen Radio on Mobile phone particularly F.M. channels. Very few of them use to listen Radio programmes at home. More than half of youth used to go Cinema and watch all types of films. They are using new media and social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube etc. They are also using e-mail and SMS services of internet. So, we can say that the Youth of All World Gayatri Pariwar have high exposure of mass media due to use TV, Newspaper and Mobile phones.

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*Book Review*

## **The Media Rich and Media Poor Children of India**

**Neha Hooda\***

### **Shakuntala Banaji 2017: Children and Media in India: Narratives of Class, Agency and Social Change (Routledge)**

In the Indian context where digital media has been expanding at a rapid speed, it is important to understand how it forms part of a child's life across different socio-economic classes. Shakuntala Banaji who has written extensively on this topic presents various perspectives from content consumers who are children and content producers who are studio executives with prominent national/ international television channels in India. In *Children and Media in India: Narratives of Class, Agency and Social Change* Banaji examines and contextualizes the neglected areas of children's everyday life, media use and representation in India. The writer uses ethnographic research as a key tool to engage in conversation with Indian children who are in the age group of 9-17 years. She explores the consumption of digital media through internet, television and films by children in everyday life. The use of qualitative interviews, participant and non-participant observations establish clear distinction in the media use by children from different socio-economic groups and also from different urban and rural areas. Content analysis of children's television programs and interviews with content producers presents perspectives on broadcasting trends on national commercial television.

To understand media consumption habits of children, the accounts of everyday life schedules given by children from different backgrounds (socio-economic & rural/urban) have been compared. The essential question to all the respondents is how they use media and how it connects with their everyday lives. The analysis of interactions with children done as part of the research work show that religion, caste and economic status subtly flow into social interactions, romantic relationships, friendships and impact the use of media by children. Closely related to the use of media by children is the concept of agency. Banaji notes that the concept of agency is integral to most discussions of media use and production. The findings point out that the children of today are growing up to be empowered beings. They are thinking individuals who make choices based on the rationale of how they understand the world around them. However, media experiences of children coming from middle class families and those coming from working class families are very different.

In the context of children from upper-middle class and middle-class families, the study explores the extensive use of media through television and internet-based services available over phones. Television programs seems to play a crucial role by providing children an 'idea' of childhood against which children can measure their own experience across classes. Banaji states that these

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programs provide middle class Indian families with a shared vocabulary of childhood which both neutralizes and universalizes the idea of a particular version of middle-class childhood. This version includes school work, excessive focus on after school study with tutors, desire for academic excellence, confinement to domestic sphere and escape into imaginary lives fueled by fiction on television. Digital media constitutes an important part of their life which often provides them a very customized and publicized world. The writing takes the reader through a very personal journey of experiences and personal stories of children who talk about how they see the world from their perspective, media being a big part of it. Internet has a positive impact as well as it enables children by providing access to news and information that they may not have otherwise. The “anonymity in online searches and access to old archival news” sometimes helps children find hope, a sense of validation and a degree of privacy which they would otherwise not have. This is especially true when children have spoken about very sensitive issues like the abuse, sexuality and acceptance.

A contrast to the middle-class media consumption imagery is the stark reality of the working-class children in urban and rural areas. Their lives remain far and distant from the imaginary ‘digital life’ and ‘digital childhood’. In most working-class families, the access to internet enabled smartphones is limited to adults. For children, television is a more ubiquitous means of media consumption. Additionally, for children in low income societies, there exist differences in consumption basis gender as well. In urban areas, girls are absorbed doing household chores along with school work, leaving little time for media indulgence. In the case of rural children from working class families, there also arises the paucity of access to media devices. The absence of leisure or personal time especially for the girl child who must work hard to provide for the family through jobs and household chores points to a gender-based media consumption difference.

To understand perspectives from the content production side, the writer uses thematic content analysis to explore the extent and manner in which international, national and regional audio-visual media understand and represent children in India. With focus on issues of re-presentation during content analysis, aspects like language, gender, social class and caste have been paramount. Interviews with senior studio executives involved with content production for children highlight how gender based and economic stratification plays an important role in programming. A large number of programs on commercial national television put males in focus thereby making them their target audience. The number of programs that have female protagonists are very few. The economic stratification becomes obvious as most of the stories on such channels focus on the lives of children from middle income groups. Banaji notes that in programmes that are remakes of Disney shows, the resemblance to upper middle-class homes is striking. The children presented in these shows have latest gadgets, well-furnished homes, hangout in cafes, play in musical bands etc. It is important to note here that Disney owns some of the popular channels in India like Disney, Disney Junior, Disney HD and Hungama. This entails that the interests of a limited population of children are represented on commercial television.

Children from working class communities are seldom portrayed adequately in mainstream programs. This leads to a wide gap in addressing the concerns and needs of audience who come from weaker socio-economic backgrounds, conflict areas like that of North-East, Kashmir or are specially-abled. In such cases, often children turn to content meant for adults. To this end Banaji quotes ‘a staggering number of children in India remain invisible to national and international policy-makers, and to national and international adults. They are not yet significant enough as a market or an audience to warrant consideration by corporate media. And they are almost invisible too, to the vast Indian middle classes.’ Banaji states that approximately 300 million Indian children are media poor and come from working class families. Private television channels do not consider these

children in their programming strategy. Public television such as Doordarshan does not have dedicated channel for children's programs, leaving a large number of children un-catered.

The book presents an understanding to the reader about the necessity and pervasiveness of media in everyday life and also brings out the limited vision of various commercial content producers who only focus on a small population coming from middle to upper middle class which mostly puts boys in focus as key audience. It brings forth the perspectives of a relatively-understudied segment of working-class children who are a huge part of the population of India and helps the reader to understand the world from a child's perspective and sees them as individuals in their own right.

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