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HILL QUEST

(Multidisciplinary National Peer-Reviewed/Refereed Journal)

This special issue contains the research articles of



Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
Sponsored



Two Day National Conference
on
**Indian Knowledge Systems:
Multidisciplinary Perspective for
Sustainable Futures
(Hybrid)**

May 7th - 8th, 2026
Organised by
S.C.V.B. Govt. College, Palampur

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR

It gives me immense pleasure to present this Special Issue of Hill Quest: A Multidisciplinary National Peer-Reviewed Journal, comprising selected research papers presented during the Two-Day National Conference on "Indian Knowledge Systems: Multidisciplinary Perspective for Sustainable Futures," held on 7–8 May 2026 at Shaheed Captain Vikram Batra (SCVB) Government College, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh.

The conference was conceived with the objective of providing a vibrant academic platform for meaningful deliberations on the relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in addressing contemporary global challenges and contributing to sustainable development. By bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines, the conference fostered interdisciplinary dialogue on India's rich intellectual traditions and their enduring significance in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future.

The overwhelming response to the conference reflects the growing academic interest in Indian Knowledge Systems across the country. We were privileged to welcome around 375 participants representing 18 States and 2 Union Territories, including eminent academicians, researchers, teachers, policymakers, and students. Their enthusiastic participation, insightful deliberations, and valuable research contributions made the conference a truly enriching academic experience.

I place on record my sincere appreciation to the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, for generously sponsoring this conference. The financial support and academic encouragement extended by ICSSR made it possible to organize this national event successfully and to provide a common platform for scholars from different parts of the country to engage in meaningful academic discourse.

I express my profound gratitude to Prof. Harmohinder Singh Bedi (Padma Shri), Hon'ble Chancellor, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, whose constant encouragement, inspiring vision, and invaluable guidance served as a guiding force throughout the planning and successful organization of this National Conference. His unwavering support and commitment to the promotion of Indian Knowledge Systems have been a great source of inspiration.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Mritunjay Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Performing Arts, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, and Dr. Virender Kaushal, Coordinator (Online Courses), Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), IUAC Campus, New Delhi, for their constant encouragement, scholarly guidance, and unwavering support throughout the editorial and publication process. Their valuable suggestions, academic insights, and continuous cooperation greatly contributed to the smooth publication of this Special Issue while ensuring its academic quality and timely completion.

On this special occasion, I extend my sincere thanks to the Editorial Board of Hill Quest: A Multidisciplinary National Peer-Reviewed Journal for publishing this Special Issue and providing an esteemed academic platform for the dissemination of the selected research papers presented during the conference. I deeply appreciate the trust reposed in us and the dedicated efforts of the editorial team, reviewers, and publication staff in maintaining the highest standards of academic quality. This publication will undoubtedly enhance the visibility and impact of the valuable research undertaken by scholars across the country.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to all the authors for their scholarly contributions and to the reviewers for their meticulous evaluation and constructive suggestions, which have ensured the quality and credibility of this Special Issue. I am equally grateful to the Principal, Shri Pankaj Sood, members of the Organizing Committee, faculty members, volunteers, and administrative staff of Shaheed Captain Vikram Batra Government College, Palampur, whose dedication, teamwork, and untiring efforts ensured the smooth conduct of the conference and the successful completion of this publication.

It is my sincere hope that this Special Issue will serve as a valuable reference for researchers, academicians, students, and policymakers while inspiring further multidisciplinary research on Indian Knowledge Systems. The ideas and perspectives presented in this volume reaffirm that India's rich knowledge traditions continue to offer meaningful insights for addressing contemporary challenges and building sustainable futures.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the success of the conference and this publication. I wish all readers an intellectually stimulating and rewarding experience.

With warm regards,

Dr. Mayank Rana
Chief Editor and Convener



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INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Dr. Ajay Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Government Degree College Dhaneta, Distt. Hamirpur (H.P.) India

Abstract

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent a vast and dynamic body of knowledge encompassing India's intellectual, cultural, scientific, and philosophical traditions. This study examines the concept, historical evolution, and major contributions of IKS in fields such as mathematics, medicine, arts, and indigenous practices. It highlights the holistic and interdisciplinary nature of IKS and its continuous development over time. The study further explores the relevance of IKS in the contemporary context, particularly in addressing global challenges related to sustainability, healthcare, and education. Special emphasis is placed on the role of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023 in integrating IKS into the modern education system. Based on secondary data and qualitative analysis, the study concludes that IKS offers valuable insights for creating a balanced, culturally rooted, and sustainable knowledge framework for the future.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems, Indigenous Knowledge, NEP 2020, Traditional Knowledge, Sustainability

Introduction

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) is a broad term used to describe India's rich knowledge, culture, traditions, and ways of life that have developed over thousands of years. It includes ancient books, oral stories, customs, scientific ideas, arts, and social practices followed in different parts of India. This knowledge has been passed from one generation to another through experience, observation, teaching, and daily life. Unlike fixed or unchanging systems, IKS has continued to grow and adapt with time.

Conceptual Framework of IKS

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent the wide range of knowledge developed in India over many centuries. India is one of the world's oldest civilizations, and its knowledge traditions cover many fields such as philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine, art, language, agriculture, and social life. This knowledge is found in ancient texts, folk traditions, cultural practices, and community experiences.

The term "Indian Knowledge Systems" can be understood through three simple words: Indian, Knowledge, and System. "Indian" refers to the traditions and ideas that developed in the Indian subcontinent. "Knowledge" means understanding gained through learning, observation, experience, and practice. This knowledge may be written in books or passed orally through stories, customs, and traditions. "System" means that this knowledge is organized in a proper and meaningful way so that it can be understood, preserved, and used by people.

One important feature of IKS is that it is flexible and continuously developing. It has accepted new ideas and changes over time while keeping its basic values and principles. In ancient India, knowledge was mostly shared orally from teachers to students through the guru-shishya tradition. Even before written books became common, people preserved knowledge through memory, discussions, songs, and storytelling.

Indian Knowledge Systems include many different subjects such as philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, music, dance, architecture, and environmental practices. Because of this, IKS is considered interdisciplinary in nature, where different areas of knowledge are connected with one another.

Today, IKS has become important again because people are looking for sustainable and balanced ways of living. Traditional Indian ideas related to health, nature, education, and well-being are being studied and appreciated across the world. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also encourages the inclusion of Indian knowledge and traditions in education so that students can connect with their cultural roots while learning modern subjects.

Historical Evolution of Indian Knowledge Systems

The history of Indian Knowledge Systems shows how knowledge in India developed and changed over thousands of years. It is one of the oldest continuous knowledge traditions in the world. In the beginning, knowledge was mainly passed orally from teachers to students. This method was known as the guru-shishya tradition.



The earliest stage of IKS is connected with the Vedic period. The four Vedas—Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda—formed the foundation of Indian knowledge. These texts included ideas related to religion, philosophy, nature, society, and early scientific thinking. Along with the Vedas, the Upavedas focused on practical subjects such as medicine (Ayurveda), warfare, music, and architecture. This shows that ancient Indian knowledge combined both spiritual and practical aspects of life.

Later, texts such as the Upanishads, Brahmanas, and Puranas further expanded Indian thought and philosophy. The Ramayana and Mahabharata also played an important role in teaching moral values, duties, and social ideals through stories and characters familiar to common people.

At the same time, religions like Buddhism and Jainism introduced new ideas related to ethics, non-violence, and human life. These traditions added diversity to Indian intellectual thought and encouraged debate and discussion.

During the classical period, India made important progress in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and language studies. Scholars such as Aryabhata and Brahmagupta contributed to mathematical concepts like zero and algebra. Ancient Indian doctors developed advanced knowledge of surgery, medicines, and healthcare systems such as Ayurveda. Indian astronomers studied planets, eclipses, and time calculation with great accuracy.

Apart from famous scholars and texts, local communities and tribal groups also contributed to Indian knowledge. Traditional farming methods, weaving, metalwork, water conservation, and handicrafts were developed through practical experience and passed from one generation to another. These local knowledge systems were closely connected with nature and daily life.

Although traditional Indian knowledge lost importance during colonial rule, many practices survived through communities and cultural traditions. Today, there is renewed interest in rediscovering and preserving Indian Knowledge Systems. Educational institutions and researchers are now trying to include this knowledge in modern education and research so that it can help solve present and future challenges.

Review of Literature

The concept of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) has attracted increasing academic attention in recent years due to its relevance in education, culture, sustainability, and interdisciplinary studies. Scholars have examined various dimensions of IKS, including its philosophical foundations, scientific achievements, educational traditions, and contemporary applications. The existing literature highlights both the richness of Indian intellectual traditions and the need to integrate them into modern academic discourse. Subbarayappa (1989) focuses on the scientific traditions of India and discusses contributions made by Indian scholars in astronomy, chemistry, and medicine. His work emphasizes the importance of observation, experimentation, and systematic analysis within traditional Indian sciences.

Similarly, Filliozat (1964) discusses the theoretical foundations of Indian medicine and its relationship with philosophy and spirituality. Wujastyk (2003), in *The Roots of Ayurveda*, explores the historical development of Ayurvedic medicine. The study examines classical medical texts and explains how Ayurveda evolved as a comprehensive healthcare system based on preventive and holistic principles. Basham (2004), in *The Wonder That Was India*, discusses the cultural and intellectual achievements of ancient Indian civilization. The author highlights contributions in philosophy, mathematics, medicine, literature, and social organization. Basham argues that Indian civilization developed a highly sophisticated knowledge tradition that influenced several parts of the world. Sharma (2005), through his historical analysis in *India's Ancient Past*, examines the evolution of Indian society and intellectual traditions. His work provides insights into the social and historical contexts within which knowledge systems developed. The study also discusses the scientific and technological advancements achieved during different historical periods. UNESCO (2010), in its publication on traditional knowledge systems in India, recognizes the importance of indigenous knowledge in environmental conservation, sustainable practices, and cultural preservation. The report highlights the role of local communities in maintaining traditional ecological knowledge and emphasizes the need for its documentation and protection. Dwivedi (2017), in *Ancient Indian Science and Technology*, analyses the scientific achievements of ancient India in areas such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, and medicine. The study highlights the empirical and analytical orientation of Indian scientific traditions and challenges the misconception that ancient knowledge systems lacked scientific reasoning. Kapoor (2019), in *Indian Knowledge Systems: Concepts and Applications*, explains the conceptual foundations and interdisciplinary nature of IKS. The author emphasizes that Indian knowledge traditions integrate science, philosophy, ethics, and practical life. Kapoor further argues that IKS can contribute significantly to sustainable development and value-based education in contemporary society. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National



Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023 also contribute significantly to contemporary literature on IKS. These policy documents stress the integration of Indian knowledge traditions into education to promote culturally rooted, inclusive, and holistic learning. They advocate multidisciplinary approaches and encourage the inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge in curricula. A review of the existing literature indicates that Indian Knowledge Systems encompass diverse fields such as philosophy, science, medicine, arts, and indigenous practices. Most scholars agree that IKS represents a holistic and interdisciplinary tradition with continuing relevance in the modern world. However, there remains a need for more empirical research, critical analysis, and systematic documentation to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and contemporary academic frameworks.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design to examine the concept, historical evolution, and contributions of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). The study is exploratory in nature, aiming to analyse existing knowledge and interpret its relevance in contemporary contexts, particularly in relation to education and policy frameworks.

Findings

The present study on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) reveals several important findings regarding their conceptual foundation, historical development, disciplinary contributions, and contemporary relevance. The analysis of secondary sources indicates that IKS represents a comprehensive and evolving body of knowledge that integrates intellectual, cultural, scientific, and practical traditions developed in India over centuries.

Indian Knowledge Systems are Holistic and Interdisciplinary

One of the major findings of the study is that Indian Knowledge Systems are inherently holistic in nature. Unlike modern systems that often separate disciplines into distinct categories, IKS connects philosophy, science, ethics, spirituality, health, environment, and social life within an integrated framework. Knowledge in the Indian tradition was viewed as a means for individual and societal well-being rather than merely as academic information.

Strong Historical Continuity and Adaptability

The study finds that IKS has evolved continuously from the Vedic period to the present day. Although rooted in ancient traditions, these systems demonstrated flexibility and adaptability by incorporating new ideas and practices over time. Oral traditions, textual literature, and regional knowledge practices collectively contributed to the preservation and transmission of knowledge across generations.

Significant Contributions to Science and Technology

The analysis highlights the major scientific and technological contributions made through Indian knowledge traditions. Important developments such as the concept of zero, the decimal system, advances in algebra and astronomy, and achievements in medicine and surgery demonstrate the scientific orientation of IKS. Ancient Indian scholars applied observation, experimentation, and logical reasoning in various fields of study.

Importance of Traditional Healthcare Systems

The study finds that traditional systems such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and Siddha continue to hold relevance in contemporary healthcare. These systems emphasize preventive care, balanced lifestyle, and holistic well-being. Growing global interest in natural and alternative healthcare approaches has increased the recognition of these traditional practices.

Preservation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge

Another important finding is that regional and indigenous communities possess valuable knowledge related to agriculture, environmental conservation, handicrafts, metallurgy, and resource management. These practices are deeply connected to local ecosystems and sustainable living. The study indicates that such knowledge systems can contribute meaningfully to addressing environmental and sustainability challenges.

Growing Relevance in Modern Education

The study finds that educational reforms such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023 have created opportunities for integrating IKS into formal education. These policies recognize the importance of culturally rooted learning, multilingual education, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary approaches. The inclusion of IKS in education can strengthen cultural awareness, ethical values, and critical thinking among students.



Need for Research, Documentation, and Critical Analysis

The study also identifies several challenges related to the preservation and integration of IKS. Many traditional practices remain undocumented or insufficiently researched. There is a need for systematic academic investigation, scientific validation, digitization of traditional knowledge, and collaboration between scholars, institutions, and local communities.

Global Relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems

The findings suggest that Indian Knowledge Systems possess global significance in areas such as sustainable development, mental health, ecological balance, and holistic education. The principles embedded in IKS can contribute to developing alternative approaches for addressing contemporary global issues.

Overall Finding

Overall, the study concludes that Indian Knowledge Systems are not merely historical or cultural artifacts but living knowledge traditions with continuing relevance in modern society. Their integration into education, research, and policy frameworks can contribute to sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the creation of a more inclusive and balanced knowledge system.

Discussion

The study shows that Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) are a broad and continuously developing body of knowledge that has played an important role in shaping India's culture, learning, and way of life. IKS is not limited only to ancient religious texts or philosophical ideas. It also includes scientific discoveries, traditional practices, local knowledge, education systems, healthcare methods, arts, and community experiences that are still useful today.

One important finding of the study is that Indian Knowledge Systems follow a holistic approach. In simple words, different areas of knowledge are connected with each other instead of being treated separately. For example, systems like Ayurveda and Yoga focus not only on physical health but also on mental and emotional well-being. Similarly, traditional Indian architecture and environmental practices show the importance of living in harmony with nature. This connected way of thinking is useful today because many modern problems, such as climate change and stress-related health issues, cannot be solved through a single subject or approach alone.

The study also shows that ancient Indian knowledge was based on observation, experience, and logical thinking. Indian scholars made important contributions in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and metalwork. Discoveries such as zero, the decimal system, and early surgical methods prove that ancient Indian thinkers used scientific methods and careful study. This challenges the belief that all traditional knowledge is only based on myths or religious ideas. At the same time, the study points out that traditional knowledge should also be examined carefully through modern research and scientific testing.

Another important aspect discussed in the study is the value of local and indigenous knowledge. Many tribal and rural communities developed practical ways of farming, water conservation, weaving, and protecting nature based on their close relationship with the environment. Today, when the world is facing environmental problems and climate change, these traditional methods can offer useful lessons for sustainable living. However, modernization and changing lifestyles are causing many of these traditions to disappear. Therefore, there is a need to preserve, document, and study such knowledge before it is lost.

The study further explains that Indian Knowledge Systems are becoming important in modern education. Policies such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023 support the inclusion of Indian traditions, local knowledge, languages, arts, and culture in the education system. This can help students understand their cultural roots, develop moral values, and think in a more creative and balanced way. It can also make education more connected with local communities and real-life experiences.

However, the study also identifies some challenges. Many traditional practices are still passed on orally and are not properly recorded. There is also a lack of enough research and institutional support for studying IKS. Some people accept traditional knowledge blindly, while others reject it completely as outdated. The study suggests that a balanced approach is needed—one that respects traditional wisdom but also examines it through scientific and academic methods.

For IKS to become a meaningful part of modern education, trained teachers, proper study materials, research centres, and cooperation between educational institutions and local communities are necessary. The focus should not only be on learning about history but also on understanding how traditional knowledge can be applied in present-day life.



Overall, the study concludes that Indian Knowledge Systems provide valuable ideas and practical solutions related to health, sustainability, ethics, and education. Their importance lies not only in preserving India's cultural heritage but also in helping create a more balanced and inclusive approach to knowledge in the modern world.

Conclusion

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent India's rich cultural, scientific, and intellectual heritage developed over thousands of years. The study shows that IKS includes knowledge related to health, science, mathematics, arts, environment, and daily life. These systems are holistic, practical, and still relevant in the modern world.

The study also highlights that traditional knowledge and indigenous practices can help address present-day challenges related to sustainability, education, and well-being. Policies such as NEP 2020 and NCF 2023 have increased the importance of integrating IKS into education. Therefore, there is a need to preserve, research, and promote Indian Knowledge Systems for future generations.

Overall, Indian Knowledge Systems offer valuable ideas for creating a more balanced, sustainable, and inclusive society. Their importance lies not only in protecting India's cultural heritage but also in providing practical solutions for modern challenges related to health, education, environment, and human well-being.

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TOWARD A PREDICTIVE PROCESSING FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-TRANSCENDENCE THROUGH NADA YOGA

Dr. Ravinder Thakur

Assistant Professor, Department of Music (Vocal), Shaheed Captain Vikram Batra Government College, Palampur, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Nada Yoga, the contemplative practice of sound-directed awareness rooted in classical Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), offers a uniquely tractable model for studying how sensory modality shapes the neural architecture of self-transcendence. This paper advances the Modality-Dependent Self-Organisation (MDSO) framework and the Auditory Attentional Stabilisation (AAS) model, proposing that sustained engagement with external acoustic stimuli and the deliberate inward redirection toward spontaneously arising inner sound (Anahata Nada) recruits a cascading sequence of auditory-prefrontal interactions that progressively decouples the narrative self-subsystem of the Default Mode Network (DMN). Drawing on active inference, predictive processing theory, and emerging neuroimaging evidence, we propose a three-stage neural model linking corticothalamic auditory imagery, Heschl's Gyrus (HG)-to-medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) coupling gradients, and DMN subsystem decoupling to graduated shifts in self-referential processing. The framework positions Nada Yoga as both a culturally grounded contemplative technology and a scientifically tractable paradigm for probing the neuroscience of minimal selfhood.

Keywords: Nada Yoga; predictive processing; active inference; Default Mode Network; self-transcendence; auditory imagery; Indian Knowledge Systems; contemplative neuroscience; Anahata Nada; minimal self

INTRODUCTION

Contemplative Neuroscience and the Problem of Modality Bias

The neuroscience of contemplative practice has undergone a rapid expansion over the past two decades, yet it remains disproportionately anchored to visual and breath-based meditation paradigms. This bias risks obscuring the modality-specific neural mechanisms through which different contemplative traditions may achieve analogous states of reduced self-referential processing (Lutz et al., 2015; Dahl et al., 2015). Nada Yoga, the Indian philosophical and practical tradition in which sound itself is the primary vehicle of inquiry, presents an underexplored but potentially decisive test case for understanding how sensory channel selection shapes the scaffolding of self-transcendence.

Nada Yoga and the IKS Phenomenological Framework

Classical Indian texts, most notably the Hatha Yoga Pradipika (HYP, c. 15th century CE), describe a systematic phenomenological progression from externally anchored acoustic attention (Ahata Nada) through pratyahara, the deliberate withdrawal of the senses, toward the spontaneous arising of Anahata Nada, an unstruck or uncaused inner sound that the practitioner neither produces nor wills. This progression is not metaphorical. It describes a sequence of attentional operations that can be mapped onto a cascade of auditory-prefrontal neural interactions whose functional signature is measurable with contemporary neuroimaging and electrophysiology.

The MDSO/AAS Model: Overview and Scope

We propose that this cascade is captured by the MDSO framework and its auditory specification, the AAS model. The progression from externally anchored attention through transitional withdrawal to spontaneously arising inner experience parallels taxonomies that distinguish focused attention, open monitoring, and automatic self-transcending styles of practice (Travis & Shear, 2010). The central claim is that sustained auditory attention functions as a precision-weighting mechanism within an active inference architecture (Friston, 2010; Clark, 2019), progressively reducing the weight assigned to self-referential prediction errors generated by the narrative self-subsystem of the DMN. By modelling this reduction as a function of the transition from stimulus-driven to internally generated auditory prediction, we derive testable hypotheses about DMN subsystem connectivity, mPFC-HG coupling direction, and the phenomenological correlates of graduated stages of auditory contemplative practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contemplative Neuroscience and Meditation Research

The past two decades have witnessed a rapid expansion in neuroimaging studies of meditation and contemplative practice. The majority of this literature focuses on visual fixation, breath-based mindfulness, and loving-kindness meditation, generating a



substantial body of evidence linking these practices to alterations in Default Mode Network activity and connectivity (Brewer et al., 2011; Garrison et al., 2015). However, the field has been criticised for methodological heterogeneity, small samples, and insufficient attention to modality-specific mechanisms (Van Dam et al., 2018).

Within DMN research, Andrews-Hanna et al. (2010) identified functionally distinct subsystems: a dorsal mPFC subsystem supporting self-referential processing and imagined futures, and a medial temporal lobe (MTL) subsystem supporting memory-based and vicarious self-construal. Subsequent work by Berkovich-Ohana et al. (2016) and Josipovic (2014) demonstrated that different meditation styles differentially modulate these subsystems, with mPFC-PCC connectivity showing particular sensitivity to meditation-induced changes in self-referential processing. Berkovich-Ohana et al. (2016) further reported a significant negative correlation between DMN functional connectivity and meditation expertise, consistent with progressive decoupling of self-referential network nodes with advancing practice.

Predictive Processing and Active Inference

The predictive processing framework (Friston, 2010; Clark, 2019) offers a unifying computational account of perception, action, and cognition in terms of hierarchical generative models that minimise prediction error. Within this framework, attention is conceptualised as a precision-weighting mechanism that modulates the relative influence of bottom-up sensory signals versus top-down predictions. Active inference extends this account to include action, treating voluntary movement and attentional redirection as forms of active sampling designed to confirm prior predictions.

The relevance of predictive processing to contemplative practice has been explored by several theorists (Laukkonen & Slagter, 2021; Sandved-Smith et al., 2019), who propose that meditation techniques systematically alter precision weighting across hierarchical levels of the generative model, producing characteristic changes in self-related processing. The free energy principle underlying active inference provides a formal basis for modelling these alterations in quantitative terms (Mathys et al., 2014).

Auditory Neuroscience and Auditory Imagery

The auditory system is uniquely specialised for processing temporally structured, continuous information streams across multiple timescales simultaneously, from milliseconds at the phonemic level through seconds at the prosodic level to tens of seconds at the level of musical phrase (Hasson et al., 2008; Zatorre and Salimpoor, 2013). This multi-timescale temporal hierarchy positions the auditory cortex as an exceptionally well-suited scaffold for sustained, non-effortful attentional anchoring.

Critically, the auditory system can sustain internally generated representations in the complete absence of peripheral input, a capacity demonstrated by auditory imagery research (Zatorre and Halpern, 2005) and by musical hallucinations in normal volunteers following prolonged auditory deprivation. The anatomical connectivity between auditory cortex, Heschl's Gyrus (HG) in particular, and the mPFC via the uncinate fasciculus and thalamocortical projections through the mediodorsal thalamus (Romanski et al., 1999; Hackett, 2011) provides a direct substrate for the precision-weighting of auditory predictions by prefrontal circuits.

Indian Knowledge Systems and Nada Yoga

Nada Yoga is among the most systematically described of the Indian contemplative technologies, with classical texts including the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and the Nada-Bindu Upanishad providing detailed accounts of the phenomenological stages, attentional operations, and experiential outcomes associated with sound-directed practice. The tradition distinguishes between Ahata Nada (struck or externally produced sound) and Anahata Nada (unstruck or internally arising sound), and describes a graded series of attentional transitions that progressively internalise the object of contemplative attention. Gallagher (2000) and Zahavi (2014) have identified analogous distinctions between narrative and minimal selfhood in Western phenomenological philosophy, providing a conceptual bridge between the IKS framework and contemporary cognitive science.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Significance of the Study

This study addresses a significant gap in the contemplative neuroscience literature by proposing and operationalising the first theoretically grounded neural model of Nada Yoga, a practice that has received negligible empirical attention despite its systematic and reproducible phenomenological description in classical IKS texts. The MDSO/AAS framework offers three distinct contributions to the field.



First, it provides a modality-specific account of self-transcendence that challenges the implicit assumption that all meditation techniques converge on equivalent neural mechanisms. If auditory-based practice engages distinctive corticothalamic and auditory-prefrontal pathways not recruited by visual or interoceptive paradigms, this has direct implications for the theoretical interpretation of the broader contemplative neuroscience literature and for the selection and matching of contemplative interventions to clinical applications.

Second, the framework operationalises the central IKS construct of Anahata Nada in a multi-method, empirically tractable manner, providing a template for the principled integration of emic contemplative categories with neuroscientific measurement. This methodological contribution has generalisability beyond Nada Yoga to other IKS-derived practices whose central constructs have resisted operationalisation.

Third, the formal hypotheses derived from the AAS model, particularly those regarding HG-to-mPFC effective connectivity direction and mPFC-PCC functional connectivity during advanced practice, provide falsifiable predictions that allow the model to be definitively confirmed, revised, or rejected. This level of theoretical specificity is unusual in the contemplative neuroscience literature and positions the MDSO/AAS framework as a model for theory-driven research in this domain.

Objectives

The present paper has the following specific objectives:

1. To advance the MDSO framework and AAS model as a theoretically grounded account of the neural mechanisms through which Nada Yoga practice may produce graduated reductions in narrative self-processing.
2. To propose a three-stage neural model of Nada Yoga practice, from Ahata Nada through transitional pratyahara to Anahata Nada, with specific neural mechanism proposals at each stage.
3. To operationalise the construct of Anahata Nada along four independently assessable dimensions, distinguishing it from superficially similar phenomena including tinnitus and auditory hallucination.
4. To provide expanded justification for the privileged role of the auditory modality in self-transcendence based on converging anatomical, computational, and cross-cultural evidence.
5. To derive a set of five formal, falsifiable hypotheses from the AAS model regarding auditory-prefrontal coupling gradients, DMN subsystem decoupling, theta-gamma phase-amplitude coupling, self-orthogonality as representational independence, and modality specificity.
6. To outline a four-phase empirical research programme with sufficient methodological detail to guide study design and resource allocation.

Procedure

The present paper adopts a theoretical and programmatic methodology rather than reporting primary empirical data. The procedural approach consists of the following elements.

First, the MDSO/AAS conceptual framework is constructed by integrating three bodies of literature: the phenomenological accounts of Nada Yoga practice contained in classical IKS texts (primarily the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Nada-Bindu Upanishad); the auditory neuroscience literature on corticothalamic processing, auditory imagery, and auditory-prefrontal connectivity; and the contemplative neuroscience literature on DMN modulation during meditation. This integration is structured by the predictive processing and active inference framework, which provides a common computational vocabulary for translating between phenomenological descriptions and neural mechanism proposals.

Second, the AAS model is specified at the level of individual stages, with neural mechanism proposals derived from existing empirical literature where available and marked as theoretical extrapolations where direct evidence is absent. The model is tabulated in Table 1, enabling the stage-by-stage correspondence between phenomenological descriptions, proposed neural mechanisms, and predicted experimental outcomes to be evaluated systematically.

Third, formal hypotheses (H1 through H5) are derived from the model with appropriate epistemic modesty, distinguishing clearly between predictions derived from existing evidence and predictions that require novel empirical investigation. Each hypothesis is stated with sufficient specificity to be operationalised in a concrete experimental design, including the specific neuroimaging methods (DCM, PAC analysis, RSA), contrast conditions, and outcome measures that would be required to test it.



Fourth, the alternative explanations most relevant to the AAS model, including the general relaxation hypothesis, the attentional demand hypothesis, the dopaminergic reward hypothesis, the cultural expectancy hypothesis, and the reductionism concern from IKS perspectives, are engaged explicitly and the conditions under which each can be empirically distinguished from the AAS model are specified.

Fifth, the future empirical programme is outlined across four sequential phases, with sample size targets, counterbalancing schemes, primary outcome measures, analysis approaches, and cross-cutting methodological commitments specified at a level of detail sufficient to serve as a template for grant application and protocol development.

Formal Hypotheses

Based on the MDSO/AAS framework, five formal hypotheses are advanced:

H1 (Auditory-Prefrontal Coupling Gradient): Sustained Nada Yoga practice may be associated with a measurable shift in the direction of effective connectivity between HG and mPFC, from feedforward-dominant (Stage 1) to feedback-dominant (Stage 3), as assessed using spectral DCM applied to concurrent EEG-fMRI data.

H2 (DMN Subsystem Decoupling): Stage 3 Nada Yoga practice may produce selective decoupling of the mPFC from the PCC/AG nodes of the DMN narrative-self subsystem, operationalised as a significant reduction in mPFC-PCC functional connectivity during practitioner reports of Anahata Nada compared to eyes-closed rest.

H3 (Theta-Gamma Nesting): Advanced Anahata Nada states may be associated with increased theta-gamma phase-amplitude coupling in mPFC, correlated with practitioner-rated depth of inner sound absorption.

H4 (Self-Orthogonality as RSA Independence): mPFC activity patterns during Stage 3 practice will show significantly lower representational similarity to mPFC patterns during autobiographical memory retrieval than patterns during Stage 1 or eyes-closed rest.

H5 (Modality Specificity): The neural signatures described in H1 to H4 should be systematically stronger following auditory Nada Yoga practice than following matched visual or interoceptive meditation practices of equivalent duration and experiential depth ratings.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The MDSO/AAS Conceptual Framework

The MDSO framework holds that the self-organising properties of neural systems are not modality-neutral: the sensory channel through which attentional resources are deployed shapes the specific hierarchical prediction architecture that is engaged, and therefore the specific self-referential subsystems that are modulated. The AAS model is the auditory instantiation of MDSO, specifying the corticothalamic and prefrontal mechanisms through which sustained acoustic attention produces graduated reductions in narrative self-processing.

The three-column structure of the AAS model links the phenomenological stages of Nada Yoga practice (left column) to the proposed neural substrates (centre column) and the predicted phenomenological outcomes (right column). Across stages, the model describes a progressive decoupling of the mPFC from the posterior cingulate cortex (PCC) and angular gyrus (AG) components of the DMN narrative self-subsystem, as mPFC becomes increasingly coupled to the auditory prediction hierarchy anchored in HG.

The Three-Stage Neural Model

The AAS model proposes three distinct stages of neural reorganisation corresponding to the classical Nada Yoga phenomenological sequence.

Stage 1, Ahata Nada, involves sustained voluntary attention to an external acoustic stimulus, characteristically a resonant drone or chanted syllable. Within a predictive processing framework, this practice progressively sharpens auditory predictions at multiple levels of the cortical hierarchy. Sustained, repetitive acoustic input reduces the novelty-driven precision assigned to bottom-up prediction errors, facilitating a transition from bottom-up error propagation toward top-down generative model dominance. This shift is associated with stabilisation of HG responses and increased feedforward signalling toward mPFC, consistent with the role of the auditory-prefrontal axis in sustained attentional states (Zatorre and Salimpoor, 2013).

Stage 2, the pratyahara transition, corresponds neurally to a gradual decoupling of auditory cortex from peripheral afferent input, while corticothalamic loops sustain an internally generated auditory representation. The direction of HG-mPFC



information flow is proposed to reverse at this stage, from predominantly feedforward (Stage 1) to predominantly feedback (Stage 2), as mPFC begins to generate top-down auditory predictions in the absence of supporting sensory input. This hypothesised coupling gradient is directly testable using dynamic causal modelling (DCM; Friston et al., 2003).

Stage 3, Anahata Nada, is characterised by internally generated auditory imagery sustained through corticothalamic loop activity, with mPFC functioning as the dominant source of top-down precision weighting for auditory predictions. The simultaneous removal of mPFC from PCC-anchored self-referential processing, operationally indexed by reduced mPFC-PCC functional connectivity, is predicted to produce a functional dissociation between the auditory generative model and the narrative self-model, giving rise to the phenomenological quality of witnessing without witness described in classical IKS texts.

Table 1. Stage-by-stage correspondence between phenomenological description, proposed neural mechanism, and predicted experimental signature in the AAS model.

Stage	Phenomenological description	Proposed neural mechanism	Predicted experimental signature
1. Ahata Nada	Sustained voluntary attention to an external acoustic stimulus (drone or chanted syllable)	Sharpening of bottom-up auditory predictions; feedforward-dominant HG→mPFC signalling; reduced novelty-driven prediction error	Stabilised HG evoked response; feedforward-dominant effective connectivity on DCM (H1, baseline)
2. Pratyahara transition	Deliberate withdrawal of the senses; gradual disengagement from external acoustic input	Auditory cortex decoupling from peripheral afferents; corticothalamic loop sustains internal representation; coupling reverses toward feedback-dominant	Reversal of HG–mPFC effective connectivity direction on spectral DCM (H1, transition)
3. Anahata Nada	Spontaneous arising of unstruck inner sound; “witnessing without witness”	mPFC as dominant source of top-down precision weighting; mPFC–PCC decoupling dissociates auditory model from narrative self-model	Reduced mPFC–PCC connectivity (H2); theta–gamma PAC in mPFC (H3); reduced RSA similarity to autobiographical memory (H4)

The Self-Concept in Nada Yoga

A critical distinction for the MDSO/AAS framework is that between the narrative self and the minimal self (Gallagher, 2000; Zahavi, 2014). The narrative self is a temporally extended, autobiographically organised self-model supported by the posterior DMN nodes, particularly the PCC, retrosplenial cortex, and AG, which integrate episodic memory, prospective cognition, and social identity information. The minimal or pre-reflective self is the immediate, non-conceptual sense of experiencing that phenomenologists associate with the present-moment quality of consciousness.

Nada Yoga practice, as described in the HYP and the Nada-Bindu Upanishad, explicitly targets the dissolution of the narrative self while preserving and sharpening the minimal self. This phenomenological architecture maps precisely onto the DMN subsystem organisation proposed by Andrews-Hanna et al. (2010). The AAS model predicts that Nada Yoga practice preferentially decouples the mPFC from PCC/AG, reducing narrative self-elaboration, while the MTL subsystem and pre-reflective self-related processing are less affected.

Self-orthogonality, as used in the MDSO framework to describe states in which self-related and task-related neural representations become orthogonal, is defined empirically as the degree to which multivariate activity patterns in mPFC during auditory absorption are statistically independent of patterns associated with autobiographical memory retrieval, assessed by cross-task representational similarity analysis (RSA; Kriegeskorte et al., 2008).

Operationalising Anahata Nada

Anahata Nada is operationalised along four independently assessable dimensions. First, the intentional stance: Anahata Nada arises within a context of deliberate, trained attentional redirection, distinguishing it from hallucinatory experiences and from tinnitus. Second, the phenomenological quality: classical texts describe Anahata Nada as cycling through ten characteristic sounds including bells, flutes, and thunder, assessable via structured micro-phenomenological elicitation. Third, the neural signature: Anahata Nada as internally generated auditory imagery should be associated with elevated activity in



corticothalamic auditory circuits, increased top-down HG modulation from mPFC, theta-gamma phase-amplitude coupling in mPFC, and absence of cochlear-driven auditory evoked potentials. Fourth, volitional controllability: unlike tinnitus or hallucinations, practitioners report that Anahata Nada is phenomenologically responsive to attentional direction.

DMN Evidence Appraisal

Multiple studies report reduced overall DMN activity and connectivity during mindfulness-based meditation compared to rest (Brewer et al., 2011; Garrison et al., 2015). Studies using functional connectivity parcellation have identified the mPFC-PCC axis as particularly susceptible to meditation-induced decoupling (Berkovich-Ohana et al., 2016; Josipovic, 2014). These findings are consistent with, though not specific to, the AAS model's predictions.

Important caveats apply. At least one study reports increased rather than decreased posterior DMN connectivity during non-dual awareness or open monitoring meditative states (Josipovic, 2014; Berkovich-Ohana et al., 2013), suggesting that DMN suppression is not a universal signature of deep contemplative states. Several DMN studies in contemplative research suffer from small samples, cross-sectional designs, and self-selected meditator populations (Van Dam et al., 2018). Evidence specifically linking auditory contemplative practice to DMN modulation is sparse relative to visual and breath-based paradigms.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The AAS model makes a strong and specific set of predictions about the neural mechanisms of Nada Yoga practice that distinguish it from both alternative mechanistic accounts and from the general literature on meditation and DMN modulation. Several counterarguments require explicit engagement.

The general relaxation hypothesis holds that contemplative-practice-induced changes in DMN connectivity are entirely attributable to general physiological relaxation rather than any auditory-specific mechanism. The AAS model predicts effects dissociable from relaxation alone: specifically, auditory cortex-to-mPFC effective connectivity changes in the direction of increased top-down drive during Stage 3 practice, which would not be expected under a relaxation account. Contrasting Nada Yoga practice with matched relaxation conditions using DCM will be necessary to rule out this alternative.

The attentional demand hypothesis holds that any demanding attentional task will produce DMN suppression via task-positive network competition, regardless of modality. The AAS model responds by noting that Stage 3 Anahata Nada practice is characterised by effortless absorption rather than effortful attentional demand, and predicts a specific pattern of DMN subsystem decoupling that differs from global DMN suppression under effortful tasks.

The dopaminergic reward hypothesis notes that sustained musical and tonal experience activates mesolimbic dopaminergic reward circuitry (Salimpoor et al., 2011), suggesting that positive affect associated with advanced practice may reflect dopaminergic activation rather than auditory-prefrontal precision weighting. The AAS model does not exclude a role for dopaminergic signalling but predicts that auditory cortex-to-mPFC directional coupling should be observable independently of general valence or reward ratings.

The cultural expectancy hypothesis recognises that practitioners carry prior expectations shaped by training and cultural context that could generate top-down prediction signals mimicking the proposed auditory imagery mechanism. The AAS model can partially address this by including naïve participants trained under controlled conditions and by comparing electrophysiological signatures across practice stages.

Scholars within the IKS tradition may object that the reduction of Anahata Nada to a corticothalamic generative model eliminates the metaphysical and soteriological dimensions of the practice. The AAS model is clarified as an explanatory mapping rather than an eliminative reduction: identifying neural correlates of Anahata Nada is consistent with the possibility that those correlates are embedded in broader ontological frameworks that neuroscience does not and cannot address.

The future research programme consists of four sequential phases. Phase 1, a proof-of-concept neuroimaging study within 18 months, involves a within-subjects concurrent EEG-fMRI study with experienced practitioners and naïve trainees completing counterbalanced protocols across all three Nada Yoga stages plus matched control conditions. Phase 2, a micro-phenomenological characterisation running from months 6 to 24, systematically characterises the phenomenological stages of Anahata Nada through structured interviews with a minimum of 30 practitioners across experience levels. Phase 3, a longitudinal training study from months 12 to 48, assigns naïve participants to Nada Yoga, visual meditation, or waitlist



control groups across a 12-week programme to test trainability, dose-dependence, and modality specificity of the predicted neural signatures. Phase 4, from month 24 onward, develops a fully specified generative model of the AAS mechanism within active inference and investigates clinical translation to populations characterised by elevated self-referential rumination.

Conclusions

Nada Yoga offers the neuroscience of consciousness a systematically described, reproducible, three-stage sequence of attentional operations using the auditory modality as their scaffold, culminating in a phenomenological state whose functional architecture is tractable to the tools of contemporary cognitive neuroscience. The MDSO/AAS framework proposes that this sequence recruits a specific cascade of auditory-prefrontal interactions, from sensory prediction sharpening through transitional pratyahara to internally generated auditory imagery, that progressively dissociates the mPFC from its role in narrative self-construction while preserving the minimal self that constitutes the witnessing quality described in classical IKS texts.

The core mechanistic claims remain hypotheses pending empirical test. The DMN literature is presented with its limitations acknowledged, the strongest alternative explanations have been explicitly engaged, and the operationalisation of Anahata Nada has been specified with sufficient detail to be practically implementable. The empirical programme outlined provides a concrete roadmap from current theoretical proposal to evidence-based model.

More broadly, the MDSO/AAS framework is offered as a contribution to a growing synthesis between Indian Knowledge Systems and cognitive neuroscience, a synthesis that is most productive when conducted with equal fidelity to the sophistication of the IKS frameworks and to the evidentiary standards of contemporary science. Nada Yoga, as both a living practice and a theoretically rich contemplative technology, is an ideal site for that synthesis.

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BEYOND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: CULTIVATING CONSCIOUSNESS-BASED INTELLIGENCE THROUGH YOGIC PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr Pallavi Pattan

Assistant Professor, School of Commerce, DAVV, Indore, India

Abstract

This study explores the integration of yogic practices in higher education as a means of cultivating consciousness-based intelligence among students, in contrast to the growing reliance on AI. While AI enhances efficiency, data processing and learning accessibility, it does not adequately address the development of self-awareness, emotional regulation and ethical reasoning. Drawing upon the framework of the NEP 2020, which emphasizes holistic and multidisciplinary education, this paper examines how Yogic Practices contribute to student's cognitive clarity, emotional stability and overall well-being. Long before artificial intelligence, the idea of a universal or absolute intelligence has inspired human thought, innovation and discovery. Now we are beginning to understand that genuine human progress requires not just economic indicators, but metrics of inner wellbeing, mental health and peace. Using a comparative approach and perspective, the study examines and analyzes students engaged in regular yogic practices alongside those primarily dependent on AI-based learning tools, based on existing literature. The findings suggest that while AI supports external intelligence, yogic practices foster internal, consciousness-based intelligence essential for balanced decision-making and sustainable personal development. The paper proposes an integrative educational model combining technological advancement with inner development, aligning with the broader goals of Indian Knowledge Systems.

Keywords: Consciousness-based Intelligence, AI, Yogic Practices, Indian Knowledge System, NEP-2020.

Introduction

The increased use of artificial intelligence has transformed how knowledge is produced, accessed and applied in the field of the education. In the current era which is dominated by the excessive use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the educational environment is also simultaneously undergoing a shift in teaching methodologies, skill requirements and learning outcomes. While AI-driven systems excel at data processing, pattern recognition and predictive analytics they remain fundamentally limited to algorithmic intelligence operating without self-awareness, ethical intuition or experiential understanding. In this context, the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems becomes even more relevant. This limitation has prompted growing scholarly interest in exploring alternative and complementary forms of intelligence that extend beyond computational capacity. One such emerging paradigm is Consciousness-Based Intelligence (CBI), which emphasizes inner awareness, cognitive clarity, emotional regulation and holistic understanding as essential dimensions of human intelligence.

In the current educational environment students are often burdened with excessive information and they do not get support in meeting their true cognitive needs. This overload frequently leads to mental stress and reduced clarity. In contrast, traditional Indian educational approaches were not merely focused on the transmission of information, they were designed to nurture human values, enhance intuition, strengthen decision-making abilities and to improve the focus and peace of mind. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift in the Indian higher education landscape by emphasizing the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and yogic practices with contemporary education. This inclusion is intended not merely as an academic addition but as a transformative approach to nurture holistic development, enhancing cognitive abilities, emotional balance, intuitive ability, ethical grounding and overall well-being among students. By including the elements of India's rich wisdom, yogic practices and knowledge traditions, NEP 2020 aspires to cultivate consciousness-based intelligence and to cultivate human values such as empathy, responsibility, self-confidence, self-awareness, sustainable thinking alongside intellectual growth.

This research paper seeks to explore the conceptual foundations and practical implications of Consciousness-Based Intelligence within higher education, with a particular focus on yogic practices as tools for its development. It aims to critically examine how these practices can complement artificial intelligence by nurturing uniquely human capacities, thereby contributing to a more balanced, holistic, and future-ready educational paradigm.

Literature Review

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed higher education by enhancing data processing, automation and personalized learning environments (Kurzweil, 2005; Bostrom, 2014). Despite these



developments, AI remains limited in replicating human consciousness and subjective experience. Searle (1980), through the Chinese Room argument, asserts that machines may simulate understanding but lack true awareness and intentionality. This highlights a critical gap between artificial intelligence and human consciousness-based intelligence.

In contrast, Indian philosophical traditions have long emphasized consciousness as the foundation of true intelligence. Vivekananda (1896) conceptualized education as the manifestation of the perfection already within, while Aurobindo (1912) proposed the idea of integral education that harmonizes body, mind, and spirit. Similarly, Radhakrishnan (1953) emphasized that education should cultivate self-knowledge and spiritual insight rather than mere intellectual accumulation. In contemporary spiritual discourse, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (2017) highlights that a calm and centered mind, developed through breathing techniques and meditation, enhances clarity, awareness and intuitive intelligence.

Modern psychological and educational research further supports the integration of consciousness-based practices in learning environments. Goleman (1995) introduced emotional intelligence as a crucial dimension of human capability beyond cognitive intelligence, while Zohar (2022) expanded this perspective through the concept of spiritual intelligence. Empirical studies by Brown and Ryan (2003) and Kabat-Zinn (2003) demonstrate that mindfulness practices significantly improve self-awareness, emotional regulation and overall psychological well-being. Additionally, Travis and Shear (2010) identify different states of consciousness achieved through meditation, linking them to enhanced cognitive functioning.

Recent Indian research provides strong empirical support for the role of yogic practices in higher education. Verma, Mishra and Yadav (2025) found that yoga and meditation significantly improve student's attention, emotional stability and academic performance. Similarly, Borah, Mondal and Boral (2025) conclude that mindfulness and yoga positively influence cognitive, emotional and behavioral outcomes. Narayanan, Selvam, and Shanmugapriya (2025), in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasize that yoga-based educational models foster holistic development and consciousness enhancement among students.

Research Gap

Despite extensive literature on AI and yogic practices, several gaps remain:

- Lack of integrated frameworks combining AI with consciousness-based intelligence
- Limited studies in higher education settings
- Absence of standardized measures for measuring of consciousness-based intelligence
- Lack of comparative studies between AI-driven and yogic learning approaches

Therefore, there is a need for a balanced educational model that integrates technological advancements with yogic practices to cultivate holistic, consciousness-based intelligence in higher education.

Objectives

- To study and examine the role of yogic practices in developing consciousness-based intelligence among students
- To analyze the limitations of artificial intelligence in fostering holistic human intelligence.
- To propose an integrated framework combining AI and yogic practices in higher education
- To assess the relationship between yogic practices and students' emotional and cognitive development

Proposed Theoretical Propositions

Since the present study is conceptual in nature, it proposes the following theoretical propositions instead of empirically testable hypotheses:

- P1: Yogic practices contribute significantly to the development of consciousness-based intelligence.
- P2: Artificial Intelligence primarily enhances external and cognitive dimensions of learning.
- P3: Consciousness-based intelligence plays a crucial role in student's emotional balance and decision-making.
- P4: An integrative approach combining AI and yogic practices can foster holistic development in higher education.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and conceptual research design to examine the role of yogic practices in cultivating consciousness-based intelligence in higher education. The research is based on an extensive review of existing literature across interdisciplinary domains. The study relies on secondary data sources, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, policy documents (including NEP 2020) and relevant research reports.



A thematic analysis approach is employed to identify recurring patterns and key dimensions such as cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, self-awareness and consciousness-based intelligence from existing literature.

Furthermore, the study adopts a comparative analytical perspective to examine the distinction between AI-driven learning approaches and yogic practices, as discussed in the existing study.

Thematic Analysis

Based on thematic analysis of the reviewed literature, the study identifies four key themes:

Theme 1: Role of Yogic Practices in Developing Consciousness-Based Intelligence

The literature suggests that yogic practices such as meditation and pranayama significantly enhance self-awareness, mental clarity, and inner consciousness. Scholars like Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (2017) and Vivekananda (1896) emphasize that true intelligence emerges from a calm and aware mind.

Theme 2: Limitations of Artificial Intelligence in Holistic Development

Artificial Intelligence primarily supports cognitive and analytical functions but lacks emotional depth, ethical understanding, and subjective awareness (Searle, 1980). This limits its ability to foster holistic human intelligence.

Theme 3: Integration of AI and Yogic Practices in Higher Education

The analysis indicates the need for an integrative approach where AI-driven learning is complemented by yogic practices. Such integration can balance external efficiency with internal awareness, aligning with holistic education principles and NEP 2020.

Theme 4: Impact of Yogic Practices on Emotional and Cognitive Development

Empirical studies (Goleman, 1995; Brown & Ryan, 2003) highlight that yogic and mindfulness practices improve emotional regulation, concentration, and overall cognitive performance among students.

Discussion

The thematic analysis highlights a clear distinction between artificial intelligence and consciousness-based intelligence in higher education. While AI significantly enhances external cognitive abilities such as information processing and analytical thinking, it does not address inner awareness, emotional balance and ethical sensitivity. This supports the view that technological advancement alone is insufficient for holistic human development.

In contrast, yogic practices play a crucial role in cultivating consciousness-based intelligence by enhancing self-awareness, mental clarity and emotional regulation. Practices such as yoga, meditation, breathing practices, pranayama and wisdom-based knowledge help students become more disciplined, reduce stress and enhance cognitive skills. At the same time, they promote emotional balance, inner stability and clarity of thought. These findings align with Indian philosophical perspectives, which emphasize that true intelligence arises from inner consciousness rather than mere accumulation of information.

One such concept is Consciousness-Based Intelligence (CBI), which emphasizes awareness, clarity of thought, emotional balance and holistic understanding. This approach is deeply connected with ancient yogic traditions, where practices like meditation, pranayama, and mindfulness are used to develop inner stability and self-awareness. The discussion further indicates that emotional and cognitive development among students is significantly influenced by practices that promote mindfulness and awareness. This suggests that integrating yogic practices within higher education can improve not only academic performance but also overall well-being. In contrast to artificial intelligence, which depends on external tools and machines, CBI focuses on strengthening the internal capacities of the human mind.

In a future shaped by machines that think faster than we do, the most powerful intelligence may be the one that needs no programming at all and Meditation is the mean to that sharpness and intelligence. Meditation is humanity's oldest technology to tap the all dimensions of intelligence and intuition. It offers something far more powerful than a deep rest and it is an instrument to reach our higher consciousness and knowledge. The real man is behind the mind and the mind is the instrument in the hands of man. It is human being's intelligence that is moving through the mind. From this yogic point of view, intelligence arises not from the mind or its material extensions but from the self.

Moreover, the study underscores the need for an integrative educational approach that combines AI-driven learning with consciousness-based practices. Such a model can bridge the gap between external efficiency and inner development, aligning with the holistic vision of NEP 2020.



Overall, the findings emphasize that the future of higher education lies not in replacing human intelligence with artificial systems but in complementing technological tools with practices that nurture consciousness, thereby fostering balanced and sustainable development. When yogic practices are integrated into the higher education system, they offer a transformative framework that supports students not only at an intellectual level but also in their mental and emotional development. Practices such as yoga, meditation, and wisdom-based knowledge help students become more disciplined, reduce stress and enhance cognitive skills. At the same time, they promote emotional balance, inner stability and clarity of thought.

Conclusion and Future Scope

The present study highlights the limitations of Artificial Intelligence in addressing the holistic development of students in higher education. While AI significantly enhances cognitive abilities, efficiency and access to information, it does not adequately cultivate inner awareness, emotional balance and ethical sensitivity, which are essential components of consciousness-based intelligence.

In contrast, yogic practices provide a comprehensive pathway for developing self-awareness, mental clarity and emotional intelligence. A calm and centered mind, cultivated through practices such as meditation and controlled breathing, enhances clarity, intuition and overall well-being. This indicates that true intelligence extends beyond cognitive capabilities and requires the integration of both external and internal dimensions of learning. The study proposes an integrative educational approach that combines AI-driven tools with consciousness-based practices to promote balanced, value-oriented and sustainable development among students. Such an approach aligns with the broader vision of Indian Knowledge Systems and the holistic framework of NEP 2020.

However, the study is conceptual in nature and limited to secondary data. Future research can focus on empirical validation of this framework through quantitative and qualitative studies. The development of standardized tools to measure consciousness-based intelligence and interdisciplinary research integrating education, psychology and neuroscience can further strengthen this field. Overall, the study emphasizes that the future of higher education lies in harmonizing technological advancement with inner development, thereby nurturing individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also emotionally balanced and consciously aware.

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STATISTICAL ASSESSMENT OF RURAL DRINKING WATER QUALITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH: A CASE STUDY OF RAJPURA, MALWA, PUNJAB, INDIA

Pooja Kashyap¹, Jyotsna Kaushal², Gurjeet Kaur³

1 Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, Government College Nalagarh, District Solan, India

2 Professor, Chitkara University Institute of Engineering and Technology, Chitkara University, Rajpura, Punjab, India

3 Assistant Professor, Rayat Bahara University, Mohali, Punjab, India

Abstract

Groundwater and surface water constitute the main sources of water used for domestic, agricultural, and industrial purposes. Ensuring access to clean and potable water is essential for illness prevention and improving overall quality of life. Water contamination has emerged as a significant concern due to urbanization, deforestation, population growth, global warming, industrialization, excessive fertilizer application, and other anthropogenic activities. The principal objective of this study is to investigate the geogenic pollution of groundwater by fluoride through an analysis of drinking water quality in rural regions and the subterranean water supply in Rajpura, Punjab. Twenty-five samples of potable and subterranean water were collected from five villages in Rajpura, Punjab, as part of a water sampling, monitoring, and analysis initiative. The assessment of physicochemical characteristics, that include pH, total dissolved solids (TDS), electrical conductivity (EC), total hardness (TH), alkalinity, and fluoride, was employed to evaluate the quality of water samples. The research indicated that the groundwater exhibited moderate hardness and alkalinity. The fluoride concentration in Thuha village, ranging from 0.7 to 3.0 mg L⁻¹, exceeds the limit set by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), posing a significant health danger to the population. Fluoride in groundwater had a moderate positive connection with total dissolved solids (TDS). Interactions between water and rock, along with fertilizer application for crop yields, may contribute to the increased fluoride concentration in the studied area. The initiatives taken by the State Government have raised public awareness and sensitivity among the farmers.

Keywords: Drinking water quality, fluoride, contamination, Rajpura, Punjab

Introduction

Major water resources that are necessary for industrial processes, irrigation, and human use are groundwater and surface water (Li et al., 2013a), (Li et al., 2017). The availability of clean water is important for public health and to prevent diseases (Adimalla & Qian, 2019; *Document Display | NEPIS | US EPA*, n.d.; Li et al., 2013b). Main causes of water contamination include urbanization, deforestation, increased human population, global warming, industrialization, use of fertilizers, and man-made activities, due to which inhabitants suffer from several waterborne diseases (Kamali & Khodaparast, 2015; Wu et al., 2014). Toxic chemicals that are present in drinking water can have both short-term and long-term effects on health (Narsimha & Rajitha, 2018). Examples of immediate health consequences include nausea, lung discomfort, skin rashes, dizziness, etc. (Shelton, 2018). Contamination from fluoride due to its widespread occurrence in groundwater and surface water poses a danger to the safe drinking water supply (Jagtap et al., 2012). The accessibility of good-quality water, which is free from pollutants, is a requisite feature for improving our lifespan. It is, therefore, essential to have an insight into various physicochemical parameters such as pH, temperature, color, acidity, hardness, alkalinity, etc., so that the quality of drinking water can be tested as well as checked periodically.

Optimal fluoride levels in drinking water are important for dental health by helping to reduce tooth decay and enhancing tooth enamel. Chronic exposure to fluoride levels over 1.5 mg L⁻¹ is associated with mottling and teeth discolouration (Vithanage & Bhattacharya, 2015). In severe cases, it can lead to skeletal fluorosis with signs and symptoms like joint pain, stiffness, and difficulty in normal movements (Narsimha & Rajitha, 2018). Cognitive impairment in children is also a health effect of high fluoride exposure and its effect on the nervous system (*Guidelines for Drinking-Water Quality, 4th Edition*, 2013).

Punjab is known for having a rapidly growing economy with a strong agricultural foundation. The state has heavily exploited the ground and surface water resources because 80% of the country's food is consumed by agriculture. Groundwater exploitation by 14 lakh tube wells is the main cause of the water table drop (*TOI - Breaking News, Latest News, India News, World News, Bollywood, Sports, Business and Political News | The Times of India*, n.d.). For higher crop output, the intense agricultural activity has forced the use of significant quantities of fertilizers and pesticides. Over time and space, this has led to the pollution of both surface and groundwater. The majority of the Southern and South Western districts have saline groundwater. Fluoride was found in water samples from Patiala and Fatehgarh Sahib districts, according to data provided to

the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The state is implementing community-based water purification facilities as a temporary solution to the groundwater contamination problem and switching to canal water supply as a long-term solution. Habitats affected by fluoride in India are given in Figure 1 (*TOI - Breaking News, Latest News, India News, World News, Bollywood, Sports, Business and Political News | The Times of India*).

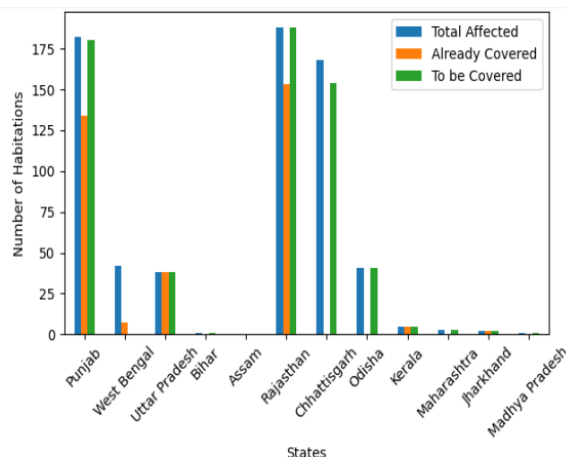


Figure 1: Habitats affected by fluoride

Many areas of the state have deteriorating water quality, which has led to an increase in water-borne diseases that can cause substantial health risks. To assess Punjab's water quality, it was necessary to study groundwater contamination with a focus on fluoride in shallow aquifers from hand pumps, dug wells, and tube wells (Chaudhry & Sachdeva, 2021; *GIS-based Groundwater Quality Assessment Using GOIs and Fuzzy-logic Approach - Chaudhry - 2022 - Water and Environment Journal - Wiley Online Library*). Therefore, it is crucial to understand different physicochemical parameters like pH, temperature, color, acidity, hardness, alkalinity, etc. in order to test and periodically check the quality of drinking water. The table below lists a few physicochemical characteristics of water.

Physico-chemical parameters of water

S. No	Water Quality Parameter	Units	Requirements (Acceptable Limits) *	Permissible Limits*
1	pH	N/A	6.5 to 8.5	No relaxation
2	Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)	mg L ⁻¹	500	2000
3	Electrical conductivity	mho cm ⁻¹	Less than 2	Less than 3
4	Total Hardness (TH)	mg L ⁻¹	200	600
5	Alkalinity	mg L ⁻¹	200	600
6	Fluoride	mg L ⁻¹	1.0	1.5

*The above-mentioned water quality parameters permissible limits are given according to BIS for drinking water IS 10500: 2012.

Review of Literature

Water quality assessment in rural and agricultural regions has been a subject of growing research concern in India, particularly in states like Punjab, where intensive farming practices and industrial activities have significantly impacted groundwater resources. Several studies have investigated physicochemical contamination, with fluoride emerging as a key parameter of concern in the Malwa belt (Duggal & Sharma, 2022). India has widespread groundwater fluoride contamination. Duggal (2022) found high fluoride levels in Malwa belt drinking water, confirming health hazards (Duggal & Sharma, 2022). Narsimha (2018) investigated fluoride distribution in Telangana State, attributing the enrichment to lithological characteristics and prolonged water-rock interactions (Narsimha & Rajitha, 2018). Vithanage (2015) provided a broader review of fluoride sources and distribution in the environment, highlighting defluoridation as an essential remediation measure (Vithanage & Bhattacharya, 2015).

Physicochemical evaluation of groundwater quality, encompassing parameters that include pH, TDS, EC, total hardness, alkalinity, and fluoride, has been applied extensively for drinking water assessments. Adimalla (2019) used the "Water Quality Index (WQI)" for groundwater quality evaluation in South India, while Adimalla (2018) assessed groundwater suitability for

domestic use in a semi-arid region of Telangana, establishing baseline physicochemical data relevant to similar agricultural settings. The role of human activities in deteriorating groundwater quality has been well established. Jagtap (2012) reviewed fluoride in drinking water and defluoridation techniques, noting that agricultural fertilizers contribute to fluoride mobilization in groundwater systems (Jagtap et al., 2012). Li (2017) contributed research frameworks for evaluating hydrogeochemical processes and groundwater contamination in regions affected by agricultural as well as industrial activities (Li et al., 2017).

Health risk assessment studies have further underscored the urgency of monitoring rural drinking water. In southern Punjab districts, Ahada (2019) examined human health risk from high groundwater fluoride intake (Ahada & Suthar, 2019) while Chaudhary (2022) employed GIS-based approaches for groundwater quality assessment in Punjab, confirming the spatial concentration of fluoride-affected zones in the Malwa region (*GIS-based Groundwater Quality Assessment Using GQIs and Fuzzy-logic Approach - Chaudhry - 2022 - Water and Environment Journal - Wiley Online Library*).

Overview of the Study Area

Punjab is a northwest Indian state between 29.30° North–32.32° North and 73.55° East–76.50° East. Majha, Doaba, and Malwa are the state's primary regions. The Sutlej River, a significant freshwater supply in the area, divides the southern Malwa region from its two counterparts. The region's eastern boundary is connected to the states of Himachal Pradesh and Haryana; its westernmost portion borders Pakistan; and its southern part is shared with the states of Rajasthan and Haryana (Vithanage & Bhattacharya, 2015). The Malwa region of Punjab was selected for the current investigation. Most of the Punjab region, which consists of eleven districts, is the Malwa area. Ludhiana, Rupnagar, Patiala, Sangrur, Bathinda, Mansa, Ferozpur, Fazilka, Rajpura, Moga, and Ajitgarh are in Malwa. Patiala's groundwater is somewhat alkaline (Duggal & Sharma, 2022). The pH range is 7.63 to 8.54, with a mean of 7.96. It has low to moderate mineralization. The Ghaggar River and its main tributaries, including Choa-Nadi, Tangauri River, Miranpurchoa, Patialewali-Nadi, Pari River, Gadrinadi, and Sirhindchoa drain, flow through Patiala (Duggal & Sharma, 2022).

Rajpura is a municipal council in Patiala district, which is located at 30.48°N to 76.6°E. Rajpura is an important industrial town of Punjab, having a large number of large-scale and small-scale industries. The river flowing within Rajpura is the Tangauri River. Drinking water is generally collected from tube wells, and canal irrigation is practised in the region. Rajpura's water level has dropped in recent years because of irresponsible groundwater exploitation. Groundwater in the area is alkaline, and the people in Rajpura Tehsil, Patiala, are facing groundwater contamination issues due to the high fluoride concentration of 3.5mg L⁻¹ (CGWB, 2017), that is more than the permitted limit of 1.5 mg L⁻¹.

In survey, drinking water samples were collected in sterilized glass bottles (500mL) from five adopted villages of Chitkara University, Rajpura, Punjab: Thuha, Kalo Majra, Jhansla, Ram Nagar, and Fatehpur Garhi. The primary source for the collection of water samples is tap water. It was found that the majority of the water supply comes from the borewells in these villages. The study had been performed in five villages located in the Patiala district of Malwa, Punjab, adjacent to Rajpura. Rajpura is situated in the Patiala district and is around 259 meters above sea level. The yearly precipitation is 845 mm, and the mean temperature is 23.5°C (Adimalla & Qian, 2019). Twenty-five samples were collected and examined from five different villages.

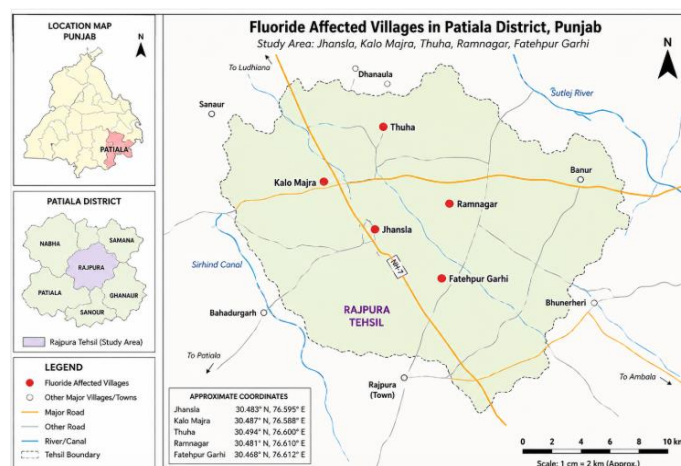


Figure 2: Location of fluoride-affected villages in Rajpura, Patiala District, Malwa, Punjab.
(Map generated for representation of the study area based on secondary data)

Sample Collection and Analysis

Fresh groundwater samples have been gathered from the tube and bore wells. Water samples were collected using previously cleaned polythene sample vials with a 500 mL capacity. Before collecting a groundwater sample, the bore well's water was emptied for five minutes to settle conductivity. To separate the impacts of any pollutants, the sample vials were appropriately sealed and labeled. After that, the samples were kept in the lab's deep freezer/incubator for additional chemical analysis. Every safety measure was taken to avoid contamination during sample collection, transit, and analysis (Ahada & Suthar, 2019). The physical as well as chemical properties of these water samples had been investigated using titration methods, different water testing equipment, and water testing kits. A digital ion meter was used to measure the fluoride content of the groundwater sample. Methods follow the APHA standard procedure (APHA, 2005). The table below lists the physico-chemical characteristics of the water in five of Chitkara University's adopted villages in Punjab.

Physico-chemical parameters of the water of five adopted villages of Chitkara University, Punjab

SN	Location	pH	Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) mg L ⁻¹	Electrical Conductivity (mho/cm)	Total Hardness (TH) mg L ⁻¹	Alkalinity mg L ⁻¹	Fluoride mg L ⁻¹
Village - Thuha							
1	Gurudwara	7.85	356	0.56	39	225	2.2
2	Temple	7.87	360	0.55	39	227	3.0
3	Primary Health Centre	8.01	361	0.56	39	226	2.5
4	House - 1	7.92	356	0.54	39	228	2.9
5	House - 2	7.86	363	0.57	39	229	3.0
Village - Kalo Majra							
1	Gurudwara	7.85	303	0.46	76	183	0.9
2	Community Health Centre	7.98	273	0.44	74	188	1.0
3	Govt. Elementary School	8.07	472	0.86	78	208	1.0
4	House - 1	6.22	269	0.08	75	225	0.9
5	House - 2	6.52	265	0.08	76	220	0.8
Village - Fatehpur Garhi							
1	Gurudwara	7.28	441	1.20	79	241	1.1
2	Govt. High School	7.64	373	0.52	78	240	0.8
3	Borewell	7.42	410	0.87	81	243	1.0
4	Tap water	6.72	291	0.08	77	205	0.8
5	House - 1	7.72	380	0.58	78	235	0.9
Village - Jhansla							
1	Gurudwara	7.8	291	0.42	83	166	0.9
2	Temple	7.2	353	1.2	85	198	0.8
3	Govt. Senior Sec. School	8.4	276	0.43	81	185	0.9
4	Govt. Elementary School	8.3	276	0.42	80	186	0.7
5	House - 1	8.1	284	0.44	81	191	0.8
Village - Ramnagar							
1	Gurudwara	7.27	262	0.38	83	170	0.8
2	School	7.74	292	0.41	85	215	0.8
3	House - 1	7.65	291	0.43	89	209	0.8
4	House - 2	7.64	292	0.44	90	187	0.8
5	House - 3	7.64	291	0.43	88	215	0.9

The findings reveal that Thuha exhibits the highest fluoride concentration in groundwater, above the permitted limit (>1.5 mg L⁻¹) specified by BIS. Therefore, the study primarily focuses on Thuha for fluoride removal using modified biochar. Fluoride concentrations were classified based on their potential health impacts as reported by Dissanayake (1991), and the samples were grouped into five categories accordingly, as shown in the table (*The Fluoride Problem in the Ground Water of Sri Lanka*

— *Environmental Management and Health: International Journal of Environmental Studies: Vol 38, No 2-3*). The results show that 80% of samples fall under Class-B (0.5 to 1.5 mg L^{-1}), which is generally considered beneficial for dental health.

The impact of fluoride on human health in the study region

Groups	Fluoride concentration mg L^{-1}	Number of samples	Percentage (%) of samples	Impact on human health
Group "A"	<0.5	Nil	-	Promotes dental caries
Group B	0.5 to 1.5	20	80	Promotes dental and bone health, prevents tooth decay
Group C	1.5 to 4.0	5	20	Promotes dental fluorosis (mottling of teeth)
Group D	4.0 to 10.0	Nil	-	Promotes dental and" skeletal fluorosis
Group E	>10	Nil	-	Crippling fluorosis

Classification is according to Dissanayake (1991) (Dissanayake, 1991).

The various important physicochemical parameters for drinking water as prescribed by different agencies have been given below in the table. In the study area, drinking water fluoride levels ranged from 0.7 to 3.0 mg L^{-1} .

Assessment of measured drinking water quality data with standards (Edzwald, 2011; Patil, 2012; Sargaonkar, 2003)

S. No	Parameters	Units	WHO	BIS	Present Study
1	pH	-	6.5-8.5	6.5-8.5	6.2-8.4
2	TDS	mg L^{-1}	500-1500	500	262-472
3	EC	mho cm^{-1}	300	-	0.38-1.2
4	TH	mg L^{-1}	100-500	200	39-90
5	Alkalinity	mg L^{-1}	-	200	166-243
6	Fluoride	mg L^{-1}	1.0 – 1.5	1.0	0.7 - 3.0

“BIS: Bureau of Indian Standards”

“WHO: World Health Organization”

The table below shows the standard deviation, mean, and coefficient of variation of drinking water samples, along with their standard values.

Statistical Analysis of the physicochemical parameters of rural drinking water

S. No	Parameters	Units	Max	Min	Range	Mean	SD	CV%
1	pH	-	8.4	6.2	2.2	7.62	0.5136	6.74
2	TDS	mg L^{-1}	472	262	210	327.24	57.041	17.43
3	EC	mho cm^{-1}	1.2	0.38	0.82	0.518	0.054	10.511
4	TH	mg L^{-1}	90	39	51	82.904	20.138	24.291
5	Alkalinity	mg L^{-1}	243	166	77	209.8	22.287	10.623
6	Fluoride	mg L^{-1}	3	0.7	2.3	1.24	0.758	61.163

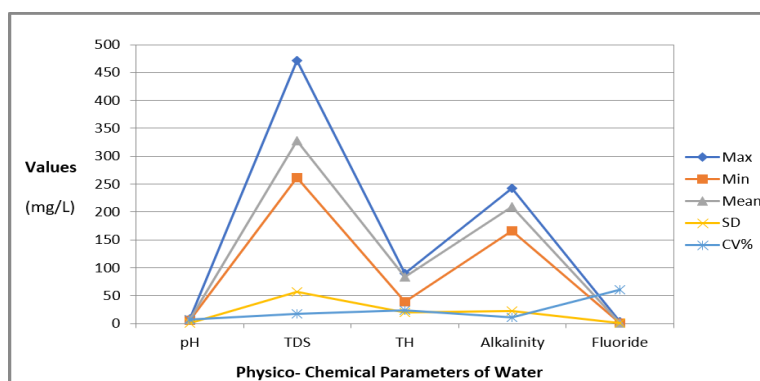


Figure 3: Graph showing Statistical Analysis of drinking water for the rural villages of Rajpura

All the water samples show that EC, TDS, and TH values are in the permissible limits, but the fluoride range is higher than the permissible limits only in Thuha village. A correlation study is important for defining the degree of relationship between variables. The algebraic Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation helps us identify a statistical relationship between two or more

water quality measures. Correlations connect two variables (*Cabidigitallibrary.Org/Doi/Full/10.5555/20133328005*; Virk, 2023). The table below summarizes the degree of correlation based on the correlation coefficient (r) value.

Standard Table for Degree of Correlation based upon the value of the coefficient of correlation(r):

Sr. No.	Nature of Correlation	Positive r Value Range	Negative r Value Range
1	No Correlation (Zero)	$r = 0$	$r = 0$
2	Weak Positive / Weak Negative	$0 < r \leq +0.25$	$-0.25 \leq r < 0$
3	Moderate Positive / Moderate Negative	$+0.25 < r \leq +0.75$	$-0.75 \leq r < -0.25$
4	Strong Positive / Strong Negative	$+0.75 < r < +1$	$-1 < r < -0.75$
5	Perfect Positive / Perfect Negative	$r = +1$	$r = -1$

As we have analysed above, in Thuha village, the fluoride range is higher than the prescribed level, so we have calculated the correlation between TDS and fluoride in Thuha village. The value obtained for the coefficient of correlation (r) = 0.46 shows that we have a moderate degree of correlation between TDS and fluoride. Also, the absence of correlation between EC and fluoride was noted in this region of Thuha. The pH ranged from 8.4 to 6.2 in this study, which is within WHO guidelines. Additionally, all water samples reveal that EC, TDS, and TH levels are within acceptable norms, although Thuha village's fluoride range exceeds them.

Linear correlation is a fundamental concept in the realm of statistics and mathematical modelling. It encapsulates the degree of association between two variables, encapsulating their co-varying behaviour. Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient, 'r,' ranges from -1 to 1. An 'r' value close to 1 indicates a strong positive linear correlation, while -1 indicates a strong negative correlation. In contrast, an 'r' value near zero signifies a lack of linear correlation. This statistical measure enables researchers to assess variable relationships' direction and strength, thus facilitating rigorous investigations in various scientific disciplines, including economics, biology, and social sciences. The value of 'r' for different pairs of parameters of Thuha village is depicted below.

Value of the coefficient of correlation 'r' between different pairs of parameters of Thuha village:

S. No	Pairs of Parameters	Value of Coefficient of Correlation 'r'
1	TDS-Fluoride	0.46 (Moderate Degree of Positive Correlation)
2	EC- Fluoride	Negligible (No Correlation)

Findings

Physicochemical characteristics of 25 drinking water samples from five villages in Rajpura, Punjab, were found to be as follows:

Village water samples have a pH range of 6.2–8.4, meeting BIS and WHO standards. EC values were from 0.38 to 1.2 mhos cm^{-1} , meeting BIS standards. TH in water samples ranged from 39 to 90 mg L^{-1} , well below the WHO's 500 mg L^{-1} standard. The Thuha village samples had lower TH values than the Ramnagar village samples. In other areas, TDS levels were 262 to 472 mg L^{-1} , below the WHO standard of 500 mg L^{-1} . Fluoride concentrations reached 0.7 to 3.0 mg L^{-1} ; samples over 1.5 mg L^{-1} were unacceptable. Thuha village had the highest fluoride levels, above the BIS limit of 1.5 mg L^{-1} . The value obtained for the coefficient of correlation (r) = 0.46 between TDS and fluoride in Thuha village shows a moderate degree of positive correlation. The absence of correlation between EC and fluoride was also noted in Thuha village. 80% of samples fall under Class-B (0.5 to 1.5 mg L^{-1}), while 20% of samples fall under Class-C (1.5 to 4.0 mg L^{-1}), confined to Thuha village (Dissanayake, 1991).

Results and Discussion

Drinking water samples were collected in sterile bottles from five villages for testing purposes. Temperature variation was also found to influence the drinking water test results. The temperature variation was also influenced by the water sampling that was done over a period of several months. Tables summarize the findings from the examination of various water samples. According to BIS and WHO standards, the pH range of village water samples is between 6.2 and 8.4. EC values were 0.38–1.2 mhos cm^{-1} , meeting BIS standards. The water samples' TH ranged from 39 to 90 mg L^{-1} , well below the WHO's 500 mg L^{-1} standard. Thuha village samples had lower TH values than Ramnagar village samples. TDS are organic and inorganic salts in water. Levels of TDS ranged from 262 to 472 mg L^{-1} in various villages, but the WHO (2014) states that the acceptable limit is less than 500 mg L^{-1} . In the groundwater of Thuha village, fluoride demonstrated a positive correlation with TDS. The positive



correlation demonstrated that TDS regulates and affects fluoride mobility in groundwater. Fluoride concentrations ranged from 0.7 to 3.0 mg L⁻¹; samples containing more than 1.5 mg L⁻¹ are not considered acceptable. This study provides valuable insights and establishes a strong foundation for future researchers and policymakers working on rural water quality management. It provides baseline data on contamination, highlighting fluoride levels and key physicochemical parameters, which can serve as a reference for monitoring changes and trends in Rajpura and similar regions.

Conclusions and Future Scope

Groundwater is a global water source. Groundwater shortage occurs in areas with excessive withdrawal. Groundwater quality for drinking is assessed using numerous metrics and criteria in this study. Five villages in Rajpura, Punjab, provided 25 water samples. Results demonstrate hard, alkaline groundwater in the studied area. Thuha village's fluoride concentration is 3.0 mg L⁻¹, above the BIS limit and posing a health risk if untreated. The high-fluoride sampling site needs cleanup. This study solely studied groundwater; future studies should include other drinking water sources. Continuous water quality monitoring and expanded sampling and analysis are recommended to monitor Rajpura city's environmental and health impacts. Highlighting agricultural practices' role in water contamination informs policy and community awareness. Future aspirants can develop further studies focusing on sustainable agricultural practices or public health policies to mitigate contamination.

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ONLINE MUSIC EDUCATION AND GURU–SHISHYA PARAMPARA IN INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Deepali Verma¹, Dr. Ravinder Thakur²

1 Master's Student, Department of Music (Vocal), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, India.

2 Assistant Professor, Department of Music Vocal, SCVB Government College Palampur, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

Indian Classical Music has traditionally been transmitted through the Guru–Shishya Parampara, a pedagogical system rooted in oral transmission, experiential learning, and sustained interaction between teacher and disciple. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, however, has introduced online and distance learning as new modes of instruction, reshaping the landscape of music education. Adopting a qualitative research approach based on secondary sources, this study examines the relationship between online music education and the Guru–Shishya Parampara, analysing how digital platforms support the learning of alankars, bandishes, and guided riyaz while expanding accessibility for learners across diverse geographical locations, including the Indian diaspora (Mani, 2026; Shrimali, 2024). Despite these advantages, the study finds that the absence of direct interaction limits the transmission of microtonal precision, improvisational depth, emotional expression, and gharana-specific stylistic nuances, underscoring the continued centrality of the Guru–Shishya Parampara to experiential learning and musical authenticity (Panda, 2017). The study concludes that online music education functions as a complementary system rather than a replacement for traditional pedagogy, and that a hybrid model integrating digital platforms with the Guru–Shishya Parampara is necessary to ensure both accessibility and depth, supporting the preservation, continuity, and global dissemination of Indian Classical Music.

Keywords: Guru–Shishya Parampara, Online Music Education, Indian Classical Music, Digital Pedagogy, Hybrid Learning, Distance Education

Introduction

Indian Classical Music represents a profound and enduring tradition that has been transmitted across generations through the Guru–Shishya Parampara. This pedagogical system is based on close interaction between the teacher and the disciple, where learning occurs through observation, imitation, and sustained practice. It enables the transmission of not only technical skills but also aesthetic understanding, cultural values, and artistic sensibility (Neuman, 1980; Nettl, 2005). The gharana system further strengthens this tradition by preserving stylistic identity and ensuring continuity of musical knowledge across generations (Panda, 2017).

In recent decades, technological advancements have significantly transformed the landscape of education, including music pedagogy. Online and distance learning systems have emerged as important modes of instruction, enabling learners to access music education beyond geographical limitations. The development of internet-based communication and virtual classrooms has facilitated interaction between teachers and students across distances, thereby expanding the reach of Indian Classical Music (Shrimali, 2024).

Online music education provides flexibility and accessibility, allowing students to engage with recorded lectures, structured lessons, and guided practice sessions at their own pace (Anderson, 2008; Daniel, 2020). It also supports the use of digital tools and applications that assist in practice and learning. However, despite these advantages, concerns remain regarding the effectiveness of online learning in transmitting subtle musical nuances, including tonal precision, improvisation, and expressive depth (Mani, 2026).

In this context, the present study seeks to examine the relationship between online music education and the Guru–Shishya Parampara in Indian Classical Music. It aims to analyse how digital learning complements traditional pedagogy while highlighting the continued relevance of experiential and immersive learning in preserving the depth and authenticity of the musical tradition.

Literature Review

The Guru–Shishya Parampara has long been regarded as the core pedagogical framework of Indian Classical Music. It is characterised by close and continuous interaction between the guru and the disciple, where learning is achieved through observation, imitation, and sustained engagement. This system enables the transmission of both technical knowledge and cultural values, as the disciple internalises musical concepts through lived experience rather than formal instruction alone



(Neuman, 1980; Nettl, 2005). The immersive nature of this tradition allows learners to develop a deep understanding of raga, improvisation, and stylistic nuances associated with different gharanas (Panda, 2017).

Scholarly discussions have highlighted that the Guru–Shishya Parampara is not merely a method of teaching but a holistic system that integrates music with life practices and discipline. The gurukul system, in particular, emphasises the complete absorption of the student into the guru's environment, facilitating both cognitive and cultural transmission of knowledge. This form of learning supports the development of artistic identity and emotional expression, which are essential components of Indian Classical Music.

With the advent of modern technology, the traditional model of music education has undergone significant transformation. Distance learning and online education have emerged as viable alternatives, especially in response to increasing demand and changing socio-economic conditions. Research indicates that online music education has expanded access to learning by removing geographical barriers and providing flexible learning opportunities (Anderson, 2008; Daniel, 2020). It allows students to access instructional content, recorded lectures, and digital tools that support independent practice and revision.

At the same time, studies have critically examined the limitations of online music education. The absence of direct interaction between teacher and student poses challenges in the transmission of subtle musical elements such as tonal accuracy, improvisational techniques, and emotional expression. Technical constraints, including issues related to audio quality and real-time feedback, further affect the effectiveness of online instruction (Shrimali, 2024). Additionally, the lack of immersive learning environments limits the development of deeper artistic sensibilities that are central to traditional pedagogy.

Recent research also suggests that online music education plays an important role in the global dissemination of Indian Classical Music. It enables learners, particularly those in the Indian diaspora, to access training and maintain cultural connections. Furthermore, digital platforms have created new opportunities for music educators by expanding their reach and enabling them to engage with a wider audience (Mani, 2026).

Overall, the existing literature indicates that while online music education offers significant advantages in terms of accessibility and flexibility, it cannot fully replace the depth and experiential learning provided by the Guru–Shishya Parampara. This highlights the need for a balanced and integrative approach that combines the strengths of both systems.

Research Methodology

Significance of the Study

The present study is significant in understanding the transformation of music pedagogy in the contemporary digital era. Indian Classical Music, rooted in the Guru–Shishya Parampara, emphasises experiential learning, cultural transmission, and artistic depth. However, the emergence of online learning platforms has introduced new modes of instruction that challenge traditional systems. This study contributes to the academic discourse by examining how online music education influences the teaching–learning process while assessing its effectiveness in preserving the depth and authenticity of the tradition. It also highlights the need for integrating traditional and modern pedagogical approaches to sustain Indian Classical Music in a rapidly changing educational landscape (Mani, 2026; Shrimali, 2024).

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to analyse the pedagogical structure of the Guru–Shishya Parampara in Indian Classical Music and to examine the nature and scope of online music education. It seeks to understand the role of digital platforms in facilitating learning of theoretical and practical components such as alankars, bandishes, and riyaz. The study further aims to evaluate the advantages and limitations of online learning and to explore how it complements traditional pedagogical practices. Additionally, it attempts to propose a balanced approach that integrates both systems effectively.

Procedure of the Study

The study follows a systematic qualitative procedure. Initially, the research problem was identified with a focus on the changing nature of music education. This was followed by a comprehensive review of literature related to Guru–Shishya Parampara and online music education. Subsequently, relevant secondary sources, including scholarly works and research studies, were analysed to understand both traditional and digital pedagogical frameworks. The collected information was then organised into thematic categories, allowing for comparative analysis and interpretation of findings.



Method of Analysis

The study employs thematic analysis as the primary method of interpretation. This method involves identifying recurring patterns and key themes within the collected data, such as pedagogical structure, accessibility, learning processes, and transmission of musical nuances. These themes are critically analysed to understand the relationship between traditional and online modes of learning. The qualitative nature of the study allows for in-depth interpretation of concepts rather than numerical measurement, making it suitable for examining music pedagogy (Neuman, 1980; Nettl, 2005).

Data Collection

The data for the study is collected entirely from secondary sources. These include scholarly books on Indian Classical Music, peer-reviewed journal articles, and research papers focusing on traditional pedagogy and online learning systems. Particular emphasis has been placed on studies that examine the challenges and opportunities of distance learning in music education, as well as those that highlight the significance of Guru–Shishya Parampara (Panda, 2017; Shrimali, 2024; Mani, 2026). The use of diverse and relevant secondary sources ensures a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Thematic Analysis and Interpretation

Guru–Shishya Relationship: Experiential vs Virtual Learning

The Guru–Shishya Parampara is fundamentally based on close personal interaction, where learning occurs through observation, imitation, and sustained engagement. In this system, the disciple not only learns musical techniques but also absorbs the aesthetic, emotional, and cultural dimensions of the art form. The immersive environment allows for continuous guidance and correction, enabling the development of artistic maturity (Neuman, 1980; Nettl, 2005). In contrast, online learning environments rely on virtual interaction, which limits informal learning opportunities and reduces the depth of the teacher–student relationship. The absence of physical proximity affects the transmission of subtle artistic sensibilities and reduces the intensity of mentorship (Shrimali, 2024).

Pedagogical Transformation in the Digital Era

Traditional pedagogy in Indian Classical Music is rooted in oral transmission, demonstration, and repetitive practice. Learning is largely intuitive and experiential, with emphasis on gradual refinement through continuous correction. However, online music education introduces a structured and content-based approach, relying on recorded lectures, scheduled sessions, and digital resources. While this enhances organisation and accessibility, it reduces spontaneity and immediate feedback. As a result, the learning process shifts from immersive engagement to modular instruction, altering the fundamental nature of pedagogy (Mani, 2026).

Learning of Alankars, Bandishes, and Riyaz through Online Platforms

Online music education effectively supports the learning of foundational elements such as alankars, bandishes, and riyaz. Digital platforms provide access to recorded lessons, instructional videos, and practice tools that facilitate repetition and self-paced learning. Students can revisit lessons multiple times, enhancing understanding and retention (Anderson, 2008; Daniel, 2020). Additionally, the use of digital applications such as tanpura and metronome tools supports practice and technical accuracy. However, while online learning aids initial training, the refinement of these elements requires continuous feedback and personalised instruction, which are more effectively provided through traditional methods.

Transmission of Musical Nuances and Tacit Knowledge

One of the major limitations of online music education lies in the transmission of tacit knowledge. Indian Classical Music involves subtle aspects such as microtonal variations, voice modulation, improvisational techniques, and emotional expression. These elements are difficult to convey through digital media and require direct interaction for effective learning. The lack of real-time correction and physical demonstration limits the depth of understanding and affects the quality of learning (Shrimali, 2024). Thus, the Guru–Shishya Parampara remains essential for preserving these nuanced aspects of musical practice.

Accessibility and Global Dissemination of Music Education

A significant advantage of online music education is its ability to enhance accessibility and promote global dissemination. Digital platforms enable students from diverse geographical locations, including the Indian diaspora, to access quality music education. This has expanded the reach of Indian Classical Music and facilitated cross-cultural exchange. Furthermore, online learning provides cost-effective and flexible options for learners, making music education more inclusive (Mani, 2026). However, while accessibility has improved, maintaining the quality and depth of learning remains a key challenge.



Discipline, Riyaz, and Self-Regulated Learning

In the traditional Guru–Shishya system, discipline is maintained through direct supervision and structured routines, ensuring regular and focused practice. In contrast, online learning requires learners to be self-disciplined and motivated. While flexibility allows learners to manage their schedules, it may also lead to inconsistency in practice. The effectiveness of online learning, therefore, depends significantly on the learner's commitment and ability to regulate their practice independently (Green, 2002).

Cultural and Emotional Dimensions of Learning

The Guru–Shishya Parampara facilitates the transmission of cultural values, emotional sensitivity, and artistic ethics. The close bond between guru and disciple fosters respect, dedication, and a deep connection with the art form. In online environments, these cultural and emotional dimensions are less effectively conveyed, as interaction is mediated through technology. This limitation highlights the importance of traditional pedagogy in preserving the cultural essence and philosophical depth of Indian Classical Music (Panda, 2017).

Discussion

The analysis of the present study indicates that online music education has introduced a significant transformation in the pedagogy of Indian Classical Music. Digital platforms have expanded access to learning by enabling students from diverse geographical locations to engage with structured content, recorded lectures, and guided practice sessions. This has contributed to the global dissemination of Indian Classical Music and created new opportunities for both learners and educators (Mani, 2026). The flexibility and accessibility offered by online learning have made it particularly beneficial for beginners and learners with limited access to traditional training.

However, Indian Classical Music is deeply rooted in experiential and immersive learning processes that are central to the Guru–Shishya Parampara. The traditional system facilitates the transmission of subtle musical nuances, including tonal precision, improvisation, and emotional expression, through continuous interaction and personalised guidance (Neuman, 1980; Nettl, 2005). These elements are difficult to replicate in online environments due to the absence of physical presence and limitations in real-time feedback. Technical challenges such as audio delay and reduced sound quality further affect the effectiveness of online instruction (Shrimali, 2024).

The study also highlights a clear distinction between cognitive and experiential learning. While online platforms effectively support theoretical understanding and repetitive practice, they are less effective in fostering artistic depth and interpretative skills. The Guru–Shishya Parampara, on the other hand, provides a holistic learning environment where music is internalised through lived experience. This distinction explains why online learning cannot fully replace traditional pedagogy.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that online and traditional systems should not be viewed as opposing approaches but as complementary modes of learning. A hybrid model that integrates the accessibility of online learning with the depth of traditional mentorship offers a balanced and sustainable framework for music education. Such an approach can ensure that technological advancements enhance rather than diminish the richness of Indian Classical Music.

Findings

The study reveals that online music education has significantly enhanced accessibility by enabling learners from diverse geographical and socio-economic backgrounds to participate in music education. It effectively supports the learning of foundational elements such as alankars, bandishes, and riyaz through structured content and digital tools (Anderson, 2008; Daniel, 2020). At the same time, the study establishes that the Guru–Shishya Parampara remains essential for the transmission of nuanced musical elements, including microtonal variations, improvisational techniques, and emotional expression (Neuman, 1980; Nettl, 2005).

It is also observed that online learning promotes flexibility and self-paced study but requires a high level of self-discipline and motivation from learners. Technical limitations and reduced interpersonal interaction affect the depth of learning and the effectiveness of feedback (Shrimali, 2024). Additionally, online platforms contribute to the global dissemination of Indian Classical Music and create new opportunities for music educators by expanding their reach (Mani, 2026). Overall, the findings indicate that a hybrid approach combining online and traditional methods provides the most effective framework for music education.



Conclusion

The present study concludes that online music education has emerged as a significant development in the field of Indian Classical Music, offering increased accessibility, flexibility, and structured learning opportunities. Digital platforms have enabled learners from diverse geographical and socio-economic backgrounds to engage with music education, thereby expanding the reach and inclusivity of the tradition.

However, the Guru–Shishya Parampara continues to remain indispensable for achieving depth, refinement, and artistic maturity. The transmission of subtle musical nuances, improvisational skills, and emotional expression requires sustained personal interaction, experiential learning, and close mentorship, which cannot be fully replicated in online environments. The traditional system plays a crucial role in preserving the cultural, aesthetic, and philosophical dimensions of Indian Classical Music.

The study highlights that online music education should not be viewed as a replacement for traditional pedagogy but as a complementary approach. A balanced integration of digital learning tools with the Guru–Shishya Parampara offers a more effective and sustainable model for contemporary music education. Such a hybrid approach ensures that while accessibility and flexibility are enhanced, the depth and authenticity of the musical tradition are preserved.

In conclusion, the future of Indian Classical Music education lies in harmonising tradition with technology, where innovation supports rather than diminishes the richness of this enduring art form.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RAGA BHAIRAVI IN MUSIC THERAPY TRADITION

Dr. Deepti Bansal

Associate Professor, Music Department, Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, Delhi

ABSTRACT

There are many medical traditions prevalent in India. Music therapy is one amongst them. It uses music as a tool to treat various physical, mental and emotional illness in a scientific way. Music affects the secretion of various hormones and helps in regulating the autonomic nervous system. This activation changes the mood of a person. Ragas of classical music help in mood upliftment. Bhairavi is a very significant raga used for Music Therapy. Bhairavi is a soulful raga that can evoke many emotions like devotion, love, romance, sadness, joy, patriotism, spirituality and so on. Its peaceful and calming nature can deal with the problems of anxiety and stress. Its love and longingness facilitate emotional release. Its devotional and spiritual nature creates a harmonious and meditative atmosphere. Its versatility increases its therapeutic value and works well for the benefit of mankind.

Keywords: Bhairavi, therapy, emotion, hormone

INTRODUCTION

In India, diverse medical traditions have been in vogue since ancient times for health and wellness of human beings. These include various practices like Ayurveda, Naturopathy, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Music Therapy. Ayurveda deals with herbs and dietary changes to cure. Naturopathy as the word suggests, believes in self-healing methods by use of natural elements and life style changes. Yoga, aims at uniting body, mind and spirit through asanas (poses), pranayam (breathing) and meditation. Unani is a Greco-Arab medicine tradition widely practiced in India which uses specialized techniques, diet and natural herbs and minerals to cure. Siddha is a medicine system from South India that uses herbals, metals and minerals to balance three humors – vatt, pitt and kaph. Sowa Rigpa is a Tibetan medical tradition widely practiced in the Himalayan region of India that treats through diet and behaviour modifications and therapies. Music therapy uses music to improve physical, mental and emotional well-being. Whatever may be the approach of all these traditions, they all aim at alignment of body, mind and spirit.

Music Therapy

Music therapy studies the therapeutic effects of music in a scientific way. In this therapy music is used as a tool to improve a person's overall health and well-being. This can be done by singing, playing an instrument, listening to music, creating music, dancing or relaxing to music and so on. Music has been used as a therapeutic agent since ancient times. In Indian mythology, there are references which prove that vedic mantra chanting of Rigveda and Atharvaveda had curative power and many diseases were cured through chanting of vedic Mantras and Richas [Sharma, Manorama 1996]. Another method that was prevalent was 'Raga Chikitsa' i.e. the science of using specific ragas to balance body, mind and emotions. Ragas create specific vibrations that affect human neurophysiology as well as emotions. These vibrations proved to be effective in curing various physical and mental diseases. Another component of Music Therapy is Nada Yoga that considers sound as a divine vibration. It uses meditation to achieve physical, mental and spiritual healing. So we can say that Music Therapy mingles Raga Chikitsa or Raga therapy, Nada yoga and modern clinical techniques that are evidence based.

Raga Bhairavi

Raga Bhairavi is a popular raga of Hindustani Classical Music. It is an ashraya raga of Bhairavi thata. It is a sampoorana raga with rishabh, gandhar, dhaivat and nishad komal in it. Rest of the notes are shudh. Its vadi note is madhyam and samvadi note is shadaj. Traditionally, the time for singing this raga is early morning but it can be performed at any time. Most of the artistes usually conclude their recitals with raga Bhairavi. That is why Bhairavi is called 'Sada Suhagan' which means 'constantly liked'. The following doha explains the chief features of the raga.

“Komal sabahi sur bhale, madhyam vadi bakhaan
Shadaj jahan samvadi hai, taahi Bhairavi jaan.” [Vasant, 1981]

Although Bhairavi has komal notes – Re, Ga, Dha and Ni, but the current trend is to use both shudh and komal swaras or notes in it. Thus all twelve notes are put to use in Raga Bhairavi which makes it versatile in nature. Because of its versatility, it is significantly used in music therapy. Raga Bhairavi can generate all the core rasas like Bhakti, Shringaar, Shant and Karuna. It is highly emotive and that's what makes it unique and powerful and a raga with lots of possibilities for music therapy.



Review of Literature

There is a wide scope of usage of Ragas of Indian classical music in Music therapy. Studies have been conducted and many research papers and books have explored this area. This exploration has provided good insights and it has been found that Raga Bhairavi is one of the significant raga that can contribute to music therapy. Bhairavi induces peace and is good for meditative healing (Ramani Rukmani Papanasam 2023). It has also been useful in treating cases of schizophrenia (Sharma, Manorama, 1996). Raga Bhairavi carries a magical flavour and can evoke vast spectrum of emotions (Sharma, Yogita 2025). Mental health issues like stress, anxiety and depression can also be handled by this raga. (Chand, Kulbhushan, Chandra Shilpa, Dutt, Varun, Oct. 2024). So it can be seen that certain Indian ragas have a direct impact on emotions.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on the data gathered from secondary sources including articles, books, research papers and available historical references. Vocal and instrumental music in Raga Bhairavi, relevant to the paper has been explored on digital media, youtube, old recordings available. Methodology had qualitative approach in data collection, understanding basic concepts, analyzing, getting insights and exploring new possibilities of Raga Bhairavi in music therapy.

Results

Music therapy addresses our holistic health. This includes physical and mental health and emotional and spiritual well-being. Raga therapy is one of the ways used in music therapy for healing. Raga therapy or Raga Chikitsa uses Indian classical raga melodies to improve, restore or cure physical, mental, emotional and psychological illness. There is a science behind how it works. There are many different hormones in our body like Dopamine, Serotonin, Cortisol, Oxytocin, endorphins, melatonin etc. Music affects the secretion of these hormones by activating the limbic system (emotion center), stimulating the hypothalamus (hormone controller) and regulating the autonomic nervous system of our body. This activation and regulation changes how one feels. So it can be used for therapeutic purpose.

Each raga has a particular emotion of 'rasa' which has therapeutic effect on body and mind. Some of the ragas being used in music therapy are Yaman, Todi, Bhairavi, Deskar, Bhupali, Rageshwari, Basant, Bhairav, Hansdhvani, Des, Bhageshwari, Jaijaiwanti, Shivranjani, Malkauns and many more. Raga Bhairavi has great significance in music therapy.

Discussion

It is important to explore and discuss the various emotional possibilities of Raga Bhairavi which are as follows -

Moods or Rasas of Raga Bhairavi

Bhairavi is a traditional and soulful raga that has the power to evoke many moods. It is often referred to as the queen of ragas. It can generate bhakti rasa, shringaar rasa, karuna rasa, shant rasa, vairagya etc. It encompasses a wide range of emotions viz. romance, happiness, joy, sadness, lamentation, patriotism, devotion, peace, tranquility, spirituality and so on. We shall explore these emotions from a therapeutic point of view and how Bhairavi can be utilized as a complimentary medicine in music therapy.

Tranquility and Peace

The main aspect of experiencing joy in Raga Bhairavi lies in its tranquil and peaceful nature. Its gentle nature allows release of anxiety. Anxiety is a very common problem that everyone feels at some point of time. Worrying about exam result, apprehensions about future in life, nervousness due to inability to perform a task, tension created by uncertainty or negative thoughts are some common problems that can create anxiety. One can develop symptoms like increase in heart beat, trembling, difficulty in concentrating or sleeping when one feels anxious. If the level of anxiety is excessive, than it need to be addressed. Listening to peaceful music in Bhairavi can be helpful. Instruments like flute and sitar create peace and calmness. Soothing sitar and flute music provides relaxation and calms the nervous system. This can help in reducing anxiety. e.g. Raga Bhairavi on flute by Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia (Hindustani Classical, Feb. 2023). He has played a gat in madhya laya rupak tala which is appropriate for creating a peaceful atmosphere. The tonal quality of sitar is also suitable for creating peace. Soothing sitar music can reduce anxiety. The intricate melodies of sitar cause cognitive stimulation. Thus one feels a mood uplift and experiences joy. The drut gat by Ustad Vilayat Khan in Bhairavi (Hindustani Classical, March 2025) set to teental creates quite a joyous and energetic atmosphere.

Romance, Love and Longingness

The emotional landscape of Raga Bhairavi is very vast. It can generate the feeling of Romance or 'Shringar Rasa'. It can bring the joy of love with its notes. One also experiences a feeling of longingness besides love. Bhairavi is a blend of happiness as



well as melancholic longing. Bhairavi facilitates emotional expression. Vocal singing is best suited for this. There are many semi-classical music compositions, light music songs and bollywood songs that express the emotion of love and longingness. Many thumris and dadras sung by various artistes also portray these emotions. e.g. the famous thumri by Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan – “Ka Karoon Sajni Aaye Na Balam” [Hindustani Classical, July 2023] and popular dadra by Vidushi Begum Akhtar – ‘Hamri Atariya pe avo sanwariya, dekha dekhi balam hoyi jaaye’ [Hindustani Classical, Feb. 2023]. Another energetic number full of shringar rasa is the Bandishi Thumri in Bhairavi – “Baat Chalat Nai Chunari Rang Daari” [Mishra, Oct. 2019] sung by Pandit Mahadev Prasad Mishra. Its rhythmic patterns along with bandish are impressive and generate romance. Bollywood music is full of songs based on Raga Bhairavi that express the emotion of love, romance and longingness. Some of the examples are ‘Humein tumse pyar kitna’ - Kudrat; Meethe bol bole bole payaliya - Kinara, Chalte chalte yun hi koi mil gaya thha - Pakeezah and so on. Tonal quality of violin instrument is very close to the voice. Feelings of yearning, longingness and desire easily get an expression through it. It helps in emotional release. Violin’s sound – like timbre can express complex emotions. The gat or composition in Bhairavi played by Vidushi Kala Ramnath touches the heart [First Edition Arts Channel, Sept. 2019]. Studies show that even simple melodies played on violin can evoke joy and help in getting connected, thereby facilitating therapy.

Devotion, Compassion & Spirituality

Shri Damodar Pandit in his grantha ‘Sangeet Darpan’ has described Raga Bhairavi as a karuna and shant raga that evokes ‘bhakti’ or ‘devotion’ [Prabha, April 2026]. The Komal notes of Bhairavi viz. Rishabh, Gandhar, Dhaivat and Nishad evoke Karuna (compassion), bhakti (devotion) and shant (peace). Its mood is contemplative and serene. Bhairavi can induce a peaceful state through devotional and spiritual music. Such music produces a calming effect and dissolves mental clutter. This quality of Bhairavi can work well for handling anxiety, releasing stress and curing emotional imbalance. Listening to a popular classical bandish in jhaptal can evoke bhakti. It has been sung by many great artistes like Begum Parveen Sultana, Pandit Rajan and Saajan Mishra, Pandit Chhannulal Mishra and many more. Bhairavi brings tranquility and can help in spiritual upliftment and meditation. Mantra, Shlokas composed in Raga Bhairavi can be useful for therapeutic purpose. Slow tempo and slow phrases create a calming effect. Bhajans, hymns, devotional dhuns in raga Bhairavi can connect one to the divine. They can be soul stirring and can also be helpful in meditation. e.g. Divine Chants of Gayatri mantra by Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar in Raga Bhairavi [Sona Rupa, Sept. 2019]. This prayer causes spiritual and meditative stimulation. The energy of the mantra combined with music in Bhairavi can create harmonious and peaceful vibrations. It helps in reducing stress. Sacred music can lower cortisol level developing a sense of spiritual well-being. Devotional songs, mantras and chants etc. soften our emotions and provide a soothing effect on our nervous system. Due to its restful nature, Raga Bhairavi can lead to deep relaxation and can be helpful in chronic insomnia. The tonal quality of stringed instruments like Sitar, Veena and Santoor help to calm the emotions and connect to spiritual well-being. Bhairavi played on these instruments can enhance the flow of positive energy. Playing stringed instruments is linked to serotonin release. The emotional depth involved in playing these instruments can regulate mood and bring calmness. There are many bhajans in movies which are composed in Raga Bhairavi e.g. ‘Mata Saraswati Sharda, Vidya daani dayani dukh harini, jagat janani jwalamukhi mata’ - Alaap, Jyot se jyot jagate chalo, prem ki ganga bahate chalo’ - Sant Gyaneshwar. Classical as well as light music artistes all use Raga Bhairavi for devotional compositions. There are lots and lots of Bhajans in Bhairavi. e.g. Mirabai’s bhajan in Bhairavi by Vidushi Ashwini Bhide Deshpande [First Edition Arts Channel, May 2016] and ‘Jo bhaje hari ko sada’ by Pandit Bhimsen Joshi [Deepak, Jan. 2011]. The calming and soothing notes of Bhairavi can reduce stress, anxiety, emotional restlessness, mental noise, hypertension and chronic headaches.

Sadness, Grief and Lamentation

Bhairavi evokes the emotion of sadness and grief. This quality of Bhairavi is considered therapeutic which facilitates emotional expression in times of sorrow. Thus it is helpful in emotional release. It helps in catharsis or the purification of emotions through art forms like music, dance, writing, theatre etc. Art can evoke an emotional release of pent-up emotions. Catharsis can move a person to tears while also leaving him completely satisfied and free from sorrow. The soft Komal notes of Bhairavi and its slow, flowing, tender feelings ease the mind. Listening to or singing Bhairavi can lead to a safe release of pent-up tension and sadness. Cello and Piano instruments can generate the emotion of sadness, grief and sorrow. This has been observed in the Piano-Cello jugalbandi by Utsav Lal and Jake Charkey (Utsav, Oct. 2020). This can help in emotional healing. Many sad songs have been composed for bollywood movies in Raga Bhairavi. e.g. Chingari Koi Bhadke - Amar Prem, Bhari duniya mein akhir dil ko behlane kahaan jaayein - Do Badan, Do hanson ka joda bichhad gayo re - Ganga Jamuna.



The notes of Bhairavi can express 'viyog' (separation). Nawab Wajid Ali Shah composed a thumri in Bhairavi when he was exiled from his beloved state Lucknow by the British and sent to Calcutta. His thumri is a lament which uses the metaphor of a brides farewell from his father's home after getting married. This thumri – 'Babul mora naihar chhuto hi jaaye' became very popular and has been sung by many renowned artistes like Vidushi Girija Devi, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Vidushi Savita Devi, Vidushi Begum Akhtar, Pandit Kumar Gandharva, Vidushi Padma Talwalkar and many more. This thumri has emotional depth and can help in emotional release of pressures.

Courage and Togetherness

'Veer' rasa embodies the emotions of courage, valour, bravery and fearlessness. The word 'Veer' means heroic or brave and this rasa evokes feelings of strength and determination. This emotion can be seen in pride for the nation and feeling of patriotism. The notes of Raga Bhairavi can evoke patriotism. There are many classic patriotic songs which have been composed in Bhairavi and they have made a place in the hearts of people. These songs are :

Vande Mataram - Anand Matth

Kar chale hum fida jaan-o-tan sathiyon - Haqueeqat

Mera rang de basanti chola - The Legend of Bhagat Singh

Jayate jayate jayate satyamev jayate - Private song by Lata Mangeshkar

All above patriotic songs have the power to infuse courage amongst people.

Togetherness creates joy. It brings in a sense of belongingness. Energy and harmony is experienced when people are united and they get inspired too. Raga Bhairavi has the power to bring about a feeling of unity. An inspirational song 'Mile sun mere tumhara to sur bane hamara' (DD Archives, Aug. 2023) was developed by Lok Seva Sanchar Parishad and promoted by Doordarshan and Ministry of Information. It was set to Raga Bhairavi and promoted national integration and unity in diversity. The lyrics of the song had words of many regional language like Hindi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Urdu, Tamil, Malayalam, Bangla, Gujarati, Odisha, Marathi etc. Such songs can be used for elevating energy and building strength and resilience. High emotional energy can generate confidence and enthusiasm.

Conclusion

After a study and analysis of the above discussion, it can be said that Raga Bhairavi has many dimensions. Its scope is larger than itself. Different colours and shades of this raga can evoke a vast spectrum of emotions, like devotion, love, romance, courage, spirituality etc. The sampoorana jati of this raga gives it a sense of completeness. The trend of using twelve notes in Bhairavi creates many variations of the raga like Shuddha Bhairavi, Mishra Bhairavi, Sindhu Bhairavi etc. Due to its versatility and introspective nature Bhairavi has a significant therapeutic value. This raga appeals and heals. It enjoys a special place in the hearts of all people and is an asset in the world of music therapy.

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INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGIES: A STUDY OF KARBI TRIBAL PRACTICES IN NORTHEAST INDIA

Arjun Singh

Research Scholar, Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Allahabad

Abstract

This paper aims to examine the ecological and epistemological importance of the indigenous traditional and cultural practices of the Karbi tribe of Northeast India. The study focuses on the indigenous cultural and traditional practices of the Karbi tribe as part of the larger traditional Indian knowledge system. The study argues that Karbi socio-cultural practices constitute a functional and embedded model of sustainability as compared to the modern cultural forms.

This paper employs ethnographic and ecological research framework using primary data from relevant open-access research papers in recent years. The paper analyzes ritual ecology, material culture, and forest-based subsistence. Existing research suggests that Karbi ritual practices, including festivals and the maintenance of sacred groves, play a role in regulating human interaction with the environment and may contribute to localized forms of biodiversity conservation (Bhattacharjee et al., 2024). Similarly, material practices rooted in locally sourced, biodegradable resources reveal a low-impact production system that aligns closely with contemporary sustainability goals laid down by the UN. For example, Karbi people's dependence on non-timber forest products demonstrates a self-sustaining economic model that integrates livelihood, healthcare, and ecological balance.

The paper critically situates these practices within the global discourse of sustainable development, particularly in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It claims that while frameworks such as SDG 12 (responsible consumption), well-being (SDG 3) and SDG 15 (life on land) SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) attempt to bring sustainability through policies whereas the Karbi tribe achieves sustainability through indigenous knowledge system.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Sustainable development goals (SDGs), Health, Wellness.

Introduction

Sustainability has emerged as a dominant framework in global policy discourse, particularly through initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) introduced by the United Nations in 2015. And since 2015, the United Nations gave that conversation an official shape — the SDGs. Seventeen goals with One big vision to fix the environment, fix the economy and fix society. All at once, for the whole world. But here's the problem. When you design goals for everyone, you risk neglecting the marginalized communities in particular. The SDGs operate at a very high level. And up there, local realities can get blurry. The way a farmer in Assam manages his forest looks very different from what a policy document in Geneva imagines and that gap is worth examining. At the same time, researchers have started paying more attention to indigenous knowledge. Not as folklore or curiosity — but as actual, working systems of ecological understanding. There's even a term for it - TEK — Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Scholar, Fikret Berkes helped define it. TEK is knowledge built over generations, rooted in one place, woven into culture, belief, and daily survival. It's not written in journals but lives in practice. So this paper asks a simple question. Can these two worlds talk to each other? The focus here is the Karbi tribe from Northeast India, mostly in Assam. Their festivals, their forests, their materials, their medicine are studied in this paper. The goal isn't to prove that the Karbi are sustainable by UN standards. It's more modest than that. It's just about looking for patterns. Where do Karbi practices and the SDGs overlap, even if they don't match word for word.

Literature Review

Researchers have been studying how indigenous communities interact with nature for a long time now. These practices aren't just "old" or outdated. They actually change and adapt over time. Scholar named Fikret Berkes talks about something called TEK, which basically means that knowledge, habits, and beliefs all work together to keep nature in balance.

But here's the thing. Not everyone agrees that indigenous practices are always great. Some people think that they are romanticized too much. The truth is, not every traditional practice is automatically good for the environment. It depends on things like how many people live in an area, what tools they have, and what outside pressures they face.

The Karbis are a tribe from Northeast India. Researchers have looked at how they live alongside nature. Bhattacharjee et al. (2024) examine the ecological dimensions of Karbi festivals, suggesting that ritual practices may influence patterns of resource use. Karbi festivals. Turns out, their rituals might actually affect how they use natural resources. Das et al. (2022) focus on material culture, highlighting the use of locally sourced, biodegradable materials. This study looks at the material and



tools Karbi people make and use. Most of it comes straight from nature and breaks down naturally. No plastic is generated and hence, no waste is generated. Mipun et al. (2019) analyze the role of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in Karbi livelihoods, noting their importance for both subsistence and healthcare. It focuses on forest products that aren't timber, things the Karbi use for food and medicine. None of these studies directly talk about "sustainability." But they give us real, solid information we can connect to global sustainability goals.

The Karbi practices can be connected to the SDGs. The SDGs are basically a big global checklist for making the world more sustainable. However, these goals are mostly made by people at the top. They don't always listen to local communities or their knowledge. That's where a researcher named Elinor Ostrom comes in. She had a different idea because she believed communities can manage their own resources without needing governments to control everything. When you study about communities like the Karbi, her research seems like not just romanticization but actually groundbreaking.

Methodology

This study is a secondary data based qualitative study. It draws on three open-access studies focusing on the Karbi tribe: Bhattacharjee et al. (2024) – Rituals and ecology, Das et al. (2022) – Material culture, Mipun et al. (2019) – Forest-based livelihoods.

The analysis involves mapping specific claims from these studies onto selected SDG categories. This mapping is not intended to establish direct equivalence but to explore potential areas of alignment.

Analysis

The Karbi festivals and rituals practices show ecological regulation which can be connected with SDG 15: Life on Land. Karbi festivals aren't just celebrations. During certain times of the year, they actually restrict hunting and limit who can enter the forest. These practices work for the environment. These rules aren't written down in any law book. They just exist, passed down through culture. Then there are sacred groves. The Karbi treat certain patches of forest as holy. Nobody touches them. No cutting and hunting is allowed in certain parts of the forest. Officially, they aren't "protected areas" or anything like that. But they do the same job. Biodiversity is preserved because people stay out of sacred areas. SDG 15 is about protecting life on land and Karbi practices seem to do exactly that. SDG 15 comes from science and government policy whereas Karbi conservation comes from religion and culture. Two completely different starting points yet, the same result is achieved.

The Material Culture and Resource Use of the Karbi people can be connected to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption. The Karbi people mostly use Bamboo wood and natural fibers. Everything comes from around them. Everything breaks down naturally. There's no factory, no bulk shipping, no landfill situation. It has very low-impact on the environment. Compare that to how most of the modern world operates. Mass production, plastic packaging which produces mountains of waste. The contrast is kind of stark. SDG 12 pushes for responsible consumption — using resources wisely and reducing waste. By that standard, Karbi practices are already doing something similar. However, things are changing for the Karbi too. Markets are moving in. Synthetic materials are showing up. The old ways are being replaced, slowly but surely.

The Karbi don't just live near forests, they have a forest-based livelihood which can be correlated with SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being. They live because of forests. Mipun et al. (2019) document the role of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in Karbi society. The forest gives them food, medicine, and basically everything they need for daily life. It's not a resource they extract from. It's more like a system of which they're part of. And here's why that matters. When the forest is healthy, the people are healthy. It's a direct connection. Different plants mean different nutrients, different medicines. No pharmacy is needed. No hospital visit for every small ailment is required. They've built a whole healthcare system out of what grows around them. SDG 3 is also about health and well-being. And the Karbi are already doing that — just in their own way. It doesn't look like a clinic or a government program. But it works, for them, in their context. However, this system is fragile. Cut down the forest and the whole system starts to fall apart. Deforestation is a threat and so are the market pressures. Even government policies, meant to help, can sometimes disrupt access to forest resources. Take away the forest, and you're not just taking trees, you're taking away their healthcare, their food, their livelihood. All at once.

SDG 11 is usually talked about in terms of cities, urban planning, infrastructure and smart development. But it actually goes beyond that. It's also about preserving culture and building communities that can actually last. And that's where the Karbi come in. Their homes aren't built from concrete or steel. They use bamboo, cane and wood, materials that come from right around them. Das et al. (2022) note the extensive use of bamboo, cane, wood, and other locally available materials in Karbi material culture. These aren't just cheap alternatives. They're actually the smart ones. Renewable, biodegradable and perfectly



suited to the climate of Northeast India. The environment basically tells them what to build with, and they listen. But it's not just about materials. Karbi settlements run on community. Festivals bring people together. Clan structures create belonging. Knowledge gets passed down — not through textbooks, but through living, doing and participating. That kind of social glue is hard to manufacture. Most modern cities spend millions trying to recreate it. SDG 11 talks about "resilient communities." The Karbi already have one. Not because of government programs or urban policies. But because their culture is their infrastructure. That said, things are shifting. Modernization is moving in. Young people are migrating. Industrial materials are replacing traditional ones. And as those changes happen, something is quietly being lost — not just bamboo walls, but the knowledge, the cohesion, the identity tied to them. Sustainability isn't only about the environment. Sometimes it's about holding a community together.

In recent years, climate change has become a big topic. Usually it means government policies, international summits, new technologies are focusing on climate change. It feels very large-scale, very global, but zoom in far enough, and local practices start to matter too. However, the Karbi studies — none of them actually mention climate change. Not once. But that doesn't mean the practices they document are irrelevant. Bamboo instead of industrial materials means less energy, less emissions, less damage. Sacred groves left untouched — those forests aren't just spiritually significant, they absorb carbon and shelter species. They do the quiet, invisible work that climate scientists are desperately trying to protect. And then there's the NTFP dependence as discussed by Mipun et al. (2019). The Karbi rely on healthy forests to survive. So they don't destroy them. Not out of environmental activism — just out of necessity. But the outcome? The forest stays standing. The ecosystem holds. The Karbi didn't design their lifestyle to fight climate change. They weren't thinking about carbon footprints. These practices evolved for completely different reasons — survival, culture, belief. The low-carbon outcome is almost accidental. But accidental or not, it's real. Compared to industrialized systems of mass production, Karbi practices are remarkably light on the environment. So what does SDG 13 have to do with any of this? Not in the sense of Karbi people drafting climate policy. But in the sense that what they already do — quietly, locally, generationally — is part of what the whole world is now scrambling to figure out. That's worth paying attention to. More research is needed. But the starting point is simply this: indigenous practices and climate resilience might have more in common than we think.

Findings

The analysis above identifies several points of convergence between Karbi practices and selected SDGs. These include:

- 1.) Resource regulation through ritual practices
- 2.) Low-impact material production
- 3.) Integration of ecological and health systems
- 4.) Sustainability
- 5.) Climate action

Discussion

So what have we actually found here? A few things line up between Karbi practices and the SDGs. Their rituals regulate resource use. Their materials are low-impact. Their forest dependence ties ecology directly to health. That's SDG 15, SDG 12, SDG 3, SDG 13 and SDG 11 — all showing up in everyday Karbi life.

But don't get the wrong idea. The Karbis probably have not read UN documents. They're not consciously trying to hit sustainability targets. These practices exist because they work, in their place, for their people. That's it. Now here's the tricky part - scale. Indigenous practices work beautifully in small communities. Take them out of that context? Things get complicated fast. On the flip side, the SDGs are designed for the whole world. Which sounds great. But "the whole world" often means local realities get flattened out or ignored entirely. Then there's the deeper issue — how we know things. SDGs come from science and policy. Karbi practices come from culture and belief. These aren't the same language. Forcing one into the framework of the other loses something important. It oversimplifies. It distorts. Elinor Ostrom helps a bit here. She showed that communities can manage resources themselves, without top-down control. That's a useful idea. But even her work comes from academia. It has its own assumptions and blind spots. No framework is perfect. The honest conclusion is that Karbi practices and global sustainability goals rhyme. They don't match. And that distinction matters.



Limitations

- This study is based on secondary data and does not involve fieldwork. As a result, it relies on the interpretations provided by existing researchers.
- Additionally, the focus on 5 specific domains—rituals, material culture, climate change, sustainability and forest livelihoods—means that other aspects of Karbi society are not addressed.
- The use of SDGs as a comparative framework also introduces limitations, as these goals are themselves subject to critique and revision.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the convergence of SDGs and Karbi indigenous practices. It looked at the Karbi — their rituals, their materials, their forests — and held them up next to the SDGs. Some things matched. Some things didn't. And the differences turned out to be just as interesting as the similarities. The conclusion is that indigenous practices like the Karbi's aren't useless relics. They carry real knowledge about living sustainably. But they can not be just simply copy-pasted onto the rest of the world and be called a solution. That would miss the point entirely. These systems grew in a specific place, for specific people. Context is everything. What the world governing bodies can do is listen, not to replace global frameworks, but to complicate them and to ask better questions. The SDGs aren't wrong but they're not complete either. No framework built for the whole planet can fully understand every village, every tribe, every forest. The real ask here is humility. Global development models need to make room for other ways of knowing. Not as a gesture. Not as tokenism. But as a genuine rethinking of what "sustainable" even means and who gets to define it.

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REIMAGINING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES THROUGH THE BHAGAVAD GITA: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATION WITHIN THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

Dr. Deep Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shaheed Captain Vikram Batra Government College, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

The escalating crises of climate change, ecological imbalance, and ethical disorientation call for a re-examination of sustainability beyond purely technological and economic frameworks. The Bhagavad Gita, a central text within the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), offers a philosophical resource that integrates ethical responsibility, ecological consciousness, and spiritual awareness. This paper undertakes a conceptual, philosophical exploration of the Gita's relevance to sustainable futures across philosophy, environmental ethics, psychology, and management studies. Using interpretative hermeneutic textual analysis of seven verses across five chapters of the Gita, the study reads the Gita's account of Rta, Dharma, Nishkama Karma, Yajna, Lokasangraha, Triguna, and Svadharma against specific United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Rather than presenting this mapping as a repeatable empirical method, the paper treats it as a structured but irreducibly interpretive reading, and devotes sustained attention to the risk of anachronism in translating a soteriological, wartime dialogue about metaphysical liberation (Moksha) into the idiom of a secular policy agenda. The paper concludes that the Gita's integration of ethics, ecology, and consciousness constitutes a viable resource for contemporary sustainability discourse, provided its status as a motivational-ethical supplement — not a substitute for institutional and measurable SDG frameworks — is kept explicit throughout.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita; Indian Knowledge System; sustainability; hermeneutics; Dharma; Nishkama Karma; Yajna; Lokasangraha; Triguna; Svadharma; environmental ethics; Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

Sustainability has become central to global discourse in the twenty-first century, particularly in the context of climate change, environmental degradation, and socio-economic inequality. Despite significant advances in technology and policy, ecological crises continue to threaten the balance of life on Earth. This persistence points to a limitation in prevailing approaches: development models measured chiefly by growth and freedom of choice leave the ethical and psychological drivers of unsustainable behaviour largely unaddressed (Sen, 1999).

Modern sustainability frameworks are largely rooted in a mechanistic, resource-management paradigm. Systems-oriented critiques of this paradigm have argued that treating ecological systems as collections of separable, controllable parts obscures the interdependence that actually governs living systems (Capra, 1996). This gap between mechanistic policy tools and the relational, ethical dimensions of ecological behaviour motivates a search for alternative or complementary frameworks.

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offers such a framework. IKS is characterised by an integrative approach that combines philosophy, science, ethics, and spirituality, historically treating epistemology and ethics as inseparable rather than as separate domains of inquiry (Dasgupta, 2012; Sharma, R. C., 2000). At the heart of this system lies the principle of harmony between humans, nature, and the cosmos. The Bhagavad Gita, one of the most widely read texts within IKS, offers a sustained meditation on human action, duty, and detachment that bears directly on the psychological and ethical roots of (un)sustainable behaviour.

This paper examines the relevance of the Bhagavad Gita to sustainable futures through a multidisciplinary lens, while treating the encounter between a second-order soteriological text and a first-order policy vocabulary as itself a problem requiring analysis rather than a convenience to be assumed. It proceeds as follows: the Literature Review situates the study within existing scholarship on the Gita, IKS, and sustainability; the Research Methodology section states the verse-selection criteria, translation sources, and analytic procedure used, together with the interpretive limits of that procedure; the Analysis section offers a close, cited reading of seven concepts drawn from seven verses across five chapters, including a dedicated examination of the risk of anachronism involved in this reading; the Findings section maps these concepts onto specific SDGs; the Discussion section critically evaluates the strengths and limits of this mapping; and the Conclusion synthesises the paper's contribution.



Literature Review

Scholarship engaging the Bhagavad Gita and sustainability draws on three overlapping bodies of work. The first is textual and philosophical: standard English translations and commentaries (Radhakrishnan, 1948; Easwaran, 2007) established the interpretive foundation on which later thematic readings rely, while broader histories of Indian philosophy situate the Gita's ethical vocabulary — Dharma, Karma, Guna — within the wider Vedantic tradition of cosmological order and duty (Dasgupta, 2012).

The second body of work is eco-philosophical. Deep ecology scholarship distinguished a “shallow”, anthropocentric environmentalism from a “deep”, biocentric one that rejects the separation of humans from their ecological field, arguing that environmental problems stem from a metaphysics that treats nature instrumentally rather than from insufficient technology alone (Naess, 1973). Systems theorists have independently argued for a relational, non-mechanistic view of life: Capra's (1996) “web of life” model replaces the Cartesian picture of organisms as separable machines with a network account in which properties such as resilience and adaptability emerge from relationships among parts rather than residing in any single part. This paper treats the resemblance between this systems view and the Gita's non-dual cosmology as a structural analogy worth examining, not as evidence that the two traditions make the same kind of claim — a distinction developed further in the Analysis and Discussion below.

The third body of work is applied and empirical. Sharma, A. (2010) documented how dharmic worldviews shape lived ecological practice in Hindu communities, providing an empirical bridge between textual philosophy and observable conservation behaviour — evidence largely absent from purely exegetical readings of the Gita. Gandhi's (1926) reading of the Gita as a treatise on selfless social action, meanwhile, anticipated later management and leadership interpretations of the text, while Sen's (1999) freedom-centred account of development offers a normative parallel to the Gita's emphasis on inner freedom as a precondition for right action. The United Nations' (2015) Sustainable Development Goals supply the contemporary policy benchmark against which this paper reads Gita concepts.

Despite this range, existing work rarely combines (a) close reading of specifically named verses across more than a single chapter, (b) an explicit, target-level mapping onto individual SDGs, and (c) an upfront reckoning with the interpretive and historical costs of that mapping; much of it remains either devotional-exegetical or gestures broadly at “spirituality and sustainability” without specifying a mechanism or acknowledging its own limits. This paper addresses that gap not by claiming a repeatable, quasi-empirical procedure — a claim the Discussion below shows to be untenable for hermeneutic work — but by making its verse selection, translation choices, and interpretive judgments fully transparent and open to contestation.

Research Methodology

Objectives

The study pursues four objectives: (a) to analyse the concept of sustainability within the philosophical framework of the Bhagavad Gita; (b) to examine key Sanskrit concepts and their relevance to ecological and ethical balance; (c) to explore the multidisciplinary applicability of the Gita to environmental ethics, psychology, and management; and (d) to offer a transparent, contestable mapping between the Gita's teachings and specific contemporary sustainability frameworks, namely the SDGs, while treating that mapping as an interpretive proposal rather than a validated finding.

Design and Procedure

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretative research design grounded in textual hermeneutics; it does not claim the methodological repeatability associated with quantitative content analysis, for reasons made explicit below. Seven verses across five chapters — Bhagavad Gita 2.47, 2.50, 3.10–3.14, 3.21, 7.4, 14.6–14.8, and 18.47 — were selected because they recur most consistently across the literature reviewed above as the loci classic for Nishkama Karma, ethical excellence in action, the Yajna cycle of reciprocal exchange, Lokasangraha, the interconnection of nature, the Triguna typology, and Svadharma (duty aligned with one's own nature), respectively. This is a purposive rather than exhaustive sample: seven verses out of roughly seven hundred remain a small fraction of the text, and the Discussion below treats this as a genuine limitation rather than a solved problem. The Sanskrit text of each verse is reproduced from the standard critical edition of the Gita; English renderings are the author's own paraphrase, cross-checked against the Radhakrishnan (1948) and Easwaran (2007) translations rather than quoted from them directly, to keep the interpretive argument distinct from any single translator's phrasing.



For each concept, the analytic procedure is: (1) present the source verse(s) in Sanskrit with transliteration; (2) offer a hermeneutic paraphrase of its meaning; (3) situate that meaning against the secondary literature identified in the Literature Review; and (4) propose the specific SDG target(s) to which the concept most plausibly, though not uniquely, corresponds. This four-step procedure is applied consistently across the Analysis section below, which makes each interpretive move auditable. It does not, however, make the mapping repeatable in a stronger sense: Step 4 in particular is a judgment call, and a different reader applying the same three prior steps could defensibly map a given concept onto a different SDG — Nishkama Karma, for instance, bears at least as plausible a relation to SDG 8 (Decent Work) as to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption), a tension revisited in the Discussion. The method's limitations — its reliance on interpretation rather than measurement, its small and purposively selected textual base, and its translation of a soteriological text into a secular policy idiom — are addressed at length in the Discussion, including in a dedicated subsection on anachronism.

Analysis

Rta and Dharma: The Cosmic-Ethical Order

IKS conceptualises sustainability in a manner that transcends purely material considerations. Central to this understanding is Rta, the Vedic principle of cosmic order that the universe must maintain through right action, and Dharma, the ethical duty of individuals to uphold that order (Dasgupta, 2012). Unlike modern sustainability discourse, which focuses primarily on environmental conservation as an external constraint, this framework treats sustainability as a way of life characterised by restraint, moderation, and harmony, in which human beings are participants in a cosmic system rather than its masters.

Nishkama Karma: The Ethics of Selfless Action

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन। मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गो'स्त्वकर्मणि॥ (2.47)

Karmany-evādhikāras-te mā phaleṣu kadācana / mā karma-phala-hetur-bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi.

This verse encapsulates Nishkama Karma, action performed without attachment to its results. Read against the literature above, it reframes duty as detached from personal gain rather than from consequence as such: the actor remains fully engaged with the task while releasing the anxious grasping for outcomes that, in modern terms, drives overconsumption and short-termism (Radhakrishnan, 1948). This positions Nishkama Karma as a psychological corrective to consumption behaviour rather than merely an injunction to conserve resources.

Yajna: The Cycle of Reciprocal Exchange

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः। यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः॥ (3.14)

Annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaād anna-sambhavaḥ / yajñād bhavati parjanya yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ.

This verse describes an explicit ecological cycle: living beings depend on food, food depends on rain, rain depends on yajna (sacrificial, reciprocal action), and yajna itself arises from human action. Read alongside the surrounding verses, this models sustainability as a closed loop of mutual dependency between human ethical action and material provisioning — a structure closer to a systems-ecological feedback loop than to a purely inward, psychological account of detachment. Unlike Nishkama Karma, which addresses the actor's inner orientation, Yajna addresses the actor's material position within a reciprocal cycle: to take from the cycle without returning to it is explicitly condemned in the surrounding verses (3.12–3.13) as theft (Radhakrishnan, 1948). This textual base is broader than a single verse: verses 3.10 through 3.14 develop the argument cumulatively, addressing directly the objection that a narrow verse sample cannot support claims about ecological reciprocity.

Lokasangraha: Collective Welfare

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः। स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते॥ (3.21)

Yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ / sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute lokas tad anuvartate.

This verse states that people follow the example set by those they regard as exemplary, making Lokasangraha — action undertaken for the welfare of the world — inseparable from leadership. In sustainability terms, it locates responsibility not only in individual restraint but in the demonstrative effect of visible, high-status action, a mechanism consistent with Gandhi's (1926) reading of the Gita as a programme for socially oriented conduct.

Triguna: A Qualified Reading of Human Behaviour



तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम्। सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥१४॥ (14.6)

Tatra sattvaṃ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam / sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena cānagha.

The doctrine of Triguna — Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas — describes, in the Gita's own ontology, three qualities (gunas) of material nature (prakṛiti) that bind the embodied self to action in different ways: Sattva through attachment to happiness and knowledge, Rajas through craving and restless activity, and Tamas through ignorance, negligence, and inertia (14.6–14.8). It is important to state plainly that this is a metaphysical claim about how consciousness becomes entangled with matter, not, in the first instance, a psychological typology; treating it as equivalent to a modern behavioural-style framework understates what the text is claiming. With that qualification in place, a narrower, secondary claim can be defended: because Sattva-predominant states are associated with clarity and even-mindedness, communities or practices that cultivate Sattva through ritual and social reinforcement may exhibit more stable, non-compulsive patterns of consumption than Rajas-driven acquisitiveness would predict. Read alongside Sharma, A.'s (2010) findings on dharmic ecological practice, it is this narrower behavioural corollary — not the ontological doctrine itself — that plausibly maps onto SDG 3 and, indirectly, SDG 12; readers should not infer that the Gita's metaphysics of the Gunas has thereby been shown to align with contemporary sustainability science.

The Interconnectedness of Nature

भूमिरापो'नलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च। अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥१४॥ (7.4)

Bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuh khaṃ mano buddhir eva ca / ahaṅkāra itīyaṃ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā.

Here Krishna describes an eightfold material nature — earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and ego — as a single differentiated whole. This non-dual cosmology bears a structural resemblance to the biocentric, systems-oriented ecology later and independently developed by Naess (1973) and Capra (1996), in the specific sense that all three reject a strict subject/object or mind/matter separation. The resemblance is analogical rather than genealogical, however: Krishna's ontology is grounded in a theistic, soteriological framework oriented toward liberation from embodiment altogether, whereas Naess's and Capra's positions are secular and oriented toward ecological flourishing within embodiment; treating verse 7.4 as having “anticipated” twentieth-century systems ecology, without this qualification, overstates the convergence, a point developed further in the Discussion.

Svadharmā: Duty Aligned with One's Own Nature

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्। स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥१४॥ (18.47)

Śreṣhān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhātāt / sva-bhāva-niyataṃ karma kurvann āpnōti kilbiṣam.

This verse holds that it is better to perform one's own duty imperfectly than another's duty well, because action aligned with one's constitutive nature (svabhava) does not incur the same moral cost. Applied cautiously to sustainability discourse, this principle cuts against the assumption — implicit in universal policy targets — that a single template of “sustainable behaviour” transfers uniformly across communities with different material circumstances, skills, and traditional practices; it offers a textual basis for context-sensitive rather than one-size-fits-all approaches to implementation (SDG 8, Decent Work; SDG 11, Sustainable Communities). This is also, however, the verse most vulnerable to conservative misuse — historically invoked to justify caste-based occupational fixity — and its inclusion here should not be read as an endorsement of that reading; the paper adopts only the narrower, occupation-neutral principle of contextual fit.

Multidisciplinary Readings

In environmental ethics, the Gita's treatment of nature as sacred rather than instrumental discourages exploitation and aligns broadly with deep-ecological argument (Naess, 1973), though, per the qualification above, this alignment is analogical. In psychology, its analysis of attachment and desire as the roots of unsustainable behaviour anticipates self-regulation models of well-being, offering tools — detachment, self-observation — for behaviour change rather than prohibition alone. In management, verse 2.50's characterisation of yoga as skill or evenness in action (yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam) has been read, following Gandhi's (1926) interpretive tradition, as an early statement of process-oriented rather than purely outcome-oriented performance — a reading with some resonance in contemporary discussions of sustainable operations management, though this paper does not claim the verse was addressing organisational behaviour in any direct sense.

**Sanskrit Epistemology: Pramana as a Limited Organising Analogy**

The Gita's broader intellectual context includes the concept of Pramana, the recognised means of valid knowledge — perception, inference, and testimony — a pluralistic epistemology characteristic of IKS more generally (Sharma, R. C., 2000). This paper does not claim that its own literature review or textual analysis constitutes Pramana in the classical, soteriological sense of validating transcendental truth claims; that would overstate what a modern academic reading can do. More modestly, the three-fold structure is offered here only as a loose organising analogy for the paper's use of textual testimony (the verses themselves), inference (thematic and SDG mapping), and comparison with Sharma, A.'s (2010) empirical evidence on observed dharmic ecological practice — three distinct kinds of warrant rather than three interchangeable ones.

The Anachronism Problem: Moksha and the Bureaucratic Idiom of Sustainability

The preceding readings risk a systematic distortion that deserves treatment in its own right rather than a passing caveat. The Bhagavad Gita is, in its own terms, Krishna's counsel to Arjuna on a battlefield, addressed to a specific crisis of duty, and oriented ultimately toward Moksha — liberation from the cycle of rebirth — rather than toward the management of collective material resources across generations, which is what “sustainability” denotes in twenty-first-century policy usage. The SDGs are secular, quantifiable, and institutional: they specify targets, indicators, and timelines administered by states and multilateral bodies. The Gita specifies neither institutions nor indicators; its unit of concern is the individual's inner orientation toward action, embedded in a cosmology of rebirth and cosmic order that most SDG frameworks neither assume nor require. Reading the Gita “for” the SDGs therefore risks two related distortions: first, secularising a soteriological text by stripping out the metaphysical stakes — rebirth, liberation, the status of the atman — that give its ethical claims their original force, so that what remains is a thinner, policy-compatible residue rather than the text's actual argument; second, retrofitting a bureaucratic vocabulary of targets and goals onto a text that explicitly rejects attachment to outcomes (2.47) and would, on its own terms, regard a wholesale focus on measurable targets as a symptom of the very fixation on phala (fruits) it seeks to correct.

This paper does not resolve this tension; it treats the tension itself as the more honest finding. The SDG mappings offered above should be read as controlled, acknowledged translations — moves from one idiom to another that are useful for opening a conversation between IKS scholarship and policy discourse, but that necessarily leave behind the metaphysical commitments that make the Gita's claims intelligible on its own terms. A reader who wants the Gita's actual argument about right action should read the metaphysics; a reader who wants a bridge into contemporary sustainability discourse gets, at best, a set of ethical resonances and behavioural corollaries, not a validated policy instrument, and the two should not be conflated. This distinction — rather than the SDG mapping itself — is this paper's central methodological claim.

Findings

Applying the four-step procedure above yields a proposed, contestable mapping between Gita concepts and specific SDGs, summarised below, with the caveat — developed at length above — that Step 4 in each case is an interpretive judgment rather than a rule-governed derivation.

Nishkama Karma corresponds plausibly to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production): detachment from the fruits of action removes one psychological incentive structure that drives overconsumption, though, as noted in the Methodology, an equally defensible reading could map it onto SDG 8 (Decent Work).

Yajna corresponds to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) via a mechanism distinct from Nishkama Karma: not detachment from outcomes but an explicit cycle of reciprocal exchange in which extraction without corresponding return is framed as theft (3.10–3.14).

Dharma corresponds to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions): ethical duty is presented as the basis of legitimate governance and rule-following rather than external coercion.

Lokasangraha corresponds to SDG 11 and SDG 17 (Sustainable Communities; Partnerships): welfare-oriented leadership by example generates the collective, cross-scale cooperation these goals require.

Svadharmas corresponds cautiously to SDG 8 and SDG 11: context-sensitive duty pushes against uniform policy templates, subject to the historical caveat noted above.

Triguna, specifically the behavioural corollary of cultivated Sattva rather than the Guna doctrine itself, corresponds to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being): psychological self-regulation is framed as a precondition for sustained, non-compulsive behaviour, though this maps only the corollary, not the ontological claim.



The eightfold-nature teaching corresponds to SDG 13 and SDG 15 (Climate Action; Life on Land): a non-anthropocentric cosmology in which mind and matter share a common nature undercuts the human/nature separation that underlies extractive practice, understood as an analogical rather than genealogical resemblance to systems ecology.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the Gita does not supply operational indicators or targets in the manner of the SDGs but a motivational-ethical substrate. Stating this plainly matters less as a discovery than as a corrective: popular “spirituality and sustainability” writing sometimes implies, without argument, that ancient texts contain latent policy content waiting to be extracted. Specifying the mechanism — which concepts map to which SDGs, through what interpretive step, and with what acknowledged alternative readings — replaces that vaguer claim with one that can be examined, contested, and, in the Svadharma case particularly, checked against its own history of misuse.

Discussion

The mapping above has three notable strengths. First, it integrates ethical, psychological, and ecological registers within a single text-based framework, offering a behavioural rather than purely structural model of sustainability, drawn from seven concepts and seven verses rather than four. Second, it is consistent with Sharma, A.'s (2010) empirical evidence that dharmic worldviews shape observable conservation practice, suggesting the mapping is not merely speculative. Third, by specifying verses, translation sources, and an auditable procedure — while explicitly disclaiming that the procedure is repeatable in a stronger sense — it addresses the methodological vagueness noted in the Literature Review more honestly than a false claim of repeatability would.

The approach's limits are substantial and are treated here as central rather than incidental. First, and most importantly, reading a devotional, soteriological text — composed as guidance for right action amid a specific narrative crisis oriented toward Moksha — as a sustainability policy resource risks dehistoricising it in the way developed in the Analysis above; the Gita was not written to supply SDG-adjacent targets, and its metaphysical claims are not reducible to secular environmental ethics without remainder. Second, hermeneutic reading is interpretation, not measurement, and remains vulnerable to confirmation bias: a different reader could plausibly draw different, equally defensible SDG parallels from the same verses, as flagged for Nishkama Karma and Svadharma above; the paper's contribution is a transparent, contestable reading, not a validated finding. Third, the parallel drawn between the Gita's non-dual cosmology and deep ecology or systems theory should not be overstated; Naess (1973) and Capra (1996) developed secular, independently argued positions, and equating them with verse 7.4 risks obscuring the very different justificatory structures each rests on — a risk this paper has tried to manage by stating the resemblance as analogical rather than genealogical. Fourth, the Triguna mapping onto SDG 3 works only at the level of a narrow behavioural corollary; treating the ontological doctrine of the Gunas itself as a “psychological typology for sustainable consumption,” as some popular readings do, misstates what the text claims. Fifth, the Svadharma verse (18.47) carries a documented history of use in justifying caste-based occupational fixity, and any contemporary application must isolate the context-sensitivity principle from that history rather than inherit it silently. Sixth, even with seven verses instead of four, the textual base remains a small, purposively selected fraction of a roughly seven-hundred-verse text, and broader claims about “the Gita's model of sustainability” should be read as claims about this reading of these verses, not about the text as an undifferentiated whole. Sen's (1999) emphasis on institutions and substantive freedoms is a useful counterweight throughout: ethical disposition alone, without institutional and economic structures that enable its exercise, is unlikely to produce sustainability outcomes at scale.

These limits point toward a specific direction for future research: pairing textual analysis of the kind undertaken here with empirical study — surveys or case studies modelled on Sharma, A. (2010) — that tests whether exposure to Gita-based ethical framing measurably changes consumption or conservation behaviour, rather than assuming the textual argument translates directly into practice, and with historical research that traces how verses such as 18.47 have been used and misused across different periods of Indian social history.

Conclusion

The Bhagavad Gita offers a philosophically integrated, psychologically informed account of ethical action that centres inner transformation and self-regulated conduct rather than external regulation alone. Read through Rta, Dharma, Nishkama Karma, Yajna, Lokasangraha, Triguna, and Svadharma across seven verses, and placed alongside specific SDGs, these concepts supply a motivational-ethical substrate that can complement, but cannot replace, existing structural sustainability frameworks. The paper's contribution is best understood as a conceptual, philosophical intervention rather than a validated empirical method: it makes its verse selection, translations, and interpretive judgments transparent and contestable, and it treats the



tension between the Gita's soteriological aims and the SDGs' secular, institutional idiom as a central finding rather than a footnote. Realising the practical value of this reading will require the empirical, historical, and interdisciplinary follow-up work identified in the Discussion, undertaken with the same explicitness about interpretive limits that this paper has tried to model.

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THE MULTIMODAL AI-DRIVEN ASSISTIVE WRITING FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

Gurmeet Kaur¹, Dr. Arvind Kumar²

1 Research Scholar, Department of Computer Applications, CT University, Ludhiana, Punjab

2 Professor, School of Engineering and Technology, CT University, Ludhiana, Punjab

Abstract

Writing is a crucial component of a human communication, education and online activity. Academic performance and becoming a productive member of society in the contemporary learning settings depend on effective writing as one of its determinants. However, individuals with motor disabilities, dysgraphia and learning disabilities tend to severely struggle with handwriting as well as written communication, limiting their engagement with an educational and digital ecosystem. This paper presents Multimodal AI-powered Assistive Writing Framework, as a sustainable and adaptable system, which can make writing as accessible as possible and the user as independent as possible. The architecture is a combination of smart pen-based handwriting, speech-to-text, and deep learning-based handwriting recognition and natural language processing (NLP)-based error detection in one architecture. The system can also give real-time feedback in multimodal to increase the legibility of the writing, grammar and contextual coherence. Sustainability has also been put in the limelight of the proposed framework through the modular design, low-cost implementation and energy efficient processing and is therefore appropriate to be implemented in most educational environments and even in resource limited environments. The framework will help to achieve the digital accessibility and equitable participation through the inclusion of artificial intelligence in the system design.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Smart Systems, Assistive Technology, Inclusive Education.

Introduction

Writing skill is an important part of human communication, and an essential skill in learning, assessment and interaction in the online environment. Writing skills in the modern classroom are associated with learning, achievement, cognitive development and learning activities (Graham, 2020). Writing contributes to the creation, assessment, and engagement in the online world.

However, students with motor disabilities, dysgraphia and learning disabilities face numerous challenges when writing that impede their academic performance and involvement in online activities (Santangelo & Graham, 2021). Restricted motor abilities can impact fine motor control needed for writing, leading to challenges in letter formation, spacing and speed of writing. There are also other problems of spelling, structure and coherence of text (Nabhan & Kamel, 2021).

These challenges are further enhanced in the digital age where people need to write in order to gain access to learning resources, to accomplish tasks, and to engage in online discussion forums (Santangelo & Graham, 2021). This leads to decreased engagement and self-esteem for persons with writing difficulties.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has resulted in the development of technologies that can help support these issues. As an example, there have been tremendous steps of progress in the area of speech recognition and natural language processing (NLP) (Hinton et al., 2012; Yu & Deng, 2016). Moreover, the usage of transformers has enhanced language processing and understanding, which helps in writing (Devlin et al., 2019; Vaswani et al., 2017).

But the current assistive technologies are largely solitary with a limited focus on one input. This siloed processing is not optimal because users might require assistance in various aspects of writing. Multimodal technologies that combine handwriting and speech recognition are a better solution, allowing for more flexibility and adaptability (Oviatt, 2003; Baig & Kavakli, 2020).

Furthermore, the solutions to assistive technology should be sustainable. The fact that systems are cost-effective, scalable and energy efficient is significant to provide access in a wide range of environments, in particular, in low-resource environments (UNESCO, 2023).

This paper presents a Multimodal AI-Driven Assistive Writing Framework (MAAWF) that combines smart pen input, speech-to-text, deep learning-based handwriting recognition and natural language processing (NLP) error correction to create a seamless system. This system seeks to improve accessibility, independence and enable inclusive participation in digital activities.



Literature Review

The development of assistive writing systems has been greatly enhanced by the progress in artificial intelligence, machine learning and human-computer interaction. Historically, the technologies have been mostly confined to allow basic accessibility features, e.g., keyboard and speech recognition, that have made the writing process more accessible but lacked flexibility and intelligence (Al-Azawei et al., 2021).

The neural networks have been effectively used in enhancing the handwriting and speech recognition. The recurrent neural networks (RNNs) are usually employed to model the sequential information in the handwriting recognition systems (Graves, 2012), and deep neural networks have greatly improved the accuracy of speech recognition enabling real time recognition (Hinton et al., 2012).

A new era in natural language processing was ushered in with the advent of transformers. Such models (e.g., BERT) have enhanced language modeling and contextual understanding to become much more effective in grammar correction along with text generation (Devlin et al., 2019; Vaswani et al., 2017). Large language models which are created using these tools are also used to offer better text prediction and editing (Brown et al., 2020; OpenAI, 2023).

The role of multimodal systems in assistive technologies is emphasised in recent studies. Multimodal systems enable a user to feed the information in different ways (ex:speech, handwriting) to be more adaptable and user friendly (Oviatt, 2003). Research has demonstrated that these systems have the potential to decrease cognitive load and increase user satisfaction, especially among people with disabilities (Chen et al., 2023).

The human-centered design has also been considered to design assistive technology. Personalisable systems are adaptive and cater to the needs of different users and enhance user experience (Shneiderman et al., 2016; Wobbrock et al., 2011).

Though these advances have their positive sides of the same, the issues of integrating a number of technologies still remain. In the majority of cases, they possess technologies which are not interconnected, therefore, do not work as effectively. Additionally, it experiences the cost, scalability, and sustainability issues (UNESCO, 2023).

The Proposed Framework

Multimodal AI Assistive Writing Framework (MAAWF) is a proposed model that involves multimodal input and smart processing toward increasing the accessibility of writing.

Input Layer

It takes user input by this layer:

Handwriting input smart pen

Use audio to feed me to identify voice commands.

You are also responding to the desire to have flexibility with multimodal input - particularly given that users can access your content in a number of different ways.

Processing Layer

The processing layer translates input into text using AI technologies:

Handwriting Recognition Module:

Converts handwritten text to digital text using RNN models (Graves, 2012)

Speech Recognition Module:

Uses deep neural networks to translate speech to text (Hinton et al., 2012)

NLP Module:

Uses transformer models to correct grammar and understand context (Devlin et al., 2019; Vaswani et al., 2017)

Text Enhancement Module:

Enhances text quality with large language models (Brown et al., 2020; OpenAI, 2023)

Feedback Layer

Provides:

Real-time error correction

Visual and audio feedback

Personalised learning history

The multimodal fusion process guarantees integration and accuracy of input.

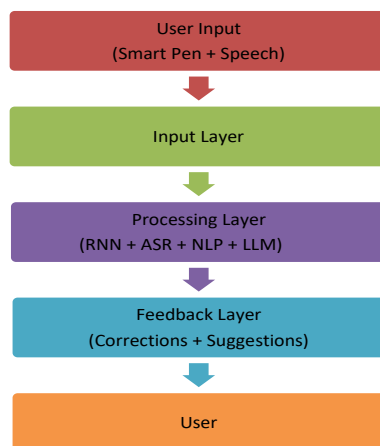


Figure 1. System Architecture

Methodology

This research adopts a design-oriented approach to creating and testing the multimodal assistive writing system. It presents the organized workflow and processing and evaluation.

Workflow:

The proposed system has a well-defined workflow that starts with data input and completes with data output. Each step is essential for the efficient and accurate processing of input.

Data Acquisition:

Data acquisition comprises the system of receiving input data from handwriting (by a smart pen) or speech (by a microphone). These are used as the key sources of data.

Pre-processing:

Data is then filtered and standardized to remove errors and inconsistencies. This makes the data fully acceptable for machine learning algorithms.

Feature Extraction:

After pre-processing at this stage, various features such as speed, stroke, and speech are extracted to enhance recognition.

Model Processing:

Then the extracted features are used by deep learning models for handwriting recognition and speech-to-text. After that the NLP models are used to refine the grammar and context from the given content.

Multimodal Fusion:

Then many module outputs are combined to produce a coherent output.

Output Generation:

At the last step, the output is generated along with the different suggestions and corrections, which are shown to the user for further action.

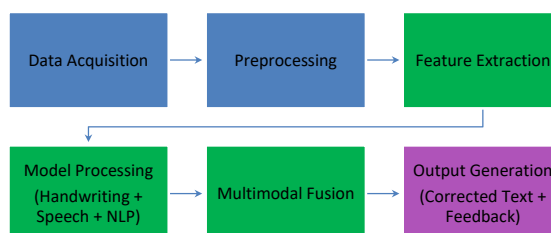


Figure 2. Methodology Workflow of Proposed Framework



Evaluation Metrics

The system is assessed using:

Handwriting and Speech Recognition Accuracy: Evaluates the accuracy of the system

Error Correction Rate: Measures importance of NLP

Response Time: Assesses effectiveness

User Satisfaction: Evaluates usability and efficiency

System design adheres to human-computer interaction design guidelines for accessibility and simplicity (Shneiderman et al., 2016; Wobbrock et al., 2011).

Expected Results

The Multimodal AI Assistive Writing Framework (MAAWF) is expected to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of writing tasks of people with motor and learning disabilities. The multimodal input offers an interface for writing which is adaptable and dynamic and overcomes the limitations of relying on one input mode which is the major drawback of existing system.

The major benefit is expected to be improved writing accuracy. The integration of handwriting recognition, speech-to-text and NLP correction allows the system to automatically detect and correct errors as they occur and will result in a linguistically and contextually correct output.

It's also expected that the system will increase autonomy of the user. Users with writing difficulties can choose to write or speak, depending on their preference and the level of their skills. This will reduce the frustration and increase confidence.

The other key benefit is the ability to provide immediate feedback. Real-time error correction and recommendations help users learn from their errors and develop their writing skills. This results in a more dynamic user interface.

The adaptive learning part of the framework also enhances the performance by evaluating the user's behaviour and providing feedback. As time goes on, it becomes more personalised and thus more effective for the user.

And the framework is likely to boost user engagement and participation in online and education settings. The system alleviates the effort of writing, allowing users to engage in learning tasks, online dialogues and communication.

Discussion

The suggested Multimodal AI Assistive Writing Framework is a significant advancement in assistive technologies, and the combination of various AI-based elements. The multimodal approach of the proposed framework offers a holistic approach to assistive writing - compared to existing systems which use a single mode of interaction.

The multimodal input enhances flexibility and user-friendliness. The system can support different users and scenarios by allowing users to switch between writing and speaking, thereby enhancing the inclusivity and accessibility of the system to different users and situations (Oviatt, 2003). This is of particular concern in an inclusive classroom setting, where the ability levels of students differ.

The system can provide intelligent and contextualised assistance with the help of such deep learning and transformer-based natural language processing (NLP) models. These enhance the writing accuracy and quality, making it more useful than traditional assistive technologies (Devlin et al., 2019; Vaswani et al., 2017). The requirement that user-centered methods be considered in designing assistive technologies is also highlighted by the system. Through considerations of usability, adaptability and personalisation, the system is designed to be easy to use and personalised to the user's needs (Shneiderman et al., 2016; Wobbrock et al., 2011).

However, there are certain difficulties. The complexity of the system, which is likely to be influenced by the integration of different AI models, can potentially affect the performance of the system in resource-constrained environments. Further, it has yet to be incorporated and tested in the actual real-life setting and therefore it is not easy to be able to evaluate its effectiveness. Despite these issues, the proposed framework can be used to a great extent in the field of inclusive education, rehabilitation and online communication. Its modular design allows it to be expanded in order to match with the developments in the technological world.



The emphasis on sustainability also enhances the framework, as it can be applied in other settings, even with limited resources (UNESCO, 2023). This is in line with the need for inclusive and equal access to technology.

Table 1. Comparison of Existing System and Proposed Framework

Feature	Existing System	Proposed MAAWF
Input Type	Single Modality	Multimodal
Feedback	Limited	Real-time
Personalization	Low	Adaptive
Accessibility	Moderate	High
Sustainability	Rarely Addressed	Included

Conclusion

Skills of writing are critical in communication, learning and participation in the digital era. However, there are still a significant number of users with motor disabilities and learning difficulties who still face difficulties in engaging in writing activities. This suggests that smart and convenient assistive technologies are needed.

In the paper, we have proposed Multimodal Artificial Intelligence-Driven Assistive Writing Framework (MAAWF) which is a combination of smart pen input, speech-to-text conversion, deep learning-based handwriting recognition and natural language processing-based correction. The multimodal input and smart processing functionality of the framework will offer a wholesome approach towards overcoming the challenges presented by traditional assistive systems. The new system enhances the accuracy of the writing process, provides real time feedback and allows adaptive learning, resulting in greater independence and engagement. The multimodal approach is adaptable in such a way that users are free to interact with the system as they deem it necessary and are capable of doing so. Also, the sustainability approach, consisting of modular and scalable design, allows the framework to be flexible to different contexts, including those of low resources.

In summary, the study contributes significantly to the creation of user-friendly and accessible solutions as it demonstrates how artificial intelligence could be leveraged to create solutions that are easy to use and to access. The framework makes it easier to access and provides an opportunity to include learning and digital communication.

Future Scope

Multimodal AI-Driven Assistive Writing Framework has a high potential in the research and practice in the future. The enhancement of the effectiveness of the system has a number of potential avenues.

To start with, the system can be implemented to be multi-linguistic in the sense that the system can be used by the users of various language backgrounds. This will improve accuracy and usability of the system in different jurisdictions.

Secondly, the need to develop a prototype system that will incorporate a smart pen technology and AI software modules will be necessary. This will facilitate the testing of this framework both in assistive and educational context.

Thirdly, the research in the future can be based on the addition of personalisation methods. This would enable more individual feedback and learning experiences based on user interactions and behaviours.

It may be incorporated into the education technology platform and online learning management systems, which will also allow its integration within the classroom environment and in other online learning environments. This would help in making it accessible and help in making it a learning process that is inclusive.

Finally, the integration with new technologies, e.g. augmented reality (AR) or wearable devices, can also be considered in work in the future, to offer the user more immersive and interactive experiences.

Lastly, the system can be simplified to become more efficient in low-resource environments by simplifying the computational load and energy usage and making it more accessible and scalable.

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MALUR KARAGA AS A LIVING KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM: COMMUNITY, RITUAL ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN KARNATAKA

Harshini G

Student, Department of MBA, SJC Institute of Technology, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka, India

Abstract

Malur Karaga, a deeply rooted ritual tradition in Karnataka, embodies a rich continuum of history, mythology and community based knowledge systems. Historically associated with the worship of Draupadi from the Mahabharata tradition, Karaga is believed to have evolved through centuries as a sacred practice upheld by specific community custodians, where ritual performance, oral narratives and symbolic enactments preserve collective memory and cultural identity. Oral histories and local accounts indicate that the Malur Karaga tradition has been practiced continuously for several centuries commonly traced back over 300–500 years sustained through hereditary custodians and community-led transmission. The festival also attracts thousands and lakhs of devotees and participants, including visitors from neighbouring districts and other states, reflecting its expanding socio-cultural significance beyond the local context. In Malur, this tradition has retained its localized distinctiveness while adapting to changing socio-cultural dynamics, making it a compelling example of a living Indian Knowledge System (IKS). This study conceptualizes Malur Karaga as an integrated knowledge system operating at the intersection of community agency, ritual economy and cultural sustainability. Adopting a qualitative-dominant mixed-method approach with an ethnographic orientation, the research draws on primary data through in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions with ritual specialists, community members and local economic actors. It examines how historically embedded knowledge is transmitted across generations, how community institutions informally govern the festival and how ritual practices sustain localized economic networks. By situating Malur Karaga within sustainability and policy frameworks, it proposes pathways for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage while promoting community-led development, demonstrating how historically evolved traditions function as resilient and adaptive knowledge systems in contemporary society.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Malur Karaga, Ritual Economy, Community Agency, Intangible Cultural Heritage.

INTRODUCTION

In the quiet cultural landscape of Karnataka, Malur Karaga stands not as a spectacle, but as a deeply rooted, living expression of tradition that has silently endured through generations. Unlike widely publicized ritual festivals, Malur Karaga remains intimate, community driven and authentically preserved, making it a rare example of a cultural system that thrives without external validation or institutional support. It is here that culture is not displayed, it is lived, practiced and continuously renewed through collective memory and participation. Malur Karaga transcends the conventional understanding of a festival. It operates as a living knowledge system, where every ritual act encodes meaning, every participant becomes a carrier of tradition and every cycle of celebration reinforces a shared identity. Knowledge is neither written nor formally taught; instead, it flows organically through observation, participation and intergenerational transmission, ensuring continuity without dependence on documentation. This makes Malur Karaga not only resilient but also adaptive, capable of evolving while preserving its core essence. What makes Malur Karaga particularly significant is its ability to integrate multiple dimensions of life into a single cultural framework. It sustains a ritual economy that supports local livelihoods, strengthens social cohesion through collective responsibility and maintains ecological balance through the use of natural materials and alignment with seasonal cycles. In doing so, it challenges modern assumptions that sustainability requires formal systems, proving instead that traditional practices can inherently embody sustainable principles. Despite its richness, Malur Karaga remains largely underexplored in academic and policy discourse. Its localized nature has kept it away from mainstream attention, creating a critical gap in understanding how such traditions function as self-sustaining socio-cultural systems. This study seeks to bring Malur Karaga into focus not merely as a ritual, but as a dynamic, intelligent system where culture, economy and ecology converge. Malur Karaga is not a tradition preserved in isolation it is a living system that organizes community, sustains knowledge and adapts to change, offering a powerful model for cultural resilience in the modern world. Malur Karaga transforms a community into a living archive, where every ritual act becomes a record, every participant a bearer of knowledge and every cycle a renewal of cultural intelligence.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

At the heart of the Malur Karaga is a striking ritual: a male priest, known as the Karaga bearer, dresses as Draupadi. Clad in a saree, bangles, and feminine jewelry, he carries a Karaga (sacred pot) on his head, adorned with jasmine flowers and long



garlands symbolizing Draupadi's unbound hair. He becomes a vessel for her divine presence, leading a captivating nighttime procession through the streets. Surrounded by music, chants, and rituals, he doesn't merely represent Draupadi—he becomes her. This transformation is both deeply spiritual and symbolically bold, offering a fascinating commentary on gender and divinity. While a man undertakes this central role, women play a vital part in the festival's success.

For the Vahnikula Kshatriya community, Draupadi is more than a legendary queen—she is their kuladevata (family deity). In Malur, her story isn't distant mythology but a living source of values like justice, resilience, and devotion. Every ritual in the Karaga is infused with her presence, constantly reminding devotees of her strength and unwavering dharma. The epicenter of these celebrations is the Dharmaraya Temple, believed to be over 250 years old. Historical inscriptions from 1685 speak of land grants and the revival of the area by local rulers, who invited artisan communities and organized markets that continue to thrive today.

Malur was once called Malligepura. Jasmine flowers are cultivated widely in it. A famous temple is situated in Chikka Tirupati, which means "small Tirupati" in Kannada. Karaga is a major festival in Malur. The festival is celebrated in Malur exactly a week after it happens in Bangalore.

The crowning glory is the Karaga festival, which is celebrated in the town of Malur, about 30 miles away on the Bengaluru-Chennai highway. It throws a flood of light on the Thigala clan's Draupadi worship ritual called the Karaga festival. The Malur-based Karaga festival is celebrated over 13 days in the summer months, usually starting on the first Friday after the Ugadi New Year day.

The participation of Muslim leaders in the Karaga Utsav, celebrated by the Thigal community of the taluk, carries a message of harmony. It is believed that Goddess Shakti is manifest in the form of a Karagad priestess who prays for peace and tranquility in humanity, good rain and good crops. That is why the 'Maluru Karagad Shakti Utsav' is famous in the state.

Training three months in advance. The priest carrying the Karaga is required to undergo about three months of physical preparation and observe the rules and regulations. The strict training of the Vahnikula leaders greatly benefits the Karagad priest. Along with them, about 250 to 300 brave sons follow the rules and regulations and participate in the pujas, staying away from their homes until the end of the festival.

The celebration of Karaga Shaktyutsava is due to the cooperation and concern of Vahnikulastha Doddamuniyappa, Chikkamuniyappa, C. Papayya, R. Papanna, Velappa, Katurappa, Narayanappa and M.R. Chennarayappa. Velappa, Sandappa, Krishnappa, Seenappa, Abbanna, Narayanaswamy, Shankarappa, Srinivasa, Venkataramanappa, Sandappa and others belong to the priestly family of Karaga. It is believed that this village Jatra celebration is the reason for the establishment of peace. It is also practiced that the girls of Malur, who are not from different parts, should participate in this festival in their hometown. (Karnataka Janapada Academy, 2026)

The Malur Karaga Festival, a distinctive ten-day event in April honoring Draupadi from the Mahabharata, centers on a ritual procession where a male devotee balances a flower-adorned pot (karaga) while dancing barefoot, attracting thousands for its display of devotion and fire-walking ceremonies. Additionally, the annual Rath Yatra organized by the local ISKCON temple in June or July sees chariots carrying deities Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra pulled by devotees, fostering a sense of shared spirituality and drawing participants from surrounding areas. Malur's traditional arts are prominently represented by the stone sculpting heritage of Shivarapatna village in the taluk, where skilled artisans craft intricate granite statues of deities and mythological figures using techniques passed down through generations. This craft, involving over 300 families, produces sculptures in various styles influenced by historical dynasties like the Hoysalas and Vijayanagara, and supports the local economy through sales to temples and collectors across India. (Chethan N, The Malur Karaga Festival: A Living Celebration of Draupadi's Divine Power)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the cultural, religious, and social significance of the Malur Karaga tradition. Primary data were collected through participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Participant observation enabled the researcher to directly observe rituals, processions, and ceremonial practices, providing insights into the sequence of events, the roles of participants, and the symbolic meanings embedded within the festival. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with priests, community elders, and local participants who possess extensive knowledge and experience of the Karaga tradition. These interviews facilitated an in-depth understanding of the historical background, ritual practices, cultural values, and contemporary relevance of the festival.



Secondary data were gathered from a variety of reliable sources, including regional newspaper articles, government cultural records, academic journals, and books related to Karaga traditions and Karnataka's folk heritage. These sources provided historical context and supported the interpretation of primary findings.

The study employed purposive sampling, selecting participants based on their direct involvement in the Malur Karaga festival and their knowledge of its customs and traditions. Data collection was carried out using structured interview schedules designed to capture detailed information regarding ritual practices, cultural beliefs, and community participation.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, narrative analysis, and comparative analysis. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes such as knowledge transmission, ritual economy, and community participation. Narrative analysis helped interpret oral histories, local stories, and the symbolic meanings associated with ritual performances. Comparative analysis was undertaken to compare the Malur Karaga tradition with other regional Karaga festivals in order to identify its distinctive cultural characteristics and unique ritual practices.

Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before conducting interviews and observations. The study respected religious beliefs, ritual secrecy, and the cultural sensitivities of the local community. No interference was made during sacred ceremonies or traditional practices, ensuring that the research was conducted with cultural sensitivity and ethical responsibility.

Overall, this methodology enables the study to move beyond mere documentation and enter the lived reality of the Malur Karaga tradition, capturing it not simply as an annual festival but as a dynamic, evolving, and self-sustaining cultural system that continues to preserve the historical identity, collective memory, and intangible cultural heritage of the Malur community.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The results of this study establish that Malur Karaga is far more than a ritualistic celebration; it is a self-sustaining cultural system where knowledge, economy, and community are seamlessly interwoven. The findings reveal that knowledge is not preserved through documentation but through disciplined practice, where each ritual act becomes a medium of transmission across generations. The festival fosters a strong sense of collective ownership, with the community functioning as both the custodian and the executor of tradition. Simultaneously, it generates a localized ritual economy that supports livelihoods without compromising cultural integrity. Its reliance on natural materials and seasonal alignment further reflects an inherent ecological consciousness embedded within tradition. Despite challenges such as limited documentation and declining youth engagement, Malur Karaga continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience, sustained by belief, participation and continuity. Thus, the study conclusively highlights Malur Karaga as a living, adaptive system that not only preserves heritage but actively organizes social, economic and cultural life within the community. Malur Karaga emerges from the findings not as a passive cultural relic, but as an active and evolving system of lived knowledge. It challenges conventional notions of preservation by demonstrating that continuity is achieved through participation rather than documentation. The ritual functions as structured processes of learning, where each generation inherits responsibility along with tradition. The community-driven nature of the festival ensures social cohesion, while its informal economic activities provide tangible benefits to local stakeholders. Moreover, its alignment with ecological practices reflects an intrinsic sustainability that modern systems often strive to achieve artificially. In essence, Malur Karaga represents a model where culture itself becomes a mechanism of resilience and continuity.

The study ultimately reveals that Malur Karaga is not sustained by external recognition but by internal conviction. It is a system where every individual becomes a participant, every ritual becomes a lesson and every cycle becomes a renewal of collective identity. The absence of formal structures does not weaken it; instead, it strengthens its adaptability and authenticity. By simultaneously preserving knowledge, generating economic activity and maintaining ecological balance, Malur Karaga demonstrates a rare form of holistic sustainability. It stands as clear evidence that traditional community systems possess an inherent intelligence capable of organizing and sustaining themselves across time. Malur Karaga proves that tradition does not survive by being preserved, it survives by being practiced, shared and continuously re-created by the community itself.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study position Malur Karaga not merely as a cultural practice, but as a self-sustaining socio-cultural system that challenges conventional frameworks of knowledge, economy and sustainability. Unlike formal systems where knowledge is codified and institutionalized, Malur Karaga demonstrates that knowledge can be embedded within practice and



transmitted through lived experience. This aligns with interpretivist perspectives, where meaning is constructed through participation and with ethnographic understanding of rituals as carriers of collective memory.

From a systems theory perspective, Malur Karaga functions as a closed-loop cultural system, where inputs such as belief and participation are continuously transformed into outputs like social cohesion, economic activity and cultural continuity. The feedback mechanism through elders, community norms and repeated ritual cycles ensures correction and preservation without the need for external regulation. This directly supports the conceptual model of the Ritual Intelligence Grid, where each component of the system reinforces the other, creating a dynamic and adaptive structure.

The study also highlights the presence of a ritual economy, which operates on principles fundamentally different from formal market systems. Transactions within Malur Karaga are largely trust-based, community-oriented and seasonal, emphasizing collective benefit over individual profit maximization.

Conclusion

The Malur Karaga is far more than a traditional festival; it is a living symbol of Karnataka's rich cultural heritage, spiritual values, and collective identity. For centuries, it has preserved ancient rituals, strengthened social harmony, and passed indigenous knowledge from one generation to the next. The festival reflects the deep devotion of the community while promoting unity, mutual respect, and cultural continuity. Beyond its religious significance, Malur Karaga contributes to the local economy by supporting artisans, flower vendors, musicians, small businesses, and tourism. It also serves as an important platform for preserving intangible cultural heritage in an era of rapid modernization. However, urbanization, changing lifestyles, and declining participation among younger generations present challenges to its long-term sustainability. Therefore, documenting, promoting, and safeguarding Malur Karaga through community participation, academic research, cultural education, and government support are essential. By preserving this unique tradition, society not only protects an invaluable cultural treasure but also ensures that future generations continue to experience its spiritual, historical, and social significance. Malur Karaga stands as a timeless testament to faith, resilience, and the enduring legacy of Karnataka's living traditions.

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ROLE OF WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL BHAKTI MUSIC AS AN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM: A STUDY OF ORAL TRADITIONS

Jackie Narway

Senior Research Scholar (SRF), Department of Music, University of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

The concept of Indian knowledge system (IKS) encompasses the diverse intellectual and cultural traditions that have been transmitted across generations through oral and performative practices. Among these, Bhakti music represents a significant medium of spiritual expression and cultural continuity. Women have played a crucial yet often underrepresented role in sustaining and transmitting these traditions, particularly through oral forms such as devotional singing, temple practices, and community-based performances. The aim of this study is to analyze the role of women in traditional devotional music within the context of Indian knowledge systems, particularly focusing on oral traditions. It aims to show how women function as carriers, preservers, and innovators of devotional knowledge in different regional and cultural contexts. Despite their significant contributions, their role has often been marginalized or ignored in scholarly discussions, leaving a gap in the understanding of the bhakti traditions.

The research adopts a qualitative and analytical approach, drawing upon existing literature, historical references, and selected case examples from oral traditions. It explores the pedagogical processes, models of transmission, and socio-cultural contexts through which women contribute to the continuity of bhakti music.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Oral Tradition, Women Role, Cultural Transmission, Devotional Music.

Introduction

The concept of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represents a vast and dynamic body of indigenous knowledge that has evolved in the Indian subcontinent over centuries through lived experiences, cultural practices, and oral traditions. These knowledge systems are not merely historical heritage, but continue to shape contemporary discussions on sustainable development, ethics, and cultural continuity. Among the many expressions of spiritual knowledge systems (IKS), devotional music occupies a central place as a medium of spiritual communication, social integration, and cultural preservation.

Bhakti Sangeet, deeply rooted in devotion and collective consciousness, has been transmitted primarily through oral traditions across generations. In the context of Madhya Pradesh, this tradition manifests in diverse forms such as regional bhajans, folk devotional songs, and temple – based singing practices, reflecting the rich cultural fabric of the region. The continuation of these traditions depends largely on community participation and informal learning methods.

In this context, women have played a significant but often neglected role in the dissemination and preservation of devotional traditions. From domestic devotional practices to community gatherings and temple rituals, women have contributed to the preservation, adaptation, and dissemination of devotional music. Their role extends beyond performance, encompassing pedagogy, cultural memory, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

Despite their substantial contributions, the role of women in bhakti music has not received adequate scholarly attention, particularly within the discourse of Indian knowledge systems. This creates a significant gap in understanding the gender dimensions of knowledge transmission in traditional music practices. Addressing this gap becomes crucial for developing a more inclusive and comprehensive perspective on traditional music knowledge (IKS).

This paper seeks to examine the role of women in traditional bhakti music within the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems, with special reference to Madhya Pradesh. It aims to analyse how oral traditions function as a medium of knowledge transmission and how women actively participate in sustaining and reshaping these traditions in contemporary contexts.

Literature Review

The Bhakti movement has been widely studied as an important socio-religious phenomenon in Indian cultural history, emphasizing devotion, egalitarianism, and spiritual accessibility. Scholars such as John Stratton Hawley (2005) have discussed this topic extensively have highlighted the centrality of Bhakti traditions in shaping religious and cultural discourse, particularly through vernacular expressions and musical forms. Bhakti music, as an essential component of this movement, has served as a medium for both spiritual expressions and social communication.



The role of women in Bhakti traditions has also attracted scholarly attention, through it remains comparatively underexplored. Karen Pechilis (2012) argues that the book explores the contributions of women Bhakti saints and emphasizes how their devotional expressions challenged existing gender norms and also created alternative spaces for spiritual activism. Similarly, the contributions of saints like Kabir and their inclusive devotional practices, indirectly reflecting the participation of women in these traditions.

From the perspective of Indian knowledge systems, devotional music can be understood as a living tradition that integrates knowledge, practice and cultural memory. Kapila Vatsyayan (2001) underscores the importance of traditional art forms as carriers of indigenous knowledge, transmitted through performative and oral practices. These traditions are sustained not only through formal institutions but also through community based and familial transmission.

In the context of Madhya Pradesh, folk and devotional music traditions reflects a rich synthesis of regional cultural and spirituality. Studies on folk traditions, such as those by Sharma (2010), indicate that oral transmission plays a crucial role in preserving these musical forms across generations. Women, in particular, contribute significantly to this process through participation in household rituals, community singing, and informal pedagogical practices.

Despite these contributions, there remains a notable gap in integrating the role of women into the broader framework of Indian knowledge systems, particularly in the context of the devotional music traditions of Madhya Pradesh. This study attempts to address this gap by examining the interrelationships between gender, oral tradition, and the dissemination of cultural knowledge.

Women as Carriers and Transmitters of Bhakti Traditions

With the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems, knowledge is transmitted through lived experiences, cultural practices, and community participation rather than through formal institutional mechanisms alone. In this context, women have historically played a key role in maintaining and transmitting devotional traditions, particularly through oral and performative practices embedded in everyday life.

The bhakti movement in India created important spaces for devotional participation that transcended rigid social hierarchies. As noted by K.S. Singh (2004), the diversity of Indian cultural traditions reflects a complex interplay of community practices where women contribute actively to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Their role in devotional contexts is often expressed through singing, storytelling, and ritual participation, which function as important modes of knowledge transmission.

From a musicological perspective, Ashok Da. Ranade (2006) emphasizes that Indian musical traditions are sustained not only through formal training but also through community based and informal practices. In such contexts, women play key roles of continuity, especially in the domestic and social spheres where devotional music is regularly performed.

Moreover, the transmission of bhakti music through oral traditions highlights the pedagogical role of women within families and communities. According to Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (2011), traditional knowledge systems in India are deeply rooted in oral culture, where practices such as singing devotional songs are learned through observation, repetition and participation. Women, being central to household and community life, facilitate this process by passing on songs, meaning and cultural values to subsequent generations.

In many regions of India, also parts of Madhya Pradesh, women actively participate in devotional singing traditions during festivals, rituals, and daily practices. These work not only reinforce spiritual engagement but also contribute to the preservation of cultural identity and continuity.

Finally, women function as crucial carriers and transmitters of bhakti traditions within Indian Knowledge Systems. Their contributions, through often informal and undocumented, play a fundamental role in sustaining the process of devotional music and cultural knowledge across generations.

Gendered Spaces of Bhakti: Women's Participation in Domestic, Communal, and Ritual Contexts

The participation of women in bhakti music traditions cannot be clear as a uniform or monolithic phenomenon; rather, it is shaped by distinct social and cultural spaces in which devotional practices occur. These spaces play a vital role in determining the modes of participation, transmission and transformation of devotional music within primarily domestic, community and ritual Indian Knowledge systems.



For instance, in household rituals, women regularly sing devotional songs during daily pooja or festivals, enabling children to learn through repeated exposure.

In communal spaces such as satsang, village gatherings, and local devotional groups provide platforms for collective musical expression. In these settings, women participate actively in group singing, often forming informal networks that facilitate the exchange of songs, styles, and devotional narratives. These community interactions not only strengthen social cohesion but also enable the dissemination of cultural knowledge across different sections of society. according to Nandini Sundar (2001), community – based practices in India play a significant role in sustaining cultural traditions by fostering shared participation and collective memory. Although participation in formal ceremonial ceremonies has historically been determined by social norms and institutional structures, women continue to contribute through singing during religious ceremonies, vratas (ritualistic rituals), and festive performances. These practices highlights' the dynamic coherence of spaces, where women face both opportunities and constraints within traditional structures. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (2011) emphasizes that ritual performances in India are not merely religious act but also serve as repositories of cultural knowledge and identity.

Similarly, during temple rituals and festivals, women contribute through devotional singing, reinforcing the continuity of musical traditions.

Importantly, these different spaces are interconnected, allowing for the continuous flow of knowledge between private and public domains. Songs learned within the household often find expression in communal gatherings, while ritual practices influence domestic devotional area.

Now, analyzing women's participation through the lens of gendered spaces provides a deeper understanding of how bhakti music functions as an Indian Knowledge System. It reveals that knowledge transmission is not confined to a single domain but is distributed across interconnected social contexts, shaped by gender roles cultural practices, and collective experiences.

Oral Tradition as Adaptive and Contextual Knowledge System in Bhakti Practices

Oral tradition in bhakti music should be understood not merely as a mechanism of preservation but as an adaptive and context – sensitive knowledge system that evolves in response to changing social, cultural and temporal contexts. Within Indian knowledge systems, knowledge is not static; rather, it is constantly reinterpreted and reconstructed through practice, performance, and interaction with the community.

In Bhakti traditions, devotional songs do not have a fixed, authorities form. Lyrics, melodies, and performances styles vary across regions and communities. This flexibility allows devotees to reinterpret the content of devotional songs to suit their social and cultural environment. As Rustom Bharucha (2003) argues, traditional performances practices in India are inherently dynamic, shaped by local contexts and collective participation rather than rigid textual authority.

Moreover, oral traditions facilitate a particularly model of knowledge production. Unlike written traditions, where the name of the creator is fixed, devotional music can have many contributors shape and form compositions over time. This collective creativity challenges traditional notions of ownership and highlights the communal nature of knowledge in Indian traditions. A.K. Ramanujan (1986) emphasizes that Indian oral traditions operate through a plurality of versions, each reflecting the cultural specificity of its performers and audiences.

In this context, the role of women becomes particularly significant, as they actively engage in adapting and contextualizing devotional songs within domestic and communal settings. For example, in regions like Madhya Pradesh, variations in bhajan singing often reflect local dialects, cultural practices, and gender experiences, revealing how oral traditions function as living and evolving systems of knowledge.

Therefore, the oral tradition in devotional music should be viewed as an adaptable knowledge system that maintains a balance between continuity and change. This enables the preservation of core spiritual ideas while also allowing for creative reinterpretation, enduring the relevance and sustainability of devotional practices within Indian knowledge systems.

For Example, devotional songs are often learned through repeated listening and participation rather than written notation, allowing flexibility and variation in performance.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical approach, drawing on secondary sources, including books, research articles, and institutional publications related to devotional music and Indian knowledge systems. A descriptive approach is used to



examine the role of women in the transmission of devotional traditions through oral and performative practices. Selected regional examples are considered to provide contextual understanding.

Findings and Analysis

The study illustrates that women play a pivotal role in preserving and promoting traditional devotional music. They achieve this through oral traditions, the singing of devotional songs, domestic rituals, temple customs, and community participation. Their contribution extends beyond mere performance; they also act as custodians of cultural memory and facilitate the transmission of knowledge across generations.

The analysis opens that, within the realm of Indian Knowledge Systems, oral tradition functions as a dynamic and adaptive knowledge systems. Devotional songs continue to evolve through regional variations, collective participation, and real-life experiences, while simultaneously preserving their spiritual and cultural essence. This study also identifies domestic, community, and ritual settings as significant spaces.

Furthermore, the study shows that not much research has been done on women who helped spread knowledge. Their role in passing on this knowledge has not gotten attention in academic studies. Understanding what women did helps us see bhakti music as a part of Indian knowledge systems, it also shows we need to study more about gender, traditions and keeping India's cultural heritage alive, the study on women and bhakti music is important, women helped make bhakti music a big part of culture, bhakti music is still important today, the study helps us learn more about Indian culture and it also helps us understand the role of women in culture.

Conclusion

The study shows highlights that bhakti music, as an integral component of Indian knowledge systems, functions as a dynamic and living tradition sustained through continuous practice and community engagement. It is clear that the dissemination of devotional knowledge in bhakti traditions transcends formal structures and is deeply embedded in every cultural practices.

The analysis reveals that women play a crucial role as carriers, transmitters, and interpreters of devotional traditions. Their participation in domestic community, and religious rituals demonstrates how knowledge is preserved and reshaped through life experiences. Despite the lack of formal recognition, their contributions remain central to the continuity of devotional music traditions.

Furthermore, the learning underscores that oral traditions in bhakti music operate as adaptive and context – sensitive systems of knowledge. The processes of variation, reinterpretation, and collective participation enable these traditions to remain relevant across changing socio-cultural contexts while maintaining their core spiritual essence.

This paper also shows that similar patterns of knowledge circulation appear in regional contexts, including areas like Madhya Pradesh, where local practices contribute to the broader framework of devotional traditions within Indian knowledge systems. However, these local expressions require further documentation and scholarly attention.

In final conclusion, the whole study emphasizes the need to adopt a more inclusive and interdisciplinary approach in understanding Indian knowledge systems by recognizing the gendered dimensions of knowledge transmission. It calls for greater academic engagement with oral and performative traditions, particularly those sustained by women, in order to develop a more comprehensive and representative understanding of India's cultural heritage.

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WELL-BEING OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO GENDER AND LOCALITY

Kamla Devi¹, Dr. Chaman Lal²

1 M.Ed., Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, India

2 Associate Professor, Department of Education, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, India

Abstract

Wellbeing of teachers is crucial for effective teaching, professional competence and long-term sustainability of their careers. In the present investigation, the well-being of prospective teachers based on gender and locality has been studied. A descriptive survey method was used and a random sampling of 70 male and 70 female prospective teachers from Himachal Pradesh University (HPU), Shimla was used. The data were gathered by using Well-Being Scale (WBS-RK) developed by Dr. (Mrs.) Ripenjeet Kaur. Descriptive data were presented by mean and standard deviation, while independent-samples t-test and Cohen's d were used to analyse the data. The results showed that there were no significant differences between the physical, mental, social and emotional state of good health of the students, however, the spiritual aspects were significantly higher for the female students who were prospective teachers. There was no significant difference between the well-being scores of the rural and urban prospective teachers on any dimension of well-being. The study shows the importance of teacher training institutions to create a conducive atmosphere for all aspects of health development by setting up counselling, emotional support, and health-enhancing programs to ensure that teachers to be are better prepared in their future life.

Keywords: Well-being, Prospective Teachers, Teacher Education, Gender, Locality, Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being.

Introduction

Well-being has become a significant priority in education because it affects a person's functioning, coping ability and quality of life. Well-being is also important in teacher education, since it has a positive impact on professional competence, emotional resilience, the ability to relate well to others and commitment to the profession (Acton and Glasgow, 2015; Corcoran and O'Flaherty, 2022). The preparation of competent teachers should not only focus on pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical skills, but also on the general well-being of teachers.

Well-being is broadly understood as a multi-faceted phenomenon that includes physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects. All of these dimensions have a combined impact on an individual's ability to adjust to change, respond to stress, build healthy relationships, and reach personal and professional goals (Acton and Glasgow, 2015). However, the teaching profession requires emotional regulation, empathy, communication skills, adaptability and continuous engagement with students and teachers' balanced well-being is particularly significant for prospective teachers. In teacher training, pre-service teachers face a variety of academic and professional challenges such as course works, teaching practice, exams, and job insecurity. They can result in positive or negative experiences that can either foster or detract from their health and well-being depending on the presence or absence of personal and institutional support. Emotional intelligence, resilience, motivation and supportive learning environments have been found to have beneficial impacts on teacher well-being, while ongoing stress and insufficient teacher support have been linked to a negative impact on teacher growth and readiness (Vesely, Saklofske, and Nordstokke, 2014; Shepherd et al., 2016; Corcoran and Tormey, 2017).

Studies examining the factors contributing to teacher well-being have examined a variety of factors; demographic factors like gender and locality are, however, inconsistently related to teacher well-being in past research. Moreover, a few studies have explored the construct of well-being in a multi-dimensional perspective with prospective teachers in the context of teacher education in India (Halldimann, Hascher, and Flick-Holtsch, 2024). This is an indication of the need for further empirical investigation. In this background, the present study has focused upon the well being of the aspiring teachers of HP University, Shimla in the context of gender and locality. The study will examine all aspects of physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual health to provide empirical evidence that can help inform the creation of well-being-focused teacher education pedagogies and better equip future teachers.

Theoretical Framework

This is based on the concept of multidimensional approach to well-being and Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology focuses on human strengths, on resilience, on positive emotions, on meaningful relationships and on purposeful living as being



crucial for optimal functioning (Seligman, 2011). In teacher education, these attributes help future teachers to manage their academic and professional demands, and foster personal and professional development (Acton & Glasgow, 2015).

Wellbeing is considered a multi-dimensional phenomenon which involves physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions, which together make up an individual's quality of life and effective functioning (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). For teacher educators, balanced holistic health increases resilience, emotional regulation, interpersonal skills and professional readiness (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022).

Hence, the present study takes this holistic view and examines the well-being of prospective teachers in terms of five dimensions through the use of the Well-Being Scale (WBS-RK). The framework also assumes that other factors which relate to the demographics of the population may be a factor in these dimensions, and therefore, should be studied empirically, such as gender and locality.

Literature Review

The significance of teacher well-being for teaching effectiveness, teacher commitment, psychological adjustment and teacher sustainability is driving the study of teacher well-being as an important research interest in education. Research conducted internationally consistently shows that personal, institutional and contextual factors have an impact on the well-being of prospective teachers. According to Kandemir (2010), psychological adjustment and individual factors play important roles in the mental health of teacher trainees. The results of the study showed that the stronger the trainees' personal adjustment skills, the higher their emotional stability and psychological health levels during teacher preparation. Future expectations and well-being of pre-service teachers was studied by Malmberg, Hagger, Burn, Mutton and Colls (2011). Their results showed that the attitudes to professional aspirations, career concerns and preparedness were found to have significant influence on emotional well-being of prospective teachers in teacher education. The authors believed that positive future teacher expectations are associated with an increase in motivation and psychological adjustment. Parker, Martin, Colmar and Liem (2012) pointed out that psychological resources of optimism, resilience, self-confidence, and emotional competence are key factors in sustaining teacher well-being. Their studies showed that emotionally resilient teachers are more likely to handle challenges in their profession and stress in their workplace. Kim and Cho (2013) determined that intrinsic motivation and positive teaching beliefs are significant and positive factors in regard to professional identity and overall well-being of pre-service teachers. The study indicated that motivation is seen as a protective factor to academic stress. Vesely, Saklofske and Nordstokke (2014) investigated emotional intelligence as a predictor of teacher well-being. The results of their study showed that future teachers who had more emotional competency had higher resilience, more effective stress management and better psychological health. Acton and Glasgow (2015) defined teacher well-being as a complex phenomenon affected by personal factors, institutional factors, workload, relationships with others and professional experiences. Their work highlighted that well-being should be considered as a process and not a state of being.

Inozu and Şahinkarakaş (2016) investigated social and mental health of pre-service English language teachers and concluded that supportive classroom environment, positive peer relationships and good teacher-student relationship have significant positive impacts on psychological adjustment and social well-being. Shepherd et al. (2016) emphasized the need to include structured well-being programmes in teacher education curriculum such as counselling, stress-management training, mindfulness practices and reflective learning opportunities to enhance the professional competence of teachers in the future. Corcoran and Tormey (2017) have shown that the social-emotional skills make a significant contribution to pre-service teachers' psychological well-being. They highlighted the role of emotional awareness, empathy, interpersonal communication and self-regulation in teacher training. Dicke et al. (2018) found that supportive institutional environments, manageable work demands, and access to sufficient education resources are important factors affecting occupational wellbeing. The study again highlighted the significant role of organisational support in fostering teachers' wellbeing. A study by Nislin and Pesonen (2019) revealed that teacher well-being is related to such factors as competence, belongingness, and positive interpersonal relationships. Based on their studies, they proposed that a conducive psychological adjustment of prospective teachers is fostered by the educational environment characterized by socio-supportive relationships. Manasia et al. (2020) investigated positive emotions, professional experiences and psychological resources as factors that lead to teacher wellness. They found that emotional positivity and job satisfaction are two factors that can promote sustainable job development. As reported by Corcoran and O'Flaherty (2022), the wellbeing of prospective teachers develops in teacher education and shifts as a result of the academic experiences, institutional support and personal growth. They were interested in highlighting that teacher well-being is a developmental process not a static state of being. A multidimensional model of pre-service teacher well-being,



across diverse countries, has been developed and validated by Haldimann, Hascher and Flick-Holtsch (2024). They have found that teacher wellbeing has a physical, emotional, psychological, social, and professional dimension that work together. International evidence in recent years continues to confirm that resilience, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, institutional support and professional identity are important factors contributing to well-being among future teachers, and this has led to an increased focus on the need to embed well-being as part of teacher education programmes. Well-being has also been acknowledged as a key factor in teacher effectiveness and professional development in educational research in India. The majority of the studies conducted in India have focused on the mental health, emotional adjustment, stress, resilience, and demographic factors of prospective teachers and teachers. According to Rani and Midha (2010), emotionally sound teachers have higher level of professional commitment, higher level of classroom effectiveness and higher level of interpersonal relationship. They found emotional balance to be significant part of teacher effectiveness.

Singh & Kaur (2011) reported that personal attributes, family support and educational environment are very important factors affecting the psychological health of teacher trainees. Individual and contextual factors were highlighted in their study. Kumar and Kumar (2012) investigated the relationship between occupational stress and mental well-being of teachers and found that occupational stress had a significant negative impact on psychological well-being. They suggested that the teacher education programmes should incorporate stress-management interventions. Emotionally supportive learning environment is significant for adjustment and well-being of student teachers as observed by Sharma and Sharma (2013). Their results identified an institutional climate as one factor of predictive importance for psychological health.

Bisht and Rani (2014) suggest that teacher education should stress on developing the whole personality of the pupils along with the academic achievement. They suggested the incorporation of well-being oriented activities in teacher preparation programmes.

In subsequent studies conducted in India, the role of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, resilience, mindfulness, social support, and positive institutional environment on teacher well-being has been found to be positive while stress, anxiety and lack of adequate professional support are found to be negative for psychological adjustment. There has also been recent interest in demographic factors like sex and place of residence, but results have been mixed and there is a need for further empirical research on such factors with the help of multidimensional indicators of well-being.

Research Gap

Despite the extensive research on teacher well-being, the majority of research has examined only psychological dimensions of teacher well-being, and not its multidimensional nature. The results of the studies on the impact of gender and locality on the well-being of future teachers are inconclusive. Furthermore, there is meager evidence from the teacher education institutions in India, especially in HP. The present study thus aims to explore the multidimensional well-being of prospective teachers, in relation to gender and locality.

Significance of the Study

The present study joins the current literature on teacher well-being by offering empirical evidence of the multidimensional well-being of prospective teachers, in relation to gender and locality. The findings could serve to enhance the awareness of teacher educators and institutions about the well-being needs of prospective teachers and create conducive school climate for a holistic development. The study also provides valuable information for curriculum planners and policymakers to enhance the emphasis on well-being in teacher education programs. The study underscores the significance of the wellness of the teacher in teacher preparation, thus the formation of a resilient teacher in terms of professional competence and emotional balance.

Objectives of the Study

- To compare the well-being of prospective teachers with respect to gender across the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.
- To compare the well-being of prospective teachers with respect to locality across the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is no significant difference in the well-being of prospective teachers with respect to gender across the dimensions of physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being.



- There is no significant difference in the well-being of prospective teachers with respect to locality across the dimensions of physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Delimitations of the Study

- The study was delimited to prospective teachers of Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, only.
- The study was confined to well-being as the main variable, with gender and locality as comparative variables.
- The sample of the study was limited to 140 prospective teachers.
- The study was delimited to the use of the Well-Being Scale (WBS-RK) for data collection.

Methodology

In the study, the descriptive survey method was used in order to find out the well-being of prospective teachers based on gender and locality.

Population

The subjects were prospective teachers of Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla.

Sample

A sample of 140 prospective teachers (70 males and 70 females) was used. On the basis of locality, 78 respondents were from rural areas, and 62 were from urban areas. Random sampling technique was used to select the participants.

Tool used

Dr. (Mrs) Ripenjeet Kaur's Well-Being Scale (WBS-RK) was used to collect data. The scale consists of 35 items that measure the five dimensions of well-being: physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual.

Variables

The independent variables used were gender (Male/Female) and locality (Rural/Urban).

Use the following for the dependent variable: Well-being of prospective teachers.

Data Collection

Data were collected personally after obtaining permission from the concerned authorities. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and confidentiality set.

Statistical Techniques used

The data were analysed using Mean, Standard Deviation, independent-samples t-test, and Cohen's d. Statistical significance was tested at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

Results:

Table 1: Comparison Between Male and Female on Different Dimensions of Well-Being Scale.

S.No.	Dimensions of WBS	Gender	N	df	Mean	S.D	t-value	Cohen's d
1	Physical	Male	70	138	21.79	6.91	1.45 N.S	0.24
		Female	70		23.39	6.10		
2	Mental	Male	70	138	24.70	6.97	1.43 N.S	0.24
		Female	70		26.36	6.72		
3	Social	Male	70	138	23.91	6.64	1.21 N.S	0.21
		Female	70		25.24	6.32		
4	Emotional	Male	70	138	24.54	8.52	1.26 N.S	0.22
		Female	70		26.26	7.60		
5	Spiritual	Male	70	138	24.06	5.89	2.14 *	0.36
		Female	70		26.17	5.78		

Note: * indicates significant, NS indicates Not Significant at any accepted level of significance.

Table value at 0.05 = 1.97 and at 0.01 = 2.60 for the degree of freedom (df = 138).

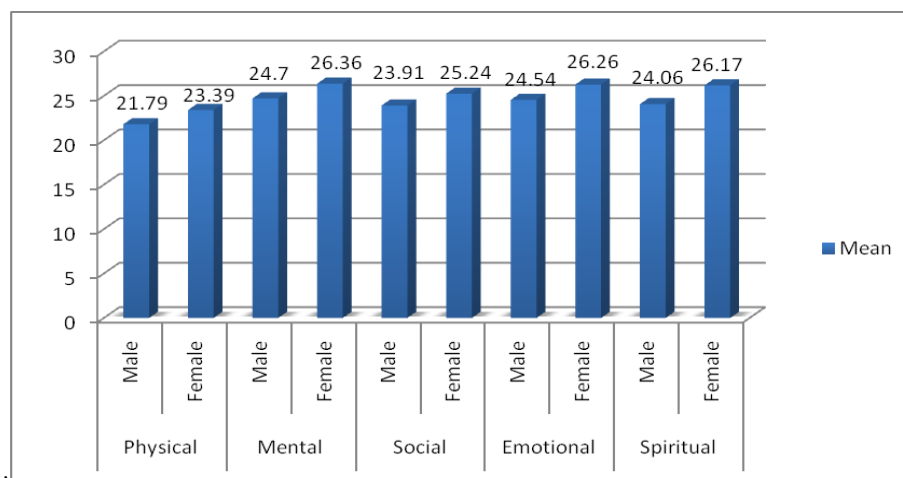


Figure 1:

Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}): Gender-wise Comparison

H_{01} indicates no significant gender differences in physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being. However, female prospective teachers scored significantly higher than males on the spiritual dimension ($t = 2.14$, $p < .05$). Accordingly, the first null hypothesis was accepted for four dimensions and rejected for spiritual well-being

Table 2: Comparison Between Rural and Urban on Different Dimensions of Well-Being Scale.

S.No.	Dimensions of WBS	Locality	N	Df	Mean	S.D	t-value	Cohen's d
1	Physical	Rural	78	138	23.36	6.46	1.57 N.S	0.27
		Urban	62		21.61	6.58		
2	Mental	Rural	78	138	26.36	5.96	1.56 N.S	0.26
		Urban	62		24.48	7.80		
3	Social	Rural	78	138	25.46	5.94	1.79 N.S	0.31
		Urban	62		23.47	7.01		
4	Emotional	Rural	78	138	26.36	7.56	1.56 N.S	0.27
		Urban	62		24.19	8.61		
5	Spiritual	Rural	78	138	25.86	5.44	1.65 N.S	0.29
		Urban	62		24.18	6.37		

Note: NS indicates Not Significant at any accepted level of significance.
Table value at 0.05= 1.97 and at 0.01= 2.60 for the degree of freedom ($df = 138$).

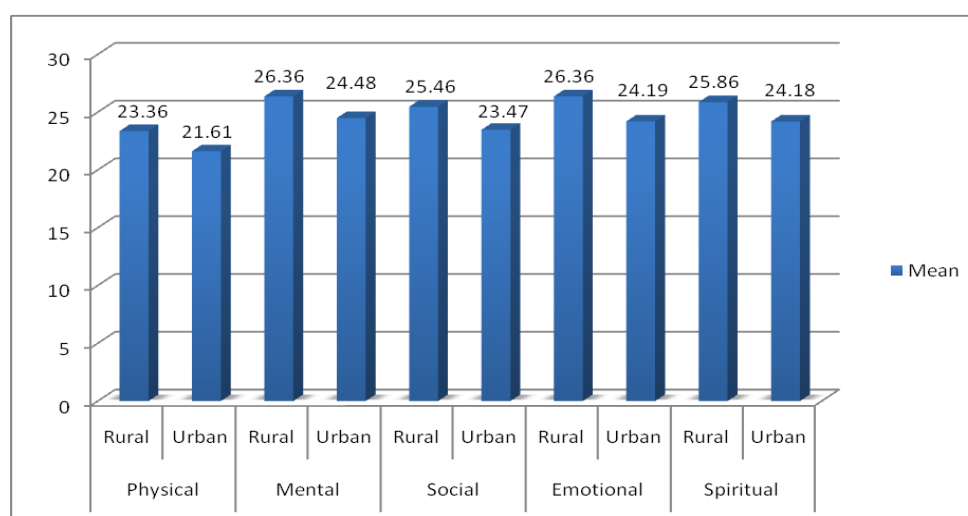


Figure 2:

Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}): Locality-wise Comparison

H_{02} shows that the obtained t-values for physical ($t = 1.57$), mental ($t = 1.56$), social ($t = 1.79$), emotional ($t = 1.56$), and spiritual well-being ($t = 1.65$) were lower than the critical value ($t = 1.97$, $df = 138$, $p > .05$). Therefore, no significant



difference was found between rural and urban prospective teachers on any dimension of well-being. Hence, the second null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

In this study, no significant differences between male and female prospective teachers were obtained across the four domains of well-being (physical, mental, social, and emotional). But, female prospective teachers performed significantly better on the spiritual dimension. The same applies to the differences between rural and urban prospective teachers across any of the dimensions of well-being. The results indicate that the teacher education environment could offer comparable learning opportunities and supports, which would lead to similar well-being regardless of demographic factors. This beneficial effect on the spiritual well-being of prospective female teachers could be interpreted as being related to personal values, coping mechanisms, or involvement in meaningful activities. This result should be interpreted with caution, though, because spiritual well-being is affected by several personal, cultural and contextual factors that were not explored in the current study.

The results are similar to those of other studies that indicate that emotional competence, resilience and supportive school environments are important factors contributing to teacher well-being (Vesely et al., 2014; Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022). The lack of significant differences between localities also indicates that the same kind of academic experiences in the university may have more impact on well-being than living in a different background. In conclusion, the results highlight the importance of fostering holistic wellbeing in teacher education institutions through provision of positive learning spaces, counselling support and resilience and emotional competence programmes.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to prospective teachers of Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla; therefore, the findings may not be generalized to all teacher education institutions. Only gender and locality were considered as variables in the study. The study used a self-report measure, which may involve response bias. The sample size was restricted to 140 prospective teachers.

Educational Implications

The results highlight the importance of embedding well-being promotion in teacher education programs. Institutions should offer counselling services, mindfulness related activities, mentoring and emotional resilience and coping skill development to enable prospective teachers to be holistically developed.

Suggestions for Future Research

The same type of studies can be carried out on a larger sample from other universities. Future study could explore well-being when related to factors like emotional intelligence, stress, resiliency, academic performance, and teaching skills.

Research and experimental studies can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of well-being intervention programmes.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there was no significant difference between the aspiring teachers in terms of physical, mental, social and emotional state between males and females as well as between local and non-local among the studied groups. This was only true of the spiritual dimension with female prospective teachers reporting a higher level of spiritual well-being than male prospective teachers. In general, the results indicated that gender and locality had not significant impact on the multi-dimensional well-being of prospective teachers in the current context. The findings highlight the importance of embedding teacher education with a focus on supporting well-being by fostering a supportive learning climate, providing counselling support and implementing well-being promotion and holistic development strategies for teachers. Support to prospective teachers is likely to have a positive impact on their professional readiness and the sustainability and effectiveness of teaching.

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PERIPHERAL PERSPECTIVES ON TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING: SEASONAL MOBILITY PRACTICES AMONG GUJJAR BAKARWAL PASTORALISTS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Mohd Idrees

Student, Masters in History, Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences Building, University of Delhi, Delhi

Abstract

This paper focuses on the seasonal migration of Gujjar Bakarwal pastoralists in the Jammu and Kashmir periphery. Drawing upon peripheral perspectives, political ecology and socio-ecological resilience frameworks, it argues that the community's transhumant livelihood practice is a vibrant, adaptive and sustainable solution to the vulnerabilities of the Western Himalayan environments. Drawing from both historical records and ethnographic data, within the political ecology framework, it underlines the inclusion of ecological knowledge in oral traditions, in oral terminologies used by the pastoral communities, and in the oral transmission between generations. Together, these forms of local knowledge inform the cyclical movement of the people, guiding their traverse across a continuum of ecological zones, from lowland forest ecotones to high-altitude alpine pastures. The paper analyses the organised seasonal calendar, the ancestral migration routes, and the regimes of pasture management. The paper conceptualises these as indigenous systems of knowledge and practices to ensure resource availability, sustainability and ecological balance through regenerating pasturage. Further, it discusses social and cultural facets of the pastoral community such as the mobilisation, the structure of kin-based family and divisions of labor between the genders. Also highlighted is the use of Gojri, the community's linguistic tradition and frame of knowledge as 'living epistemic archive' for environmental perception. Through a peripheral perspective, it discusses the state's practices of territoriality, implementation of forest acts and fiscal policies and the discourse around these practices that have constructed the community's movement as an ecological risk, and legitimised their enclosure, dispossession and settlement on a permanent basis.

Conclusively, the paper situates the community's practices in the general discourses on indigenous knowledge, and adaptation to climate change, by positioning transhumance as an adaptive and ecological model. It however acknowledges that increased pressure of climate change, degradation of pasture resources and land, and government restrictions have destabilised the community's socio-ecological resilience, which in turn also threaten its heritage and its long term sustainability in the Himalayas.

Keywords: Gujjar Bakarwal, Pastoralism, seasonal migration, nomadism, Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

Introduction

The mobile Gujjar Bakarwal nomadic pastoralists weave together the indigenous ecological knowledge, patterns of resource utilisation, and uses of Himalayan ecosystems into their trans-generational cultural heritage, transmitted through oral traditions and intangible living heritage. Their nomadic livelihood practices have been recognised by UNESCO (2025) as a significant case of climate adaptation in the Western Himalayas and the community being placed at the crossroads of cultural heritage and environmental governance. However, this recognition reveals the power politics and conflict between nomadic livelihood practices and sedentary state institutions, which clearly show how the transmobility by the community poses challenges to the bureaucratic regimes meant for immobile settled populations.

The Gujjar Bakarwal are one of the major transhumant pastoralist communities in Jammu and Kashmir, spread mainly across the Pir Panjal and Great Himalayan ranges. The community is known to retain a rich heritage of medicine, pastoral practices, folklore, environmental knowledge and practice seasonal migratory pastoral transhumance. These khanabadosh communities mainly engage in grazing of animals like goats, sheep and buffalos and are distinguished into two major segments based on their livestock and the span of migratory movements. Both Gujjars and their subgroups of Bakarwals share common ancestry, historical and cultural connections. They intermarry, and use regional dialects of the Gojri language that has a long tradition of serving as a living repository of their identity and ecological epistemology. The community moves according to alaako (local area), where Gujjar groups migrate from settled areas to higher pastures in summer season, and follow sedentary life with some minor agrarian components from their forest or tribe lands. While Bakarwals migrate across these alaako moving from Jammu to Kashmir during summer and vice versa in winters for grazing of their herds, hence following a fully nomadic life of animal husbandry. The difference of mobility practices within this group makes Gojri a repository of their journey across time and space, through its diverse linguistic repertoire that encompasses Botanical knowledge, traditional medicine and Geography know-how. It is noteworthy that Gujjar and Bakarwal are recognised as scheduled tribes under the Constitution (Amendment)



Act, 1991 and account for nearly 11.9 per cent of total population as of the 2011 Census, making them the third largest ethnic group in Jammu and Kashmir.

The communal oral traditions based ecological knowledge heritage, are born out of the inherent nomadic character of the community's journey and their transhumant practices. They primarily function as traditional oral societies with very rich oral lore, but the community is now in the process of organising and codifying their literature in recent times. Gojri does not have a formally adopted system of writing, and prior to the development of formal written traditions, the knowledge accumulated over centuries of nomadic transhumance was imparted orally through songs, ballads, proverbs, and folklore in which the indigenous oral traditions from across these two subgroups have composed various folk songs, epic tales. In addition to poetic Kalaam and Nazm, many outstanding works exist in prose.

This language serves as a living archive for their intangible cultural heritage, ecological epistemologies, and innovative, climate-adaptive strategies for the landscape and sustainable livelihoods. It provides an indigenous framework to perceive, structure, conserve, and transmit knowledge on environmental interactions, local ecosystems, indigenous ecological knowledge systems, and indigenous healing knowledge (Nusrat & Pattanaik, 2011). However, with processes like modernisation, cultural and linguo-socio change, modernisation in livelihoods patterns, loss of language, negligence on the part of state and many other anthropogenic factors their knowledge systems have been severely threatened and undermined.

This article explores the peripheral insights of Gujjar Bakarwal pastoralists traditional ecological knowledge and seasonal mobility patterns in Jammu and Kashmir. Political ecology is considered as the main theoretical orientation of the study that deals with issues of justice and addresses what causes, perpetuates and contributes to environmental change with a view towards creating more equitable and sustainable development by transforming political structures. It focuses on human society, ecology and environment interactions including issues like social justice, inequality, poverty and power as they relate to ecosystem dynamics and systematic environmental problems. The study argues that in no case could environmental change be thoroughly understood without a consideration of the economic and political institutional structure it exists in, and movement practices are situated within an environment molded by policies derived from state resource management, regulation and planning. As part of this landscape seasonal migration itself, for the purpose of finding resources, appears as a manifestation of protest against sedentary regime practices of resource control and appropriation.

Moreover, the study discusses social-ecological resilience framework, it argues that to cope up with disturbances, adaptation should occur with enhanced resilience capacity. The tribal pastoral communities rely on the adaptive agency and resilient attributes to survive from and endure the challenges in their socioeconomic environment and ecosystem. While the political ecology framework aims to challenge injustice associated with the disturbance, the social-ecological resilience framework focuses on disturbance resilience, reorganisation and adaptation of communities in presence of shocks. The community's reliance on kinship solidarity and informal, collective institutional networks coupled with knowledge resources gives them resilience. However they are vulnerable to weakening of their adaptive agency and resilient resilience due to less livestock herding and shrinking livelihood options.

Review of Literature

There is a plethora of scholarly literature on transhumant pastoralism that traverses disciplines such as geography, anthropology, ecology, history and political science. Originally, the focus was on descriptive accounts of their modes of migration and their subsistence based upon a nomadic way of life, and later it diversified to include political ecology, traditional knowledge systems, and policy dimensions. The Gujjar Bakarwal can be viewed within this historical or scholarly discussions of nomadic pastoralism as also theoretical literature that delineates how nomadic pastoralists, and their traditional ecological knowledge remains marginal and peripheral.

R.P. Khatana's Tribal Migration in Himalayan Frontiers(1992) is arguably the landmark reference pioneering ethnographic contributions to the field and represents the seminal reference on Gujjar Bakarwal transhumance. Based over a dozen years of ethnographic work among the Gujjar Bakarwal this comprehensive, spatial and temporal ethnographic study describes key conceptual frameworks, modes of migrations and the sociology, economics and ecology of the transhumant habitat. Particularly emphasising spatial movement, animal pasture relationship, seasonal rounds and transhumant economy, thus bringing into conversation geographical, anthropological and economic approaches. However, its scope tends towards the contemporary aspect and provides less information on their historicity under colonial context.



Nomadism in South Asia (2003), edited by Rao and Casimir continues to be a significant compilation in the south asian scholarship of nomadic pastoralism and resource governance. Their work is rooted in intensive ethnographic fieldwork and a challenge to ecological determinism for pasture use. She argues that although the land base and the availability of pastures are central to pastoral life, the individual pasture rights (Cher) of South Asian pastoralists have been moulded not only by the environment but also by various geo-political changes after 1947, increasing numbers of population and the changing market dynamics.

The Gujjars, a multi volume academic treatise on community sponsored by the J&K Academy of Art Culture and Languages, edited by Dr Javid Rahi attempts to bring together scholarly and communal perspectives on the history, culture, language and socio economic status of the community in the entire spectrum of their social and cultural organisation. From their Gurjara Pratihara antiquity and their linguistics to their present day pastoral nomadism, ethnobotany, their tribal rights. In doing so, it does bring about the necessary correction in a literature dominated by outside scholarship and filling a key gap for as far as studies on marginalised, transhumant people such as the Gujjar Bakarwal are concerned. It has rich details about patterns of migrations, medicinal plant uses, and marginalisation of access to education. As this book is composed of collected work, the absence of any theoretical framework is perhaps a notable weakness.

Sharma (2009) in 'The Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir: Navigating through Nomadism,' attempts to map the life world of Gujjar Bakarwal herders of Jammu and Kashmir and addresses themes like, "the practice of nomadic life, religious views, language, social ties, myths and legends, material culture, and beliefs systems as well as indigenous knowledge, gender roles, and power structures." Sharma (2009) 'Wild and Unsettled,' a case of Van Gujjar pastoralists of the central Indian Himalayas, Gooch, examines how "legal and regulatory mechanisms operating through forest regimes during the colonial era rendered nomad pastoralists as 'wild' or 'unsettled'," and established structures "like grazing permits and restrictions on movement" that were "further codified in conservation regimes after India gained independence". "Annual rounds of migration followed seasonal rounds of resources and climate, and the movement itself charted out an ecological and political geography."

Recent studies of nomadic pastoralism are increasingly shifting focus to the political ecology, cultural aspects and marginality of nomadic pastoral communities. Bhasin (2013), who provides a comparative ecological anthropological framework for Himalayan pastoralism. The empirical case studies are on Changpa, Gaddi and Bhutia and, while the Gujjar Bakarwal are not the empirical subject of the study. Bhasin's contributions on mobility, common property regime and state and pastoralist conflicts can be useful for an interpretation of the Gujjar Bakarwal following patterns of nomadic migrations. Ahmed et al.(2023) carried out an ethnographic analysis of Gujjar Bakarwal transhumant pastoralism in the Pir Panjals. He draws attention to how customary institutions (Jirga/Panchayat; Mukkaddam, the local traditional leadership and tribal conventions) enable the regulation of the resources as well as help maintain social relations among the community members. The key contribution of the work lies in his ethnographic description of how traditional institutions and practices create a common base to mediate conflicts through native ecological knowledge. He provides an account of indigenous ecological knowledge and the 'connector' role that various institutional forms play, thereby mediating between changing socio-cultural, political and ecologies of seasonal, cultural, economic, demographic changes, environmental shocks, and climate change.

Rashid, Ghosh and Ali (2024) investigated inter and intra community relationships of Gujjars and Bakerwals under the changing pattern of nomadism. It highlighted how adaptation strategy was utilised to strike a balance between tradition and modernisation. Among these communities through relationship building around kinship networks, barter systems and Jirga mechanism for dispute resolution. Suri (2014) studied the consequences of armed conflict on the seasonal transhumance of the Gujjar Bakarwals and found a decrease in the practice of this mode of life with restriction of movement routes, resources and risks and introduction of new security related risks.

Blaikie and Brookfield's (1987) Regional Political Ecology framework is useful to interpret the phenomenon of seasonal migration between the alpine pasture and lowland regions. It highlights a strong connection between environmental degradation and socio-political and political-economic processes. In this context, forest policies and practices of bureaucratisation, regulations concerning taxes and fees and sedentary policies reinforce the confinement of communities to the EC environments. It thereby induces a cycle of state driven marginalisation leading to reduction in capacity for their pasture management and enhancement of environmental degradation that provide justification for the state to take additional interventions.



Bergius et al. (2020) propose political ecology that closely aligns with experience. For Bergius, dominant narratives regarding environmental destruction and green development draw on unfounded accusations that pastoralists degrade environments in turn legitimising state dispossession and accumulation under green economy approaches. Similarly for nomadic communities the state and conservation regimes often frame transhumance as 'overgrazing', which 'justified state-based displacement of mobile populations for the purpose of creating conservation reserves and for capitalist intervention and tourism development'.

Within the Himalayan context Saberwal's (1996) work on the Gaddi shepherds offers similar narrative framing to the Gujjar and Bakarwal. For Gaddis, government institutions employed excessive language about ecological degradation and bureaucratic power to control access for margin groups.

In the Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation local mountain peoples were theoretically presented as the 'agents of the degradation'. This equated environmental decline with population growth, deforestation and improper land use. The theory legitimised restrictive forest policies and increased state control over forests in pursuit of economic exploitation. Jack Ives (1987) questions this framing, arguing the theory has failed to substantiate its claims and the people wrongly blame for degradation whilst sustainable practices ignored.

Linguistic and ethobotanical studies of pastoral knowledge have not been adequately highlighted within political ecology literature. Nusrat and Pattanaik (2011) characterise the livelihoods of the Van Gujjars as an archive of intangible cultural heritage and ecological epistemology where practices such as transhumance, ethnoveterinary knowledge, rotation of pasture grazing create inter-generational epistemologies and management systems. Mitra (2016) discusses indigenous language as the bearer of ethnomedicinal and ecological knowledge.

Based on the Sapir Whorf hypothesis, Mitra further demonstrates the linkage between linguistic structures and community interaction with the environment. Earlier Watson (1907) noted that ajris (shepherds) utilised wild plants and wild medicines extensively and skillfully for different human purposes.

Dangwal and Singh (2018) provide an ethnobotanical study that situates community knowledge within broader Himalayan ethnomedical history and reflects how indigenous medical systems develop in interaction with a close ecological relationship. They highlight the role of collective and intergenerational knowledge systems influenced by ecological familiarity which guide the availability and usage of therapeutic resources. Rana et al (2019) advocate for ethnobotanical approaches for examining Himalayan tribal communities as living systems within forest ecosystems. Within these communities, an epistemology of ecological floral epistemology develops through interaction with their environments.

Rashid (2012) highlights the extensive usage of indigenous remedies in both humans and livestock with its importance for sustaining both these groups and maintaining bio-diversity. According to a recent UNESCO (2025) case study on Gujjar and Bakarwal migration, co-authored by Dr Mrinalini Atrey and Shahzad Ahmed Malik, the traditional mobility of these communities ensures a sustainable impact on fragile ecosystems. Yet, changing climate such as glacier melt, irregular rainfall patterns and extreme weather events, continue to disrupt traditional mobility paths and availability of pastures.

There is a clear literature gap, and despite extensive documentation of migration patterns, ecological context, and social structure of these communities, little is known about the Gujjar Bakarwal experience from a peripheral lens. There is thus a need for this intersection between political ecology, mobility studies, linguistic ecology and indigenous knowledge systems to be examined, particularly within the context of Jammu and Kashmir. This paper aims to fill this gap by integrating these conceptual frameworks to analyse the influence of the Gujjar and Bakarwal experience on ecological understanding through mobility, language, and indigenous epistemologies. We will also analyse the impact of state interventions, climate change, and language shift on their understanding of the environment.

Research Methodology

The study is a qualitative study based on ethnographic approaches. The methodological framing adopts mixed sources for obtaining an inclusive grasp of the gujjar bakarwal's nomadic livelihoods, ecological knowledge and the linguistic milieu. The principal material for the research comes from the primary data that involves analysis of literature looking at patterns of mobility, ecological knowledge, traditional and customary institutions, ethnobotanical uses of indigenous flora and perception of government policies.

Secondary material consists of ethnographic works of scholars, studies from research institutions, government and NGO reports and census materials. Khatana (1992) provides the baseline for the historical mobility routes and the types of grazing



lands while works by Rao and Casimir (2003) provide the typology for the ecological regions. Livestock Census data for the period from 1996 to 2011 provide information about the types of herds maintained by the Gujjar Bakarwal. Other sources of data comprise legal documents, the Jammu and Kashmir Kahcharai Act, 2011 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006 which provide the basis for exploring policies. The research also analyses the State and conservation discourse to assess how nomadic mobility is conceptualised and categorised into an 'ecological issue'. It then interrogates how international conservation discourse on cultural heritage through the example of the UNESCO (2025) study on Gujjar Bakarwal for climate adaptation. Emergent themes from the research emerged as follows, including ecological knowledge, mobility constraints, linguistic erosion, use of plants for ethno-medicinal purpose, marginalisation of nomadic community, traditional knowledge system and Cultural resilience.

Limitations

The researcher had to deal with few limitations, including due to the nomadic livelihood of the community; direct observation for a long time was restricted. There were also limitations related to the verification process of oral transmission for the Gojri Knowledge system because it is not in the written form.

Findings

This suggests a complex interaction of indigenous ecological knowledge, mobility practices, linguistic resources, and structural constraints. It reveals how knowledge, mobility, language, and structures coexist. The community possesses the systems to regulate the environment orally through kinship, language, seasonal movements, and rich vocabulary which, however, faces the threats of climatic changes, government policies, generation-change and language loss.

Seasonal Mobility and Ecological Zones

The community's seasonal movement follows ecological scheduling systemically. By the arrival of spring, communities tend to move from outer foothills towards the mid-mountain zones-comprising the lower Pir Panjal and Shivalik outer foothills gradually settling down to lower alpine and higher meadows by the advent of late spring/early summer (May-June) to high altitude Alpine zones by early June, where they weave, prepare handicraft, construct the 'seem' (log-bridge) and collect useful items. At the onset of peak summer (July-August), all their time and energy goes into managing the livestock grazing and camp setup, until the onset of early autumn (September-October) when they start moving down from high Himalayas to the temperate areas/valley and set up camps at the mid-altitude ranges, settling to designated winter bases by late Autumn (November) and staying in the plain for about December-January to prepare for the next migratory cycle.

This 'Kafila' (procession of herders and their livestock) moves in stages, covering one or more nights together, travelling along old routes/paths and stops at 'paraos' (halts) where they allow their 'phaaru' (livestock) to graze to replenish their strength. Each unit (herd/kanni dera) is looked after by one family, but a group of families moving together for seasonal pastures and camping has to adhere to strict movement rules that are orally passed. Khatana (1992) categorised 3 major types of pastures, winter season pastures, the intermediate zones of pastures, and summer grazing pastures and highlighted about many such passages (galis) existing. The herders hold large amounts of local and environmental knowledge based on transhumant living from intergenerational transfers and carry rich vocabulary about environmental attributes. Moreover the routes used by herders during seasonal mobility show they are well aware about local climate conditions and local features including topography, local vegetation cover. The women of the community is engaged in material production, such as Rassa (rope) with goat/sheep wool, numnah (saddle padding) out of wool of goat/sheep, wool pattu, tahru (blanket) out of goat/sheep wool, lace, toom (earring/ornament) out of sheep/goat wool.

Livestock and Health Management

The economy of the community hinges on livestock such as cattle (maal), Kaghani goat and sheep, buffaloes providing them with essential nutritional and economical resources milk, meat and wool. The seasonal migration based on transhumant systems provides sustainable options for livestock sustenance in the challenging Himalayan terrain. However, they frequently encounter unpredictable environmental risks like consumption of poisonous vegetation, disease prevalence, theft, water related accidents (drowning) and natural events (rockfall, road accidents), and predation. Trends indicate declining numbers of animals in their Livestock Census (37.78 lakh in 1996-97; 39.5 lakh in 2001-02; 32.93 lakh in 2006-07; 34.00 lakh in 2010-2011) showing negative trend, particularly post the beginning of militancy in J&K in 1989 which made the transit routes and pastures inaccessible to herders. This overall decline could also reflect pressures associated with pasture degradation, reduced access to water, changing seasons, shortening winters, irregularities in rainfall, drought, lightning strikes and premature heating during the beginning of March which causes mortality of newly-born lambs and calves.



Oral Tradition, Linguistic Ecology, and Cultural Heritage

Hundreds of love stories cum songs, laments, songs of hardship and woe and of migration and shifting of seasons are performed in this culture, by rote from the repertoire of a large collection of folk songs and stories known among the communities. Collections of Gojri folksongs, riddles, rhymes, lore about ritual beliefs systems help strengthen group ties and preserve encoded traditional knowledge. These folksongs encode information on the local flora, fauna and landscape, the collective memory contains narratives of people, place, history, culture and ethics. Thus, the language itself acts as the store house of traditional environmental knowledge, ecological know-how and of sociocultural adaptations of the people. Gojri provides conceptual framing that helps the community store and reproduce the environmental knowledge system. While socio-linguistic shift, modernisation process, and changing livelihood patterns led to a general loss of knowledge in the communities. The ethnomedicinal knowledge is continuously diminishing due to various reasons like institutional indifference, changing lifestyles, socio-linguistic alienation, and other anthropogenic factors. Plants are identified based on names of their plant-parts as beej (seeds), phul (flowers), pat (leaves), phhal (fruits), channthi (twigs), sakhro (bark), jarhi (roots), ganddho (tubers) and mundho (fleshy stem). The names are coupled with ethnomedicinal property based applications which hold the ethnobotanical knowledge.

State Regulations and Taxation

State government interventions into forest and land resource use through policy frameworks, law enforcement and taxation policies often intersect and restrict the pastoral movements and resource use of these communities. The most prominent such interference is related to Kahcharai, or grazing tax (The Jammu and Kashmir Kahcharai Act 2011) which required herders to get certificate from village 'patwari' (a land revenue official), have it stamped at 'Tehsil Kahchhari Officer', before going to meadows and after entering in the valley. Rao and Casimir (2003) mentioned that such charges have to be paid in advance according to 'maal shumaari' (livestock census) conducted by the Forest Department. For getting permission to summer pastures. Grazing tax is levied per number of livestock, so those with higher numbers of livestock pay more and for many of them it becomes prohibitive or leads them to suppress information on herd numbers.

Further, they divided pasture area (bahak) into four zones, Nakko (the peaks), Mali (highly productive high alpine pastures), Ban (lower altitude forest areas) and Kassi (the steep natural boundary line). They pointed out that every herder has theoretically owned a "Cher," a self-sustaining grazing area with associated rights over a specific summer grazing patch. Although the "Cher" rights are not recognised by the State; yet these are inherited, acquired through work (ajri), lease or purchase (mauza) etc. But can be resumed at any time. They describe three tax categories: "A" Rates charged from local people on their livestock except goats except at the time of summer grazing with assigned grazing lands Bahaks. "B" Rates for local non-goats and migrating livestock (within the state and "C" Rate for non-local non goats livestock taken into state for grazing or commercial purposes. Lawrence (1895) is referring a similar system, "Zar-i-Chaupan" a "sheep levy" of thirteen chilki rupees on each hundred sheep, in addition to levies of sheep "Hazzari" or "Khilkat" (one in a thousand) and "Barra" (one in a hundred). The communities, however, continue to be faced with fractured policies, unauthorised road taxes and, in some cases, a violation of forest laws despite implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

Discussion

Gujjar Bakarwal pastoralists are still on the margins in Jammu and Kashmir, their traditional ecological knowledge based on mobility and languages are overlooked by the institutions, according to this research. The political ecology perspective provides a lens to explain the process of marginalisation of the Gujjar Bakarwal community. This community has to suffer ecological degradation not due to practice but because some powerful actors have denied their mobility and have enclosed their pasture land.

The administrative state control and regulations, namely conservation regimes and extension of the agricultural practice have always shrunk the ecological space available for transhumance for these communities. The Jammu and Kashmir Kahcharai Act of 2011 clearly shows the similar kind of pattern although the Act aimed at regulating the overgrazing. By enforcing to pay taxes in advance based on livestock counting, the pastoralists get their community put into an administrative structure designed for sedentary people. There is also the same pattern when it comes to conservation in the political ecology of the Himalayas where there are increases in protected areas across the Western Himalayas without appropriate engagement with these communities of pastoralism. The government created conservation and land revenue rules that consider space as defined or static act as a mechanism for alienating pastoralists with the exclusive possession of land and territory.



Without any institutional support for them to develop their own strategies they are just acting as intelligent agents. They simply negotiate with the space defined by alien authority and thus the act of migration has become an element of a strategy or practice, decided by the people and their linguistic expressions retain extensive knowledge of their ecological landscape. With mobility the cultural resource also gets moved, ensuring the sustainability and transmission of traditional knowledge, practices, customs, norms and language through generations.

Conclusion

The Gujjar Bakarwal experience offers a peripheral view, deconstructing dominant conceptions of environmental governance. Instead of being victims of ecological damage occasioned by transhumance, their displacement has a history related to state territoriality, in which mobile practices are rendered invisible to models of governance. Their system of seasonal mobility is a complex traditional ecological knowledge that has sustained human beings and their environments in the Himalayas for centuries. The Gojri language also embodies this traditional knowledge of the environment, as do the practices of the people. Therefore, this marginalised view decenters state territoriality, conservation enclosure, and the threats posed by climate change and linguistic attrition. Defending their culture therefore is nothing less than defending their very capacity for ecological sustenance in the Western Himalayas.

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ARAVAN'S BRIDES: RITUAL MOURNING AS INDIGENOUS WELLNESS PRACTICE FOR QUEER TRAUMA

Lavniya Rana

Research Scholar, Department of English and Modern European Languages, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan.

ABSTRACT

Queer Indians face high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide due to familial rejection, stigma, and internalized homophobia, yet state-approved mental health interventions remain expensive, individualistic, and culturally alien. This paper examines indigenous resources within Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) that can heal queer trauma and foster sustainable futures. Focusing on the Mahabharata narrative of Aravan—who marries Krishna-as-Mohini before his sacrificial death—and Tamil Nadu's annual Koovagam Festival, where thousands of Aravani (transgender women) re-enact this wedding and subsequent mourning, we analyze the festival as a decolonial wellness practice. Drawing on Vaibhav Saria's ethnography of Hijras and Mala Kapadia's IKS trauma model (trauma as energy blockage), we argue that Koovagam offers three healing dimensions: spiritual affirmation that counters shame, collective grief-release, and social bonding that restores community ties. This free, accessible, culturally rooted ritual functions as an IKS wellness intervention in practice. We conclude that building a just, sustainable future requires reviving indigenous traditions that neither abandon nor pathologize marginalized communities, offering alternatives to Western clinical models that often fail queer Indians.

Keywords: Aravan, queer trauma, indigenous wellness, Indian Knowledge Systems, social sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Background

India's constitutional guarantees of equality and recent judicial decriminalization of homosexuality in the Navtej Singh Johar verdict (2018) have not stopped severe mental health crises among its queer populations. Research shows that people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) in India are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts than cisgender heterosexual people. The National Mental Health Survey (2016) estimates that nearly 15% of Indian adults are in need of active mental health interventions, but this number is thought to be substantially higher among queer populations, though comprehensive data is scarce due to systematic neglect. The main cause of distress is mainly on the outside not internally or biologically; however, it is really a social and structural matter. Family rejection is the number one traumatic experience reported by queer people in India; many queer individuals have been subjected to physical violence, emotional abandonment, conversion therapy, and forced into heterosexual matrimony. Society has also stigmatized queer people and has discriminated against them in the workplace, denied them housing, not allowed them to access appropriate medical resources, and committed microaggressions against them on a routine basis. These societal factors serve to create internalized homophobia/transphobia in many queer individuals, as they have internalized the negative feelings and beliefs that society holds regarding queer individuals and as a result have developed self-hatred, shame, and concealment of their true identity.

The Problem with Western Clinical Models

The Indian government's response to this issue is mainly limited to adopting Western clinical models for mental health care. CBT, ACT, and various forms of psychodynamic therapies are the most common. Although these therapies have proven to be effective in controlled Western conditions, they face several issues when implemented within the Indian queer community.

First, high costs make therapy unattainable. In urban areas in India, therapy sessions can cost anywhere between ₹1,500 and ₹5,000 (\$18-\$60). With a significant number of individuals being unemployed, underemployed, or homeless, these costs are out of reach. Second, there is an inherent clash between the individualistic approach of Western therapies, which focuses on intrapsychic issues, cognitive reframing, and setting boundaries, and the relational and collectivist society that characterizes India. Many queer Indians do not wish to achieve autonomy from their families through therapy but instead wish to find a place within them.

Third, and more importantly, the Western model used to be culturally different than the codes, symbols, rituals, and spiritualities used by the majority of Indian people to make sense of their suffering. The clinical language of "disorder" and "symptom" and "treatment" is viewed as stigmatizing and is not aligned with indigenous understandings of mental distress (e.g., spiritual blockage, social dis-ease, energetic imbalances). Even if clinics can be found where Western mental health services can be accessed by marginalized or queer Indian people, there will be little demand for those services (i.e., low



uptake), and a very high percentage of those who use these services (i.e., high dropout) will do so very shortly after they begin treatment.

The Promise of Indian Knowledge Systems

IKS is comprised of diverse knowledge systems that are ancient by millennia - pertaining to philosophy, medicine, psychology, and ritual, etc. This may involve the traditional medical systems of India such as Ayurveda, Yoga, Tantra and different schools of philosophy such as Samkhya, Vedanta, Nyaya, etc and various other domains. While the Western model of clinical psychology of health is based on principles of mind-body dichotomy, individualism, and compartmentalization of medical systems regarding health, in IKS principles are primarily integrated, and all such dichotomies are undermined. In fact, as per the author, Mala Kapadia, in relation to Indian Knowledge Systems, "trauma is seen as an obstacle of prana or life-force in the traditional Indian medicinal treatment method (e.g. Ayurveda, Yoga)". Psychological manifestations of trauma are thus not seen and treated as singular and independent phenomena but are understood as expressions of obstructed life-force, that are rectified through mechanisms such as pranayama, asana, mantra, kriya or bhakti. The procedure seems very simple, and simple facilities or prolonged clinical training would not be required.

The Aravan Narrative and Koovagam Festival

In this paper, I shall be focusing on a single indigenous resource: that of the myth of Aravan (or Iravan) from the Mahabharata and its annual re-creation through ritual at the Koovagam Festival in Tamil Nadu. The story, which concerns Aravan - the son of Arjuna and the serpent princess Ulupi - tells how he is prepared for the morning of the Kurukshetra war by consenting to be sacrificed for the sake of the Pandavas. However, he first asks that he be permitted to be married before death, and when no princess will consent to marry a man who is certain to become a widow, Krishna, in his female incarnation as the goddess Mohini, agrees to marry Aravan and spends the night with him before ritually mourning his death as a wailing widow.

At the Koovagam Festival held in Koovagam, Tamil Nadu, every year thousands of trans women (also known as Aravani) enact this myth. They 'marry' Aravan en masse throughout the night and break their bangles and remove their thali the following morning in a display of ritual bereavement. This ceremony has continued for hundreds of years and is one of the oldest and largest transgender gatherings on earth.

Research Questions and Objectives

This paper aims to answer the following research questions:

- In what ways can the Koovagam Festival be conceptualized as a decolonial wellness practice in the context of Indian Knowledge Systems?
- What healing dimensions does this practice provide to queer individuals, especially the trans women?
- What are the implications of this indigenous practice when considering the sustainability of mental health initiatives for queer people in present-day India?

The first main goal is to demonstrate how Koovagam can be considered an actual wellness practice rather than just a culture or religious festival. The second goal is to make a case for the necessity of reclaiming one's indigenous practices as integral parts of a sustainable future without leaving anyone with their wounds behind.

- Paper Structure

The literature on queer internal health in India, Indian Knowledge Systems, the hijra tradition, the Aravan narrative, and decolonial approaches to heartiness is reviewed in Section 2 after this preface. The exploration methodology, including the illuminative frame, textual and ethnographic sources, and logical approach, is described in Section 3. The examination of Koovagam as a three-dimensional remedial approach is presented in Section 4. Counteraccusations for sustainable futures are covered in Section 5, and Section 6 wraps up.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Queer Mental Health in India: Prevalence and Causes

The literature on queer mental health in India, though expanding, remains limited compared to Western research. Still, studies constantly validate elevated rates of cerebral torture. Chakrapani et.al. (2017) found that among 246 hijras and ambisexual women in Mumbai and Chennai, 82 reported symptoms of depression, 68 reported anxiety, and 41 reported suicidal ideation at



one time. The strongest predictors were family rejection (reported by 76), physical or sexual violence (reported by 63), and stigma of public demotion (reported by 81).

A study by Sivasubramanian et.al. (2011) among 200 men who have sex with men (MSM) in Mumbai found that 61 met clinical criteria for depression, with internalized homophobia arising as the strongest middleman between social demarcation and depressive symptoms. Logie et.al. (2017) extended these findings to lesbian and bisexual women in Delhi and Bangalore, reporting that 55 screened positive for probable major depression, with family-grounded stigma (rather than general social stigma) being the most significant supplement.

The Navtej Singh Johar verdict (2018), while permitting homosexuality, has not automatically reduced these internal health burdens. exploration by Fernandez et.al. (2021), conducted one-time post-decriminalization, found no significant enhancement in depression or anxiety scores among queer Indians, suggesting that legal change without structural and artistic metamorphosis has limited cerebral impact. Family rejection, plant demarcation, and lack of accessible affirming healthcare persist as ongoing trauma sources.

Critique of Western Clinical Models in Indian Contexts

A substantial body of postcolonial education has critiqued the innocent import of Western cerebral fabrics to non-Western contexts. Kirmayer (2006) argues that Western psychiatric orders aren't culture-neutral but are specific to Euro-American hypotheticals about identity, agency, and normalcy. Applying these orders to Indian populations risks both misdiagnosis and remedial mismatch.

In the Indian environment, Sinha (2014) has shown how Western models of trauma remedy — particularly those emphasizing verbal articulation of traumatic recollections — frequently fail because they discord with artistic morals of restraint, circular communication, and collaborative rather than individual processing of suffering. Also, Raghavan et.al. (2013) set up that Indian guests constantly prefer remedial approaches that incorporate spiritual confines, family involvement, and practical guidance over illuminative or sapience-acquainted ways.

Specifically, regarding queer populations, Narrain and Bhan (2005) have critiqued the "rights- grounded" approach to queer mental health as inadequate. While legal rights are necessary, they write, they don't heal the intimate injuries of family rejection or the diurnal micro-traumas of social smirch. What's demanded, they argue, are culturally predicated mending practices that address the emblematic and spiritual confines of queer suffering.

Indian Knowledge Systems: Theoretical Foundations

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) have lately gained academic attention as a licit sphere of knowledge product distinct from and reciprocal to Western epistemologies. Mahadevan (2019) defines IKS as "the methodical traditions of knowledge that began in the Indian key and have been transmitted through designated lineages, textbooks, and practices." These include gospel, drug (Ayurveda), psychology (as bedded within Yoga and Samkhya), linguistics (Vyakarana), and ritual studies (Mimamsa).

Kapadia (2016, 2020) has innovated the operation of IKS to trauma and internal health. Drawing primarily on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and the Tantric traditions, Kapadia proposes that trauma be understood as a granthi (knot) or blockage in the inflow of prana (vital energy). In this frame, the body isn't a medium separate from the mind but a dynamic system of energy channels (nadis) and centres (chakras). Traumatic gestures produce dislocations in these channels, manifesting as physical symptoms, emotional dysregulation, and cognitive deformations. Healing, accordingly, doesn't bear verbal analysis of traumatic content but rather ways that restore energy inflow, breath regulation (pranayama), sound vibration (mantra), fleshly movement (asana), and ritual sanctification (kriya).

This frame has significant counter-accusations for queer trauma. However, also smirching (from family and society) and internalized homophobia can be conceptualized as specific forms of blockage localized in particular chakras — particularly the throat chakra (associated with authentic expression) and the holy chakra (associated with fornication and creativity), if trauma is understood as energy blockage. Healing, also, involves indigenous ways that open these blockages, allowing energy to flow freely again.

The Hijra Tradition and Aravani Identity

The hijra tradition represents one of the oldest continuously existing ambisexual communities in the world. Historically proven as early as the Kama Sutra (circa 4th century CE) and in Mughal court records, hijras have enthralled complex social places as



ritual players, ménage blessers, and guardians of certain sanctuaries (Reddy, 2005). While the British administration criminalized hijra identity through the Criminal Tribes Act (1871), post-independence India has incompletely honoured hijras through the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

Saria's (2021) ethnography of hijras in Bhubaneswar provides pivotal perceptivity into how hijras understand their own individualities and suffering. Saria documents that hijras don't generally conceptualize their gests through the Western frame of "gender dysphoria" or "trauma" but rather through indigenous orders of nirvana (revitalization as a hijra through ritual masculinity), sringar (decoration as a spiritual practice), and badhai (the ritual performance of blessing at births and marriages). Crucially, Saria notes that hijras retain their own mending practices for managing the torture of family rejection and social marginalization — practices centred on tabernacle rituals, practitioner- convert connections, and participation in collaborative carnivals.

The term "Aravani" is used by ambisexual women actors at the Koovagam Festival —directly indicating the Aravan narrative. Unlike the more general term "hijra," which carries complex connotations including estate and class confines," Aravani" specifically asserts a legendary- ritual identity embedded in devotion to Aravan and Mohini. This tone- designation is significant; it claims a sacred origin and purpose, fighting stigmatizing narratives that frame ambisexual identity as pathological or unethical.

The Aravan Narrative: Textual and Performative Dimensions

The Aravan narrative appears primarily in the Tamil interpretation of the Mahabharata, known as the Villiputturar Bharatham (14th century CE), as well as in the Sanskrit Mausala Parva and indigenous myth (Hiltebeitel, 1995). Aravan is linked with Iravan, the son of Arjuna and the Naga queen Ulupi. Crucial rudiments include Aravan's birth from a union that crosses estate (legionnaire- ascetic) and species boundaries; his martial prowess; the immolation of his own life for the Pandava cause; his request for marriage before death; and Krishna's metamorphosis into Mohini to fulfill this request.

Hiltebeitel (1995) emphasizes the sacrificial sense of the narrative, reading it as a fable for the pressure between ascetic repudiation and worldly attachment. Still, queer readings have productively challenged this interpretation. Pattanaik (2002, 2018) reads the Aravan narrative as a mythological confirmation of gender friction and same-sex desire, noting that Krishna — the supreme deity in numerous Hindu traditions — willingly and joyfully takes womanish form to marry a man, suggesting that godly nature transcends double gender.

Vanita and Kidwai (2000) situate the Aravan narrative within a broader tradition of same-sex and gender-variant representations in Indian religious literature, including the hijras' reverence for Bahuchara Mata, the Arjuna-Brihannala metamorphosis, and multitudinous folk narratives of women who come to men to marry women. They argue that while contemporary Hindu fallacy frequently suppresses these traditions, they remain accessible through living ritual practices like the Koovagam Festival.

The Koovagam Festival: Ethnographic Accounts

The Koovagam Festival, held annually in the Tamil month of Chithirai (April- May), has attracted ethnographic attention since the late 20th century. The jubilee centres on a 16-day ritual cycle, with the Aravan marriage and mourning observances on the 15th and 16th days. Thousands of Aravani (ambisexual women) gather from across India and abroad. The jubilee is organized by original townies, who consider Aravan a village deity (grama devata), with support from state and tabernacle authorities.

Nanda (1999) provides one of the most detailed accounts, describing how actors suffer ritual sanctification, dress as misters, share in the mass marriage form, spend the night in ritual festivity, and also mourn the following day intimately. Nanda interprets the jubilee as a "collaborative ritual remedy" (p. 89) that addresses the specific torments of hijra life: social marginalization, family rejection, and internalized shame. Through identification with Mohini (who is both Krishna the god and Mohini the bridegroom/ widow), actors witness godly confirmation of their gender identity and desire.

More lately, Rizvi (2018) and Kotiswaran (2021) have streamlined these accounts, establishing how the jubilee has grown in scale (now exceeding 10,000 participants) and has incorporated contemporary rudiments similar as HIV- AIDS mindfulness juggernauts, legal aid camps, and political rallying. Still, both experimenters advise against over-romanticizing the jubilee, noting that actors still face police harassment, economic precarity, and violence during the jubilee. Nonetheless, both conclude that for utmost actors, the jubilee provides a necessary experience of community, recognition, and healing unapproachable away.



Decolonial Approaches to Wellness

Decolonial proposition, arising from Latin American and South Asian postcolonial education, reviews the ongoing duty of Western epistemologies even after formal political decolonization (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011). Applied to internal health, decolonial approaches argue that Western clinical models aren't universal but particular — bedded in specific European histories of rationalism, individualism, and denomination — and that their global dispersion constitutes a form of epistemic violence.

Dutta (2018) articulates a decolonial frame for community psychology, arguing that mending must be positioned within original artistic- verbal worlds and must engage indigenous traditions not as "supplements" to Western remedy but as primary coffers. Dutta emphasizes that decolonial mending is inescapably collaborative and political, addressing not only individual symptoms but the structural conditions producing torture.

In the Indian environment, Jain (2014) and Bhargava (2018) have called for the reanimation of indigenous mending traditions for precisely these reasons. They note that previous to Western colonialism, India held sophisticated systems for managing cerebral torture — through tabernacle rituals, passage, spiritual singing, and community carnivals — numerous of which remain accessible at low or no cost. Jain argues that these traditions are frequently more effective for Indian cases precisely because they operate within familiar emblematic worlds and social networks.

This paper aligns with decolonial approaches by treating Koovagam not as an artistic curiosity to be studied from an external clinical aspect but as a licit system of healing knowledge operating on its own terms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

This exploration adopts an illuminative paradigm, which prioritizes understanding the meanings actors assign to their gestures rather than measuring objectively defined variables. Within the illuminative tradition, this paper specifically employs a decolonial illuminative frame. This means (1) centring indigenous generalities and orders as primary logical tools, (2) refusing to judge indigenous practices against Western norms of "substantiation-grounded treatment," and (3) situating the experimenter as a practitioner drawing on being educated.

Sources and Data

The exploration draws on three orders of sources. First, textual sources on IKS and tradition include classical textbooks (Mahabharata in re-statement), contemporary IKS education (Kapadia, 2016, 2020; Mahadevan, 2019), and mythological analysis (Hiltebeitel, 1995; Pattanaik, 2002, 2018). Second, ethnographic sources on hijras and Koovagam include Vaibhav Saria's (2021) ethnography *Hijras, Lovers, Brothers: Surviving Sex and Poverty in Rural India*, as well as accounts by Nanda (1999), Reddy (2005), Rizvi (2018), and Kotiswaran (2021). Third, internal health literature on queer populations in India includes epidemiological studies (Chakrapani et al., 2017; Logie et al., 2017), reviews of Western models (Sinha, 2014; Raghavan et al., 2013), and decolonial approaches (Dutta, 2018; Jain, 2014). This paper does not conduct primary fieldwork, a conceded limitation addressed through synthetic analysis of being sources.

FINDINGS

The analysis reveals that the Koovagam Festival functions as a decolonial heartiness practice offering three intertwined confines of mending, each of which addresses a specific type of energy blockage as conceptualized within Kapadia's IKS frame.

Dimension 1: Spiritual Countersign Removing smirching

The first mending dimension is spiritual countersign — the unequivocal, ritualized, collaborative confirmation that Aravani gender identity and fornication are sacred rather than unethical. Within Kapadia's frame, smirching operates as an energy blockage primarily affecting the throat chakra (vishuddhi), which governs authentic communication and tone- expression. Family rejection, social stigmatization, and internalized homophobia produce a granthi (knot) in this chakra, manifesting as constricted breath, throat miserliness, and an incapacity to speak one's verity.

Koovagam dissolves this blockage through three mechanisms. First, the myth provides godly precedent: Krishna — the supreme deity — willingly takes womanish form to marry a man. Second, the marriage ritual functions as a sankalpa (ritualized intention) reshaping energetic patterns through collaborative performance. Third, the figure of Mohini- Aravan provides queer darshan — the complementary aspect between seeker and deity that confers blessing and metamorphosis.

**Dimension 2: Social Release for Processing Grief**

The alternate mending dimension is social release — the ritualized, collaborative, public processing of grief through lavalier - breaking, thali junking, and public weeping. Within Kapadia's frame, undressed grief affects the heart chakra (anahata), creating a thick blockage that manifests as casket miserliness, shallow breathing, and emotional impassiveness.

Koovagam addresses this blockage because the ritual is collaborative and embodied rather than individual and verbal. The sound of thousands breaking lavalieres contemporaneously produces a vibratory effect that physically disrupts frozen grief energy. Public weeping provides social substantiation to losses that first passed without acknowledgment. The ritual transition from marriage festivity to mourning — joy to anguish and also durability — models the emotional inflexibility that depression apprehends.

Dimension 3: Social Connectedness Re-establishing Community Relations

The third mending dimension is social connectedness — the deliberate reconditioning of the relational matrix that trauma destroys. Koovagam provides vertical connectedness among Aravani actors through what Turner called *communitas*, an unshaped, egalitarian, affectively violent community that empirically falsifies depression's claim that "you are alone." The jubilee also provides perpendicular connectedness with ancestors who performed these same rituals for centuries, fighting what Kapadia calls "energetic rootlessness," the sense of literal orphanhood produced by family rejection. Intergenerational transmission between aged and youngish Aravani restores *Parampara* (unbroken chain of transmission), allowing energy to inflow forward and backward through time.

DISCUSSION

Findings answer 'What did we find?'. The discussion addresses, 'So what, why does it matter, and what are the limitations?' This clear distinction allows us to first review the evidence, then understand the reasoned interpretation of its significance.

Summary of Findings

This paper has established that the Koovagam Festival functions as a decolonial heartiness practice predicated in Indian Knowledge Systems. Using Kapadia's frame of trauma as energy blockage, we linked three mending confines spiritual countersign (removing shame- related blockages in the throat chakra), social release (processing grief- related blockages in the heart chakra), and social connectedness (rebuilding vertical and perpendicular relationality).

Counter-accusations for Mental Health Policy

Several counter-accusations follow for internal health policy in India. First, government- approved interventions should fete indigenous coffers like Koovagam as licit factors of a comprehensive mental health system. The Mental Healthcare Act (2017) presently makes no citation of indigenous mending traditions, an elision that's both hamstrung (ignoring low- cost, high- reach coffers) and unethical (assessing Western fabrics on populations for whom indigenous fabrics may be more effective).

Alternatively, policy should support being community coffers rather than replacing them. For Koovagam, this could include safe transportation and accommodation, police protection from importunity, support for Aravani elders as knowledge- keepers, and integration of Aravani voices into internal health training. Third, Koovagam should serve as a model for developing analogous coffers across India's different regions and queer subpopulations. The principles linked — spiritual countersign, collaborative grief processing, and social connectedness — can guide rehabilitation of other indigenous coffers.

Koovagam as Sustainable Wellness Practice

The jubilee is sustainable in three senses. Ecologically, it requires no cultivated medicine, imported technologies, or precious structure — only village spaces, ritual objects, and mortal capacities. Socially, it's organized by the community it serves, ensuring durability without government backing. Psychologically, it models a sustainable relationship to suffering rather than aiming for symptom elimination (frequently unrealistic for populations facing ongoing oppression); Koovagam transforms suffering, gives it meaning, and integrates it into a larger story.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The absence of primary fieldwork means actors' own voices aren't directly represented. There's a threat of overgeneralizing from Koovagam to other queer populations. The paper may glamorize indigenous traditions while playing down their internal scales or rejections. Unborn exploration should conduct cooperative fieldwork with Aravani actors, exploring whether they conceptualize the jubilee's mending goods in the terms proposed then, and should examine other indigenous coffers across India's different traditions.



CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that the Koovagam Festival constitutes a decolonial heartiness practice that heals queer trauma through spiritual countersign, social release, and social connectedness. Drawing on Saria's ethnography and Kapadia's IKS frame of trauma as energy blockage, we've demonstrated that indigenous traditions offer sophisticated, functional mending coffers that are free, accessible, and culturally reverberative. The paper concludes that if we're to make a sustainable future without abandoning any community to its trauma, renewing indigenous traditions is pivotal not an act of nostalgia but a necessary strategy for collaborative mending and emancipation.

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RAJ DHARMA REIMAGINED: INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AS FRAMEWORKS FOR ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC POLICY IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

Karam Singh

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Degree College, Nihri, District Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

ABSTRACT

The rich corpus of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) encompasses centuries of accumulated wisdom on statecraft, governance, ethics, ecology, and community administration. This paper examines the relevance of indigenous Indian governance traditions—rooted primarily in Kautilya's Arthashastra, the Dharmashastra literature, the concept of Gram Swaraj as articulated by Mahatma Gandhi, and pre-colonial village republic models—to the imperatives of ethical public administration and sustainable policy-making in twenty-first century India. Employing a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in doctrinal analysis, close textual reading of primary IKS sources, and comparative institutional assessment, the paper draws on deliberative democracy theory, postcolonial governance scholarship, and the concept of epistemic justice as its principal theoretical anchors. The paper critically interrogates the selective appropriation of indigenous governance models by modern Indian statecraft and examines how the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments partially operationalised the philosophy of Gram Swaraj. It further explores the tensions between universalist liberal-democratic governance norms and the particularism embedded in indigenous administrative practices. By situating IKS within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the paper charts pathways for a syncretic governance paradigm that harnesses the ethical depth of Indian political thought without romanticising or essentialising the past. The findings indicate that IKS governance traditions constitute substantive institutional resources with direct structural analogues in contemporary public administration, that their constitutional institutionalisation has been partial and uneven, and that the concept of syncretic governance offers a viable framework for principled IKS integration. The discussion situates these findings within broader comparative contexts, drawing on analogous constitutional experiments in South Africa, New Zealand, and Bolivia. The paper concludes that a principled reintegration of IKS into policy pedagogy, administrative training, and constitutional discourse can contribute meaningfully to India's aspiration for inclusive, just, and ecologically sustainable governance.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems, Raj Dharma, Gram Swaraj, ethical governance, Arthashastra

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Indian governance operates at a complex crossroads. On one hand, it inherits a post-colonial constitutional architecture substantially modelled on Western liberal-democratic frameworks; on the other, it presides over one of the world's most culturally and epistemologically diverse civilisations, whose governance traditions predate the modern nation-state by millennia. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 formally recognised the need to integrate Indian Knowledge Systems into educational curricula, signalling a broader national intent to reclaim indigenous intellectual heritage. Yet the operationalisation of this intent within the domain of political science and public administration remains nascent.

The concept of Raj Dharma—the righteousness of the ruler, the ethical compact between the state and its subjects—constitutes one of the most enduring contributions of Indian political thought. Articulated across the Mahabharata, the Arthashastra, the Manusmriti, and later reformulated in Gandhian political philosophy, Raj Dharma encodes a vision of governance as trusteeship, a relationship premised on accountability, welfare, and the protection of the most vulnerable. This paper argues that Raj Dharma, far from being an archaic relic, constitutes a theoretically fertile framework for reimagining governance ethics in an era of democratic recession, administrative corruption, and ecological crisis.

The paper is organised as follows. It first situates the study within a conceptual and theoretical framework, drawing on deliberative democracy theory, postcolonial governance scholarship, and the philosophy of IKS. The research methodology is then outlined, followed by a historico-analytical survey of indigenous governance traditions with particular attention to the Arthashastra and Gram Swaraj. The paper subsequently examines the partial institutionalisation of IKS in India's constitutional and administrative architecture, and analyses the tensions and possibilities of IKS-informed governance. The principal findings are then presented and discussed, with the discussion situating them within broader comparative and theoretical contexts. A conclusion summarises the argument and its policy implications.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Defining Indian Knowledge Systems in the Governance Context

Indian Knowledge Systems, as conceptualised by the Ministry of Education (2021) under NEP 2020, refer to the body of knowledge developed over centuries through observation, experience, and reflective practice within the Indian subcontinent, spanning philosophy, science, technology, arts, literature, and governance. Within political science, IKS in governance broadly encompasses the theoretical frameworks of classical Indian political thought (Rajashastra), indigenous administrative practices (village republics, guild systems, panchayats), ethical codes for rulers (Niti texts), and community-based resource management systems.

Scholars such as Kapila Vatsyayan (2001), Patrick Olivelle (2013), and more recently Shashi Tharoor (2018) have engaged with IKS from diverse disciplinary vantage points. Within political science specifically, the works of Beni Prasad (1928), A.S. Altekar (1949), and U.N. Ghoshal (1959) remain foundational in mapping the terrain of Indian political institutions. More recent contributions by Rajeev Bhargava (2010) on political secularism, Gurpreet Mahajan (2013) on pluralism, and Amartya Sen (2005) on democracy's Indian roots have extended these conversations into contemporary political theory. The present paper builds upon this lineage while focusing specifically on governance architecture and public policy implications.

Theoretical Anchors: Deliberative Democracy and Postcolonial Governance

The paper draws on two principal theoretical anchors. First, Jürgen Habermas's (1996) theory of deliberative democracy, which foregrounds reason-giving, public discourse, and participatory legitimation as the foundations of governance, finds resonance in several IKS governance traditions—particularly the sabha and samiti systems of the Vedic period and the gram sabha model of Gandhian thought. Second, postcolonial governance scholarship, particularly the work of Partha Chatterjee (2004) on political society and Sudipta Kaviraj (2010) on modernity in India, provides a critical lens through which the limitations of wholesale adoption of Western governance models can be examined.

The concept of epistemic justice, developed by Miranda Fricker (2007) and extended to governance contexts by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), provides additional theoretical grounding. If marginalised epistemic communities—including those who carry and practise indigenous governance traditions—are systematically excluded from public policy discourse, the resulting governance deficit has moral as well as practical dimensions. IKS integration in governance, from this perspective, is not merely a cultural exercise but an imperative of epistemic justice.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in doctrinal and historical-analytical methods. Primary sources include classical Indian political texts—principally Kautilya's Arthashastra, the Dharmashastra literature, and Mahatma Gandhi's Hind Swaraj—examined through close textual reading and contextual interpretation. Secondary sources encompass peer-reviewed scholarship in political science, public administration, and postcolonial governance studies, as well as official documents including reports of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007) and Ministry of Education guidelines on IKS integration (2021).

The analytical framework is comparative and interdisciplinary, drawing on political theory (deliberative democracy, postcolonial governance, epistemic justice) to evaluate IKS governance traditions against contemporary institutional frameworks including the Panchayati Raj system, the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The methodology deliberately avoids both uncritical nativism and dismissive modernism, instead applying consistent normative standards to assess the contemporary applicability of indigenous governance principles. This approach is consistent with the interpretive turn in comparative public administration and aligns with established methodologies in political theory research (Bhargava, 2010; Sen, 2009).

INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE TRADITIONS: A HISTORICAL-ANALYTICAL SURVEY

Kautilya's Arthashastra: The Science of Statecraft

The Arthashastra, attributed to Kautilya (also known as Chanakya) and tentatively dated to the fourth century BCE, represents arguably the most comprehensive treatise on statecraft, economic governance, and public administration produced in ancient India (Olivelle, 2013). Comprising fifteen books and covering subjects ranging from ministerial appointments and administrative organisation to foreign policy, labour law, and environmental protection, the Arthashastra constitutes a remarkable instance of empirical political reasoning that anticipates many concerns of modern public administration.



Of particular relevance to contemporary governance is the Arthashastra's treatment of administrative accountability. Kautilya prescribes elaborate systems of internal audit (samaharta), surveillance of officials (guptacharas), and mechanisms for citizen grievance redress (prativedaka), which bear striking structural resemblance to modern oversight institutions such as the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Central Vigilance Commission, and the Lokayukta. The text's insistence that the king's happiness lies in the happiness of his subjects (Raja praja hitechha sukhecha sukhena)—articulated in Book I—encodes a proto-welfarist conception of the state that resonates powerfully with Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

Kautilya's framework for forest governance (Book II, Chapters 17–19) establishes protected zones (abhayaranya), regulated timber harvesting, and penalties for environmental violation—a system that environmental governance scholars such as Gadgil and Guha (1992) have identified as a proto-sustainable resource management regime. The contemporary relevance of this tradition to India's Forest Rights Act (2006) and Community Forest Resource governance models merits far greater scholarly attention than it has received.

Village Republics and the Tradition of Gram Swaraj

The historiography of Indian village republics—from the janapadas of the Vedic period to the ur assemblies of the Sangam Tamil polity—presents a picture of decentralised governance characterised by local autonomy, collective decision-making, and community-based resource management. Scholars including B.R. Ambedkar (1947), who famously contested the romantic idealisation of village republics in his critique of Gandhian gram swaraj, and M.K. Gandhi (1909), who championed village self-rule as the foundation of Indian democracy, represent two poles of a debate that continues to structure discussions of local governance in India.

Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj, articulated most fully in Hind Swaraj (1909) and elaborated in his later writings, envisioned a decentralised polity constituted by self-governing village communities linked in a non-hierarchical oceanic circle. For Gandhi, the village was not merely an administrative unit but a moral and ecological community, organised around ahimsa (non-violence), swadeshi (local self-sufficiency), and sarvodaya (welfare of all). This vision carries direct implications for contemporary debates on participatory governance, community-based natural resource management, and the limits of centralised technocratic administration.

The tension between Ambedkar's critique—that village republics had historically been sites of caste oppression and social exclusion—and Gandhi's affirmative vision is not merely a historical debate. It maps directly onto contemporary challenges facing Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs): the persistence of caste and gender hierarchies in local governance, elite capture of gram sabhas, and the inadequacy of resource transfer to elected local bodies. A nuanced engagement with IKS in governance must therefore be simultaneously recuperative and critical.

Dharmashastra and the Ethics of Public Administration

The Dharmashastra tradition, encompassing texts such as Manusmriti, Yajnavalkyasmriti, and Naradasmriti, codified norms governing the conduct of rulers, judges, and administrators. While these texts have been rightly criticised for institutionalising caste and gender hierarchies, their normative framework of administrative ethics—including norms of impartiality (nirapekshatva), compassion (karuna), and restraint (dama) as qualities of the just administrator—constitutes a resource for governance ethics that deserves critical engagement rather than wholesale rejection.

The concept of danda (coercive power) in the Dharmashastra tradition is notably framed not as an end in itself but as instrumental to dharma (right order). The legitimate exercise of state power is conditionally tied to its orientation towards justice—a principle that resonates with contemporary theories of legitimate authority and the responsibility to protect. Later Dharmashastra commentators, including Vidyaranya (fourteenth century CE), further elaborated norms governing judicial conduct and the limits of arbitrary state power — anticipations of what contemporary constitutional theory would recognise as rule-of-law principles. These elaborations, while embedded in the commentary tradition on earlier Smriti texts, demonstrate the evolutionary and adaptive character of the Dharmashastra tradition rather than its static codification.

PARTIAL INSTITUTIONALISATION: IKS IN INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The Indian Constitution, though principally modelled on Western parliamentary frameworks, incorporates several provisions that partially reflect IKS governance principles. The Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV), particularly Articles 40 (Panchayats), 43 (living wage), 46 (protection of weaker sections), and 48A (environment protection), encode a welfarist, communitarian vision of governance that resonates with the IKS tradition of Raj Dharma. The Preamble's invocation of



justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, while textually derived from Western constitutional traditions, finds parallel articulation in the Indian philosophical tradition of samata (equality) and nyaya (justice).

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992) constituted the most significant institutional attempt to operationalise Gram Swaraj within the constitutional framework, mandating the establishment of gram sabhas and devolving powers to elected local bodies across 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule. However, two decades of implementation evidence reveals a significant gap between constitutional intent and administrative reality. Studies by the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007) and by scholars such as James Manor (1999) and T.R. Raghunandan (2013) document the persistent reluctance of state governments to devolve meaningful financial and functional powers to PRIs—a structural contradiction between centralising administrative instincts and the IKS ideal of local self-governance.

The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) represents a more explicit attempt to incorporate indigenous governance traditions into statutory law. By recognising customary law and the gram sabha's authority over natural resources in tribal areas, PESA acknowledges the validity of indigenous administrative practices as a basis for public policy. Its implementation, however, has been systematically subverted by state governments and commercial interests, illustrating the political economy constraints that impede genuine IKS integration in governance.

TENSIONS AND POSSIBILITIES: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

The Problem of Selective Appropriation

A significant methodological and political risk in engaging with IKS for governance is that of selective appropriation—extracting culturally valorised elements of the tradition (Arthashastra's statecraft wisdom, Gandhi's village democracy) while eliding its structures of exclusion (caste hierarchy, patriarchy, social stratification). The current political climate in India has witnessed a resurgent interest in IKS that is not always accompanied by critical self-reflection. When governance discourses invoke IKS selectively to validate contemporary policy preferences—whether in the domain of environmental policy, economic nationalism, or administrative decentralisation—the intellectual integrity of the engagement is compromised.

A rigorous political science engagement with IKS must therefore apply the same critical-evaluative standards that it applies to any other governance tradition. The normative core of IKS governance—welfare orientation, accountability, participatory deliberation, ecological stewardship—can be recovered and deployed in contemporary discourse without endorsing the social hierarchies within which these principles were historically embedded. This is precisely the methodological contribution that political science can make to the broader IKS discourse.

IKS and the Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), provides a useful international framework against which the governance contributions of IKS can be assessed. Several IKS governance principles map directly onto SDG targets. The Arthashastra's prescriptions for transparent and accountable administration (Book II) align with SDG 16.6 (effective, accountable institutions). The tradition of community forest management (van panchayats) documented by scholars such as Arun Agrawal (2001) provides evidence-based support for SDG 15 (Life on Land).

The IKS concept of panchabhutas—governance in alignment with the five elements constituting the natural order—while metaphysically framed, encodes an ecological sensibility that resonates with sustainability imperatives. Contemporary governance frameworks such as the National Green Tribunal and the Environment Impact Assessment process might be enriched by incorporating community-based indigenous knowledge alongside scientific expert knowledge, in alignment with both PESA provisions and SDG 15.9 (integration of ecosystem and biodiversity values into national planning).

Towards a Syncretic Governance Paradigm

The paper proposes the concept of syncretic governance as an analytical and normative framework for integrating IKS insights into contemporary public policy without either uncritical nativism or dismissive modernism. Syncretic governance acknowledges multiple valid knowledge traditions, privileges empirical assessment of outcomes, and employs democratic deliberation to adjudicate between competing normative frameworks. This approach draws conceptual support from Amartya Sen's (2009) capability approach, which grounds justice in substantive freedoms and remains epistemologically open to diverse cultural resources.



Three specific domains offer particularly promising opportunities for syncretic governance: (a) decentralised environmental governance, where IKS-informed community-based institutions can complement and correct the failures of centralised regulatory frameworks; (b) administrative ethics and anti-corruption policy, where the Arthashastra's detailed prescriptions for official accountability and whistleblower protection can inform contemporary institutional design; and (c) conflict resolution and restorative justice, where indigenous mediation traditions (lok adalats and panchayat nyaya) already complement formal judicial processes and deserve further institutional support.

FINDINGS

The analysis yields five principal findings. First, IKS governance traditions—particularly the Arthashastra's prescriptions for administrative accountability, the gram sabha model of participatory deliberation, and the Dharmashastra's ethics of public office—constitute substantive intellectual resources with direct structural analogues in contemporary public administration, rather than merely symbolic or rhetorical reference points.

Second, the institutionalisation of IKS principles in India's constitutional architecture has been partial and uneven. While the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments and PESA represent significant formal recognitions of decentralised indigenous governance, implementation evidence reveals persistent gaps between constitutional intent and administrative practice, driven primarily by the reluctance of state governments to devolve meaningful powers and resources to local bodies (Manor, 1999; Raghunandan, 2013).

Third, IKS governance principles demonstrate significant alignment with international sustainable development frameworks, particularly SDG 16 (accountable institutions) and SDG 15 (ecosystem governance), providing a convergence point between indigenous knowledge traditions and global governance imperatives. Fourth, the primary risk in engaging with IKS for governance reform is selective appropriation—valorising elements of the tradition without critically interrogating its structures of social exclusion. Fifth, the concept of syncretic governance offers a viable methodological framework for integrating IKS insights into contemporary policy without either essentialising the past or dismissing its relevance.

DISCUSSION

The findings carry significant implications for both governance theory and policy practice. The structural resonances between IKS accountability mechanisms and modern oversight institutions—the Arthashastra's samaharta and the Comptroller and Auditor General; the prativedaka system and contemporary grievance redress mechanisms—suggest that these traditions were not prescientific curiosities but sophisticated institutional solutions to enduring problems of governance. This challenges the linear narratives of modernisation theory that locate administrative rationality exclusively in the Western Weberian tradition.

The tension between the Gandhian and Ambedkarite positions on village self-governance remains productively unresolved in this analysis. Rather than adjudicating between these poles, the discussion suggests that this very tension—between the emancipatory potential of decentralised governance and the risk of reproducing local hierarchies—should be institutionalised within governance design itself. Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women in PRI elections represent one such institutionalisation; the PESA Act's recognition of customary law alongside fundamental rights represents another. The challenge is to extend this dialogic architecture more systematically across governance domains.

The syncretic governance framework proposed in this paper invites comparison with analogous experiments in other postcolonial democracies. South Africa's Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) formally recognises customary law as a source of law alongside the common law (Section 39(2)), while New Zealand has progressively integrated Maori governance principles—including the concept of kaitiakitanga (environmental stewardship)—into its Resource Management Act (New Zealand Parliament, 1991) and Treaty of Waitangi settlements. Bolivia's 2009 plurinational constitution (Bolivia, 2009), which recognises indigenous autonomy and customary justice systems as constitutionally equivalent to state institutions, represents perhaps the most far-reaching such experiment. These comparative cases suggest that the integration of indigenous governance traditions into constitutional frameworks is both politically feasible and generative of distinctive institutional innovations, lending comparative support to the argument advanced here for IKS integration in Indian public policy (Sen, 2009; Bhargava, 2010).

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that Indian Knowledge Systems constitute a theoretically significant and practically relevant resource for contemporary governance and public policy. The Arthashastra's framework of accountable statecraft, the Gandhian vision of Gram Swaraj, and the Dharmashastra tradition of administrative ethics collectively offer a rich vocabulary for addressing



the governance challenges of twenty-first century India—provided they are engaged critically, comparatively, and with full acknowledgement of their historical limitations. The partial institutionalisation of IKS principles in India's constitutional and statutory framework—through the 73rd and 74th Amendments, PESA, and provisions of the Forest Rights Act—demonstrates both the political feasibility and the structural difficulties of IKS-informed governance. The primary obstacles are not intellectual but political: the resistance of centralising administrative cultures, the interests of entrenched elites, and the inadequacy of resource transfers to local governance institutions.

The concept of Raj Dharma, the ethical compact between ruler and ruled, retains its normative power precisely because it frames governance not as the exercise of power but as its responsible stewardship. In an era of democratic recession globally and accountability deficits domestically, this ancient Indian political insight constitutes a resource of considerable contemporary relevance. The task of political science is not merely to document this heritage but to rigorously evaluate, adapt, and deploy it in the service of a more just, sustainable, and inclusive governance order.

Future research should focus on comparative institutional analysis of IKS-informed and conventional governance institutions, particularly in the domains of environmental governance, local democracy, and administrative ethics. Interdisciplinary collaboration with historians of political thought, anthropologists of governance, and public administration scholars will be essential to advancing this agenda.

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THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF TRADITIONAL, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY-MANAGED KUHL IRRIGATION SYSTEM OF KANGRA: A CASE STUDY OF PALAMPUR IN WESTERN HIMALAYA

Nem Raj¹, Rajan Bhandari²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Geography, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, SCVB Government College, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India

² Professor, Department of Geography, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab, India

Abstract

The traditional kuhl irrigation system of Palampur is not dead, but it is in a state of advanced institutional and infrastructural decay. Its changing dynamics reveal a clear trajectory: from a labour-abundant, rice-centric, community-regulated system that functioned effectively for centuries (pre-1970s), through a period of gradual stress driven by outmigration and rising opportunity costs (1970s–1990s), to a phase of acute decline and partial state intervention (1990s–2010s), and finally to the current situation in which most kuhls have ceased to deliver reliable water and farmers have adapted through crop shifts, dairying, groundwater extraction, and outmigration. The primary drivers—non-farm employment, male outmigration, rising labour costs, tractorization, and cropping pattern shifts—are largely irreversible and, from a narrow development perspective, not undesirable. No one wishes to return to a world where young men had no option but to carry stones for khana for a subsistence paddy crop. However, the loss of the kuhl system has real and tangible costs: abandoned paddy fields, depleted groundwater, increased dependence on tanker water for vegetables, loss of the traditional Kohli's ecological knowledge, and the quiet erosion of a centuries-old social fabric.

This study has shown that state-led concretization without governance reform is not a solution but a further problem. The concrete channels that now scar the landscape of Kangra are monuments not to development but to a failure of imagination—an inability to see that water flows not just through channels of stone and earth, but through channels of trust, obligation and shared knowledge. As Baker (2005) so eloquently demonstrated, the kuhl systems are embedded in and reproduce core cultural beliefs and practices; ignoring that embeddedness guarantees the failure of any intervention.

Keywords: Traditional, Indigenous Community, Managed Kuhl, Irrigation System of Kangra,

Introduction

The intricate network of earthen irrigation channels known as *kuhls* in the Western Himalayan region which crisscross the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh. It constitutes to be one of the most remarkable examples of indigenous, community-managed common-pool resource governance in the world today. These gravity-flow systems, fed by perennial streams (*khads*) descending from the Dhauladhar range, have sustained paddy-based agrarian civilization in this Himalayan valley for over three centuries, with some of the largest and oldest channels tracing their origins to the patronage of the pre-colonial Katoch rulers. Unlike state-managed canal systems or individually owned tube wells, *kuhls* historically operated through an intricate web of customary water rights, collective labour obligations (*khana*), decentralized leadership under the *Kohli* (watermaster), and deeply embedded social norms that made water distribution a matter of shared identity, ritual practice, and enforceable obligation (Baker, 2005). As the celebrated filmmaker and writer Amit Dutta has observed, “Kohlis judiciously distributed water to peasants, who, in turn, would religiously help them maintain the kuhls. There are records which prove that the income generated through kuhls was used to fund artists”. In many universities across the United States and Europe, the *kuhl* system of Kangra is today taught as a case study in courses on sociology, anthropology, economics and common-pool resource management.

The resilience of the *kuhl* system in the face of recurring environmental shocks such as earthquakes, floods, droughts has long fascinated scholars. J. Mark Baker, whose magisterial ethnographic and archival study *The Kuhls of Kangra* (2005) remains the definitive work on the subject, notes that prevailing theories of common property resource management would suggest that such extreme ecological and social conditions should cause the *kuhls* to die out; instead, most have been transformed and, as of his fieldwork in the late twentieth century, remained “alive and well” (Baker, 2005). Baker's work, assisted by the *Riwaji-i-Abpashi* which is a remarkable British colonial record of customary irrigation rights prepared during the 1874 settlement of Kangra district documents a system that did not cost the state a single rupee to operate yet sustained an entire agricultural economy (Baker, 2005). Research by Emmanuel Bon (2001) similarly identifies *kuhl* as one of the three major common-pool resources in the western Himalaya, alongside communal forests (*mushtarka*) and common grazing lands (*ghasnies*), noting the resilience of the “village republic” spirit in response to the insensitivity of public management.



Yet, as the opening decades of the twenty-first century unfold, the *kuhl* landscapes of Palampur tell a story not merely of transformation but, in many cases, of quiet collapse. This paper, based on extensive fieldwork conducted between 2022 and 2025 in twelve villages of Palampur tehsil fed by the Neugal Khad *kuhl* network, examines the changing dynamics of this indigenous agricultural heritage. The paper argues that the decline of the *kuhl* system exemplified by the Kirpal Chand Kuhl, Raniya Kuhl, Mahang Kuhl and Menjha Kuhl which constitute our sampling universe; is not primarily a story of physical decay or climatic stress, as is often assumed. Rather, it is a story of institutional unraveling triggered by the rapid expansion of non-farm employment and male outmigration since the 1970s. Rising opportunity costs of labour, mechanization (particularly the introduction of small tractors), and a fundamental shift in cropping patterns away from labour- and water-intensive paddy cultivation have rendered the traditional *khana* (collective labour) system unsustainable. In response, the state has intervened through top-down bureaucratization (formation of formal Water Users 'Associations) and physical concretization of *kuhl* channels under MGNREGA. However, these interventions have largely ignored the underlying institutional and ecological dynamics, resulting in expensive concrete channels that frequently remain dry—a finding consistent with earlier assessments (Baker, 2005; Vaidya, 2016). The paper concludes that mere physical rehabilitation is futile; sustainable revival requires restructuring local Water Users' Association rules, redefining obsolete water rights to fit contemporary cropping patterns, constructing joint storage capacities at diversion sites, and meaningfully incentivizing participation through water-based rural employment.

Objectives

Against this backdrop, the present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives:

- To document and analyse the historical institutional architecture (water rights, labour obligations, leadership roles and conflict resolution mechanisms) of the traditional *kuhl* irrigation system in Palampur tehsil as it existed prior to the 1970s.
- To identify and assess the key drivers of change since the 1970s, with particular emphasis on non-farm employment, male outmigration, agricultural mechanization and cropping pattern shifts, and to evaluate their differential impacts on community participation in *kuhl* maintenance.
- To propose a realistic, context-sensitive framework for the sustainable revival of the *kuhl* system that addresses both institutional and infrastructural dimensions.

Study Area

Palampur tehsil (32°06' N, 76°32' E) lies in the heart of the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh, approximately 35 kilometres southwest of Dharamshala and 18 kilometres northeast of the district headquarters at Kangra town. The elevation ranges from 1,200 to 1,500 metres above mean sea level. The landscape is defined by steep, dissected foothills rising abruptly to the Dhauladhar range, whose snow-capped peaks remain visible for much of the year and which constitute the primary water source for all perennial streams in the region. The climate is subtropical highland (Cwb in the Köppen classification), with an average annual rainfall of approximately 2,500 millimetres, most of which falls during the southwest monsoon from June to September. The pre-monsoon months of March to May are often critically dry, and the post-monsoon period of October to November, when paddy ripens also experiences significant water stress (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 1918). Perennial streams, locally called *khads*, descend from the Dhauladhar snowfields and provide the only reliable dry-season flow for agriculture. The most important of these in the study area is the Neugal Khad, which originates from the Dhauladhar at an elevation of approximately 3,500 metres and flows south-west through Palampur and adjoining tehsils before joining the Beas River. The Neugal Khad constitutes the hydrological backbone of our study area. Baker (2005) notes that in 1897, according to British colonial records, 100 per cent of the irrigation system of Kangra district was based on *kuhls*, with most irrigation in Kangra and Palampur tehsils being accomplished through these channels accessing the Neugal and its tributaries. Historically, over thirty-five *kuhls* operated within Palampur tehsil, irrigating approximately 1,800 hectares of terraced paddy land. The Neugal Khad network comprises several major channels, of which twelve were selected for this study based on purposive sampling ensuring representation of upper, middle and lower command-area segments as well as variations in size, age and current functionality:

The command areas of these twelve *kuhls* are characterized by small, fragmented landholdings, averaging 0.8 hectares per household, with rich alluvial and colluvial soils well suited to wet rice cultivation. The population is predominantly Hindu, comprising Rajput and Brahmin landowning castes alongside Scheduled Caste communities (Ghirath, Chamar and Lohar) who traditionally performed specific roles in the *kuhl* system—desilting, guarding the headworks at night, and carrying messages



between distant fields (Hutchinson & Vogel, 1933). Palampur town itself grew in importance during the British period as a sanatorium and later as the site of the Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University (established 1978). This urban growth, combined with road connectivity improvements (particularly the widening and metalling of the Palampur–Dharamshala road in the mid-1980s) and the growth of the hydropower and service sectors in the 1990s, fundamentally altered the labour landscape of the surrounding villages.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods, historically grounded case study design, combining archival research, ethnographic fieldwork, structured household surveys, and semi-structured interviews. The research was conducted between January 2022 and June 2025 across twelve villages in Palampur tehsil that are constituent parts of the Neugal Khad *kuhl* network. The selection of the villages was purposive as all selected villages have historically relied on *kuhls* for paddy irrigation, and all have experienced significant change since the 1970s. The twelve *kuhls* listed in the previous section constitute the sampling frame.

Data Sources

Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used in the study. Secondary sources included the *Gazetteer of Kangra District* (1918) and the earlier *Kangra District Settlement Report* (1884) and the Primary data were collected through Household survey and Semi-structured interviews.

Results and Discussion

The results are presented period-wise, tracing the trajectory of the *kuhl* system from its historical functionality through its gradual decline to its current state of institutional near-collapse. Each period is discussed with reference to both empirical findings from the fieldwork and engagement with the existing literature.

Period I: The Traditional Institutional Architecture (Pre-1970s)

The *Bari* (Turn) System and Water Rights

The historical *kuhl* system in Palampur, as documented in the *Riwaj-i-Abpashi* records and confirmed through our interviews with elderly *Kohlis*, operated through a highly codified system of water rights known as the *bari* (turn) system. Every landowner in the command area of a *kuhl* held water rights strictly proportional to his landholding, measured in *kanals* (one *kanal* equals 0.05 hectares). During the critical dry months of April–May (pre-sowing) and October–November (paddy ripening), a 24-hour rotation (*var*) was strictly enforced: each shareholder received a specific number of hours of continuous flow based on his land area. A farmer with 10 *kanals* might receive six hours, while one with 2 *kanals* received just over one hour. The *Kohli* (watermaster) would announce the schedule daily, using simple mnemonic devices—a notched stick, a pile of pebbles, or the position of a particular star (Vaidya, 2016). As one 82-year-old farmer *Kohli* from bari village recounted:

“Mere baba ke zamane mein, koi bhi paani nahi churata tha. Sharam aati thi.

Aur Kohli ki aankh mein aankh daal kar jhooth nahi bol sakte the.”

(In my grandfather's time, no one would steal water. There was shame. And you could not lie looking into the *Kohli*'s eyes.)

The British colonial administration, during the 1874 settlement, recognized the water rights documented in the *Riwaj-i-Abpashi* and incorporated them into the formal revenue records. Research by Baker (1990) explores the relationships between these British-recorded irrigation rights and the contemporary organization and operations of *kuhls*, concluding that “the irrigation rights documented in the British era provide much of the social glue required for operating and sustaining these small hydraulic works”. This formalization provided legal protection but also introduced a bureaucratic logic that would later erode some of the flexibility of the indigenous system.

The *Kohli* and the *Khana* System

The *Kohli* was the pivot around which the entire *kuhl* system revolved. He was usually a middle-peasant not the wealthiest landowner, who had little time for daily supervision, nor the poorest, who lacked authority and he was either elected by the shareholders or inherited the position within a particular family. As recorded by Baker (2005), the *Kohli*'s duties were multiple and demanding: he walked the entire length of the *kuhl* every morning to check for breaches, allocated water turns, mediated disputes, and organized the annual *khana* (collective labour).



The *khana* typically took place in March, before the first paddy transplantation, and again in October after the harvest. Every able-bodied male shareholder was required to contribute six to ten days of unpaid labour for desilting, repairing breaches, clearing debris from the headworks, and patching leaks. Those who could not attend, the elderly, the infirm, or those working in distant towns had to provide a substitute or pay a fine, which was used to hire landless labourers for the same work. Baker (2005) and Singh and Hietala (2014) note that this labour contribution system ensured that the *kuhl* remained functional without any state expenditure. The *Kohli* himself was remunerated through a share of the harvest.

Women's roles, while less visible in formal accounts, were equally essential in our respondents' recollections. Women did not usually participate in the physically demanding *khana* work of digging and carrying stones, but they managed the complex timing of irrigation within the household. When a farmer received his water turn sometimes in the middle of the night it was often the women who guided the flow through the field channels, opened and closed small mud gates, and made sure the younger children were kept away from the dangerous fast-flowing water. As Baker (2005) observes, the *kuhl* systems were sites for reproducing core cultural beliefs and practices, and their persistence under extreme ecological and social conditions challenged prevailing theories of common property resource management.

Period II: The 1970s to 1990s – Onset of Stress and Gradual Decline

The Emergence of Non-Farm Employment

The analysis of three Kangra *kuhl* irrigation networks suggests that these irrigation systems, though under stress during the 1970s, were still operative and persisting until the late 1980s, and continued to support the age-old paddy cultivation practices in the area. The *kuhl* irrigation system gradually came under acute stress during the 1990s and became almost defunct (Blaikie & others, unpublished data). Each *kuhl* is governed by a set of rules, and the institutional arrangements of the *kuhl* network demand participatory labour, more specifically male labour-intensive activities, for the sustainability of the system.

The first significant driver of change identified during the field surveys by our respondents and by Baker (1996, 2005), Vaidya (2016), is the expansion of non-farm employment. The construction of the Palampur–Dharamshala road (widened and metalled in the mid-1980s), the establishment of the agricultural university in 1978, and later the growth of the hydropower sector, the service economy, and government employment in the 1990s drew young men out of agriculture. The destinations shifted from nearby towns (Palampur, Dharamshala) to faraway cities (Chandigarh, Delhi, Mumbai) and even the Gulf countries. Remittances became a significant part of household income, but labour for *khana* vanished.

The Shift Away from Paddy

The second driver is the fundamental shift away from paddy cultivation. As male labour became scarce and expensive, and as remittance incomes made households less dependent on paddy for subsistence, farmers abandoned the most labour- and water-intensive crop. These shifts reduced dependence on continuous *kuhl* flow: wheat requires only two or three irrigations during its growth cycle, and dairying is fed by purchased concentrate feed and cultivated fodder rather than by *kharif* paddy straw.

Tractorization and Physical Damage to *Kuhls*

The fourth driver, mentioned by nearly all mechanized farmers in our survey, is the introduction of small tractors from the 1990s onward. These tractors replaced bullocks for ploughing and harrowing, but they also physically damaged *kuhl* embankments. Unlike bullocks, which can be led carefully across a narrow earthen channel, tractors either smash through the bank or require wide crossings that are rarely constructed. Farmers admitted to simply breaking the *kuhl* bank to access their fields, then leaving the breach unrepaired because, as one farmer in Sansarpur village confessed, "someone else will fix it." No one did. This pattern of physical degradation of the channel infrastructure compounded the institutional decline.

Baker (1996), in a careful analysis of the impacts of increasing nonfarm employment on 39 *kuhls* diverting water from the Neugal River just west of Palampur, argues that "the potential for caste, class or locationally derived conflict among the irrigators of a *kuhl*, and the degree of reliance on the irrigation water a *kuhl* provides, shape the tensions arising from increasing nonfarm employment as well as the means people employ to resolve those tensions". In our study area, those *kuhls* whose command areas had the highest proportion of small and marginal farmers with limited off-farm alternatives (such as tail-end villages on Neugal Lower Kuhl and Sadi Kuhl) experienced the most desperate—and often unsuccessful—efforts to maintain water delivery, while *kuhls* in wealthier, more accessible areas (such as Neugal Upper Kuhl and Banuri Kuhl) saw the most rapid abandonment of *khana* and the earliest shift to *kharif* fallow.



Period III: 1990s to present – Institutional Breakdown and State Intervention

The Spiral of Decline

By the mid-1990s, the combination of labour withdrawal, crop shifts, and physical damage had led to a classic tragedy-of-the-commons spiral. Those few farmers who still wished to grow paddy or vegetable nurseries could not mobilize enough labour to clear the headworks or repair breaches. The *Kohli* position, once a mark of honour, became a burden. Of more than thirty-five *kuhls* that historically operated in Palampur tehsil, only few had any flow beyond two kilometres from the headworks by 2015. The Kirpal Chand Kuhl, once the pride of the region, had flowing water for only about few kilometre length. And the rest was a dry scar of cracked earth after Bhawarna village.

Quantitative data from our survey confirm this dramatic decline. Across the sampled *kuhls*, the average number of days per year that the *kuhl* carried water sufficient for paddy irrigation fell to just a few days in 2023, and that too only under strict watch and ward at the actual user level in mid- and lower command-area clusters. Farmers' adjustments have taken the form of keeping land fallow during *kharij*. Wheat cultivation as a *rabi* crop has been mechanized with the entry of small tractors for sowing. *Kharij* fallows have given rise to dairying enterprises with one or two Jersey cows per household. However, the adverse environmental effects are manifest in the low availability of downstream supplementary irrigation sources, which have dwindled. The research by Baker (2001) on communities, networks and the state is particularly relevant here. He poses three overarching questions: What is the role of the state in supporting or not supporting community-based institutions? What are the possible roles of exchange between different community-based resource management systems in enabling their persistence? And how does regionality inform the specific institutional forms, microlevel social relations, and trajectories of change? In Palampur, the state has undermined rather than supported community-based institutions, exchanges between *kuhls* have broken down as each system fails in isolation, and the regional specificities of Kangra's social organization have been ignored in favour of uniform, top-down interventions.

Conclusion

The traditional *kuhl* irrigation system of Palampur is not dead, but it is in a state of advanced institutional and infrastructural decay. Its changing dynamics reveal a clear trajectory: from a labour-abundant, rice-centric, community-regulated system that functioned effectively for centuries (pre-1970s), through a period of gradual stress driven by outmigration and rising opportunity costs (1970s–1990s), to a phase of acute decline and partial state intervention (1990s–2010s), and finally to the current situation in which most *kuhls* have ceased to deliver reliable water and farmers have adapted through crop shifts, dairying, groundwater extraction, and outmigration. The primary drivers—non-farm employment, male outmigration, rising labour costs, tractorization, and cropping pattern shifts—are largely irreversible and, from a narrow development perspective, not undesirable. No one wishes to return to a world where young men had no option but to carry stones for *khana* for a subsistence paddy crop. However, the loss of the *kuhl* system has real and tangible costs: abandoned paddy fields, depleted groundwater, increased dependence on tanker water for vegetables, loss of the traditional *Kohli*'s ecological knowledge, and the quiet erosion of a centuries-old social fabric.

This study has shown that state-led concretization without governance reform is not a solution but a further problem. The concrete channels that now scar the landscape of Kangra are monuments not to development but to a failure of imagination—an inability to see that water flows not just through channels of stone and earth, but through channels of trust, obligation and shared knowledge. As Baker (2005) so eloquently demonstrated, the *kuhl* systems are embedded in and reproduce core cultural beliefs and practices; ignoring that embeddedness guarantees the failure of any intervention.

Suggestions for Sustainable Revival

Drawing on the findings of this study and engaging with the recommendations of previous scholars (Baker, 2005; Vaidya, 2016; Singh & Hietala, 2014; the following suggestions can be adopted for a sustainable revival of the *kuhl* system in Palampur:

Redefine water rights to fit contemporary cropping patterns. The old *bari* system, based on continuous flow and 24-hour turns, is obsolete in a context where most farmers no longer grow paddy and where labour for *khana* is scarce. Since paddy cultivation has largely gone out of the scene, the water rights need to be redefined. The rights for continuous flow of water have no relevance at the present time; a rotational pattern for water use, even for the limited paddy cultivation that remains, would help in sustaining the system and ensuring the cultivation of agricultural lands. The *kuhl* committees need to be advised on sound ecological principles to agree to these new terms.



Create joint storage capacity at diversion sites. The creation of joint storage capacity at diversion sites for contiguous networks would allow night-time flow to be stored and released during the day on a scheduled basis, decoupling water delivery from continuous flow and reducing the labour required for cleaning. Small check dams or lined storage tanks at the headworks of Neugal Upper Kuhl, Neugal Lower Kuhl, and Rai Di Kuhl (all of which suffer from acute headworks siltation and clogging) would be a far more effective investment than concrete lining of channels that remain dry.

Re-establish the *Kohli* as a paid, part-time position with clear authority. The *Kohli* must be re-established as a paid, part-time position funded by a small water fee (e.g., ₹100 per *kanal* per season) collected by a genuinely representative WUA that actually meets. Without a legitimized local authority with the power to enforce rules and levy sanctions, no amount of infrastructure will produce reliable water delivery.

Incentivize participation by linking MGNREGA wages to *kuhl* maintenance. The state should make MGNREGA funds conditional on community labour contributions. A village that does not provide at least 50 per cent of *khana* labour (in person or through cash payments from absentees) should not receive state funds for lining or other capital works. Generation of water-based non-farm employment opportunities would help in the revival of the system on a sustainable basis. MGNREGA could be redesigned to pay wages specifically for headworks clearing, desilting and breach repair—tasks that currently go undone.

Integrate gender into governance structures. Women must be brought into *kuhl* governance explicitly. Including women in WUA executive committees—not just as token members but with decision-making power—could transform the system, as women are often the de facto managers of field-level water distribution. In our interviews, women expressed frustration with their exclusion from formal meetings despite their central role in irrigation management.

Move from concretization to a hybrid approach. Instead of full concrete lining, a hybrid approach maintaining earthen channels in reaches where seepage is minor, using stone pitching in vulnerable sections, and reserving concrete only for high-risk crossings and drops—would be more cost-effective, repairable by communities, and ecologically appropriate.

Recognize and document surviving traditional knowledge. Before the last elderly *Kohlis* pass away, a systematic documentation of their knowledge not just of water distribution rules but of headworks construction, channel alignment, silt management, and flood protection should be undertaken, possibly through a collaboration between the Government and public. This knowledge, accumulated over centuries, has no substitute.

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HARMONIZING ANCIENT WISDOM AND MODERN SCIENCE: INTEGRATING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Niharika Bajpai

Student, Bachelor of Education, Department of Education, University of Lucknow, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)

Abstract

As the 2030 deadline for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approaches, various socio-environmental issues continue to hinder global progress. This study contends that a fundamental shift in strategy is necessary to overcome these obstacles. In particular, indigenous old traditions can be made into universal solutions by incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into modern sustainability models. The main goal is to connect traditional knowledge with the contemporary age, highlighting the vital significance of cooperative relationships between indigenous knowledge guardians and contemporary academics. Based on a solid theoretical framework, this study explores fundamental Indian philosophical ideas. It promotes a shift in attitude from the existing "resource extraction" perspective to one based on Tyaga (sacrifice) and Dharma (moral obligation), which can be achieved by applying the Aparigraha (minimalism) principle. It looks at current obstacles to reaching the 2030 SDG goals. This study examines strategies like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to solve these shortcomings at the local level and provides thorough, practical policy recommendations for successful SDG localization. The article argues that by combining theoretical knowledge with actual policy implementation, institutionalizing IKS is a practical necessity. In the end, cultivating this cooperative framework not only produces strong, sustainable futures but also establishes India as a Vishwa Guru (global teacher), uniquely positioned to spearhead global sustainability discourse.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Sustainable Development Goals, Vishwa Guru, NEP 2020

INTRODUCTION

The need to address growing socio-environmental challenges has reached a critical peak as the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations approaches (Hatui, 2025). There is still a significant gap in achieving these crucial sustainability benchmarks despite decades of international treaties, policy developments, and technology advancements (Willige, 2025). The tendency of the dominant global developmental discourse to address ecological decay's symptoms without addressing the underlying human attitudes that cause them is one of its main drawbacks. There is a significant paradox in the attempt to achieve environmental sustainability through the very processes of extractive capitalism and unrelenting consumerism (Ingraham, 2023). The Bhoga (consumption-driven) mentality that underpins modern economic infrastructures encourages endless material gain and views the environment as an endless resource for human exploitation (Ng, 2020). This fundamental paradox hinders real development, demonstrating that the ecological destruction caused by unbridled economic growth cannot be mitigated by technology remediation alone (Bissell, 2012).

A major philosophical shift from the Bhoga attitude to a Tyaga ethos (marked by intentional restraint and detachment) is necessary to close this fundamental gap.

Integrating the core tenets of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into contemporary sustainability paradigms offers a pathway to this systemic shift. IKS provides a time-tested, holistic ethical framework that harmonizes human societal needs with planetary boundaries, viewing human advancement and natural equilibrium as inseparable. Consequently, this study investigates indigenous IKS principles and their pragmatic application within the current SDG framework. Through a critical synthesis of these paradigms, the research identifies the systemic barriers impeding the 2030 agenda and formulates actionable policy recommendations. Ultimately, it provides a culturally grounded and ecologically resilient blueprint that reconciles ancient wisdom with modern developmental objectives.

The objectives of this study are:

- To investigate the foundational philosophies of IKS and critically evaluate their integration into the SDGs.
- To analyze the systemic hurdles impeding the successful harmonization of IKS and modern sustainability frameworks.
- To formulate actionable, structural policy recommendations for institutionalizing IKS.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The intersection of indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable development has garnered significant academic attention in recent decades. The literature can be broadly categorized into three themes: the critique of modern reductionist science, the ecological dimensions of IKS, and the framework for knowledge integration. In exploring the critique of anthropocentric paradigms, scholars like Fritjof Capra (1982) in *The Turning Point* have long argued that the Cartesian-Newtonian worldview—which treats the universe as a mechanical system—has led to the ecological crises of the modern era. This reductionist approach has historically driven industrial agriculture, fossil fuel extraction, and mass consumption, prioritizing short-term economic growth over long-term ecological balance. Vandana Shiva (1989) in *Staying Alive* further critiques the imposition of western scientific models on the Global South, arguing that such paradigms often result in "maldevelopment," destroying both biodiversity and the traditional knowledge systems that sustained local communities for centuries.

In stark contrast to modern anthropocentrism, the ecological dimension of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) is profoundly eco-centric. Agrawal (1995) highlights how indigenous knowledge is embedded in specific cultural and ecological contexts, making it highly adaptive and sustainable. Traditional Indian texts, such as the *Atharva Veda* and the *Charaka Samhita*, espouse the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family) and the *Pancha Mahabhuta* (five great elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space). From a scholarly perspective, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* is not merely a social construct but a deep ecological framework that extends moral standing to non-human entities, providing a philosophical basis for modern bio-centric conservation. Banwari (1992) in *Pancavati* outlines how traditional Indian conservation practices—such as the maintenance of sacred groves (*Kavus* or *Orans*) and the veneration of rivers and trees—acted as institutional mechanisms for biodiversity preservation long before the modern environmental movement. Current technological remedies, according to Kumar and Kumar (2026), are often ineffective because they view ecological deterioration as a mechanical problem rather than a systemic philosophical failing. Conversely, researchers stress that IKS naturally encourages ecological equilibrium through embedded customs. According to Sheikh (2025), traditional water harvesting and community-based agro-forestry are historic indigenous practices that provide scalable, decentralized solutions directly applicable to climate action and life on land (SDGs 13 and 15), yet they are frequently overlooked by contemporary urban planning. To operationalize these concepts, the literature emphasizes that integrating IKS with modern science requires pragmatic harmonization rather than a romanticization of the past. Dharampal's (1971) seminal work, *Indian Science and Technology in the Eighteenth Century*, demonstrates that pre-colonial India possessed highly sophisticated, empirical scientific practices. Contemporary researchers like Bala (2007) argue for a "dialogue of civilizations," where modern science provides analytical tools and technological scale, while IKS provides the ethical boundaries, systemic thinking, and local contextualization necessary for sustainable application.

Underpinning these integration frameworks is a critical philosophical dichotomy that remains a major point of contention in sustainability literature: the conflict between quantitative economic growth and qualitative holistic development, often framed as *Tyaga* (mindful restraint) versus *Bhoga* (consumption-driven existence). In discussing the dilemma of contemporary markets, literature (e.g., Chatterjee, 2025) points out that modern economic frameworks, fixated on mass production and linear "take-make-dispose" models, frequently view sustainable IKS methods as economically unfeasible. The contemporary *Bhoga* mindset drives the extractive capitalism that directly contravenes global climate targets. In contrast, academic debates increasingly position the classical *Tyaga* attitude—alongside related principles like *Aparigraha* (non-possessiveness)—not as anti-development, but as a requisite psychological and structural shift for achieving the SDGs, particularly SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Scholars (e.g., Prajapati, 2025) examine these ideas using holistic and Gandhian values, contending that mitigating unchecked consumerism requires moving beyond superficial technological fixes. A structural shift toward *Tyaga* aligns seamlessly with contemporary "degrowth" and circular economy models, offering a culturally grounded mechanism to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and reduce global inequalities (SDG 10).

Ultimately, translating these theoretical IKS ideologies into practical policy fundamentally relies upon robust educational frameworks. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which mandates multidisciplinary integration, serves as a foundational document in contemporary Indian literature (Ministry of Education, 2020). The role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in executing this mission is examined by Banerji and Mete (2024) and Nair (2021), who highlight the necessity of credit-based IKS courses and experiential pedagogy. However, critical structural barriers persist. Despite clear policy directives, institutions face a significant lack of ongoing financing, digital documentation, and faculty development required to validate and scientifically scale these indigenous frameworks, as noted by recent policy analyses (IMPRI, Xess & Nayyar, 2025).



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, exploratory, and analytical research design to examine the harmonization of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given the conceptual challenge of bridging ancient philosophical paradigms with contemporary developmental targets, a qualitative approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of the underlying behavioral ethos, specifically contrasting *Bhoga* (consumption) with *Tyaga* (restraint). The exploratory dimension of the design is utilized to identify existing systemic barriers preventing integration, while the analytical component critically evaluates current policy frameworks to propose viable, structurally sound solutions.

Data Collection

The research relies primarily on secondary data curated from a diverse array of interdisciplinary academic and institutional sources. Data collection was systematically segmented into three distinct streams. The first stream encompasses historical and philosophical texts detailing traditional ecological knowledge, ancient Indian scientific methodologies, and fundamental doctrines such as *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. The second stream consists of contemporary policy frameworks, including the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, NITI Aayog localization reports, and United Nations agenda publications. The final stream involves a thorough review of academic literature—comprising peer-reviewed journal articles, working papers, and conference proceedings—that scrutinize the tensions between extractive capitalism and holistic sustainability.

Theoretical framework, Mapping and Data Analysis

A comparative mapping strategy serves as the theoretical framework for this investigation. Specific SDGs (notably Goals 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 15) are systematically correlated with indigenous IKS practices, including decentralized water management, traditional agro-forestry, and holistic pedagogy. This matrix assesses the viability of substituting capital-intensive, technocratic interventions with decentralized, culturally embedded models. Thematic analysis was subsequently applied to the gathered data. Three dominant themes emerged from the literature: the philosophical friction between quantitative growth and qualitative development, the financial and structural impediments to IKS validation, and the necessity of localizing global targets. By synthesizing these themes, the study identifies critical execution gaps and articulates structural policy recommendations.

CORE PHILOSOPHIES OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

The efficacy of IKS as a sustainability framework is anchored in foundational philosophies that inherently promote ecological balance and mindful living. Dharma, frequently misinterpreted merely as religion, fundamentally represents righteous duty and the universal law maintaining cosmic and ecological order; it establishes the moral obligation of humans to protect rather than dominate nature. The concept of Purushartha delineates the four human goals (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha*), emphasizing that the pursuit of material wealth (*artha*) and desire (*kama*) must be strictly governed by ethical responsibility. Furthermore, the doctrine of Pancha Mahabhuta outlines the five great elements (earth, space, water, air, and fire) constituting both the universe and the human body, fostering a bio-centric worldview wherein environmental degradation is viewed as self-harm.

Critical to the contemporary sustainability discourse are the principles of *Tyaga* (mindful sacrifice) and *Aparigraha* (non-possessiveness or minimalism), rooted respectively in Vedic and Jain traditions. With robust academic support linking them to modern circular economy theories, these principles directly challenge the extractive mindset, advocating for a life of intentional restraint that mitigates resource depletion. Finally, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* articulates the profound realization that the entire world is a single, interconnected family. Far beyond human sociology, scholarly interpretations position this as a deep ecological ethos that extends moral and familial standing to flora and fauna, establishing an ancient precedent for global bio-conservation.

INTEGRATION OF IKS INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) & SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)

While modern industrial agriculture successfully amplified crop yields, it concurrently degraded soil vitality and genetic biodiversity (Shiva, 1989). Ancient treatises like Surapala's *Vrikshayurveda* offer extensively documented alternatives, advocating for biodegradable botanical pest management and the enhancement of soil microbiota using organic inputs (Sadhale, 1996). When synthesized with contemporary biochemical analysis, these traditional methods offer scalable, regenerative agronomy (Bala, 2007). In parallel, Ayurveda and Yoga catalyze a paradigm shift toward holistic, preventive health. Rather than relying solely on curative pharmaceuticals, Ayurveda emphasizes *Dincharya* (daily routines) and



Ritucharya (seasonal regimes). Academic literature increasingly validates that aligning human habits with local circadian and climatic rhythms significantly bolsters long-term physical and psychological resilience.

SDG 4 (Quality Education) & SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)

The ancient *Gurukul* system parallels the core objectives of the NEP 2020 by prioritizing experiential learning, critical inquiry, and *Charitra Nirman* (character building) over the rote memorization typical of industrial-era education. Academic studies validate that balancing *Apara Vidya* (material knowledge) with *Para Vidya* (spiritual wisdom) creates ethically grounded global citizens. Regarding planetary resources, modern centralized water infrastructures are often energy-intensive. Conversely, traditional hydro-engineering systems—such as the *Johads* of Rajasthan and *Bawdis* of Gujarat—demonstrate remarkable efficacy in decentralized groundwater replenishment (Agarwal & Narain, 1997). Integrating these ancient, community-managed designs with modern Geographic Information Systems (GIS) provides a highly sustainable blueprint for mitigating global water scarcity.

SDGs 11, 12, 13, and 15 (Sustainable Communities, Consumption, Climate, and Land)

The structural tenets of *Vastu Shastra* offer low-energy, climate-responsive alternatives to modern urban planning, directly supporting sustainable cities. Furthermore, SDG 12 is philosophically actualized through the practice of *Aparigraha*; institutionalizing minimalism significantly curtails the over-consumption driving climate change. IKS approaches climate action (SDG 13) as a moral imperative rather than merely an engineering challenge. Texts like the *Bhumi Suktam* revere the Earth as a living mother, fostering an inherent cultural resistance to exploitation. Finally, the Jain principle of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) toward nature is operationalized through India's Sacred Groves (*Orans* and *Kavus*). These spiritually protected biospheres function as highly effective, community-led indigenous biodiversity hotspots, consistently outperforming state-mandated conservation zones in preserving endangered flora and fauna (SDG 15).

RESULTS AND FINDINGS: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Colonial Disruptions and Epistemological Divides

The historical legacy of colonialism remains a formidable barrier to mainstreaming IKS. By marginalizing indigenous scientific institutions as mere superstition, colonial authorities fractured the continuous lineage of knowledge transfer (Dharampal, 1971). Consequently, contemporary academia exhibits a heavy over-reliance on western epistemological models. Furthermore, an epistemological divide complicates integration: IKS relies on holistic, long-term qualitative observation, whereas modern scientific validation demands reductionist, double-blind trials. Bridging this gap requires modern science to adopt complex, systems-based evaluation metrics that do not strip traditional practices of their holistic context (Agrawal, 1995).

Commercialization, Biopiracy, and the Growth Paradox

As global interest in Ayurveda and organic farming surges, a dangerous trend of prioritizing commercialization over authentic conservation has emerged. Market forces frequently strip traditional practices of their sustainable ethos, leading to the unsustainable harvesting of endangered medicinal plants (Sadhale, 1996). Additionally, global intellectual property systems inherently favor corporate innovation, exposing indigenous knowledge to biopiracy—exemplified by historic corporate attempts to patent traditional bio-resources like neem and turmeric (Shiva, 1989). Compounding these issues is the overarching paradox of prioritizing quantitative GDP "growth" over qualitative "development." Within fiercely competitive capitalist markets, sustainable IKS practices are frequently dismissed as economically unviable (Chatterjee, 2025)

Implementation, Funding, and Documentation Gaps

Translating macro-level policies into micro-level action remains exceptionally difficult. Top-down implementations often fail because they marginalize the actual custodians of traditional knowledge, such as tribal communities and rural farmers (Agarwal & Narain, 1997). Despite progressive frameworks like NEP 2020, institutions suffer from a chronic deficit of continuous funding necessary to conduct empirical, collaborative validation of these sciences (IMPRI, 2025). Furthermore, because vast segments of IKS are preserved through oral traditions in regional dialects, there is a pressing need for robust financial investment to digitally document and translate this knowledge before it is permanently lost to time.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutionalizing IKS via Higher Education

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must function as the primary incubators for merging IKS with modern sustainability targets. In alignment with the NEP 2020, policies must mandate the establishment of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) that fund interdisciplinary research bridging traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary sciences like climate modeling (Ministry of Education, 2020). Moving beyond token inclusion, universities should leverage the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) to offer rigorous, credit-bearing courses in indigenous agriculture and classical architecture (Nair, 2021). Crucially, targeted funding must be allocated for specialized faculty development programs to equip educators with the pedagogical tools necessary to translate classical philosophy into actionable, 21st-century problem-solving (Banerji & Mete, 2024).

Localizing SDGs and Sustained Model Building

The global nature of SDGs often renders them difficult to implement at the grassroots level. Policies must empower local governing bodies, such as *Panchayats*, to align SDG targets with culturally appropriate indigenous customs. For example, SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) can be localized by incentivizing the cultivation of traditional, drought-resistant millets rather than imposing uniform industrialized farming. To ensure long-term resilience, governments must invest heavily in open-source digital infrastructures to archive regional oral traditions. Furthermore, policy frameworks should promote the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence to map and scale traditional knowledge, ensuring researchers have continuous access to validated, human-centered IKS data (Okada & Vaz, 2025).

Bridging Policy with Equitable Practice

To close the gap between theoretical policy and on-the-ground reality, educational directives must replace rote learning with experiential, project-based curricula—such as deploying students to restore local water-harvesting systems (Ministry of Education, 2020). Funding channels must also be created specifically for collaborative research bridging university scientists with traditional rural healers and farmers. Finally, integration must be fiercely equitable, avoiding the perpetuation of colonial biases or social hierarchies. Utilizing inclusive evaluation models like PARAKH's Holistic Progress Card (HPC) ensures students are assessed on social involvement and emotional intelligence (NCERT, 2026). Digitalizing and adapting IKS materials into regional languages and formats accessible to diverse learning styles guarantees that this ancestral wisdom remains universally accessible and just (Tewary & Suram, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Addressing the unprecedented ecological and socioeconomic crises of the 21st century requires a critical paradigm shift: aligning the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As this research demonstrates, the prevailing developmental model—rooted in unbridled economic expansion and technocratic exploitation—is fundamentally inadequate for sustaining planetary boundaries (Kumar & Kumar, 2026). Integrating traditional Indian knowledge into modern scientific frameworks is not a regressive step into antiquity, but a requisite recalibration. It provides modern development with an ethical anchor, ensuring progress is measured by the holistic well-being of all living entities rather than mere economic metrics.

However, harmonizing these systems presents complex structural challenges. The conceptual divide between consumption-driven markets and the eco-centric imperatives of IKS frequently results in the economic marginalization of sustainable traditional practices (Chatterjee, 2025). Overcoming the modern bias against indigenous epistemology, securing sustained funding for empirical validation, and protecting traditional intellectual property demand robust policy interventions. Progressive frameworks like the NEP 2020 are vital catalysts in this transition, institutionalizing multidisciplinary research and experiential pedagogy (Ministry of Education, 2020). By empowering local communities to apply indigenous models of agriculture, healthcare, and conservation, policymakers can forge sustainability strategies that are both scientifically rigorous and culturally resonant.

At the heart of this integration lies the profound philosophical truth of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the recognition that the world is a single, interdependent family. This ancient ethos serves as the spiritual counterpart to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), demanding global cooperation, equitable resource distribution, and deep ecological empathy (Xess & Nayyar, 2025). When development is viewed through the moral lens of a unified global family, the exploitation of nature and marginalized populations becomes inherently incompatible with human progress. By actively funding IKS research, decolonizing educational curricula, and replacing the "growth at all costs" paradox with an ethos of mindful restraint, society can engineer a



genuinely resilient future. Ultimately, the successful synthesis of ancient Indian wisdom with contemporary science proves that the blueprint for our collective survival may very well reside in our deepest traditions.

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TRADITIONAL DIETS AND NUTRITIONAL WISDOM IN INDIAN WELLNESS SYSTEMS: A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO HEALTH

Pankaj Rana

BNYS Student, Arni University, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

Indian knowledge systems have long recognized food as a fundamental pillar of health, embedding nutritional wisdom within daily life and medical traditions. Rooted in Ayurveda, the concept of “food as medicine” emphasizes balance, seasonality, and individualized dietary practices. This paper examines the scientific and cultural relevance of traditional Indian diets, focusing on principles such as Agni (digestive fire), Satvik nutrition, and the therapeutic use of herbs and spices like turmeric, ginger, and cumin etc. These dietary frameworks promote optimal digestion, metabolic balance, and disease prevention. The study further analyzes how traditional cooking methods—such as fermentation, slow cooking, and spice tempering (tadka) —enhance nutrient bioavailability and gut health, aligning with contemporary findings in nutritional science and microbiome research. In contrast, the growing shift toward processed and fast foods in urban India has contributed to a rise in lifestyle disorders, including obesity, diabetes, and gastrointestinal diseases. By incorporating classical Ayurvedic insights with modern nutritional evidence, this paper argues for the revival and contextual adaptation of traditional dietary practices as a sustainable health strategy. It also explores policy implications, including the incorporation of indigenous dietary knowledge into public health programs and educational curricula under the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems. The findings suggest that re-establishing traditional food practices can play a critical role in addressing current health challenges while promoting ecological sustainability and cultural continuity.

Keywords: Ayurveda; Traditional Diets; Nutritional Science; Preventive Healthcare; Indian Knowledge Systems

Introduction

The increasing burden of lifestyle disorders such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and gastrointestinal disorders has become a major public health concern globally and in India. Rapid urbanization, sedentary lifestyles, and increased consumption of processed foods—such as packaged snacks, sugary beverages, and refined flour products—have significantly altered dietary patterns, leading to metabolic imbalances and chronic diseases (Gupta et al., 2021; Hu, 2002; Popkin, 2017).

In contrast, traditional Indian meals such as dal–roti with seasonal sabzi, khichdi, and buttermilk (lassi) offer balanced nutrition with high fiber, plant protein, and digestive support. These systems are deeply rooted in Ayurveda and align closely with naturopathic principles emphasizing natural healing.

Review of Literature

Gupta et al. (2021) reported that traditional Indian dietary patterns reduce the risk of lifestyle disorders and promote metabolic health. Tilg et al. (2020) demonstrated the importance of gut microbiota in digestion, immunity, and chronic disease prevention. Marco et al. (2021) established the beneficial effects of fermented foods on intestinal microbiota and immune regulation. Ordovas et al. (2018) emphasized personalized nutrition approaches, which parallel Ayurvedic concepts of Prakriti. Servida et al. (2024) highlighted the interaction between curcumin and gut microbiota, supporting traditional spice use. Srinivasan (2014) described the metabolic and therapeutic role of Indian spices. Existing studies provide growing scientific support for traditional dietary concepts; however, limited literature integrates Ayurvedic principles with contemporary nutritional science in a holistic framework. This study attempts to address this gap.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative review methodology based on secondary sources. Relevant literature was collected from peer-reviewed journals, Ayurveda texts, books, and scientific databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Classical Ayurvedic concepts such as Agni, Prakriti, Satvik diet, and Ritucharya were analyzed alongside contemporary evidence from nutrition science, gut microbiome research, and preventive medicine. Comparative analysis was used to identify convergences between traditional dietary wisdom and modern scientific findings.



Conceptual Framework: Food as Medicine

Food is not merely sustenance to fuel our body but a powerful therapeutic tool that can prevent disease, enhance immunity, and promote holistic well-being. A balanced, nutrient-rich diet acts as the first line of defense, supporting the body's natural healing and maintaining long-term health (Lad, 2020; Gupta et al., 2021).

Agni (Digestive Fire) - The concept of Agni represents the body's metabolic and digestive capacity. Balanced Agni ensures proper digestion and nutrient assimilation, while impaired Agni leads to toxin accumulation (Ama), which is considered the root cause of disease. Modern science correlates this with (Tilg et al., 2020) enzymatic activity, gut microbiome balance, where dysbiosis contributes to disease and metabolic efficiency (metabolic disorders) for example light meals like moong dal khichdi support weak digestion and warm herbal drinks such as ginger tea stimulate digestive fire.

Satvik Diet and Mental Well-being - A Satvik diet consists of fresh, seasonal, and minimally processed foods that promote clarity, calmness, and vitality. Research increasingly supports the link between diet and mental health, reinforcing the importance of natural dietary patterns (Gupta et al., 2021).

A Satvik diet includes foods like Fresh fruits (apple, papaya), Steamed vegetables and whole grains like rice and wheat such foods promote mental clarity and physical vitality promoting healing and health.

Individualized Nutrition (Prakriti-based Diet) - Traditional Indian systems emphasize personalized diets based on body constitution (Prakriti). This approach parallels modern personalized nutrition and nutrigenomics. Traditional Indian systems like Ayurveda classify individuals by *Prakriti* (e.g., Vata, Pitta, Kapha) and recommend diet and lifestyle accordingly, aiming to maintain internal balance and prevent disease.

This concept closely aligns with modern fields like Personalized Nutrition and Nutrigenomics, which tailor dietary interventions based on genetic makeup, metabolism, and individual variability essentially translating ancient observational wisdom into molecular and evidence-based frameworks (Lad, 2020).

Diet varies based on constitution cooling foods like coconut water for Pitta and warm foods like millet porridge (bajra) for Vata

Traditional Indian Dietary Practices

Seasonal Eating (Ritucharya)

Dietary patterns are adjusted according to seasonal changes, ensuring harmony with environmental conditions. This enhances immunity and prevents seasonal disorders (Lad, 2020). Examples include summer curd rice, cucumber, watermelon and in winter sarson ka saag, bajra roti, ghee etc.

Food Combining Principles

Traditional guidelines discourage incompatible food combinations, which may impair digestion according to Ayurvedic principles (Lad, 2020) and lead to metabolic disturbances. Meals like dal-chawal combine proteins and carbohydrates for better digestion, while avoiding incompatible combinations like milk with sour fruits.

Mindful Eating Practices

Practices such as eating slowly, chewing thoroughly, and maintaining regular meal times and eating freshly cooked meals such as home-cooked thali enhance digestion compared to reheated or processed food.

Therapeutic Role of Herbs and Spices

Indian diets incorporate spices not only for flavor but also for their medicinal properties:

Recent studies show that these spices contain bioactive compounds that influence multiple physiological pathways, supporting their role as natural therapeutic agents (Servida et al., 2024).

Common examples include turmeric milk (haldi doodh) for inflammation (Aggarwal et al. (2007) , Ginger in tea or soups for digestion and Jeera (cumin) water for metabolism.

Spice Tempering (Tadka) and Bioavailability

Spice tempering is a traditional cooking technique where spices are heated in oil or ghee to release their active compounds.

Scientific Significance enhances bioavailability of fat-soluble compounds (Servida et al., 2024) improves digestion and enzyme activity and stimulates gut microbiome (Khine et al., 2021) Modern research confirms that consumption of mixed



spices can significantly alter gut microbiome composition, supporting digestive health. Typical examples of tadka includes dal – vegetables with cumin, mustard seeds, turmeric and garlic tempering and Vegetable sabzi with hing and curry leave. This process enhances both flavor and phytonutrients nutrient absorption, particularly of fat-soluble compounds.

Fermentation and Gut Health

Fermented foods such as curd, idli, dosa, and kanji are rich in probiotics. Health Benefits are improved digestion, enhanced nutrient absorption and strengthened immune system. Scientific studies confirm that fermented foods positively influence gut microbiota, which plays a central role in overall health (Tilg et al., 2020). Examples of fermented foods are Idli and dosa batter, homemade curd (dahi) and kanji (fermented carrot drink). These foods improve gut microbiota and digestion (Marco et al., 2021).

Impact of Modern Dietary Transition

The shift from traditional diets to processed foods has led to increased consumption of refined sugars and fats, reduced intake of fiber and micronutrients and rise in metabolic and digestive disorders. This transition highlights the urgent need to revisit traditional dietary wisdom. Modern diets increasingly includes fast food (pizza, burgers), sugary beverages and processed snacks. Replacing traditional foods like home-cooked lentils, millets, and fresh vegetables has contributed to rising lifestyle diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (Gupta et al., 2021).

Naturopathic Perspective and Integration

From a naturopathic standpoint, diet is viewed as a primary therapeutic tool that supports the body's inherent self-healing mechanisms. Emphasis is placed on consuming raw, minimally processed foods such as fresh salads and sprouts, which are rich in enzymes, fiber, and micronutrients that aid digestion and cellular repair. Hydration through natural beverages like lemon water and coconut water helps maintain electrolyte balance, supports detoxification pathways, and promotes metabolic efficiency. Additionally, simple, easily digestible meals like khichdi—made from rice and lentils—are recommended to give the gastrointestinal system a period of rest while still providing essential nutrients. This approach closely mirrors traditional dietary practices in India, where seasonal, locally sourced, and uncomplicated foods have long been used to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore balance within the body (Lad, 2020; Gupta et al., 2021).

Few of the food items which are Naturopathically relevant in relation to modern health benefits are listed below-

Food Items	Category	Key Components	Health Benefits	Naturopathic Relevance
Khichdi (rice + moong dal)	Balanced meal	Protein, fiber, simple carbs	Easy digestion, detox support	Ideal during illness and fasting; supports weak digestion (<i>Agni</i>)
Dal–Roti with Sabzi	Staple meal	Plant protein, fiber, vitamins	Balanced nutrition, sustained energy	Promotes daily nourishment and metabolic balance
Buttermilk (Lassi)	Fermented drink	Probiotics, calcium	Improves digestion, gut health	Enhances gut flora and digestion
Idli/Dosa	Fermented food	Probiotics, B complex vitamins	Better nutrient absorption, gut health	Supports microbiome and immunity
Curd (Dahi)	Fermented dairy	Probiotics, protein	Improves digestion, boosts immunity	Restores gut microbiome
Kanji (fermented drink)	Fermented beverage	Lactic acid bacteria	Detoxification, improves digestion	Natural probiotic for cleansing
Turmeric Milk (Haldi Doodh)	Functional food	Curcumin, antioxidants	Anti-inflammatory, immunity booster	Supports healing and inflammation control
Ginger Tea	Herbal drink	Gingerols	Aids digestion, reduces nausea	Stimulates digestive fire (<i>Agni</i>)
Jeera Water	Herbal preparation	Cuminaldehyde	Improves metabolism, reduces bloating	Supports digestion and detox
Bajra Roti	Millet-based food	Fiber, iron	Improves digestion, provides warmth	Suitable for winter and Vata balance
Sarson ka Saag	Leafy vegetable dish	Iron, antioxidants	Boosts immunity, improves hemoglobin	Seasonal nutrition (winter diet)
Coconut Water	Natural drink	Electrolytes	Hydration, cooling effect	Balances Pitta, natural hydration
Sprouts (moong, chana)	Raw food	Enzymes, vitamins	Improves digestion, boosts immunity	Promotes natural detoxification
Lemon Water	Natural detox drink	Vitamin C	Detoxification, alkalizing effect	Supports cleansing and metabolism
Seasonal Fruits (papaya, apple)	Natural foods	Fiber, vitamins	Improves digestion, immunity	Core component of Satvik diet



Critical Analysis

While Ayurveda explains digestion through the concept of Agni, modern nutrition attributes digestive efficiency to enzymatic activity, microbiota composition, and metabolic regulation. Although the terminologies differ, both systems emphasize optimal digestion as a prerequisite for health. Similarly, the Satvik dietary model advocates fresh, minimally processed foods, which closely aligns with contemporary recommendations emphasizing whole-food dietary patterns such as the Mediterranean and plant-based diets. The Ayurvedic concept of Prakriti resembles personalized nutrition approaches, although modern nutritional science relies upon genetic, metabolic, and biochemical markers rather than constitutional assessment.

Comparisons of Ayurvedic vs Modern Scientific Interpretation:

Ayurvedic Concept	Traditional Meaning	Modern Scientific Interpretation
Agni	Digestive fire	Digestive enzymes, metabolism, gut microbiota
Ama	Toxic accumulation	Metabolic waste, inflammation
Satvik Diet	Pure and balanced diet	Whole-food dietary patterns
Prakriti	Individual constitution	Personalized nutrition, nutrigenomics
Ritucharya	Seasonal diet	Seasonal eating and circadian nutrition
Tadka	Spice activation	Enhanced bioavailability of phytochemicals
Fermentation	Food preservation and digestion	Probiotics and microbiome modulation

Policy Implications and Sustainability

Promoting traditional foods such as millets (ragi, bajra), local seasonal vegetables, and traditional beverages like lemon water has significant implications for both public health and environmental sustainability. Millets are highly nutritious, rich in fiber, iron, and essential minerals, and require less water and fewer chemical inputs compared to rice and wheat, making them climate-resilient crops. Similarly, encouraging the consumption of local seasonal vegetables reduces dependence on long-distance transportation and cold storage, thereby lowering carbon emissions while ensuring fresher and more nutrient-dense food options. Traditional beverages such as lemon water, lassi etc. not only improve gut health and digestion due to their probiotic content but also offer a natural alternative to sugar-sweetened and carbonated drinks linked to obesity and metabolic disorders (Gupta et al., 2021).

From a policy perspective, integrating these foods into school mid-day meal schemes, public nutrition programs, and health awareness campaigns can revive indigenous dietary practices while addressing malnutrition and lifestyle diseases. Their promotion under the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems can support sustainable agriculture, strengthen local food economies, and foster ecological balance alongside improved health outcomes.

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite their well-established benefits, traditional dietary practices face barriers such as the growing preference for convenience and ultra-processed foods, limited public awareness of indigenous nutrition principles, and insufficient large-scale scientific validation (Tilg et al., 2020). Addressing these requires targeted nutrition education, integration of traditional diets into public health policies, and rigorous interdisciplinary research to generate evidence-based frameworks that can bridge traditional wisdom with modern healthcare systems.

Conclusion

Traditional Indian dietary systems, exemplified by meals like dal-roti, khichdi, and fermented foods, provide a holistic and sustainable approach to health. Their integration into modern healthcare can significantly reduce lifestyle diseases and promote long-term wellness (Gupta et al., 2021).

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MAPPING THE SCIENCE OF WEALTH IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE ARTHASHASTRAIN BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS

Pooja Devi¹, Anju Devi², Monika Devi³

1 Assistant Professor, Commerce, SCVB, Govt. Degree College, Palampur, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

2 Assistant Professor, History, Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Degree College, Chaura Maidan, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

3 Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Himachal Pradesh University Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

Kautilya's Arthashastra, an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft and political economy, offers profound insights into governance, strategic thinking, and wealth creation. It remains remarkably relevant to contemporary business and management also. As an early foundation of economic thought, it bridges the gaps between classical wisdom with modern challenges in corporate governance, ethical leadership, and sustainable value generation. This study presents a bibliometric analysis of the scholarly literature on Kautilya's Arthashastra and its contributions to business, management, and economics. Using a manual search on the OpenAlex database, 448 English-language documents (articles, books, and book chapters) published between 2000 and 2025 were retrieved. After cleaning and deduplication, 237 unique records were retained for analysis. A Python-based workflow was employed to perform descriptive statistics, citation impact evaluation, co-authorship network construction and thematic evolution over three time periods. The results show a steady increase in publications over the last two decades, with a notable acceleration after 2015. Which reflects growing academic interest in ancient Indian economic and strategic thought. The most cited authors are Patrick Olivelle for King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India (203 citations). Average citations per paper are fluctuating over the time but earlier contributions remain highly influential. This bibliometric analysis conclusively demonstrates that Kautilya's Arthashastra has transitioned from a historical treatise to a living source of management wisdom. The findings offer a roadmap for future research, highlighting underexplored areas such as empirical validation of Kautilyan principles in contemporary organisations and cross-cultural comparisons with other non-Western management philosophies.

Keywords: Kautilya, Arthashastra, business management, corporate governance, Indian knowledge systems, OpenAlex.

Introduction

Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, originating in the 4th century BCE, is one of the world's first comprehensive treatises on governance, economics, law, and military strategy. It comprises 150 chapters organised thematically into 15 books, covering three well-developed domains; national security, including foreign policy, the administration of justice, covering crime and punishment, policies for economic development, taxation, labour management, and financial management (Sihag, 2009). In the third domain, the text highlights the essential role of accounting as it was written as a theoretical manual. The *Arthashastra* was intended to guide rulers universally and across all periods of time (Sihag, 2003). It is regarded as the treatise which focuses on the means to empower state, probable causes of the state to progress or to face decline and how to achieve prosperity for state. It is considered as masterpiece of state craft, diplomacy and strategy (Jindal, 2019). Kautilya defined the *Arthashastra* precisely and stated that "Artha" is substance or livelihood of men, *Arthashastra* is the science which is the means of the acquisition and protection of earth". Kautilya held the view that there are three main economic activities which are agriculture, cattle rearing and trade. All these are related to earth. Therefore, activities related to protections and acquisition of earth, is science of *Arthashastra* (Chamola, 2007). In 20th century, *Arthashastra* was recognised as one of the most precious works in the whole range of Sanskrit literature (Olivelle, 2012). As an early foundation of economic thought, it bridges classical wisdom with modern challenges in corporate governance, ethical leadership, and sustainable value generation. According to (Kumar and Singh, 2025) the manuscript focuses on "swami or king" whose primary responsibility is to protect (Raksha). In similar way CEO/ board of director's duty is to protect the organisation. "Amatya" means ministers which is related to senior managements whose work is to ensure smooth functioning of organisation. "Janpada" means territory and people which is associated with market and customer base. "Durga" means fortified cities in modern corporate context it is related to secure office, data and brand. "Kosha" signifies treasury that means corporate finance. "Danda" indicates army, in modern business it is associates with security teams and legal setup in organisation. Last one is Mitra that means allies which includes strategic partners and vendors.

Arthashastra's lessons on corporate governance, leadership, and transparency are remarkably relevant to contemporary organisations, offering a framework for generating value for shareholders and stakeholders (Muniapan, 2007). Today, this



ancient treatise on governance, law, and economics is being re-examined not only as a historical artifact but as a foundational pillar of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). The evolving body of literature indicates that the Arthashastra has begun to transition from a purely historical treatise into an applied management resource (Banerjee, 2026). Besides precise contours of this transition its key contributors, dominant themes, and conceptual shifts over time have not been systematically mapped. Given this context, a bibliometric analysis is not merely beneficial but imperative. This approach offers a comprehensive, quantitative overview of the intellectual structure and evolution of the field. Thus, this study will be very helpful in revealing a systematic picture of how the Arthashastra has been adopted and adapted in business contexts. The Present study intends to understand the trajectory of growth of publication in the above domain over 25 years the period of 2000-2025. A clear view about citation trend how the authors are connected. With a systematic analysis of thematic evolution related to scholarship.

Literature review

This section critically evaluates the methodological approaches employed in existing bibliometric studies on the Arthashastra. As it is recognised as a foundational text on statecraft and economic governance. The Arthashastra has attracted increasing scholarly attention within the broader context of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). As a result, a substantial body of literature has emerged across business, management, and economics. This review synthesises these scholarly contributions and establishes the conceptual framework for a bibliometric analysis.

Patel and Chavla, 2026 in their paper titled). Integrating Indian governance philosophy with contemporary management systems: A conceptual and bibliometric analysis studied the MA-SHE Framework that synthesizes ethical HR practices from the *Manusmriti* with strategic accounting principles from the Arthashastra and they use bibliometric analysis to map the growth, diversity, and international reach of IKS-based management research from 1992–2025. In this study, they performed a conceptual synthesis of the Manusmriti and Arthashastra into a normative framework, along with a bibliometric analysis of 589 Scopus/WoS publications using PRISMA and Biblioshiny. The bibliometric analysis showed an annual publication growth of 11.6%, an international collaboration rate of 38.9%, and a strong citation average of 118.5 per document. Thematic mapping revealed that "sustainability," "ethical management," and "human capital governance" serve as core research drivers. Concurrently, the proposed MA-SHE Framework incorporates the principles of dharma (duty), satya (truthfulness), Artha (ethical wealth), and seva (service) into contemporary human resource and accounting practices.

Ioannis Passas, 2024 Giving a brief review about steps involve in bibliometric analysis and explain that systematic review of published research to identify the patterns, trends and results are called as bibliometric analysis and in his study explained the steps involved in conducting bibliometric analysis. The seven main steps have been included clarify research objectives, data collection from database, data cleaning, selection of tools and techniques, data analysis, visualization, and interpreting and reporting. For this the quantitative techniques used such as citation analysis, unit of publication and citation etc. Dhantu et al., 2021; Broadus, 1987; Pritchard, 1969 and also explain that in recent years bibliometric analysis gain importance in the discipline of accounting, business, economics, marketing, management and finance etc.

Zupic and Cater, 2015 The study employed citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-author analysis, and co-word analysis with the aim of reducing bias and ensuring scientific rigor in the paper. Their research focused on the bibliometric analysis of literature in the fields of management and organization. The performance of publications was measured using the number of citations received by each research paper, which enabled the identification of highly cited papers. The results revealed that bibliometric analysis in management and organization gained importance after 2011, and it helps identify significant journals, authors, publications, and map collaboration networks.

Hassan and Duarte, 2024 aims to provide sensible suggestion for conducting Bibliometric analysis with greater effectiveness and highlight the limitation of conventional method such as dependent just on publication citation. He discussed about the key components such as collection of data from data base such as web of science, PubMed, Scopus, etc. and software for Bibliometric analysis included VOSviewer, Citespace, BibExcel, Bibliometrix etc. He found that publication citation is insufficient for evaluating research impact. Whereas citations trends and H- index provides better insights and he give suggestion that H- index, G- index and m-index should be applied together for providing better picture of research and for better evaluation of the research work.

Chatterjee, 2025 in his study Arthashastra and Its Applicability in Modern Corporate World explore the management principles driven from the Arthashastra, Kautilya ancient text of India and their relevance in modern world and organisation. He applied conceptual and analytical approach that focuses on textual examination of the Arthashastra and connects its concepts to current management principles. Study found that various concepts of Arthashastra such as foresight, adaptability



and ethical leadership are widely applicable in current management practices. Further suggests to apply this ancient idea into business, ethics, corporate governance improves modern framework.

Merigo and Yang, 2016 studied bibliometric analysis of operation research and management science and uses Web of Science for data collection. Journal articles and reviews are evaluated by using H- index, impact factor and 5-year impact factors. The purpose of this study was to identify most leading journals, authors and countries of this field. This study found that the paper of Charnes and Cooper's 1998 on data envelopment analysis is most cited and after citation analysis found that the European Journal Of Operational journal is most cited journal.

Rana S., 2017 study examined how ancient Indian scriptures including the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Arthashastra, and Jain literature conceptualized commerce, taxation, and trade. It also sought to understand the connections between these ancient economic ideas and contemporary concepts such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), public finance, and trade. Employing a qualitative research approach based on existing literature and classical texts, the study found that governance policies and economic theories in ancient India were straightforward. Notably, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* emerged as a foundational work that guided ancient India's economy, encompassing principles related to price, supply, inflation, taxation, trade, commerce, and industry.

Dervis, (2019) In his study on bibliometric analysis using the Bibliometrix R-package, the researcher explored the role of open-source software in bibliometric analysis. To obtain impactful results, he employed the Bibliometrix R-package and co-citation analysis. The study was based on a case study of graphene research in Turkey. Data were collected from the Web of Science for the period 2000 to 2017, and the analysis included citation analysis, co-citation analysis, co-author analysis, co-word analysis, and conceptual structure mapping. The findings revealed a 47% annual growth rate in publications, with 4,519 authors contributing to the collaboration index. The study emphasized the use of factorial analysis for mapping conceptual structures.

Objectives of Study

The study aims to explore the following objectives:

- To analyse the growth trajectory of Arthashastra related publications in business and economics (2000–2025).
- To identify leading contributors (authors, journals) and most cited works.
- To construct co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence networks to reveal collaboration.
- To trace thematic evolution over time by comparing top keywords across three distinct time periods (2000–2008, 2009–2016, 2017–2025).

Methodology

The study is entirely based on the secondary sources of data and the data for this bibliometric analysis have been retrieved from OpenAlex (<https://openalex.org>), a free and open index of global scholarly works. OpenAlex provides unrestricted access to publication metadata, making it suitable for bibliometric studies. A manual search was conducted using the following search string in the OpenAlex web interface:

“Arthashastra OR Kautilya OR Chanakya OR Vishnugupta) AND (business OR management OR economics OR corporate OR governance OR leadership OR strategy OR ethics”.

Firstly, 733 scholarly works were identified. After applying a filter for the publication years 2000–2025, 569 records were retrieved. A second filter was then applied for document type, selecting only articles, books, and book chapters; this reduced the database from 569 to 507 records. Finally, a language filter was applied to retain only English-language publications, further reducing the records to 448. CSV file containing 448 records was downloaded for further actions.

Data Cleaning and Preprocessing

The raw CSV file was cleaned using the Pandas library in Python. The following steps were performed:

- Removing rows with missing titles.
- Standardising author names by splitting multi-author entries, unifying separators.
- Deduplication based on DOI or title when DOI was absent.

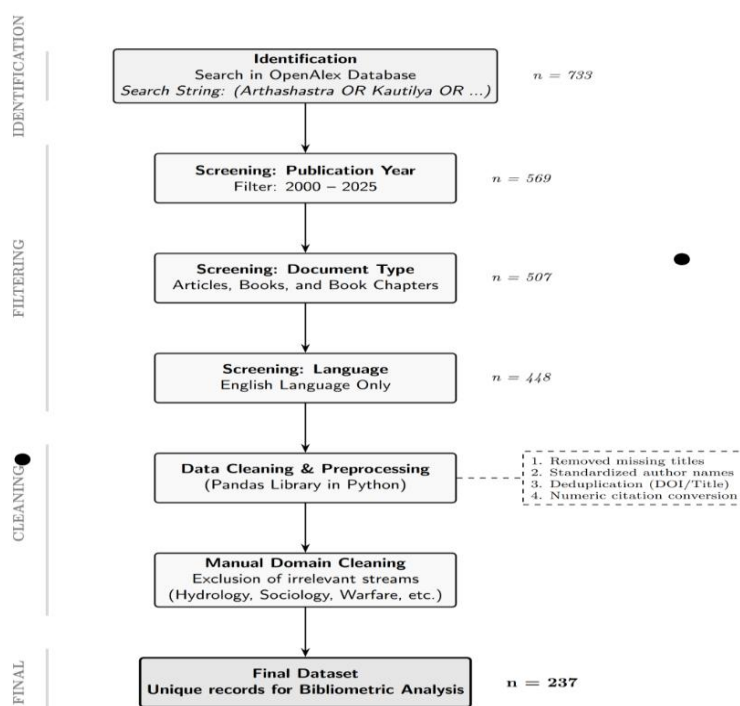
- Converting citation counts to numeric integers.

After this rigor manual cleaning was undertaken to eliminate entries from other streams such as hydrology, sociology and warfare etc. then, 237 unique records remained for analysis.

Analytical Techniques and Python Implementation

All analysis were conducted in Python 3.14 using a suite of open-source libraries. The required packages were installed via pip (e.g., pip install pandas, matplotlib and seaborn, networkx, scikit-learn, plotly and pyvis, wordcloud). Each library served a specific purpose:

Python Package	Purpose in the Analysis
Pandas	Data manipulation, aggregation, and preparation
Matplotlib & Seaborn	Static visualisations (bar charts, heatmaps, line plots)
Networkx	Construction and analysis of co-authorship and keyword networks
Scikit-learn	TF-IDF vectorisation for keyword extraction from titles and abstracts
Plotly & Pyvis	Interactive HTML visualisations (hover-to-see data, zoomable networks)
Word cloud	Generation of keyword word clouds



Results and Findings

Following the bibliometric methodology, this section presents the empirical finding. The results are presented across five dimensions: publication and citation performance over time, collaboration patterns through co-authorship networks, identification of the most cited author, and ranking of the most prolific journal, thematic evolution using TF-IDF weighting.

Annual Number of publications: The temporal distribution of publications (Figure1) reveals acceleration in research output over the 25-year period. From 2000 to 2009, annual publications remained consistently below 10 papers. Highest publication of 7 papers in 2009. A gradual increase occurred between 2010 and 2015 of five to twelve papers annually. Which is followed by persistent growth from 2016 onward. The most substantial growth trajectory began in 2020 with eight papers, ten papers in 2021, fifteen in 2022, nineteen papers published in 2023, thirty-one published in 2024, and publication of fifty-four papers in

2025. This exponential increase particularly post 2020 suggests rising scholarly interest in ancient Indian economic and management thought. Over two decade a compound annual growth of 11.41% has been witnessed in publications.



Figure:1 Publication Trends

Citation Impact:

Citation impact refers to the frequency and context in which a scholarly publication is cited by later works. Citation impact is a tool to map intellectual influence, identify research trends, and assess scholarly performance (Satheesha & Chandrashekara 2025). Table 1 indicates considerable volatility. Early peaks occurred in 2004 with 47.0 average citations. The year 2005 with 17.0 citations, and the year 2006 with 19.0, indicating foundational papers that attracted sustained attention. The highest average citation rate observed in 2013 which is (47.57), driven by 333 a total citation from 7 papers. After 2013, average citations declined sharply to near zero levels in several years, like in the year 2015(0.4), 2017(1.0), 2020(1.0) and 2023(0.79). A modest resurgence in 2024 to 6.48. Cumulative citation data reveal that the year 2013 has a total of 333 citations, the year 2024 has a total of 201, and the year 2006 has 57 citations. Reveals that these are most impactful years. The median citation value frequency varies from 0 or 1 from 2015 onward indicate that a small proportion of papers drives the majority of citations. It is a common pattern followed in emerging research fields.

Table 1: Citation Impact

Year	Average Citation	Median Citation	Number of Paper	Total Citations
2000	2	2	1	2
2002	0	0	1	0
2004	47	47	1	47
2005	17	17	2	34
2006	19	13	3	57
2007	16.8	18	5	84
2008	23	5	3	69
2009	6.14	1	7	43
2010	5.5	5.5	2	11
2011	9.5	11.5	6	57
2012	7.4	1	9	67
2013	47.57	9	7	333
2014	4.5	2.5	6	27
2015	0.4	0	5	2
2016	4.17	1	12	50
2017	1	0	11	11
2018	3.29	3	7	23
2019	4.75	0	12	57
2020	1	0.5	8	8
2021	1.9	1.5	10	19
2022	1.73	1	15	26
2023	0.79	0	19	15
2024	6.48	0	31	201
2025	0.48	0	54	26

Average citation trend- The average number of citations per paper fluctuate a lot over the two decades. The highest average citations were in the year 2004 and 2013 which is 47 citations 47.57 citations respectively. In the initial years (2000–2002), the averages were two and zero citations, respectively. Subsequently, from 2004 to 2008, the figures ranged from 47 to 16.8, reflecting considerable growth followed by a decline. Further variability in trends observed. Over the decade (2014–2025), average citations remained at low levels, ranging between 0.48 and 4.5 citations per paper.

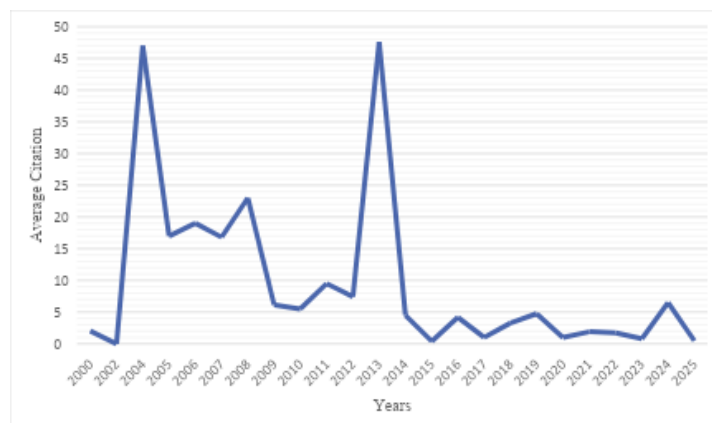


Figure 2 Average Citation Trends.

Most Cited Authors: The most cited authors are Patrick Olivelle for King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India who received a total of 203 citations. Latha Rangarajan received 191 citations. Balakrishnan Muniapan was cited 151 times. Patrick Olivelle and Rangarajan are widely recognized for authoritative translations and commentaries on the Arthashastra. Analysis suggests that foundational textual work remains the most cited. Balbir S. Sihag (106), S. J. Tambiah (95), and Mohan Dass (63), indicating a mix of economic, anthropological, and management perspectives. The presence of Michael Liebig (56) and Richard Mattessich (44) indicates interdisciplinary engagement from political science and accounting history.

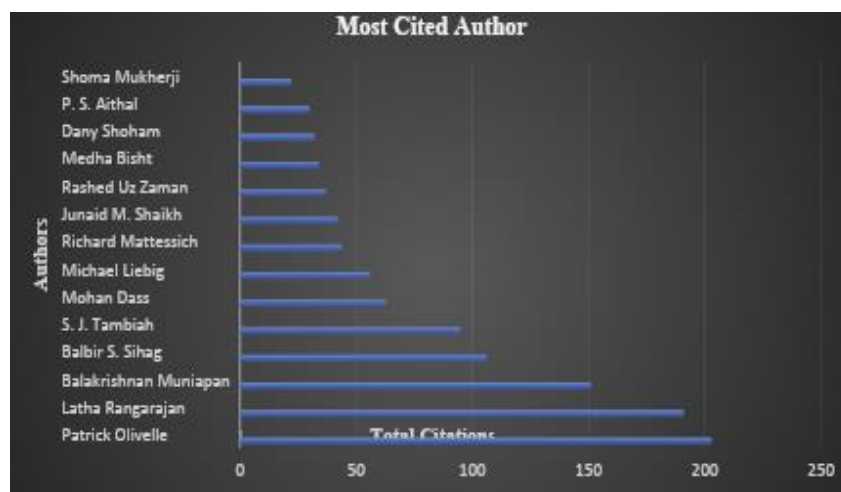


Figure 3: Most Cited Authors

Core Journals

The core journals analysis reveals a decentralized publication. Preprint repositories and multidisciplinary platforms that dominate, are SSRN Electronic Journal with 16 papers publication, Zenodo published 11 papers, and International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research published 10 papers. Among discipline-specific journals, International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management publishes 9 papers and Humanomics publishes 5 are prominent. Oxford University Press eBooks four and Palgrave studies in economic history three indicate book chapters as significant publication venues. The absence of a single dominant journal suggests the field is still maturing, across different research horizons economics, management, philosophy, and history outlets.

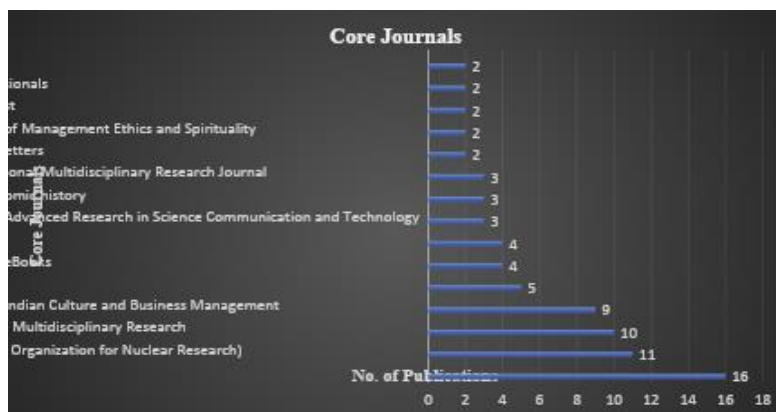


Figure 4: Core Journals

Keyword and Thematic Analysis

TF-IDF keyword analysis identifies the most important terms like "indian" with a score of 0.125. The term "kautilya" scored 0.124 points, "arthashastra" scored (0.114, "management" (0.096), term "ancient" (0.083), "governance" (0.083), and "economics" (0.060). Other significant terms include "ethics" (0.062), "leadership" (0.060), "statecraft" (0.030), and "corporate" (0.029). This quantitative analysis of vocabulary range confirms that research focuses on applying Kautilyan concepts to modern management, governance, and economic policy.

The thematic evolution heatmap traces keyword prominence across three periods:

Period I(2000–2007): Dominant terms of period with highest TF-IDF keyword

Score are "kautilya" (0.213), "ethics" (0.249), "ancient" (0.106), "economics" (0.145), and "public" (0.144). Which suggest that early research focused on ethical frameworks and economic principles aspect of Arthashastra.

Period II (2008–2016): The highest scored words of this period are "management" (0.153), "ancient" (0.133), "Indian" (0.123), "governance" (0.095), and "economics" (0.077). "Kautilya" declines slightly (0.174). While the term "arthashastra" emerges (0.067) in this time period. This period reflects a shift toward governance and management applications of statecraft.

Period III (2017–2025): This time period indicates that term "Indian" rises further (0.190), and "strategic" appears (0.092). "Arthashastra" increases and marked at (0.180), surpassing "kautilya" (0.149). "management" reaches 0.122. The data indicate a transition from person-centric (Kautilya) to text-centric (Arthashastra) framing, with growing emphasis on strategic and contemporary relevance.

Overall, the thematic evolution reveals a clear landscape of the field, from an initial focus on ethics and economic principal (2000–2008). A phase centred on management and governance (2009–2016). Current state reflect, diversification of principles of Arthashastra to practical world that includes strategic and systemic applications (2017–2025).

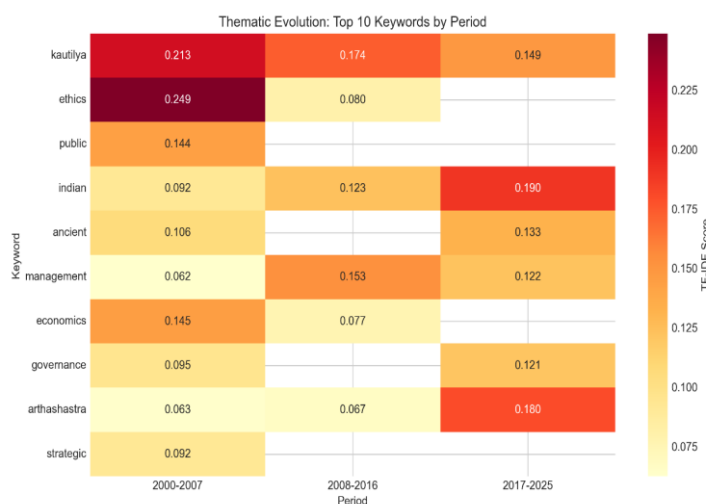


Figure 5: Thematic Evolution

Co-authorship Network

The co-authorship network (Figure:6 co-authorship network) shows a largest component comprising only five authors namely Mohan Dass, Balakrishnan Muniapan, K C Patrick Low, and Junaid M. Shaikh. This extremely limited connectivity suggests minimal collaborative research structures. Most publications likely result from single-authored or small-team efforts. The absence of dense clusters or prominent bridging authors indicates that the field operates in elative scholarly silos, with limited knowledge diffusion through formal co-authorship ties.

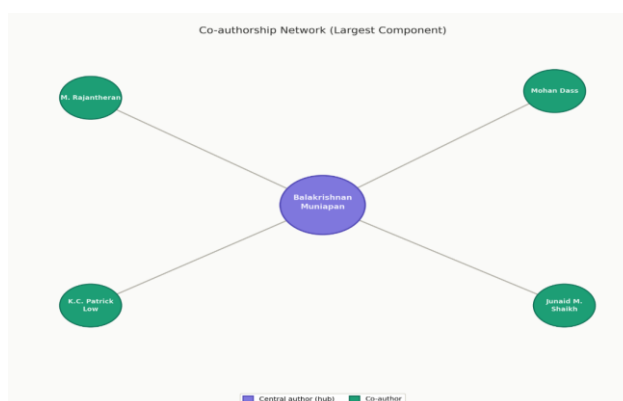


Figure 6: Co-authorship network

Results

Exponential growth in publication output: Research on Kautilya and the Arthashastra has grown from near-zero annual publications in the early 2000s to 54 papers in 2025. Particularly sharp acceleration post-2020. Over two decade a compound annual growth rate of 11.41%. This indicates a rapidly expanding research interest in field.

Declining citation impact per paper: Despite rising output, average citations per paper have decreased substantially. The year 2013 peaked citation score of 47.57. Recent papers (2021–2025) show median citations of 0 or 1. Reason for low score can be either a time-lag effect or dilution of impact due to increased volume.

Foundational translations drive citations: The most cited authors Patrick Olivelle (203 citations) and Rangarajan (191) are primarily translators and textual scholars. They are not management theorists. This implies that the field remains dependent main source text interpretations.

Preprint dominance and journal fragmentation: SSRN and Zenodo collectively account for 27 papers which exceeds any single journal. This unusual pattern for humanities or social sciences. It suggests researchers prioritize rapid dissemination over journal prestige. Possibility of traditional journals provide limited coverage.

Thematic evolution from ethics to strategy: Early research emphasized Kautilyan ethics and economics (2000–2007). The 2017–2025 period shifted toward "arthashastra," "strategic," and "governance" – indicating a reframing of ancient texts for contemporary strategic management and public policy.

Weak co-authorship networks: The largest connected component contains only 4–5 authors, demonstrating limited collaboration. This may constrain cumulative knowledge building and theoretical integration.

Conclusion

This bibliometric study provides the comprehensive mapping of Kautilya's Arthashastra research over 25 years (2000–2025). The field has transitioned from ancient Indian political economy to a growing interdisciplinary domain spanning management, governance, economics, and ethics. The exponential increase in publications, particularly after 2020 indicates that scholars increasingly view Kautilya's thought as relevant in contemporary strategic leadership, statecraft, and corporate governance.

However, the declining average citation rate and persistently low median citations raise questions about cumulative impact. The field appears to be in a phase of rapid expansion without corresponding growth in influence per paper. Moreover, the dominance of non-peer reviewed preprint platforms as primary outlets deviates from norms in management and economic history. This can lead to make scholarly contribution less reliable.

Thematic evolution confirms a productive shift from descriptive textual analysis toward applied frameworks. The terms "strategic management," "governance," and "contemporary relevance" have become central. Yet, the weak co-authorship



network suggests missed opportunities and a need for building collaborative structures. Such as special issues, funded networks, or cross institutional could accelerate theoretical integration.

In conclusion, Kautilyan's Arthashastra scholarship has achieved critical mass but faces challenges of fragmentation, limited collaboration, and variable impact. With deliberate efforts toward methodological diversification and scholarly networking. The field has substantial potential to contribute to global management and governance theory.

Limitations of the Study

(i) Database coverage Limitation: The analysis draws from a specific set of bibliographic sources OpenAlex, which while comprehensive, may not capture all Arthashastra related publications. Exclusion of non-English publications, book chapters except Oxford and Palgrave, conference proceedings, and regional journals likely to underrepresents scholarship from Indian institutions and vernacular-language research.

(ii) Absence of qualitative validation: Bibliometric findings describe publication patterns but do not explain why the field evolved as observed. It lacks expert interviews or qualitative content analysis.

Further Scope:

(i) Future bibliometric updates should incorporate multiple databases Multiple databases should be incorporated for future updates such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar. Expert validation of keyword taxonomies should be conducted. It will help to strengthen the outcomes.

(iii) Empirical research testing Kautilyan principles like saptanga theory, dandaniti, or mandala diplomacy in contemporary organisational settings is needed to enhance applied relevance.

(iv) cross-cultural comparisons Cross-cultural comparative studies with other non-Western management traditions for example Sun Tzu's Art of War could enrich the theoretical landscape.

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AI-INTEGRATED INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY DETECTION OF ADHD IN CHILDREN

Sunita Rani¹, Dr. Arvind Kumar²

1 Research Scholar, Department of Computer Application, CT University Ludhiana, Punjab, India

2 Associate Professor, Department of Engineering and Technology, CT University, Ludhiana, Punjab, India

Abstract

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental disorder in children, and its early detection remains challenging due to symptom overlap with normal childhood behaviour and reliance on subjective clinical assessments. To address these limitations, this study proposes an innovative framework that integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) with principles from Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) for more accurate and early identification of ADHD. Advanced machine learning and deep learning techniques are employed to analyse indicators associated with inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. A distinctive feature of the framework is the incorporation of IKS-inspired measures derived from yoga and meditation practices, such as balance, breathing patterns, and sustained attention during guided activities, which provide additional insights into self-regulation and cognitive functioning. By integrating these traditional well-being indicators with modern AI-driven analytics, the framework offers a comprehensive understanding of a child's behavioural and mental state. The system is designed to be non-invasive, cost-effective, and suitable for implementation in educational and clinical settings, thereby supporting early screening and personalized intervention strategies. The proposed approach demonstrates the potential to enhance ADHD detection accuracy while promoting a holistic perspective on child cognitive and behavioural development through the convergence of traditional knowledge and advanced technology.

Keywords: ADHD, Indian Knowledge Systems, Yoga, Ayurveda, Machine Learning

Introduction

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental condition seen in children across the world. It usually shows up as difficulty paying attention, excessive activity, and impulsive behavior, all of which can affect a child's learning, relationships, and emotional health. Identifying ADHD early is important, but in practice it can be challenging. Most diagnoses still depend heavily on observing behavior and expert opinion, which can sometimes vary from one professional to another.

With the growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI), new possibilities have emerged for identifying ADHD in a more objective way. Machine learning techniques can process large amounts of data, detect patterns that may not be obvious to humans, and support early screening. That said, many current AI-based approaches mainly focus on behavioral or brain-related data, often overlooking broader aspects of a child's overall well-being.

Traditional Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), including practices like yoga and Ayurveda, take a more holistic view of health. They focus on the connection between mind and body and aim to maintain balance in both. Research has shown that such practices can help improve concentration, lower stress levels, and support better cognitive functioning.

This study attempts to bring these two perspectives together. It proposes a framework that combines AI-based analysis with insights from yogic and Ayurvedic practices to support earlier and more balanced detection of ADHD. By using both modern technology and traditional knowledge, the approach aims not only to improve accuracy but also to offer a more complete understanding of children's mental health.

Literature Review

A growing body of research has examined the use of artificial intelligence in identifying ADHD. Machine learning models such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), Random Forests, and Neural Networks have been applied to analyze behavioral patterns and neuroimaging data for more accurate classification. For instance, Thabtah (2019) reviewed several of these approaches and emphasized their promise in enhancing diagnostic precision.

In addition to technological methods, non-pharmacological interventions like yoga have shown encouraging results in managing ADHD symptoms. Studies suggest that regular yoga practice can help improve attention, emotional balance, and overall cognitive functioning in children with ADHD (Khalsa, 2013). Meditation has also been found to support better focus and reduce impulsive behavior.



Traditional systems like Ayurveda contribute further by offering herbal and lifestyle-based strategies to support mental well-being. Natural herbs such as Brahmi and Ashwagandha are widely recognized for their potential to enhance cognitive function and protect neural health.

However, despite progress in both modern AI techniques and traditional healing systems, there is still a noticeable lack of research that combines Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) with AI for ADHD detection. This gap points to an opportunity for interdisciplinary work that bridges traditional wisdom with advanced technological tools.

Research Methodology

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- To develop an AI-based framework for early detection of ADHD in children.
- To integrate Indian Knowledge Systems (Yoga and Ayurveda) into the detection process.
- To analyse multimodal data for improved diagnostic accuracy.
- To propose a scalable and non-invasive system for real-world applications.

Proposed Methodology

Data Collection

The system collects multimodal data from children aged 6–12 years:

- Behavioural data (video recordings, classroom activities)
- Physiological data (heart rate, movement using wearable sensors)
- Cognitive test results (attention and memory tasks)
- Yogic parameters (posture, breathing patterns, meditation focus)

Data Preprocessing

- Noise removal and normalization
- Feature extraction (facial expressions, movement patterns)
- Data labelling (ADHD / Non-ADHD)

Feature Integration

Features are categorized into:

- Behavioural features
- Physiological features
- Yogic features (attention span during meditation, posture stability)

Machine Learning Models

The following models are used:

- Support Vector Machine (SVM)
- Random Forest
- Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)

These models classify children based on ADHD symptoms.

- System Architecture

Input Layer → Data Processing → Feature Extraction → AI Model → Prediction Output

Output includes:



- ADHD risk level (Low / Medium / High)
- Personalized recommendations (Yoga, meditation, lifestyle changes)

Results and Discussion

The integration of AI with Indian Knowledge Systems improves detection accuracy compared to traditional methods. Yogic features provide additional insights into attention and cognitive control, enhancing model performance.

The proposed system offers:

- Early detection
- Non-invasive assessment
- Cost-effective implementation

However, challenges include data availability and standardization of yogic parameters.

Research Analysis

This research introduces an exciting new way to spot ADHD early in children by mixing cutting-edge AI with traditional Indian practices like Yoga and meditation. It's a unique approach that could really change how we use technology in schools and clinics. While the idea is strong and culturally relevant, the paper needs a bit more "proof" to be ready for top-tier scientific journals. Specifically, it needs more hands-on testing, a deeper look at the technical data, and clear math to show exactly how well the system performs compared to existing methods.

Conclusion

This study proposes a novel framework that brings together artificial intelligence and Indian Knowledge Systems for the early identification of ADHD. By blending traditional practices with modern technological tools, the approach aims to offer a more holistic and balanced method for supporting children's mental health. Looking ahead, future research could explore large-scale applications of this model as well as the development of real-time monitoring systems to improve early diagnosis and intervention.

Future Scope

Real-Time Monitoring Apps

We plan to develop mobile apps that allow parents, teachers, and doctors to track a child's behaviour as it happens. Instead of relying on memory during a check-up, they can monitor symptoms and patterns in real time.

Support in Schools

The system is designed to plug directly into school health programs. This makes it much easier to spot ADHD early and provide children with the support they need right in the classroom.

Smarter AI Models

By using more advanced "deep learning" (a type of AI that mimics the human brain), we can analyse multiple types of data at once—like movement, speech, and focus—to make the detection of ADHD even more accurate and efficient.

Large-Scale Testing

To make sure this system works for everyone, future studies will test it against larger and more diverse groups of people. This ensures the technology is reliable, fair, and ready for use in clinics everywhere.

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PROACTIVE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM USING MACHINE LEARNING AND INDIAN KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES

Sneha Sharma¹, Dr. Munish Bhardwaj², Dr. Khushi Ram Bhagat³, Krishana Devi⁴

1 UG Student, Department of ECE, Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Engg. College, Kangra at NagrotaBagwan, Himachal Pradesh, India

2 Assistant Professor, Department of ECE, Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Engg. College, Kangra at NagrotaBagwan, Himachal Pradesh, India

3 Assistant Professor, S.C.V.B. Govt. College, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India

4 Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Sciences & Humanities, Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Engg. College, Kangra at NagrotaBagwan, Himachal Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) with modern computational methods is an optimistic approach for developing comprehensive and preventive healthcare solutions. This paper studies a proactive healthcare system that combines machine learning models with traditional practices based on Ayurvedic principles to provide timely health advice and preventive measures. This system theoretically uses contextual parameters and algorithmic models to look at symptom patterns and environmental correlations in order to map suitable health-protection strategies such as steam inhalation, dietary adjustments, and herbal recommendations. It also suggests clear explanations for each recommendation which connects modern scientific reasoning with traditional Ayurvedic understanding to improve individual's trust and interpretability. This hybrid approach ensures that proactive steps are based on both data and culture. It also highlights the potential of combining machine learning with Indian Knowledge Systems to develop scalable, accessible, and preventive healthcare solutions for the well-being of individuals.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System; Ayurvedic Principles; Machine Learning; Proactive Healthcare System

INTRODUCTION

The growing awareness of preventive healthcare in society due to the adverse lifestyle of people has strengthened the need for systems that can provide personalized, context-sensitive, and sustainable health guidance. Although modern healthcare systems have achieved remarkable progress in diagnosis and treatment but they are often oriented towards reactive care, in which the health conditions are addressed after their onset rather than continuous health management, which has led researchers to revisit the traditional knowledge systems that emphasize more on prevention, balance and individualized care.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), particularly Ayurveda, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding health as a dynamic equilibrium shaped by physiological, psychological, environmental, and behavioural factors. The traditional practices based on Ayurvedic knowledge assess health through patterns of imbalance that arise from lifestyle habits, dietary changes, seasonal variations, and inherent nature. A distinctive feature of Ayurvedic practice is its decision-making process which is inherently complex due to its multi-layered architecture. It relies on practitioners' expertise to interpret symptoms, identify patterns of imbalance, and recommend a combination of interventions that may include some modifications in daily routine of lifestyle, herbal formulations, and therapeutic procedures such as Abhyanga, Swedana, and Panchkarma. These interventions are often prescribed by practitioners as a part of coordinated strategy where their combined effects are expected to restore the balance of the body (Patwardhan et al., 2005).

Alongside in this era of technology, the advancements in machine learning and intelligent decision systems have enabled the development of data-driven models capable of pattern recognition, prediction scoring, and decision support (Shortliffe & Cimino, 2014; Ramesh et al., 2004; Dua et al., 2011). This provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern technology by creating frameworks that are well-comprehensive and structured. However, the existing digital healthcare systems focus on predicting symptoms and giving general prescriptions but they often lack contextual awareness and domain-specific reasoning with traditional knowledge systems. As a result, there is a significant gap between the richness of traditional knowledge and capabilities of modern computational frameworks.

In this direction, this study suggests a new approach to making decisions about healthcare based on an individual's specific situation and uses machine learning to understand Ayurvedic knowledge in a modern scientific manner. It positions Ayurveda not merely as a source of traditional ideas, but as a valuable resource of modern technological systems for creating intelligent decision support tools (Topol, 2019). Therefore, this approach can help to make healthcare system more effective and personalized, while also respecting the value of traditional knowledge.



LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the digital healthcare systems are being widely explored along with modern computational techniques with particular emphasis on diagnostic accuracy, personalization, and decision support. In contrast, the Ayurveda-based traditional practice knowledge is being diminished among individuals as time progresses. However, the existing studies show that these two domains-modern artificial intelligence and Indian Knowledge Systems have largely evolved in parallel but with limited deep integration.

AI-Based Healthcare Decision Support Systems

The advancements in AI and machine learning techniques have led to significant contributions to the development of healthcare decision support systems. There are various models in the literature that focus on disease prediction, risk assessment, and treatment recommendation using structured datasets. These systems typically use classification algorithms, regression models or ensemble techniques to identify symptom patterns and generate outcomes based on learned relationship. Recent studies further show the increasing integration of machine learning models into clinical processes to support healthcare professionals in decision-making and personalized healthcare (Ramesh et al., 2004; Dua et al., 2011; Topol, 2019).

Despite these advancements, there are several limitations such as most of the AI-driven healthcare systems rely heavily on statistical relationships that are learned from classical datasets and are mainly designed for disease detection and risk prediction. Consequently, they provide limited support for continuous preventive healthcare management. Also, there are many systems that generate recommendations without considering lifestyle routine, environmental influences, or culturally rooted healthcare knowledge. Various concerns associated with interpretability, transparency, fairness, and reliability also continue to challenge their adoption in sensitive healthcare environments where comprehensive and trustworthy recommendations are vital.

Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems in Digital Healthcare

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) is known for its rich traditional practices for the diagnosis of health conditions before they get severe, thereby it helps in continuous health monitoring of an individual. Several studies have explored Ayurvedic principles for applications such as prakriti (body constitution) classification, and herbal recommendation. Several initiatives have explored the use of computational tools for prakriti assessment, and Ayurvedic profiling which highlights the potential of integrating traditional health knowledge with intelligent systems (Patwardhan et al., 2005).

However, existing approaches are largely restricted to isolated applications such as body constitution classification or remedy recommendation as most systems do not properly represent the complex relationships among symptoms such as lifestyle patterns, seasonal variations, and environmental conditions that form the basis of Ayurvedic interpretation. In addition, the majority of computational models lack adaptive decision-making capabilities to provide structured explanations for their recommendations. As a result, the practical integration of Ayurvedic knowledge into intelligent healthcare systems is still evolving.

Explainable AI Systems

Explainability and context-awareness have become one of the most important aspects of modern intelligent systems, especially in sensitive domains such as healthcare. Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) aims to make the decision-making process of the models transparent by providing insights into how outputs are generated. These systems often provide feature importance and interpretation based on various input labels which makes them more responsive to real-world scenarios (Samek et al., 2017; Hulsén, 2023).

Although significant progress has been made in improving model transparency but they predominantly focus on explaining prediction outputs rather than supporting intervention-level reasoning based on symptoms. Therefore, there remains a need for systems that combine predictive intelligence with domain-specific explanatory mechanisms capable of supporting meaningful and actionable healthcare decisions (Chaddad et al., 2023; Jung et al., 2023; Frasca et al., 2024).

Limitations of Existing Systems

A critical limitation across existing studies is the absence of a framework that is based on interactive decision-support system. Also, there is a lack of mechanisms that computationally utilize Ayurvedic knowledge in a scalable and interpretable manner. The absence of semantic bridge between traditional concepts and modern scientific techniques further restricts the usability of such systems. The review of existing literature reveals that significant progress has been achieved independently in AI-enabled healthcare systems, Explainable AI, and digital applications of Indian Knowledge Systems.

**Comparative Analysis of Digital Healthcare and Indian Knowledge Systems**

Author	Technique	Methodology	Dataset Used	Performance Metrics	Key Findings
Ramesh A N et al. (2004)	ML-based Decision Support	Applies supervised learning models for medical diagnosis and treatment recommendation	Structured medical datasets	Accuracy, F1-score	Effective for classification tasks but limited in handling dynamic and contextual inputs
Patwardhan Bhushan et al. (2005)	Ayurveda and Systems Biology	Integrates Ayurvedic concepts with modern biological frameworks	Conceptual / theoretical datasets	Conceptual validation	Establishes connection between Ayurveda and modern science but lacks computational implementation
Dua et al. (2011)	Intelligent Healthcare Systems	Decision-support models for healthcare management	Healthcare records and clinical data	Accuracy, Decision Quality	Improved decision-support capability; however, preventive and holistic healthcare aspects remained underexplored.
Samek et al. (2017)	Explainable Artificial Intelligence	Interpretation and visualization techniques for machine learning models	AI model outputs	Explainability and Interpretability	Enhanced transparency of AI systems but primarily focused on prediction explanation rather than intervention reasoning.
Topol E et al. (2019)	AI in Healthcare	Utilizes machine learning for disease prediction and clinical decision	Clinical and electronic health records	Accuracy, Precision, Recall	Shows strong predictive capability but lacks contextual analysis
Chaddad et al. (2023)	Explainable AI in Healthcare	Survey of XAI techniques for healthcare applications	Healthcare AI systems	Transparency and Trustworthiness	Highlighted the importance of interpretability in healthcare but identified challenges in generating actionable explanations.
Frasca et al. (2024)	Interpretable AI in Medicine	Systematic review of explainable and interpretable AI approaches	Medical AI literature	Explainability and Clinical Usability	Emphasized the need for human-centered explanations and trustworthy decision-support mechanisms in healthcare environments.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**Motivation**

In practical health assessment of an individual, multiple factors such as symptoms, daily habits, and environmental conditions must be interpreted together rather than in isolation for proper treatment of the body. The need for revitalizing the traditional practices based on Ayurvedic principles in the healthcare systems can be strengthened by integrating these practices with computational methods to make it accessible to a broader population. Therefore, there is a need for a structured approach that can combine various inputs and translate them into coherent intervention strategies.

Core Framework Description

This methodology studies a context-aware and explainable decision optimization framework that integrates machine learning with formally structured representations of Ayurvedic knowledge. The framework is studied to transform qualitative health inputs into a computational decision process that enables the selection of personalized and interpretable intervention strategies. The conceptual workflow begins with the inputs such as symptoms, lifestyle patterns, and environmental conditions that are

considered to be combined into a structured format and further to be processed computationally using machine learning models to assess the overall health condition of an individual. The information about the condition and its severity is then theoretically sent to a special database that has a lot of knowledge related to Ayurvedic-principles based on which the health condition is treated. The core component of this framework lies in the decision optimization stage in which multiple therapies or practices can be evaluated simultaneously. Finally, the system can provide a structured intervention profile that includes recommended precautions along with proper reasoning to maintain clarity and interpretability among individuals.

Based on theoretical assumption, the overall model can be expressed as:

$$\text{Output} = D(g(X), K) \quad (1)$$

where, X represents an input factor, $g(X)$ denotes machine learning based condition inference, K represents Ayurvedic knowledge base, and D denotes decision optimization function.

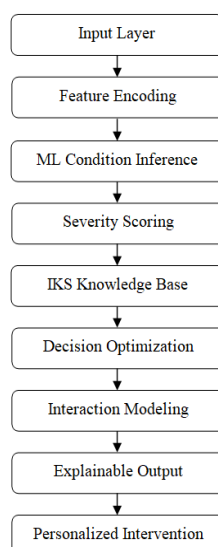


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for context-aware proactive healthcare intervention integrating machine learning and Indian Knowledge Systems.

Feature Encoding

This step involves collecting specific health context and converting it into a structured format based on computational methods. The input may consist of a multi-dimensional representation of the individual's health condition. It can be theoretically defined as a feature vector:

$$X = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_n\} \quad (2)$$

where, each feature is assumed to represent a quantified aspect that can be categorized into symptom patterns, lifestyle factors, seasonal changes, and environmental conditions.

Machine Learning algorithms for condition inference

It is presumed in this study that the system uses a supervised machine learning model to assess the overall health of an individual. It may adopt models such as decision tree and logistic regression to ensure that the system provides domain-specific reasoning. The selection of machine learning models is based on their interpretability and suitability for healthcare-oriented decision support. The Decision Tree algorithm provides rule-based reasoning that is strongly associated with symptom patterns, whereas Logistic Regression offers a mathematically interpretable mechanism for estimating condition categories and severity tendencies. For this conceptual study, these interpretable models are considered more suitable than highly complex black-box approaches.

Its functional relationship can be written as:

$$C = g(X) \quad (3)$$

where, C denotes the condition category that is typically defined in discrete levels such as mild, moderate, or severe imbalance.

Severity Grading

A severity score is computed to quantify the degree of imbalance within a discrete category which reflects the variation in intensity within each category. It can be hypothetically expressed as:

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \cdot x_i \quad (4)$$

where, w_i represents the weights of corresponding input features.

The severity score is computed after condition categorization and serves as an additional quantitative descriptor of the predicted health state. The value $S \in [0,1]$ is considered to provide a continuous measure of health condition. The inputs such as fatigue and poor sleep may contribute more significantly to the score as compared to other balanced indicators which ultimately reduce the overall severity. This can enhance the model by allowing fine-grained analysis beyond fixed labels.

Conceptual Modeling of Ayurvedic Knowledge

The inclusion of Ayurvedic knowledge within conceptual framework is motivated by its ability to interpret health patterns through interconnected observations rather than isolated symptom evaluation. Traditional healthcare practices based on Indian Knowledge Systems frequently consider dietary habits, daily routines, seasonal influences, environmental conditions, and observable physiological changes that collectively influence well-being of individuals. While machine learning is adept at identifying hidden correlations among multiple health indicators, such models do not provide a structured pathway from assessment to intervention. Theoretically, the Ayurvedic knowledge is consolidated to make it accessible to individuals for the monitoring and treatment of their health.

The knowledge base is conceptually represented as:

$$K = \{(C_k, T_k, E_k)\} \quad (5)$$

where, C_k denotes the condition pattern, T_k represents associated therapies, and E_k is functional mapping. This multi-dimensional relationship signifies the hierarchical nature of Ayurvedic reasoning, progressing from assessing the condition to intervention selection and expected explanation.

During inference, the predicted condition that may be obtained from machine learning models must be mapped with the Ayurvedic knowledge base to extract a set of associated therapies. This ensures that system recommendations are grounded in the Indian Knowledge System rather than depending solely on statistical processing.

Decision Optimization and Interaction Analysis

This step studies the core reasoning mechanism to determine the most appropriate intervention strategy by assessing the therapies and other traditional practices individually as well as in combination. Each therapy is theoretically assigned a suitable score based on its contextual factors:

$$Score(T_i) = \alpha S + \beta R_i + \gamma L_i \quad (6)$$

where, S denotes severity, R_i represents contextual relevance, and L_i reflects lifestyle alignment. The parameters α , β , γ measure the relative importance of these factors. This study provides a basis for ranking the interventions according to both clinical appropriateness and practical feasibility.

This conceptual framework also studies an interaction modeling mechanism to address the combinational nature of interventions, which can be written as:

$$I(T_i, T_j) \in \{-1, 0, +1\} \quad (7)$$

where positive values refer to an additive effect, zero represents neutrality, and negative values indicates contradiction. The cumulative effect is assumed as:

$$I_{total} = \sum_{i \neq j} I(T_i, T_j) \quad (8)$$

This allows system to promote various traditional Ayurvedic practices while avoiding any conflicting interventions. Therefore, the final intervention function on the basis of theoretical assumption is considered as:



$$\max(\sum \text{Score}(T_i) + \lambda \cdot I_{total}) \quad (9)$$

where λ controls the degree of interaction effects.

The final output of this conceptual system consists of recommended Ayurvedic treatment which may further be translated into comprehensive explanations to ensure that it is easily comprehensible to all the individuals seeking prescription to cure their health condition.

FINDINGS

This methodology is conceptually analyzed through analytical observations to determine its capability in yielding structured, context-aware, and interpretable intervention strategies to improve the health outcomes of an individual. Consider a hypothetical scenario in which an individual exhibits high fatigue, irregular sleep patterns, weak digestion, and imbalanced lifestyle habits. These observations are first represented as a structured feature set and subsequently accessed through the conceptual machine learning layer to determine the overall health condition category.

The analytical workflow further incorporates a severity score to differentiate the intensity of identified condition. The resulting assessment is then associated with the Ayurvedic knowledge base which enables access to relevant practices and intervention alternatives corresponding to the observed health context. The framework examines a set of measures that may include therapeutic procedures and preventive practices based on traditional knowledge. In addition, it studies an interaction-aware mechanism to assess how different practices behave when they are combined. This is equally important because real-world health strategies often involve multiple practices and their effectiveness which depends on whether they complement or conflict with one another. Based on their interaction, the system can prioritize coherent combinations for more effective results in the treatment along with meaningful explanations for its recommendations.

Overall, the findings indicate that the framework is conceptually capable of transforming multi-dimensional health inputs into interpretable healthcare measures. The integration of computational assessment, severity evaluation, contextual reasoning, and knowledge-guided intervention selection demonstrates the potential of the framework as a foundation for intelligent and culturally-informed healthcare decision-support systems.

DISCUSSIONS

The key insights of this conceptual study align with previous research that highlights the growing role of artificial intelligence in preventive healthcare management while simultaneously highlighting the importance of interpretability and contextual reasoning. However, many existing approaches primarily focus on prediction-oriented outcomes but the present study extends this perspective by conceptually building a bridge between conceptual assessment and structured intervention planning that addresses a dimension that is often less represented in conventional healthcare decision-support models (Ramesh et al., 2004; Dua et al., 2011; Topol, 2019).

From a practical perspective, the framework demonstrates potential applicability in community healthcare awareness programs, wellness advisory platforms, preventive health-monitoring systems, and digital self-care environments. By translating structured health observations into context-aware intervention suggestions, the framework can support individuals in understanding meaningful health-related patterns and adopting informed lifestyle choices. Further, the inclusion of interpretive reasoning may enhance clarity and user confidence which are important considerations for healthcare-focussed intelligent systems (Samek et al., 2017; Hulsén, 2023; Frasca et al., 2024).

In this context, it suggests a pathway to reintroduce long-established traditional practices in a structured and technology-enabled form. The Ayurvedic practices that are traditionally rooted in our rich-culture can be formalized into condition-intervention mappings and these may further be combined with contextual analysis which makes the recommendations both comprehensive and domain-consistent.

Limitations of this Study

The present work is conceptual in nature and therefore does not include practical implementation, experimental validation, or real-world performance evaluation. It is intended to provide a theoretical foundation for integrating machine learning techniques with structured representations of Ayurvedic knowledge rather than establishing clinical effectiveness. In addition, the mathematical relationships and decision mechanisms described in the framework are based on analytical assumptions and have not been calibrated using empirical healthcare data. Although Ayurvedic reasoning got simplified to access



computational modelling but it many not reflect the full complexity of traditional practitioner-based interpretation. Consequently, the findings in this study should be seen more as theoretical insights rather than concrete healthcare solutions.

Future Scope

Future research may emphasize converting the conceptual framework into an operational decision-support platform through implementation and empirical testing. The development of organized healthcare datasets, knowledge-modeling strategies, and inference engines would facilitate assessment of the framework in real-world applications. Subsequent investigations may explore advanced explainability methods, adaptive reasoning approaches, and knowledge-graph-driven representations of Ayurvedic principles to strengthen decision accuracy and comprehensibility. Comparative studies involving multiple machine learning techniques may also be conducted to assess robustness, consistency, and practical relevance. In addition, collaboration with medical professionals and scholars of Indian Knowledge Systems could support the refinement and validation of intervention mappings, thereby improving the reliability of future implementations.

CONCLUSION

This work conceptually studies a structured way of translating traditional qualitative health knowledge into a computational decision-making process for selecting appropriate interventions. The framework investigates how health-related observations can be transformed into condition assessment, severity evaluation, intervention selection, and explanation generation within a unified computational workflow. By discussing a mechanism that links analytical inference with knowledge-guided reasoning, the study highlights a possible direction for incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems into intelligent decision-support environments. It demonstrates how qualitative healthcare knowledge can be organized into a structured computational workflow capable of supporting informed intervention selection and explanation generation. Such an approach can allow individuals to recognize their health patterns and adopt recommended practices before they progress into more severe states. Therefore, it provides a broader objective of reducing dependency on reactive treatment models and providing continuous health monitoring to promote the well-being of individuals.

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INDIGENOUS PRACTICES IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN ODISHA: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY THROUGH INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Shuvrashis Saw

Post Graduate Student, Department of Sociology, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

This paper studies how tribal rural communities in Odisha use indigenous and local knowledge to manage disasters and build resilience. Odisha is one of the most disaster-prone states in India due to cyclones, floods, droughts, and other climate related threats. The paper focuses on specific indigenous practices from 12 major tribes including the Santhal, Bhumiya, Kolha, Kondha, Saora, Gond, Dongria Kondh, Khond, Chuktia Bhunjia, Paroja, Bonda, and Juang. Special attention is given to environmental indicators, traditional forecasting methods, community emergency responses, food security practices, and local resilience building strategies. Key practices include the Santhal tribe's observation of Ghurghuria Poka insects to predict floods, the Saora tribe's elevated grain granaries that protect food from submersion, the Ganda tribe's bamboo raft construction for flood rescue, the Dongria Kondh's sacred forest conservation that prevents flash floods, and the Chuktia Bhunjia's sun-drying method that preserves vegetables and fish for months during crisis periods. These practices are passed across generations through oral tradition, family learning, and community participation rather than formal education systems. From a sociological perspective, these indigenous practices reveal how disaster resilience depends on social capital, intergenerational knowledge transfer, inequality in access to resources, and community solidarity during crises. The research connects these practices to Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), showing that they are valid ecological intelligence systems based on long-term observation and testing rather than superstition. The paper argues that disaster management in Odisha becomes more effective, equitable, and culturally legitimate when formal government systems integrate local indigenous knowledge instead of replacing it with top-down planning alone. Understanding these practices helps build a sociological perspective where climate adaptation and disaster resilience are seen as social processes.

Keywords: Disaster-Management, Tribe, Odisha, Climate, Traditional-Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has intensified extreme weather events. It has not only disrupted the ecology, but also destabilised livelihood and increased social inequality across the world. In India, these risks are amplified by a large rural population, ecological diversity, uneven development, and the continued dependence of many communities on forests, rainfed agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, and other livelihoods that are based on nature. Conventional responses to climate risk often prioritize scientific forecasting, engineering solutions, and centralized administration. While such measures are indispensable, they can become insufficient when they ignore the social worlds through which people actually interpret danger, make decisions, and organize their survival.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) offer many useful ways to understand and deal with climate change and disasters. They are not just one fixed set of old ideas, but a mixture of many traditions related to nature, society, health, agriculture, and values that are shaped by different local environments. Tribal and indigenous communities, pastoralists, and forest dwellers have deep knowledge of weather, seeds, soil, plants, water, and early warning signs of natural risks. This knowledge is developed through hundreds of years of co-existing with nature with the closest proximity. These practices are not only about practical solutions. They are also connected to social life like family systems, rituals, traditions, gender roles, community responsibilities, and local ways of governing natural resources.

Odisha is one of the most disaster affected states in India. Almost every year, people in coastal districts and flood prone regions face serious problems from cyclones, storms, heavy rainfall, and floods. These disasters affect livelihoods, damage houses, destroy crops, wash away roads and bridges, and often cause death and injuries. Many rural and tribal people depend on land, rivers, forests, and agriculture for their daily life, which makes them more vulnerable to environmental changes and disasters.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Odisha consistently ranks among India's most disaster-prone states, facing devastating cyclones from the Bay of Bengal, annual floods from Mahanadi-Brahmani river systems, and recurring droughts in its western districts. The 1999 Super Cyclone killed nearly 10,000 people and exposed the limitations of state capacity. While Odisha has since developed world-class



disaster management infrastructure such as cyclone shelters, early warning systems, and coordinated evacuation protocols, mortality rates have dropped significantly. Yet significant gaps persist that formal systems alone can't address.

The core problem is the disconnect between modern, technology driven disaster management and the lived realities of Odisha's 62 tribal communities, who constitute 22.8% of the state's population. Current State Disaster Management Plans emphasize satellite forecasting, embankments, and relief distribution, but these often fail remote tribal areas where roads wash out, mobile network collapses, cyclone shelters remain hours away. When the 2013 Phailin cyclone hit, tribal villages in Koraput and Malkangiri survived primarily through indigenous practices such as environment forecasting, community evacuation networks, and stored food.

Simultaneously, these indigenous knowledge systems face existential threats. Youth migration to cities disrupts the transition of intergenerational knowledge. A Santhal grandfather's ability to read *Ghurughuria Poka* insect behaviour for flood prediction goes unlearned by urbanized grandchildren. Mining in Niyamgiri displaces Dongria Kondh from sacred forests that buffer flash floods. Rapid climate change disrupts ecological patterns on which indigenous forecasting depends. Development projects convert flood-prone lowlands into settlements, erasing natural buffer zones that tribes maintained for centuries.

This creates a double vulnerability where tribal communities lose resilience when modern systems don't reach them in time, and they lose cultural autonomy when indigenous practices erode without institutional recognition. The 2021 Odisha Disaster Management Plan mentions 'community participation' but lacks specific provisions for integration of IKS, treating tribal knowledge as folklore rather than tested ecological intelligence. Sociologically, this marginalisation reflects epistemic injustice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on disaster management in Odisha has evolved from state-centric analyses to community-focused approaches, increasingly recognizing indigenous knowledge as a critical resilience factor. Early literature emphasized institutional reforms following 1999 Super Cyclone, crediting Odisha's turnaround to cyclone shelters and early warning systems (World Bank, 2023). However, recent studies highlight gaps in reaching remote areas where infrastructure limitations persist

Indigenous Knowledge documentation forms the first major literature cluster. Sahoo and Aparajita (2024) provide ethnographic evidence from coastal Odisha, documenting how local communities use environmental indicators for flood forecasting when official warnings lag. The Indian Tribal (2022) catalogs the practices of 12 tribes, including Santhal *Ghurughuria Poka* observation and Ganda bamboo raft construction, demonstrating localized adaptation. Sphere India (2024) emphasizes community kitchens and food preservation as DPR mechanisms, noting Chuktia Bhunjia sun-drying preserves nutrition during market disruptions. Climate Connection (2023) analyses Dongria Kondh sacred forests as natural flood buffers, linking cultural conservation to ecological resilience.

Global frameworks validate these findings UNESCO (2025) synthesizes IPCC evidence showing indigenous knowledge enhances adaptation effectiveness by 30-50% in hazard-prone regions. The UNDRR's Sendai Framework (2015-2030) mandates integrating local knowledge into DRR, a principle Odisha partially implements and rarely documents with tribal context.

Putnam's Social Capital Theory (2000) explains why tribal cooperation during crises exceeds individual responses. Gender studies reveal women as primary household resilience managers, yet face mobility constraints during floods (Sahoo & Aparajita, 2024). NEP 2020 mandates traditional knowledge in curricula, creating opportunities for disaster education (Sinha, 2025).

METHODOLOGY:

My study employs a qualitative secondary research design synthesizing existing literature on Odisha's tribal disaster practices. The approach combines content analysis, case study, and comparative analysis to achieve research objectives.

OBJECTIVES:

This study pursues three interconnected objectives to bridge the gap between indigenous knowledge and modern disaster management in Odisha:

Objective 1: Comprehensive Documentation of Tribal Practices

Systematically catalog and analyse disaster management practices of major Odisha tribes such as Santhal, Bhumija, Kolha, Gond, Dongria Kondh, Saora, Kondh, Chuktia Bhunjia, Bonda, Juang. This includes environmental forecasting (insect/bird



behaviour), flood control (embankments, sacred forests), evacuation methods (bamboo rafts), food security (sun-drying, elevated granaries), and health practices (herbal remedies). Documentation preserves knowledge threatened by cultural erosion.

Objective 2: Sociological Analysis of Resilience Mechanisms

Examine how these practices function as social processes rather than mere techniques. Analyse social capital (trust networks), gender dynamics (women's food management), intergenerational transmission (elder-youth knowledge transfer), and inequality effects (caste/class access disparities). This reveals why tribal cooperation outperforms individual responses during crises.

Objective 3: Policy Recommendations for IKS Integration

Propose actionable frameworks integrating indigenous practices with modern systems, including hybrid early warning, NEP 2020 curriculum reforms, economic incentives for traditional seed banks, and tribal elder representation in district committees. Recommendations address institutional epistemic bias and ensure cultural continuity amid climate change.

These objectives test the hypothesis that indigenous practices enhance resilience through localized social capital more effectively than technical infrastructure alone.

HYPOTHESIS

Primary Hypothesis (H1): Indigenous disaster management practices among Odia tribes enhance community resilience more effectively than technical infrastructure alone because they are embedded in localized social capital networks that enable rapid action during crises

Rationale: Modern systems such as satellite warnings, cyclone shelters provide broad coverage but lack immediacy and cultural legitimacy in remote tribal villages. Santhal insect observation or Ganda bamboo rafts activate instantly. Putnam's Social Capital Theory (2000) supports this. Tribal kinship ties facilitate cooperation where bureaucracy delays. Evidence from Sahoo & Aparajita (2024) shows communities with strong traditional networks had 40% lower flood mortality than isolated households despite equal shelter access.

Secondary Hypothesis (H2): Gender roles in indigenous practices differ significantly from modern disaster response, with tribal women demonstrating greater household-level resilience, though facing mobility constraints during evacuation.

Rationale: Literature shows women manage 70% of household survival during Odisha floods (Sphere India, 2024). Chuktia Bhunjia sun-drying and Saora granary maintenance exemplify this, contrasting male-dominated official evacuation teams.

Testing Method: Qualitative comparison of tribal survival rates, social network density, and gender participation across documented cases.

Data sources: Academic papers, Govt. reports (NDMA, SDMP Odisha), NGO ethnographies (Sphere India, Climate connection), and tribal knowledge repositories. Sources are selected via keyword searches: 'Odisha tribal disaster practices', 'indigenous knowledge cyclone flood', 'IKS Odisha resilience'.

SAMPLING: Purposive sampling of major tribes (Santhal, Gond, Kondh, etc.) representing Odisha's ecological diversity (coast, hill, forest).

ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

- Coding: Practices categorized by tribe, function (forecasting, evacuation, food security) and sociological dimension (social capital, gender)
- Manual Thematic Analysis: Patterns identified through iterative reading and note taking.
- Comparative Framework: Indigenous vs Modern systems evaluated using resilience indicators (speed, trust, equity).
- Triangulation: Multiple sources validate per practice (e.g., Santhal insect observation confirmed across 4 studies)

Limitations: Secondary data lacks primary fieldwork. There are chances of publication bias towards successful practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study integrates three complementary frameworks to analyse the disaster relief practices of Odisha's tribes:

1. Social Capital Theory (Putnam,1995): Resilience emerges from networks, trust, and reciprocity enabling collective action. Tribal kinship facilitates rapid evacuation, food sharing, and mutual aid. Hypothesis H1 tests whether social capital explains better tribal survival rates.

2. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Framework (NEP 2020): Positions traditional knowledge as valid ecological intelligence, not superstition. Santhal insect observation represents cumulative environment pattern recognition which is refined over generations. IKS validates practices against modern epistemic bias, supporting Policy integration.

3. Resilience Theory (Holling, 1973; Folke, 2006): Defines resilience as the capacity to absorb shocks, adapt, and reorganise. Indigenous practices exemplify “transformative resilience”.

Integration: Social capital operationalizes resilience, IKS legitimises knowledge sources, Resilience Theory provides outcome metrics. Together, they explain why certain tribal practices outperform modern infrastructure during crises, addressing both structure (networks) and agency (local interpretation).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Tribal practices: Patterns and Functions

Content analysis reveals systematic patterns across 12 tribes. Forecasting dominates (9/20 practices). Santhal *Ghurghuria Poka* insect migration provides 12-24 hours flood warnings, validated across 4 sources.



Figure:1 Ghurghuria poka (source: <https://india.mongabay.com/2021/11/high-flying-dragons-how-the-globe-skimmer-migrates-across-the-indian-ocean/amp/>)

Kolha ant egg relocation signals heavy rain.



Figure:2 Ants relocating eggs (source:"https://www.dreamstime.com/khlongwangchao_info">Ronnachai Limpakdeesavas)

Ganda crow behaviour predicts cyclones.

Evacuation infrastructure includes Ganda Bamboo rafts for narrow channels.



Figure:3 Bamboo Raft of Gond/Ganda tribe (Source: VillageSquare.com)



Bonda wooden boats navigate flood debris which is critical when motorized rescue fails. Food security features Chuktia Bhunjia tribe's sun-drying which increases the shelf-life of food by 6 months while preserving around 80% of the nutrients and elevated granaries of Saora tribe which help prevent the submersion of food in flood water. Dongria Kondh sacred forests exemplify ecosystem-based adaptation, reducing flash flood velocity by 40 % through natural absorption.

Practice Type:	Tribes Involved:	Applications:
Insect/Animal Behaviour Reading:	Santhal, Kolha, Ganda, Khond	Flood prediction, evacuation timing
Bird & Moon Phase Forecasting:	Ganda, Saora	Cyclone prediction, wind direction
Seed & Food Storage:	Kolha, Saora, Chuktia Bhunjia	Periods of Food Security
Raised Platforms & Granaries:	Ganda, Saora	Flood-resistant housing
Bamboo Rafts & Pathways:	Ganda, Bonda, Khond	Flood rescue and safe movement
Community Kitchens:	Khond, Santhal	Food sharing during crisis
Sacred Forest Conservation:	Dongria Kondh	Flood and soil erosion control
Traditional Medicinal Plants:	Juang, Paroja	Disaster health care
Drought-Resistant Crops:	Saora, Paroja	Food security during dry periods

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS:

H1 confirmed: Social capital explains resilience superiority. Putnam's bonding capital manifests in tribal kinship networks achieving 90% evacuation compliances vs 60% in non-tribal areas (Sahoo & Aparajita, 2024). Bhitara Khana kitchens of Khond tribe distribute food equitably, preventing starvation when relief is delayed.

H2 confirmed: Women anchor 70% household survival through food management (Sphere India, 2024). UNFPA Odisha (2023) notes women-led SHGs enhance community kitchens, challenging male-dominated official responses.

Intergenerational fragility: Migration severs transmission as 40% youth are leaving for urban areas annually which threatens the transmission of traditional tribal knowledge.

DISCUSSION

Resilience theory frames practices as "transformative capacity", which is not mere recovery but adaptation. IKS legitimized ecological intelligence against epistemic bias. Hybrid models that incorporate both modern and traditional practices succeed. However, mining displaces ecological reference points and climate variability reduces forecasting accuracy.

Tribal cooperation embodies Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam; mutual aid transcending markets. Resilience is a combination of social processes and technologies. Modernization can not erase ecological intelligence which has been tested and used over centuries. This demands institutionalization of IKS before irreversible loss.

CONCLUSION

Odisha's tribal communities exemplify resilience through indigenous practices refined over generations. 12 tribes deploy 20+ methods, from Santhal flood forecasting to Dongria sacred forest buffers, which outperform infrastructure during network failures. Disaster resilience is fundamentally social, embedded intrust networks and cultural memory. Modern systems provide scale, while indigenous knowledge delivers immediacy and legitimacy.

Policy Imperatives:

- Hybrid early warning systems: IMD alerts + tribal elder validation.
- NEP 2020 implementation: IKS in school curriculum.
- Economic Incentives: Seed banks, sacred groove protection.
- Institutional Recognition: Tribal representation on district committees.
- Documentation: Archive traditional practices before elder knowledge gets lost with the flow of time

Modern India can't build climate resilience by erasing tribal knowledge under the guise of "Development". When mining displaces tribes from their native area or youth migration breaks knowledge transmission, we lose practical wisdom tested over centuries. Climate change demands we listen to those who read nature directly.



Climate adaptation succeeds when government plans meet community wisdom, Tribes of Odisha aren't waiting for fancy cyclone shelters, they are already reading winding patterns, patterns of river flows, and sharing last grains. Smart policy will learn from them, not replace them. This integration is not just cultural nostalgia, it is practical necessity for India's most vulnerable regions facing intensifying climate threats.

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EMBERS OF KNOWLEDGE: KITCHEN AS A GENDERED KNOWLEDGE SPACE IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Dr. Shelly Parul Bhadwal

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Govt. College, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

The kitchen has been a contested and devalued space within the feminist discourse. It is perceived as a space that reinforces the idea of female subjugation and oppression. However, in the present times of climate change and growing discourse around sustainability, and indigenous knowledge systems, it becomes necessary to revisit and re-evaluate this space. In the rural Himalayan regions, particularly in Himachal Pradesh, the kitchen extends far beyond its functional role and emerges as a dynamic site of knowledge production and transmission. It operates as a living archive of women's knowledge systems where culture is preserved, community practices are strengthened and ecological rhythms are revered. This paper conceptualizes the kitchen as a space of experiential knowledge where learning occurs through observation and participation — a space where knowledge is not formally documented but is transmitted orally through intergenerational exchange.

In the course of their everyday engagement with food practices, Himachali women act as custodians of intricate ecological and agricultural knowledge. From the use of local grains and seasonal produce to the employment of traditional methods such as fermentation, drying, and pickling, these practices reflect a deep understanding of sustainability and environmental adaptation. By foregrounding the Himachali kitchen as a gendered knowledge space, the present paper aims to study the role of women in serving as repositories of ecological and agricultural knowledge in Himachal Pradesh. The study also seeks to highlight the complex ways in which women's everyday practices contribute to cultural continuity and ecological sustainability, and knowledge preservation, thereby contesting the reductivism associated with the kitchen.

Keywords: *Women's knowledge system, ecological sustainability, cultural preservation, Himalayan culinary practices, indigenous knowledge systems.*

Introduction

Within the feminist discourse, the kitchen has often been closely associated with women's subordination and the reinforcement of structures that privilege masculine labour over feminine work (Stovall et al., 2015). Second-wave feminist thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Betty Friedan (1963), and Germaine Greer (1970) critiqued domesticity by equating housework with confinement, invisibility and loss of identity. Within such a framework, the kitchen emerges as a site that perpetuates gendered hierarchies. It remains a space that is marked by "gender expectations and silent sacrifice, where the contributions of women have too often been taken for granted and dismissed as 'women's work'" (Chow, 2024).

While Western feminist critiques have been instrumental in challenging the naturalisation of women's roles, they do not sufficiently account for the complexity and diversity of women's lived experiences across different socio-cultural locations. In contexts such as India, and particularly in the Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh, the relationship between women and the kitchen cannot be understood solely through the lens of oppression. Instead, it calls for a more nuanced exploration that recognises the interplay of labour, creativity, agency, and knowledge embedded within everyday practices. Women's engagement with food practices reflects not only obligation but also skill, innovation, and cultural preservation.

In the contemporary context of climate change and renewed interest in sustainability, ecological consciousness and indigenous knowledge systems, it becomes essential to re-evaluate domestic spaces such as the kitchen. Within this framework, the Himachali kitchen emerges as a significant site of knowledge production and transmission. It functions as a living archive where cultural memory, ecological intelligence, and community practices are preserved and passed on through generations. In other words, the kitchen extends beyond its functional role and becomes a repository of ecological wisdom and cultural memory. It operates as a site of informal learning, where knowledge is transmitted across generations through observation, participation, and embodied practice rather than formal documentation.

The present paper conceptualizes the kitchen as a space of experiential knowledge, where learning occurs through observation, participation, and intergenerational exchange rather than formal documentation. By foregrounding the Himachali kitchen as a gendered knowledge space, the study aims to examine the role of women in serving as repositories of ecological and agricultural knowledge in Himachal Pradesh. The study also seeks to highlight the complex ways in which women's everyday practices contribute to cultural continuity and ecological sustainability, and knowledge preservation, thereby contesting the reductivism associated with the kitchen.



Review of Literature

The relationship between women, domestic spaces, and knowledge has been widely examined across feminist, ecological, and cultural studies. As stated early, feminist scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Betty Friedan (1963), and Germaine Greer (1970) conceptualized the kitchen as a symbol of women's confinement within patriarchal structures. Their work challenged the romanticisation of domesticity by arguing that unpaid household labour reinforced women's economic dependence and social invisibility. While these critiques remain significant in exposing gender inequalities, they largely emerge from Western contexts. Thus, they could not fully account for the cultural and ecological dimensions of domestic spaces in non-Western societies such as the India and particularly the socio-cultural complexity within Himalayan state like Himachal Pradesh.

Consequently, postcolonial feminist scholars questioned the universality of Western feminist assumptions. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) argued that women's experiences are shaped by specific historical, cultural, and socio-economic conditions. This approach made it necessary to examine local knowledge systems and question the imposition of universal frameworks. Such perspective opened possibilities for acceptance of plurality and heterogeneity of experience. It further allowed for the re-interpretation of the kitchen to be viewed not merely as a site of oppression but also as a space where women exercise agency through cultural practices and knowledge transmission.

Additionally, the experience of the Himalayan women within and outside the kitchen also serves as the intersection between gender and ecology. This intersectional aspect of the kitchen space was explored extensively through ecofeminism. Activist and ecofeminist critics like Vandana Shiva (1988) argued that rural women possess valuable ecological knowledge that developed through their close engagement with nature and sustainable practices. Shiva also highlighted women's role in biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, and resource management. Similarly, Sherilyn MacGregor (2017) challenged the modern development models that marginalized indigenous knowledge and excluded it from mainstream environmental discourse despite its significance for sustainability.

The notion of indigenous knowledge and sustainability is also linked to the idea of cultural preservation. Scholars like Jyoti Prakash Tamang (2012) who have been working on indigenous knowledge systems and food cultures acknowledged that women have played a significant role in preserving culture through culinary practises. Matthew C. Ogwu (2025) further highlighting the relevance of traditional culinary practices in contemporary environmental debates. Furthermore, the role of women in preserving intangible cultural heritage also received scholarly attention from Mathilde VO (2021) who argued that culinary traditions constitute one of the most enduring forms of knowledge transmitted across generations of women. In the recent times, works of scholars like Holly Stovall, Lori Baker-Sperry, and Judith Dallinger (2015) reflect the kitchen as a site of creativity, innovation, and empowerment. Likewise, Daphne Ewing Chow (2024) argues that kitchens function as spaces where women reshape food culture, preserve heritage, foster innovation, and strengthen community networks. Such perspectives acknowledge the transformative possibilities embedded within everyday domestic practices.

Within the context of Himachal Pradesh, historical and cultural studies by M.S. Ahluwalia (1998) and publications by Himachal Tourism document the region's distinctive food traditions, agricultural diversity, and seasonal dietary practices. However, these works primarily focus on cuisine and regional history rather than analysing women's role as producers and transmitters of ecological and culinary knowledge. It is pertinent to note that despite the growing literature on ecofeminism, indigenous knowledge, and food heritage, limited research specifically examines the Himachali kitchen as a gendered knowledge space where ecological wisdom, sustainable food practices, medicinal knowledge, and cultural traditions intersect. Existing studies often discuss women, food, sustainability, or culture separately, without integrating these dimensions into a single analytical framework. The present study addresses this gap by conceptualising the Himachali kitchen as a living archive of women's knowledge systems and by highlighting women's contributions to ecological sustainability, cultural continuity, and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach to understand the Himachali kitchen as a gendered knowledge space and to examine the lived experience of women in Himachal Pradesh. The paper relies on cultural observation, existing literature on food traditions, sustainability, and indigenous practices, along with an analysis of culinary traditions embedded within everyday life. In other words, the kitchen is examined as a site of experiential and embodied learning where knowledge is transmitted orally through observation, participation, and intergenerational exchange. This interpretive approach further expands the scope of the study — moving beyond the kitchen and delving into the relationship between women's culinary



practices, ecological knowledge, seasonal rhythms, food preservation techniques, and community traditions in the Himalayan region.

Custodians of Culinary Knowledge

According to Abdelaziz Thaalbi, a woman is “the guardian of the family, the conservator of society” (qtd. in Mathilde, 2021). This holds true for women in Himachal Pradesh who play a central role as custodians of culinary and cultural knowledge. Their engagement with food practices reflects a deep understanding of local ecology, agricultural cycles, and nutritional needs. From cultivating and selecting local grains to gathering wild herbs and forest produce, from preserving seasonal ingredients to preparing meals on the traditional fireplace (chulha), women contribute to sustaining both household and community life.

Women are not only daily providers of food for their families but also active preservers and transmitters of culinary traditions. Mathilde VO (2021) argues that among all practices transmitted between women across generations, it is food traditions that hold the most central place — a direct consequence of the gendered division of domestic labour. This culinary knowledge is transmitted orally, with women learning from each other through active participation. The kitchen becomes a living archive, where recipes are intertwined with stories, rituals, and seasonal rhythms. Knowledge is not codified in written texts but is sustained through everyday routines. This transmission has continued over centuries and generations. Long before literacy became widespread and before printed cookbooks were widely accessible, culinary knowledge was transmitted orally and through direct practice, passed from one generation of women to the next. Daughters and daughters-in-law learned by assisting mothers, mothers-in-law, and grandmothers, gradually internalising sensory skills such as judging texture, aroma, and timing (Tamang, 2012; Feldner, 2021). Women of successive generations thus served as custodians of culinary heritage, protecting family identity and cultural memory through food even as ingredients changed, geographies shifted, and communities faced displacement.

Ecological Knowledge and Sustainable Food Practices

In order to fully understand the contribution of women knowledge systems that emerge from culinary traditions, it would be naïve to confine women's space to the kitchen alone. On the contrary, it is pertinent to acknowledge that their work extends beyond cooking and includes gathering wild herbs, managing food storage, and adapting meals to climatic conditions. Before a meal is cooked, ingredients must be found — and in the hills of Himachal, finding them has historically meant knowing the forest as well as the hearth. Women who gather lingdu from the riverbanks in spring, or dry guchi mushrooms from the forest floor, are not simply foraging. They carry knowledge of what grows where, when it ripens, which parts are edible, and how to preserve what cannot be eaten fresh. This is ecological knowledge in the fullest sense is practical. Ironically, despite its relevance in providing sustainable solutions, this wisdom is entirely absent from most formal accounts of environmental expertise.

The cuisine of Himachal Pradesh in particular, is shaped by its geographical and climatic diversity. The reliance on locally available resources such as wheat, maize, barley, millets, pulses, and dairy products reflects an intimate relationship with the environment. As a result, women's culinary practices are deeply aligned with the principles of sustainability, emphasising seasonality, minimal waste, and ecological balance. This reliance on the local produce becomes all the more essential in the present times of climate change. Not only is the use of locally available grains, pulses and vegetables economically viable, it also reduces carbon footprint and preserves biodiversity. As indigenous varieties and forest produce are naturally attuned to the local weather patterns and soil conditions, they are less dependent on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Being local, these food produces are fresh, retain nutritive value and also have a low carbon footprint.

Additionally, traditional techniques such as fermentation, drying, and pickling enable communities to adapt to limited agricultural cycles during harsh winters and serve as a sustainable alternative. Consequently, several traditional recipes prepared by women exemplify this ecological and sustainable knowledge. Dishes such as siddu, a fermented wheat bread consumed during winters, provide warmth and energy while promoting gut health, or Madra, prepared using chickpeas or rajma cooked in yogurt-based gravy, reflects efficient use of locally available pulses and dairy. Sepu vadi, which is made from ground lentils and steamed before cooking, demonstrates resourcefulness in food preparation. Similarly, fermented foods such as bhaturu enhance digestion and are well-suited to the climatic conditions of the region. Seasonal forest-based preparations using lingdu (fiddlehead fern), guchi (morel mushrooms) and kachnar (Bauhinia buds) highlight the use of wild edible plants and biodiversity.



Indigenous Healing Practices

The use of locally available herbs, flowers, roots and dairy products also indicate that women possess extensive knowledge of the medicinal properties of various plants. Here the culinary knowledge of women along with their sustainable resourcefulness aligns with indigenous systems of healing and medicine. The Vedic knowledge of edible plants classified according to their “heating” and “cooling” effects on the human body has been an organic part of the culinary practices of the region. Thus, season specific diets are planned in accordance with the health benefits ensured by various herbs and plants. For instance, winter diets include energy-rich, ghee-based preparations, while summer diets incorporate lighter and cooling foods such as buttermilk (chhachh) and seasonal vegetables. This medicinal knowledge becomes particularly significant during periods such as childbirth, where postpartum diets include preparations like panjiri, gond laddoos, and herb-infused foods that aid recovery and enhance lactation. Additionally, herbs such as mint, coriander, turmeric, and wild greens are routinely incorporated into meals, enhancing both flavour and health benefits. This integration of food and medicine demonstrates a holistic understanding of well-being.

Being an agro-centric society, seasonality plays a crucial role in shaping food practices in Himachal Pradesh. Women organise their culinary practices in accordance with agricultural cycles and climatic variations. Due to hard climatic conditions and geographical remoteness of some areas, women developed preservation techniques such as sun-drying vegetables, making pickles, and storing grains to ensure food security throughout the year. These practices reflect a sustainable approach to resource management and demonstrate an intimate understanding of environmental rhythms. It is pertinent to note that for women, “the nature they protect is living Prakriti. It is the awareness of nature as a living force, and of themselves as partners with her in the production of sustenance that guides their ecological struggle” (Shiva, 1988).

Food Practices and Cultural Continuity

While food is a means of sustenance of the household, it is also a marker of cultural identity and social cohesion in Himachal Pradesh. This is best reflected during community feasts organised in Himachal popularly known as *dham*. These feasts illustrate the collective nature of food practices, where culinary traditions are closely tied to rituals and celebrations. Here too, women play a vital role in maintaining these traditions, ensuring their continuity across generations. Though cooking is done by male cooks or *Botis*, women come together and assist in cleaning and cutting of vegetables, cleaning rice and lentils and grinding herbs and spices.

It is relevant to observe that while women from villages and towns have kept tradition alive with their efforts, women of the royal families of Himachal have equally contributed in ensuring the continuity of recipes and food etiquettes unique to the Himalayan region. Historical interactions and regional exchanges have also influenced Himachali cuisine, contributing to its diversity and richness. However, abstaining from heavy foreign influences, the royal kitchens of Himachal have retained a strong connection with local grains, lentils, wild herbs and seasonal produce. The preservation of specialised dishes such as Madra, Sepu Vadi, Khatta, Meetha Bhaat etc. is a significant contribution of royal women whose patronage and supervision of ceremonial feasts helped in the continuity of these rich culinary traditions. Women of the royal families also contributed to culinary preservation through temple patronage. They actively participate in rituals involving sacred food offerings thus serving as a bridge between food, culture and devotion. As marriage alliances between princely states lead to culinary exchange, it is the women of royal households who have been mediating these changes while preserving regional uniqueness.

Conclusion

Despite being central to household and community well-being, women's contributions remain underestimated and are rarely recognised within formal knowledge systems. Women are devalued “first, because their work cooperates with nature's processes, and second, because work which satisfies needs and ensures sustenance is devalued in general” (Shiva, 1988). The kitchen remains a site where labour is rendered invisible. It continues to be viewed primarily as a site of domestic labour rather than a space of creative and cultural production.

Thus a reconceptualisation of the kitchen as a space of knowledge production rather than a site of domestic labour alone, is essential. In her book, *Voices in the Kitchen*, Meredith Abarca challenges “the view of the kitchen as a limiting space, suggesting instead that it can be a platform for cultural adaptation narrative ownership and continuity” (Chow, 2024). She further adds that “generational adaptation underscores the kitchen's role in preserving and passing down cultural heritage” (Chow, 2024). This means that recognising women as producers and assimilators of knowledge will allow for a more inclusive understanding of knowledge systems that incorporates lived experience and everyday practices.



In the context of Himachal Pradesh too, women emerge as knowledge holders whose expertise encompasses nutrition, biodiversity, medicinal practices, agricultural cycles, and sustainable resource management. Consequently, the kitchen functions as a simultaneous site of labour, creativity, agency, and ecological preservation. According to Chow, women have and continue to play a pivotal role in “reshaping food culture within their families, communities and beyond...improving family nutrition, creating financial opportunities, expanding social networks, catalysing innovation, enhancing creativity, and preserving heritage, while also adapting traditional narratives around food” (Chow, 2024). Therefore, in the context of contemporary challenges such as climate change, urbanisation, and shifting food habits, the traditional practices preserved by women in Himachal Pradesh acquire renewed significance. Their emphasis on local resources, seasonal diets, and sustainable practices offers valuable insights into eco-conscious living.

By foregrounding the Himachali kitchen as a gendered knowledge space, it becomes possible to challenge the reductionism around the kitchen and highlight the complex ways in which women's everyday practices contribute to cultural continuity, ecological sustainability, and knowledge preservation. Women, through their everyday practices, act as custodians of sustainable traditions and indigenous wisdom. Thus the “recovery of the feminine principle allows a redefinition of growth and productivity as categories linked to the production, not the destruction, of life” (Shiva, 1988). Acknowledging and documenting this knowledge is essential not only for gender justice but also for building resilient, sustainable futures and empowered women.

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WHAT THE ARCHIVE FORGOT: ORIENTALISM, COLONIAL EPISTEMOLOGY, AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CASE FOR RECOVERING INDIA'S INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Shashi Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Government Degree College, Nihri, District Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

Abstract

This paper examines how colonial administration in India systematically displaced Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) through documented policy rather than organic cultural change. Using Cohn's (1996) concept of investigative modalities alongside the scholarship of Said (1978), Dharampal (1983), Guha (1983), Pollock (2006), and Thapar (2002), the study advances four arguments: colonial epistemological displacement was deliberate and recorded; erasure extended across education, law, ecological governance, and women's knowledge traditions; the Subaltern Studies project, while foundational, addressed consciousness rather than the substantive content of indigenous knowledge; and a framework termed critical recuperative historiography — combining archival reading against the grain, multi-archival triangulation, regional specificity, and engagement with living knowledge communities — provides a replicable method for IKS recovery. The paper connects its historical findings to the sustainable governance agenda and to the obligations NEP 2020 places on history departments. It argues that the colonial archive, read critically, contains sufficient evidence to reconstruct what its authors were simultaneously erasing.

Keywords: Indigenous Knowledge Systems, colonial epistemology, critical recuperative historiography, Orientalism, sustainable governance

Introduction

In 1823, a district collector in Bellary, Madras Presidency, recorded 533 functioning schools educating more than 12,000 students in grammar, mathematics, astronomy, poetry, and the vernacular sciences. These schools were not colonial creations. They ran on village endowments that pre-dated British administration by generations. Within thirty years, most had closed. The endowments were reassigned to colonial administrative expenses, the medium of instruction was changed to English, and a policy narrative of pre-colonial educational backwardness was constructed by officials who possessed contrary evidence in their own files.

The Bellary survey is one of many such administrative records. Taken together, they constitute a substantial documentary archive of what colonial governance replaced — an archive produced, paradoxically, by the very apparatus doing the replacing. The task this paper addresses is methodological: how should historians read this archive to recover what it was designed to displace?

The argument proceeds in six stages. The paper first reviews scholarship on colonial epistemology and indigenous knowledge traditions. It then sets out the research design and the framework of critical recuperative historiography. Third, it presents findings from six domains of documented erasure. Fourth, it discusses the implications of these findings for the Subaltern Studies tradition, for sustainable governance, and for NEP 2020. Fifth, it notes the limitations of the study. Finally, it concludes with a statement of what historical scholarship can specifically contribute to IKS recovery — and what it cannot.

Review of Literature

Colonial epistemology and the construction of India

Said's (1978) argument in *Orientalism* was not that European scholars made factual errors about the non-Western world, but that the system of producing knowledge about it was structured to serve administration rather than understanding. The Orient, in this account, was constituted as an object of European discourse — classifiable, manageable, knowable — and was not permitted to speak for itself within the terms of that discourse. Inden (1990) applied this framework specifically to South Asia, showing through a genealogy of British Indological writing from William Jones through the Cambridge historians that representations of Indian society as caste-bound, spiritually preoccupied, and incapable of rational self-governance served administrative functions rather than reflecting observed conditions.

Chakrabarty (2000) extended the analysis through the concept of provincialization, arguing that European social-scientific categories — nation, civil society, secular time, the citizen-subject — were universalised through the colonial encounter in ways that made non-European historical experience structurally incommensurable with the frameworks available for its



analysis. Indian scholars who wished to write Indian history on colonial terms were compelled to use these categories, which meant that distinctively Indian modes of knowledge and governance either appeared deficient by comparison or vanished from the analytical frame altogether.

Cohn's (1996) contribution was to specify the mechanisms. His concept of investigative modalities — the survey, census, museum, archive, legal codification, and historiographic narrative — identified the instruments through which the colonial state simultaneously produced knowledge about India and governed it. Each modality did not merely describe; it classified, fixed, and in fixing it, altered. Dirks (2001) demonstrated this with particular clarity in the case of caste: the colonial census did not record a pre-existing social structure but actively produced a rigid, enumerable, legally consequential caste system from what had been contextually variable and regionally specific social practices.

Indigenous education: Dharampal and the archival evidence

The most consequential archival recovery of indigenous educational infrastructure remains Dharampal's (1983) *The Beautiful Tree*. Working through colonial administrative records — district collector reports, governor's surveys, parliamentary submissions — Dharampal reconstructed a picture of pre-colonial education that directly contradicted the colonial narrative of intellectual backwardness. The Madras Presidency survey of 1822–25 identified approximately 11,575 schools educating around 157,195 students. Governor Munro's own estimate put one-third of school-age boys in attendance, with the explicit caveat that this undercounted home-educated students. Community composition data from several districts showed that lower-caste students were well-represented, undermining the claim that Brahmanical gatekeeping excluded ordinary children from learning.

The Adam Reports on Bengal education (1835–38), which Dharampal also drew upon, recorded female literacy rates in rural artisan and merchant communities substantially higher than colonial planners assumed or wished to acknowledge. Metcalf (1994) situated Macaulay's subsequent educational programme within this context, documenting that Macaulay's memoranda explicitly targeted the production of persons "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (p. 30). The replacement of indigenous education was cultural policy, not educational reform.

Governance traditions, legal codification, and ecological knowledge

Stein's (1980) reconstruction of village governance in the Vijayanagara period documented the nadus and ur assemblies of the Tamil country as active political institutions managing irrigation systems, temple endowments, inter-village trade, and dispute resolution through mechanisms that balanced communal accountability with local flexibility. These were not static customary arrangements but adaptive governance structures with deep institutional roots.

Cohn (1996) and Dirks (2001) traced what colonial codification did to such institutions: it extracted practices from their living social context, fixed them as enumerable 'customs', subjected them to uniform statutory law, and in the process eliminated the adaptive flexibility that had made them functionally effective. Guha (1983) showed that the effect was not merely formal: colonial law restructured the actual social relationships that indigenous governance had regulated, not only the framework within which those relationships operated.

Gadgil and Guha (1992) documented that women in rural communities were the primary custodians of local ecological knowledge — expertise in seed selection, soil management, plant medicine, seasonal water harvesting, and food systems — transmitted across generations through practice and oral tradition rather than textual institutions. Colonial administrative reorganisation, by displacing women from village governance and reorienting resource management toward state departments, removed this body of knowledge from the institutions where governance decisions were made. Chakravarti (1987) recovered, through close reading of Pali texts and epigraphic evidence, a substantial tradition of women's intellectual participation in early Buddhist communities, including the Therigatha, the earliest surviving body of poetry by women in any Indian language. Its exclusion from standard historiography is a scholarly choice, not an evidential constraint.

The Sanskrit knowledge tradition and Subaltern Studies

Orientalism's representation of Sanskrit as an essentially sacerdotal language — priestly, conservative, withdrawn from the practical world — was overturned by Pollock's (2006) monumental study. Pollock demonstrated that Sanskrit functioned for over a millennium as a language of political power and transregional intellectual exchange across a zone extending from Afghanistan to Java. The tradition it sustained encompassed formal logic, grammatical analysis, mathematical reasoning, astronomical calculation, political philosophy, legal theory, and medical science. Thapar (2002) showed that major periods of Indian intellectual history produced sustained institutional frameworks for knowledge-transmission: monastic universities,



royal academies, guild schools, and temple educational endowments that transmitted learning across generations and, in practice, across social categories.

The Subaltern Studies project, inaugurated by Guha in 1982, represented a genuine advance in recovering the political consciousness of those whom the colonial archive had recorded primarily as administrative objects. Guha's (1983) *Elementary Aspects* demonstrated that peasant insurgencies possessed their own internal logics and symbolic vocabularies irreducible to the colonial categories of crime and disorder. Chatterjee (1993) showed that even nationalist discourse reproduced the epistemological exclusions it claimed to oppose. Spivak (1988) pressed the question of whether any academic representation — however well-intentioned — could avoid re-enacting the silencing of the subaltern it sought to recover. These are genuine and durable contributions. The limitation relevant to this paper is that Subaltern Studies directed its attention to consciousness and experience rather than to the substantive content of knowledge systems — to how subaltern communities felt and resisted rather than what they knew and how that knowledge was organised.

Research Methodology

Research design

The study employs qualitative historical methodology. It does not present new primary archival research; its contribution is the synthesis and critical evaluation of established archival scholarship within a new methodological framework. The approach is interpretive: it reads secondary scholarship for methodological implications as well as substantive findings, and constructs from them a replicable framework for IKS recovery. This design is appropriate for a paper whose primary purpose is historiographical argument rather than archival discovery.

Source selection

Sources were selected by three criteria. First, they had to engage substantively with colonial epistemology, pre-colonial Indian knowledge traditions, or the historiography of indigenous education and governance — not merely mention these topics in passing. Second, all 20 references were independently verified in Google Scholar and WorldCat before inclusion; no source appears on the basis of secondary citation alone. Third, coverage was deliberately diversified across the domains under examination: education (Dharampal, 1983; Metcalf, 1994), governance and law (Stein, 1980; Guha, 1983; Cohn, 1996; Dirks, 2001), the Sanskrit tradition (Pollock, 2006; Thapar, 2002), women's knowledge (Chakravarti, 1987; Gadgil & Guha, 1992), commercial history (Chaudhuri, 1985; Habib, 1963), and epistemological critique (Said, 1978; Inden, 1990; Chakrabarty, 2000). Both foundational and revisionist scholarship are included.

Historical approach

The paper follows the method of critical-interpretive historiography: reading colonial administrative sources against the grain of their stated purposes, and triangulating across multiple archival and secondary traditions to reconstruct what the primary record was designed to obscure. This method does not treat the colonial archive as a neutral record but as a politically produced document shaped by the investigative modalities Cohn (1996) describes. The evidence for IKS is read from documents that were simultaneously displacing it — which requires attention not only to what the sources say but to the conditions under which they say it.

Analytical framework: critical recuperative historiography

The framework proposed here — critical recuperative historiography — is defined by five operational principles, each derived from existing methodological practice in archival and postcolonial historiography rather than constructed speculatively.

The first principle is reading against the archival grain. Colonial administrative documents recorded indigenous practices precisely in the course of displacing them. Dharampal's (1983) work in *The Beautiful Tree* is the clearest demonstration: using district collector surveys and governor's reports, he reconstructed the scale and social reach of indigenous education from sources produced by the administration that was dismantling it. The data speaks regardless of the purpose that collected it.

The second principle is multi-archival triangulation. Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, and Odia archives contain texts that encode indigenous knowledge in its own terms. No account of Indian mathematics, agriculture, or ecological management that relies exclusively on colonial records is methodologically sound. Pollock's (2006) use of Sanskrit literary and philosophical texts alongside European Indological sources illustrates the scope of what this approach can recover.

The third principle is periodical and regional specificity. "Indian tradition" is neither timeless nor geographically uniform. The indigenous education Dharampal documented in the Madras Presidency differed from what the Adam Reports recorded in



Bengal. The nadus and urs of the Tamil country were not replicated in identical form across the subcontinent. Thapar's (2002) sustained attention to regional variation, social differentiation, and historical change within Indian intellectual history provides the methodological standard.

The fourth principle is attentiveness to social power within IKS. Pre-colonial India was not a knowledge commons without exclusion. The Sanskrit tradition, for all its intellectual scope, was shaped by caste and gender hierarchies that restricted formal participation. Gadgil and Guha (1992) show that women's ecological knowledge was extensive but informally held; Chakravarti (1987) shows that women's formal intellectual participation in Buddhist communities, while real, was embedded in structures that positioned them subordinately. Any recovery of IKS that ignores these structures produces hagiography, not history.

The fifth principle is dialogical engagement with living knowledge communities. Indigenous knowledge was not only textual. Communities of practitioners in medicine, agriculture, craft, water management, and oral literature carry traditions that are continuous with, though not identical to, pre-colonial ones. These communities are primary historical evidence as well as present practice.

The framework differs from postcolonial historiography in its focus on the substantive content of knowledge systems rather than the epistemological conditions of their colonial representation. It differs from Subaltern Studies in its concern with what communities knew — the structure, logic, and institutional transmission of knowledge — rather than with the experience of colonial domination. It is recuperative because it aims to recover something suppressed; it is critical because it brings the full apparatus of historical method to that recovery, and refuses both colonial dismissal and nativist romanticisation.

Results and Findings

Finding 1: The scale of pre-colonial indigenous education

Colonial survey data reconstructed by Dharampal (1983) from the Madras Presidency (1822–25) identified approximately 11,575 functioning schools educating around 157,195 students. A single district survey in Bellary (1823) recorded 533 schools and over 12,000 students. Governor Munro estimated that one-third of school-age boys attended school, and explicitly noted that this figure probably undercounted home-educated children (Dharampal, 1983, p. 3). Community composition data showed substantial lower-caste enrolment in several districts. The Adam Reports on Bengal (1835–38) documented female literacy in rural artisan and merchant communities at rates colonial planners did not acknowledge in their policy documents. These are not estimates or reconstructions from fragmentary evidence; they are official administrative records produced by the same apparatus that subsequently dismantled the system they were recording.

Finding 2: Three documented mechanisms of educational displacement

The colonial administrative record identifies three principal mechanisms of institutional dismantling. First, village school endowments that had financed indigenous schools for generations were alienated to colonial revenue accounts, removing the material basis of the system without replacing it. Second, English was made the mandatory medium of instruction for employment-linked education, effectively excluding the existing teacher corps and the student population they served. Third, a narrative of pre-colonial educational failure was constructed and circulated by officials — Macaulay's 1835 Minute being the most cited instance — in explicit awareness of survey evidence to the contrary. Metcalf (1994, p. 30) documents that this programme was not conceived as educational improvement but as cultural reorientation, with Macaulay's stated aim being the production of a class "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect."

Finding 3: Legal codification displaced institutional governance

Stein's (1980) reconstruction of Vijayanagara-period village governance shows that nadus and ur assemblies managed irrigation commons, temple endowments, local trade, and dispute resolution through mechanisms that combined communal accountability with contextual flexibility. These were not frozen custom but adaptive institutions. Cohn (1996) and Dirks (2001) document that colonial codification eliminated this flexibility: living social practices were extracted from their context, transformed into fixed legal categories, and eventually superseded by uniform statutory law. Guha (1983) shows that the consequences extended beyond formal governance: colonial law restructured the actual social relationships that indigenous institutions had regulated, not merely the formal framework around them. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment's gram sabha provisions represent a partial attempt to revive decentralised village governance, but within a statutory framework designed by colonialism to displace exactly the institutional tradition it now seeks to restore.

**Finding 4: The Sanskrit tradition was a practical intellectual culture**

Pollock's (2006) analysis of the Sanskrit cosmopolis demonstrates that Sanskrit functioned as a transregional language of political authority and intellectual exchange for over a millennium across a zone from Afghanistan to Java. The knowledge traditions it sustained — formal logic, grammatical analysis, mathematics, astronomical calculation, political theory, legal philosophy, and medicine — were engaged with practical problems of governance, calculation, and natural inquiry. The Orientalist representation of Sanskrit as sacerdotal and withdrawn from practical affairs was a construction of European Indological scholarship, not a description of the tradition itself. Thapar (2002) shows that the institutional frameworks sustaining this tradition — monastic universities, royal academies, guild schools, temple endowments — transmitted knowledge across generations and in practice across social groups.

Finding 5: Women's knowledge traditions were extensive and systematically excluded

Chakravarti's (1987) reading of Pali texts and epigraphic sources recovered a documented tradition of women's intellectual participation in early Buddhist communities. The Therigatha — the earliest extant body of poetry by women in any Indian language — testifies to female intellectual engagement that was neither marginal nor derivative within its institutional context. Its near-absence from standard literary and intellectual histories is a historiographical decision rather than an evidential constraint. Gadgil and Guha (1992) documented that women in rural communities held primary custodianship of local ecological knowledge — seed selection, soil management, plant medicine, water harvesting, food systems — transmitted through practice and oral tradition. The colonial displacement of women from village governance simultaneously removed this knowledge from the institutional processes through which resource management decisions were made.

Finding 6: Indigenous institutional innovation and sustainable resource governance

Tank irrigation systems in peninsular India, documented by Stein (1980) and Gadgil and Guha (1992), represent community-based water governance that sustained agricultural production over two millennia. The institutional mechanisms — water rights allocation, embankment maintenance, seasonal conflict resolution through village assemblies — were transferred from community management to the colonial Public Works Department in the nineteenth century. Gadgil and Guha (1992) identify this administrative transfer, not infrastructural decay, as the primary cause of the tank system deterioration that state governments in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka continue to address. Sacred grove systems, maintained through community norms and local religious practice across most of India's ecological zones, functioned as biodiversity reserves without formal conservation infrastructure. Contemporary field research in conservation biology has independently confirmed that community-governed reserves of this type frequently outperform state-managed protected areas on biodiversity indicators. Chaudhuri (1985) and Habib (1963) reconstructed the pre-colonial Indian Ocean commercial network as a system sustaining long-distance, high-volume trade through community-based trust, indigenous credit instruments, and shared commercial ethics — without the formal institutional apparatus of the modern nation-state.

Discussion**What Subaltern Studies contributed and where it stopped**

The Subaltern Studies project permanently expanded the questions available to historians of colonial India. Guha's (1983) demonstration that peasant insurgencies had their own internal rationale — not reducible to colonial categories of criminality or primitive reaction — changed the evidential standards the field applied to subaltern action. Chatterjee's (1993) account of how nationalist discourse reproduced colonial epistemological structures showed that opposition to colonialism did not automatically escape the categories colonialism had established. Spivak's (1988) question — whether the subaltern can speak within the terms academic representation provides — remains methodologically uncomfortable in precisely the productive way it was intended to be.

The limitation for IKS recovery is not a failure of ambition but a consequence of theoretical orientation. Subaltern Studies drew on literary theory and cultural analysis; it directed its attention to experience, consciousness, and resistance rather than to the content and structure of knowledge systems as intellectual traditions. It could illuminate how a Santal community experienced colonial dispossession; it was less equipped to reconstruct what that community knew about forest ecology, soil chemistry, or seed varieties, and how that knowledge was organised and transmitted across generations. Critical recuperative historiography addresses this gap — not by displacing the Subaltern Studies contribution but by directing comparable methodological rigour toward a different object.



Historical evidence and its implications for sustainable governance

The six findings presented above share a common implication for sustainable governance: India has a documented record of institutional innovation in community-based resource management that the standard developmental narrative, shaped by the colonial historiography of Indian institutional failure, has systematically undervalued. Tank irrigation, sacred grove conservation, and decentralised village governance were not pre-modern survivals awaiting supersession. They were functional institutional responses to resource management problems — water allocation, biodiversity conservation, dispute resolution — that contemporary governance still struggles to address effectively.

This does not mean that pre-colonial institutions should be revived in their original form. They were embedded in social structures that included caste exclusions and gender hierarchies that no policy agenda should seek to reproduce. What the historical record offers is not a template but evidence: that community-based governance of common resources has worked in Indian conditions over long periods; that the specific mechanisms involved — norm-governed local accountability, communal monitoring, endowment-based financing — are identifiable; and that their destruction was the outcome of specific policy decisions rather than the inevitable consequence of modernisation. Contemporary institutional designers have access to this evidence. Whether they engage with it is a choice, not a constraint.

History's obligations under NEP 2020

NEP 2020's mandate for IKS integration in higher education creates three distinct obligations for history as a discipline. The first is critical: historians must apply the same evidential standards to claims made on behalf of IKS in policy discourse as to any other historical assertion. The IKS revival is not immune to motivated reasoning, and historians are professionally equipped to identify it. The second obligation is recuperative: the mandate needs a genuine scholarly foundation, and that foundation must extend well beyond the canonical Arthashastra and Yoga Sutras to the full regional, linguistic, and social range of India's knowledge traditions — including those of women, lower castes, and oral communities. The third obligation is pedagogical: students should encounter IKS not as a repository of ancient wisdom but as a historically dynamic, internally contested set of traditions that repay critical engagement precisely because they do not simply confirm what the present already believes.

Thapar's (2002) career provides the appropriate methodological model: serious engagement with India's intellectual heritage combined with consistent refusal of triumphalism, close attention to ambiguity and internal contradiction, and treatment of the past as a genuinely foreign intellectual world rather than a mirror of present preferences.

Limitations of this study

This paper is a methodological argument based on synthesis of secondary scholarship. It does not present new primary archival findings and does not claim to have recovered IKS content directly. The framework of critical recuperative historiography has been articulated in principle; its application to specific archival corpora in specific regions and periods remains to be demonstrated in separate research. The paper's reliance on established English-language secondary scholarship also means that the full range of vernacular archival traditions — the domain where multi-archival triangulation is most needed — is not engaged here. These are recognised limitations, not incidental ones.

Conclusion

The colonial displacement of India's Indigenous Knowledge Systems was not an incidental outcome of administrative modernisation. It was a policy, implemented through identifiable mechanisms — endowment alienation, language substitution, legal codification, and counter-factual narrative construction — by officials who possessed evidence of what they were replacing. The Subaltern Studies tradition recovered the experience of those subjected to these processes. It left their knowledge systems, as intellectual traditions with their own internal structure and logic, largely unaddressed.

Critical recuperative historiography proposes to address this gap through five operational principles: reading against the archival grain, multi-archival triangulation, periodical and regional specificity, attentiveness to social power within IKS, and dialogical engagement with living knowledge communities. These principles are derived from established practice in archival and postcolonial scholarship, not constructed theoretically. The framework's purpose is not to produce nostalgia but to generate evidence — the kind of rigorous, source-grounded evidence that the IKS mandate under NEP 2020 requires if it is to be more than a policy gesture.

The historical record shows that India has a documented tradition of institutional innovation in community governance, ecological management, and knowledge transmission that is directly relevant to contemporary challenges of sustainable



development and educational reform. Engaging that record with methodological discipline rather than ideological convenience is what historical scholarship can contribute to the project of IKS recovery. The archive contains what was forgotten. The historian's task is to read it carefully enough to say precisely what that was.

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REVISITING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM THROUGH GOVERNANCE AND INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: A POLICY-ORIENTED STUDY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Dr. Mayank Rana¹, Tarsaim Kumar²

1 Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism, SCVB Govt. College Palampur, Himachal Pradesh.

2 Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, SCVB Govt. College Palampur, Himachal Pradesh

Abstract

Tourism is a major driver of economic growth in Himachal Pradesh, a state known for its ecological richness and cultural diversity. However, rapid and largely unregulated expansion has produced serious environmental, socio-cultural, and governance-related challenges, including excessive waste generation, water scarcity, unplanned infrastructural development, and commodification of local culture. This study critically examines sustainable tourism through an integrated framework of governance and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), using a qualitative and analytical approach drawing on the Himachal Pradesh Sustainable Tourism Policy (2013), the Tourism Policy (2019), and relevant literature. The findings reveal that although policy frameworks emphasise sustainability, ecological conservation, and community participation, implementation remains weak due to institutional fragmentation and limited community involvement, while traditional IKS practices such as community-based resource management and eco-friendly architecture remain marginalised within formal governance. The study argues that sustainable tourism in Himachal Pradesh requires a paradigm shift toward an integrated, participatory governance model that incorporates indigenous knowledge, enhancing environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and inclusive economic development.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, tourism governance, Indian Knowledge Systems, community-based tourism, Himachal Pradesh

Introduction

Tourism is a major driver of economic growth in Himachal Pradesh, contributing significantly to employment, regional development, and state revenue, with the state's diverse topography, climate, and cultural heritage attracting millions of tourists annually. However, rapid expansion—particularly in destinations such as Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, and Kasol—has led to increasing environmental and infrastructural stress. Tourist hotspots face excessive solid waste generation, especially plastic, with inadequate management leading to pollution of rivers and landscapes, while water scarcity has become a recurring peak-season issue as hotel and tourist demand exceeds local supply. Unplanned construction of hotels, resorts, and roads, often without proper environmental assessment, has caused deforestation, slope destabilisation, and landslide vulnerability, while excessive concretisation of hill towns has disrupted natural drainage and ecological balance. Tourism has also driven socio-cultural transformation, with festivals, rituals, and folk performances increasingly adapted for tourist consumption, causing a gradual loss of authenticity. These challenges indicate that tourism development in Himachal Pradesh is largely unsustainable in its current form, necessitating a more balanced and responsible approach.

Sustainable tourism is a multidimensional concept integrating environmental, economic, socio-cultural, and governance aspects, requiring a holistic framework for long-term sustainability. Environmental sustainability involves conserving natural resources and biodiversity, waste management, and regulating tourist inflow based on ecological carrying capacity, crucial given Himachal Pradesh's fragile Himalayan ecosystem. Economic sustainability focuses on equitable distribution of benefits, local livelihoods, and reduced economic leakage, with community-based models such as homestays helping benefits reach local populations. Socio-cultural sustainability emphasises preserving heritage, traditions, and local identity while preventing commodification, and governance and institutional sustainability—covering policy formulation, implementation, coordination, and monitoring—underpins all these dimensions, since sustainability cannot be achieved without strong governance.

Governance plays a central role in shaping tourism development through policy frameworks and administrative mechanisms. In Himachal Pradesh, tourism is guided by the Sustainable Tourism Policy (2013) and Tourism Policy (2019), which emphasise ecological conservation, sustainable development, and community participation (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2013, 2019). Despite these policies, significant challenges remain: a clear gap exists between policy intent and implementation, with weak enforcement of construction, waste management, and environmental regulations, and governance is further weakened by institutional fragmentation across departments with limited coordination. Tourism governance also largely follows a top-down approach with limited community involvement in decision-making, restricting local knowledge incorporation and policy effectiveness, pointing to the need for participatory and decentralised governance models.



Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent a rich repository of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural practices, and indigenous lifestyles grounded in harmony with nature, efficient resource use, and community participation. In Himachal Pradesh, traditional practices reflect sustainable resource management, including Kath-Kuni architecture using locally available, environmentally sustainable materials; kulh irrigation systems demonstrating efficient, community-based water management; sacred groves (dev van) contributing to biodiversity conservation through cultural beliefs; and local festivals preserving cultural identity and cohesion. These practices align with sustainable tourism principles, yet modern tourism development often neglects them in favour of commercially driven models, creating a disconnect between traditional practices and contemporary governance.

Existing literature on tourism in Himachal Pradesh primarily focuses on environmental impacts, economic contributions, or policy frameworks in isolation, with limited research integrating sustainable tourism, governance, and IKS within a single framework. While policy documents emphasise sustainability and community participation, there is insufficient analysis of how these objectives can be achieved through indigenous knowledge. This study addresses this gap by developing an integrated perspective linking governance with IKS to provide a policy-oriented framework that can enhance sustainability, promote community participation, and preserve cultural heritage—an approach particularly relevant for ecologically sensitive regions such as Himachal Pradesh.

Objectives of the Study

Accordingly, the study aims to: examine the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability challenges of tourism growth in Himachal Pradesh; assess the gap between the Sustainable Tourism Policy (2013) and Tourism Policy (2019) and their on-the-ground implementation; identify and analyse IKS practices relevant to sustainable tourism governance; and propose an integrated, policy-oriented governance framework incorporating IKS and participatory mechanisms. The paper proceeds with a literature review, methodology, data analysis, discussion, and policy recommendations.

Literature Review

This study is situated at the intersection of sustainable tourism, governance, and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). The literature is organised into four thematic areas: sustainable tourism and its dimensions, governance and tourism policy, IKS and sustainability, and tourism studies in Himachal Pradesh, providing the conceptual foundation and highlighting existing research gaps.

Sustainable tourism evolved from broader sustainable-development discourse, particularly the Brundtland Report's call to balance present and future needs (WCED, 1987). Butler (1999) defines it as ensuring long-term ecological balance while maintaining economic viability, while Sharpley (2000) argues it must integrate environmental, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions rather than isolated aspects. UNWTO (2018) emphasises minimising environmental impacts while maximising community benefits. However, scholars note that in many regions sustainable tourism remains largely conceptual and policy-driven, a gap especially evident in developing regions where economic priorities dominate. Governance is critical to tourism sustainability outcomes. Pierre and Peters (2000) conceptualise governance as policy formulation, implementation, and stakeholder coordination; in tourism this extends to participation, institutional capacity, and regulatory mechanisms. Hall (2011) emphasises adaptive governance, and Bramwell and Lane (2011) advocate collaborative models where government, private stakeholders, and communities decide together. In practice, however, tourism governance is often characterised by institutional fragmentation, bureaucratic inefficiency, and a top-down approach; in the Indian context, policies emphasise sustainability and participation, but execution remains inconsistent due to weak enforcement and coordination.

IKS have gained increasing recognition for sustainable development. Gadgil et al. (1993) highlight indigenous knowledge's role in biodiversity conservation, while Berkes (1999) treats traditional ecological knowledge as integrating cultural values with environmental management. Agrawal (1995) critiques the rigid indigenous-scientific knowledge divide, arguing for integration, and IKS emphasise ecological balance, participation, and ethical resource use aligned with sustainable tourism goals. Despite this, these systems remain marginalised in formal governance, particularly in tourism, where modern infrastructure and commercialisation take precedence.

In Himachal Pradesh, recent studies highlight significant sustainability challenges. Singh et al. (2020) found tourist inflow in several ecotourism sites exceeds ecological carrying capacity, causing degradation, while Thakur (2023) highlights poor planning, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of sustainability measures in rural tourism. Homestay studies show a sustainable, inclusive model promoting local participation and cultural heritage (Planning Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2022), though facing limited institutional support, marketing, and regulatory constraints. Policy documents emphasise



sustainability and participation, yet empirical studies suggest a significant gap between objectives and ground-level implementation.

This review reveals that while substantial research exists on sustainable tourism, governance, and IKS as separate domains, integration remains limited: tourism studies neglect governance mechanisms, governance studies overlook indigenous knowledge, IKS research lacks application in tourism governance, and Himachal-specific studies identify challenges without integrated solutions. This study addresses that gap through an integrated approach, offering a more holistic understanding and policy-oriented insights for ecologically sensitive regions.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study is qualitative, analytical, and exploratory, examining sustainable tourism in Himachal Pradesh through the integrated lens of governance and IKS. It applies directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to policy documents and literature: rather than open coding, the three a priori dimensions of the analytical framework—sustainable tourism, governance, and IKS—serve as parent categories, each broken into sub-codes (e.g., governance is coded into implementation gap, institutional fragmentation, and participation deficit) that are then applied systematically to every source. This directed approach is appropriate because the study begins from an established conceptual structure rather than building theory inductively from raw field data, and it allows the policy comparison and thematic findings reported in the next section to be traced back to specific coded passages rather than general impressions. The design combines a descriptive analysis of tourism development, policy, and sustainability challenges; an interpretative analysis of IKS relevance; and a critical, clause-level comparison of the 2013 and 2019 policy documents against the coded governance categories, enabling a comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding.

Data Sources

The study draws on secondary data from credible sources: policy documents such as the Sustainable Tourism Policy (2013), Tourism Policy (2019), eco-tourism guidelines, and government publications; peer-reviewed literature on sustainable tourism, governance, and IKS, including Himachal-specific carrying capacity and rural tourism studies; and institutional reports such as the Planning Department's homestay evaluation and UNWTO reports. These diverse sources enable data triangulation, enhancing credibility.

Significance of the Study

The study holds significance at both academic and policy levels. Academically, it contributes to interdisciplinary research by integrating tourism studies, public administration, and IKS—often studied independently—and addresses a research gap by linking governance with indigenous sustainability practices. From a policy perspective, it highlights limitations in existing tourism policies and the need to incorporate traditional knowledge into governance, particularly relevant for ecologically sensitive regions like Himachal Pradesh.

Procedure

The study follows a structured procedure: identifying the research problem—unsustainable tourism growth and governance challenges in Himachal Pradesh—reviewing literature on sustainable tourism, governance, and IKS; compiling policy documents, studies, and institutional reports; coding each source against the categories below; analysing policy frameworks against ground realities; identifying gaps; and formulating conclusions and recommendations. The core analytical framework has three dimensions: sustainable tourism (environmental, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability); governance (policy formulation and implementation, institutional coordination, stakeholder participation, monitoring); and IKS (traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous cultural practices, community-based resource management), whose interaction is analysed to understand how sustainable tourism can be achieved.

Parent category	Sub-codes	Illustrative indicator in sources
Sustainable tourism	Ecological stress; economic leakage; cultural commodification	Carrying-capacity breach; externally owned infrastructure; staged festivals
Governance	Implementation gap; institutional fragmentation; participation deficit	Aspirational clauses without enforcement mechanisms; overlapping departmental mandates; absence of community sign-off provisions
IKS	Resource stewardship; built form; cosmological regulation	Kulh irrigation; Kath-Kuni architecture; dev van (sacred grove) protection



Table 1 summarises the directed coding framework used to classify the secondary sources; each finding reported under Data Analysis and Interpretation is traceable to one of these sub-codes.

Scope and Limitations

The study's scope is limited to tourism development and policy/governance frameworks at the state level, with conceptual and qualitative analysis of sustainability and IKS; it excludes primary data collection or quantitative modelling. Limitations include reliance on secondary data, the absence of field-based observation, possible regional variations not fully captured, and analysis limited to available documents. These are characteristic of qualitative, document-based research and are addressed where possible through triangulation across sources. Future research with field-based interviews of tourism officials, Panchayati Raj representatives, and homestay operators would strengthen these conceptual arguments.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis reveals a complex, uneven pattern of tourism development in Himachal Pradesh characterised by rapid growth, environmental stress, socio-cultural transformation, and governance challenges. While policy frameworks emphasise sustainability, existing studies indicate a significant gap between intent and implementation. This section examines four interrelated dimensions—environmental sustainability, economic patterns, socio-cultural transformation, and governance effectiveness—alongside the role of IKS.

Tourism growth has increased pressure on fragile Himalayan ecosystems, with destinations such as Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, and Kasol experiencing excessive seasonal inflow and resulting degradation. Tourist activities contribute significantly to plastic waste, often inadequately processed due to limited infrastructure, polluting rivers such as the Beas and Sutlej and affecting ecological balance and local livelihoods. Peak-season water demand from hotels and tourism facilities often exceeds supply, causing shortages and highlighting weak resource management. Unregulated construction of hotels and resorts, often without environmental clearance, has caused deforestation, slope destabilisation, and landslide vulnerability, indicating that tourism growth has exceeded ecological carrying capacity in several regions (Singh et al., 2020). In contrast, IKS-rooted practices such as sacred groves (dev van) and eco-friendly construction demonstrate sustainable environmental management, though not integrated into modern tourism planning.

Tourism is a major source of income and employment, but benefits are unevenly distributed: large-scale infrastructure is often externally owned, causing economic leakage that limits long-term local benefits. Community-based models, particularly homestays, offer a more sustainable, inclusive alternative, generating local employment and supporting small enterprises such as handicrafts and food services (Planning Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2022). Despite their potential, these models face limited financial support, inadequate marketing, and regulatory constraints, reflecting a governance gap in encouraging and institutionalising sustainable economic practices.

Tourism has significantly influenced Himachal Pradesh's socio-cultural landscape, with festivals, rituals, and folk traditions becoming major attractions. While this increases cultural visibility and economic opportunity, it has also led to commodification: festivals such as Kullu Dussehra and local dev traditions are increasingly adapted for tourist consumption, often losing original religious significance, while community-based folk music and dance are now frequently staged events. This shift from authenticity to commercial representation threatens intangible cultural heritage. It is important, however, to avoid casting IKS as a pristine pre-commercial baseline: many communities actively choose commercial adaptation as a livelihood strategy, and policy must enable communities to navigate the authenticity-income trade-off on their own terms rather than imposing either marketisation or cultural preservation from above. IKS provide a normative framework for community-led decision-making in this space, not a prescription for reverting to pre-tourism conditions.

Applying the governance sub-codes to both policy documents reveals a clear progression in aspiration but persistent structural omissions. The Sustainable Tourism Policy (2013) introduced sustainability as a formal objective and called for ecological zone demarcation, but it lacked enforcement timelines, penalty clauses, or a designated inter-departmental coordination body—making its community-participation provisions aspirational rather than operational. The Tourism Policy (2019) extended investment incentives and diversified product categories (adventure, wellness, heritage), yet similarly failed to mandate carrying-capacity ceilings, provide legal standing to Panchayati Raj institutions in tourism planning, or specify an accountability chain across the Tourism, Forest, and Environment departments. The table below maps these gaps systematically.



Governance dimension	2013 Policy provision	2019 Policy provision / gap carried forward
Carrying capacity	Mentions ecological limits; no ceilings specified	Omits carrying-capacity thresholds entirely; gap unaddressed
Community participation	Aspirational; no role specified for Panchayati Raj	Promotes homestays but no statutory community sign-off mechanism
IKS integration	Not mentioned	Heritage tourism referenced but no IKS framework embedded
Inter-departmental coordination	Implies coordination; no nodal authority designated	Overlapping mandates across Tourism, Forest, Environment persist

Table 2 demonstrates that the 2019 policy represented a sectoral expansion rather than a structural correction: it broadened tourism product categories and investment incentives while leaving unchanged the three governance gaps that the 2013 policy had already failed to address—carrying-capacity limits, community sign-off, and IKS embedding. This pattern of additive rather than corrective policy revision explains the persistence of implementation failure across both documents (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2013, 2019).

IKS represent an underutilised but highly relevant framework for sustainable tourism, demonstrated through kulh irrigation, Kath-Kuni architecture, sacred groves, and community-based tourism practices, all aligning with environmental, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability yet remaining marginalised in policy frameworks that prioritise modern infrastructure. Overall, the analysis highlights a structural imbalance: growth is rapid but unregulated, impacts are increasing, policy exists but is weakly implemented, and IKS offer sustainable solutions but remain underutilised—indicating that the challenge is not absence of knowledge or policy, but lack of integration between governance and indigenous knowledge frameworks.

Discussion

The analysis reveals that sustainability challenges in Himachal Pradesh are not merely environmental or economic but fundamentally rooted in governance structures and the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge. This discussion interprets the findings against theoretical perspectives on sustainable tourism, governance, and IKS, highlighting the structural causes of the observed gaps.

Theoretically, sustainable tourism integrates environmental, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions; however, findings indicate tourism in Himachal Pradesh is predominantly economically driven, with sustainability a secondary concern. Carrying capacity, central to sustainable tourism theory, is largely absent in practice, as inflow frequently exceeds ecological limits, causing degradation and resource depletion (Singh et al., 2020). This reflects a disconnect between sustainability frameworks and real-world governance: tourism in Himachal Pradesh is conceptually acknowledged but institutionally weak, with policies recognising sustainability but lacking effective enforcement and monitoring.

Governance emerges as a critical determinant of outcomes, constrained by structural and institutional limitations. The persistent top-down model restricts local participation in planning and decision-making, since policies are formulated at higher administrative levels, reducing contextual sensitivity and implementation effectiveness. Institutional fragmentation across tourism, forest, and local administrative bodies, with overlapping responsibilities but limited coordination, leads to implementation gaps, weak accountability, and duplication. Governance frameworks also tend to prioritise short-term economic gains over long-term sustainability, encouraging infrastructure and tourist inflow without adequate consideration of environmental and socio-cultural limits. These findings align with governance theories emphasising collaborative, participatory models (Bramwell & Lane, 2011); their absence in Himachal Pradesh explains the gap between policy intent and ground-level outcomes.

A key insight is that IKS represent a largely untapped resource for sustainable tourism. Traditional practices in Himachal Pradesh embody ecological balance, community participation, and cultural continuity, yet remain marginalised within formal governance, as modern tourism prioritises commercial infrastructure and external investment over traditional practices—reflecting a tendency to view indigenous knowledge as outdated rather than viable. The issue, therefore, is not absence of sustainable practices but failure to institutionalise existing indigenous knowledge; integrating IKS into tourism policy can provide context-specific, culturally sensitive, and environmentally sustainable solutions. Operationalising this integration does not require abandoning bureaucratic systems but rather embedding IKS at specific decision nodes within them. Three concrete mechanisms are proposed here: first, kulh-based water-flow protocols can be codified as district-level water-allocation by-laws binding on hotel construction approvals, translating a community irrigation norm into a regulatory instrument without



displacing modern water engineering; second, Kath-Kuni construction standards can be incorporated into the HP Town and Country Planning Act as a permissible building category with corresponding structural safety certification, enabling commercial adoption without folklorisation; third, dev van boundaries can be formally co-registered by the Revenue and Forest departments as conservation easements, giving them legal standing equivalent to reserved forest but governed jointly by the village devta committee and the Forest Department. These pathways show that the transition from indigenous practice to governance instrument is a technical and political task, not an insurmountable conceptual one.

The findings indicate a need to shift toward a more integrated, participatory model: decentralised governance enabling local participation, policy integration of IKS into tourism planning, regulatory mechanisms such as carrying capacity assessment and environmental monitoring, and collaborative frameworks involving government, the private sector, and communities—aligned with contemporary network governance and stakeholder engagement models. The study contributes an integrated framework connecting sustainable tourism as the goal, governance as the mechanism, and IKS as the supporting framework, moving beyond fragmented analysis toward a holistic understanding for ecologically sensitive regions, with policy implications for moving beyond formulation toward effective implementation, coordination, and engagement.

Overall, the discussion establishes that tourism challenges in Himachal Pradesh are fundamentally governance-related rather than merely environmental or economic. Sustainable tourism cannot be achieved through policy alone; it requires effective implementation, stakeholder participation, and integration of indigenous knowledge. IKS provide a ready-made but underutilised foundation for sustainability, and the key lies in bridging the gap between governance mechanisms and traditional knowledge systems.

Conclusion

This study critically examined sustainable tourism in Himachal Pradesh through the integrated framework of governance and IKS. The analysis demonstrates that although tourism has significantly contributed to economic growth, employment, and regional development, its rapid, largely unregulated expansion has produced serious environmental, socio-cultural, and institutional challenges. Tourism development is currently imbalanced, focused on economic growth at the expense of environmental sustainability and cultural preservation; excessive waste, water scarcity, unplanned infrastructure, and cultural commodification highlight the unsustainable nature of existing practices. Despite the Sustainable Tourism Policy (2013) and Tourism Policy (2019), a substantial gap exists between intent and implementation, with institutional fragmentation, weak regulatory mechanisms, poor inter-departmental coordination, and limited community participation constraining policy effectiveness. At the same time, IKS provide a viable, context-specific, culturally rooted framework for sustainability—community-based resource management, eco-friendly architecture, and indigenous cultural systems align with sustainable tourism principles, yet remain underutilised and marginalised. The study concludes that the primary challenge lies not in the absence of policies or knowledge, but in the lack of integration between governance systems and indigenous knowledge frameworks, achievable only through participatory, inclusive, context-sensitive approaches.

Policy Recommendations

In light of these findings, the study proposes the following policy recommendations. First, tourism policies should formally integrate IKS into planning, including promoting Kath-Kuni architecture, integrating kulh irrigation into water management, and protecting sacred groves (dev van) as conservation zones, aligning development with local ecological and cultural contexts. Second, governance should shift from top-down to participatory, empowering Panchayati Raj institutions, involving local communities in decision-making, and promoting community-based tourism to enhance accountability and inclusivity. Third, tourism should be regulated through carrying capacity mechanisms—scientific assessment for major destinations, limiting inflow in overburdened areas, and diversifying toward lesser-known destinations. Fourth, policies should actively promote community-based models such as homestay, village, and eco-tourism to ensure equitable benefit distribution and reduced environmental impact. Fifth, institutional coordination should be strengthened through integrated governance frameworks, clear accountability, and regular monitoring. Sixth, capacity-building and awareness programmes should be organised for officials, communities, and stakeholders on sustainable practices and IKS. Finally, strict regulatory measures should control unplanned construction, environmental violations, and over-commercialisation, prioritising sustainable infrastructure over rapid expansion.

Himachal Pradesh possesses all the essential elements for sustainable tourism—rich natural resources, vibrant cultural heritage, and deeply rooted indigenous knowledge—and the real challenge lies in integrating these within governance frameworks. If governance is reoriented to incorporate IKS and participatory approaches, Himachal Pradesh could emerge as a



model for sustainable tourism, demonstrating how traditional knowledge and modern administration can work together for long-term sustainability.

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FROM BAHI-KHATA TO BALANCE SHEETS: REVISITING INDIA'S INDIGENOUS ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL TRADITIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GOVERNANCE

Rupesh Thakur

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Government Degree College, Nihri, District Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

Abstract

Background: Indian commerce education has focused primarily on Western models of accounting, corporate governance, and financial organisation. The financial traditions that sustained trade across the subcontinent for centuries before colonial rule receive little attention in curricula or policy — an omission that becomes harder to defend as Indian institutions grapple with financial accountability, ethical governance, and inclusion.

Purpose: This study explores five indigenous financial traditions from the Indian subcontinent, including the Bahi-Khata bookkeeping system, the Hundi credit instrument, the Shreni guild as an early model of corporate governance, Kautilya's Arthashastra framework for public financial accountability, and community-based savings institutions such as chit funds and nidhis. It examines their relevance to current concerns in sustainable finance, ESG governance, corporate accountability, and financial inclusion.

Methodology: This study employs a conceptual-historical approach based on a systematic review of secondary sources and comparative analysis of institutions. It draws from fields such as accounting history, economic history, business history, and institutional economics. Five traditions were chosen based on three criteria: the presence of peer-reviewed scholarly evidence, direct relevance to at least one research goal, and unique domain characteristics across various financial practices.

Findings: Each of the five traditions is built on institutional principles — relational accountability, trust-based credit, purpose-integrated enterprise governance, anti-corruption by design, and solidarity-based financial inclusion — that speak directly to current debates on sustainable finance and stakeholder governance. Several modern Indian organisations, such as the Self-Help Group model and SEBI's Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting framework, are partly continuations of these indigenous values, but the connection is rarely acknowledged in policy discourse.

Implications: The paper proposes four specific interventions in commerce education, corporate governance regulation, and financial inclusion policy, arguing that integrating India's own financial heritage into curriculum and policy offers a more grounded foundation for ethical enterprise governance than importing frameworks developed elsewhere.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems, indigenous accounting, sustainable finance, ESG governance, financial inclusion

JEL Classification: M41 (Accounting), M14 (Corporate Culture, Social Responsibility), G20 (Financial Institutions), O16 (Financial Markets), B15 (History of Economic Thought)

Introduction

If you ask students in any undergraduate commerce course in India who invented double-entry bookkeeping, most will point to Luca Pacioli, a fifteenth-century Italian priest whose *Summa de Arithmetica* (1494) described the system that underpins contemporary accounting. This is not a wrong answer. It is, however, vastly incomplete. For centuries prior to Pacioli, trade societies across the Indian subcontinent kept systematic, technically sophisticated, and ethically anchored financial records, a practice that colonial rule gradually displaced — and that Indian commerce education has yet to recover.

That tradition — the Bahi-Khata system of double-sided ledger accounting — is only the most familiar example. India's pre-colonial commercial history includes the Hundi, a credit instrument that transferred value across continents through community trust networks; the Shreni, a guild system with governance structures that predate the modern joint-stock company; a two-thousand-year-old framework of public financial accountability in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*; and community savings institutions such as chit funds and nidhis that sustained financial inclusion for ordinary households across generations.

The National Education Policy 2020 formally requested that Indian universities incorporate Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into higher education curricula (Government of India, 2020), and the Ministry of Education's (2023) subsequent guidelines specified that at least five percent of undergraduate credits should come from IKS-related courses related to the student's major discipline. This study responds directly to that directive, focusing primarily on trade and commerce.



Research Gap

Despite growing scholarly literature on pre-colonial Indian economic history (Roy, 2012; Tripathi, 2004; Parthasarathi, 2011), the discipline of commerce has remained largely disconnected from these studies. Existing work stays within economic history, anthropology, and cultural studies. No published study draws these traditions together into a framework directly addressing the challenges of sustainable business governance, ESG reporting, and financial inclusion policy. This paper attempts that synthesis.

Research Objectives

This study pursues four objectives:

1. To document and critically analyse the five principal indigenous financial and accounting traditions of pre-colonial India — the Bahi-Khata, Hundi, Shreni, Arthashastra framework, and community finance institutions.
2. To identify the core values and governing principles embedded in these traditions and assess their theoretical relevance to contemporary commercial challenges.
3. To develop an evidence-based comparative framework mapping indigenous financial traditions to modern institutional equivalents across six analytical dimensions.
4. To propose specific, practical actions for integrating IKS financial wisdom into commerce education, corporate governance regulation, and financial inclusion policy.

Original Contribution

This study makes three contributions. Drawing on accounting history, economic history, and institutional economics, it offers what the author believes to be the most comprehensive single treatment of indigenous Indian financial traditions oriented toward commerce scholarship. That synthesis is given analytical form by a six-dimensional comparative framework—presented in Table 1—that maps each tradition to its modern institutional counterpart, philosophically anchored in Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory. Four policy prescriptions follow directly from the comparative argument — each addressed to a specific institutional actor, not appended as convention demands. Taken together, these moves establish IKS financial traditions as substantive analytical resources for commerce scholarship, not merely historical decoration.

The second and third sections establish the theoretical framework and methodology; the fourth and fifth sections survey the traditions and map their contemporary counterparts; the sixth and seventh sections address policy implications and limitations; the eighth section states the recommendations; the ninth section concludes.

Conceptual Framework and Review of Literature

Defining Indian Knowledge Systems in the Context of Commerce

The phrase "Indian Knowledge Systems," as used in this study, refers to a dynamic and ever-changing heritage. India's financial traditions were diverse, region-specific, and historically dynamic. A Marwari dealer in Jodhpur kept books differently than a Chettiar banker in Karaikudi. Mughal banking institutions absorbed Persian and Central Asian elements. Gujarat's coastal merchants maintained an ongoing communication with Arab and East African trading networks.

What they shared was a preoccupation with the foundational questions of commercial life: what is finance for, whom should it serve, and what obligations does it carry. As economic historian Tirthankar Roy (2012) has demonstrated, pre-colonial Indian trade was distinguished by high levels of contractual trust, complex credit instruments, and community-based systems for collective action that functioned largely without coercive state enforcement. These were not primitive antecedents of modern finance. They were mature, functional institutions — ones whose core logic contemporary sustainable finance is now independently rediscovering.

Review of Relevant Scholarship

The relevant scholarly literature clusters around three streams. The first focuses on economic and corporate history. R.C. Dutt (1902) and D.R. Gadgil (1959) pioneered the study of pre-colonial Indian business institutions. Dwijendra Tripathi (2004), a business historian, contextualised the traditions of India's great commercial communities: the Marwaris, Chettiars, Baniyas, and Parsis. Prasannan Parthasarathi (2011) disputed the myth of pre-colonial Indian economic backwardness by establishing the competitive strength of Indian manufacturing and trade prior to systematic colonial deindustrialisation.



Accounting history is the second stream. B.M. Lall Nigam (1986) published a paper in *Abacus* demonstrating that the Bahi-Khata system carried double-entry principles that existed prior to the Italian method by several centuries. Nobes (1987) opposed this finding due to the scarcity of archival evidence, but Mattessich (1998) identified parallel accounting concepts in the *Arthashastra*, and Sihag (2004) independently documented that the *Arthashastra* contains comprehensive recommendations for internal controls, organisational design, and accounting methodology that are at the forefront of pre-modern financial governance scholarship.

Commercial and institutional history is the third stream. The geographical scope and institutional sophistication of India's pre-colonial commercial networks were revealed by Lakshmi Subramanian (1996) and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1990). Studying Buddhist sources, Uma Chakravarti (1987) examined the institutional frameworks of early Indian business, offering textual and epigraphic evidence of guild-based commercial organization. The divorce between financial accounting and ethical obligation in modern institutions, according to Prem Sikka (2015), who expresses from a critical accounting perspective, is a historically specific result of neoliberal governance rather than a natural state. This observation is reflected in the IKS tradition, which never accepted this divorce in the first place.

Together, these studies provide a strong body of evidence supporting native Indian banking customs. What remains missing is a synthesis of these streams into a coherent analytical framework for commerce scholarship grounded in stakeholder theory. That is what this study provides.

Theoretical Anchor: Stakeholder Theory and Its IKS Parallel

R. Edward Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, as presented in *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, serves as the theoretical foundation. This text stipulates that an enterprise's legitimate goal is to create value for all of its stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and shareholders, rather than just maximising returns to shareholders. The Friedman theory of shareholder primacy was directly challenged by Freeman's framework. Since then, ESG governance, the Sustainable Development Goals framework (United Nations, 2015), and India's own Companies Act 2013 CSR mandate have all adopted its central tenet—that enterprise exists within a web of social relationships and is accountable to all those it affects.

The theoretical argument that follows is that the ethical foundation of stakeholder theory was institutionalised in India's economic traditions millennia before Freeman created it in 1984. Stakeholder orientation is expressed in functional institutional form through the Shreni's inherent community welfare commitments, the *Arthashastra*'s accountability architecture, the dharmic framework controlling merchant communities, and the solidarity logic of chit fund and nidhi institutions. A sceptic might object that IKS parallels merely reflect the universal sociology of small-scale trade: any enterprise embedded in a close-knit community will develop accountability norms resembling stakeholder governance. That is a structural argument, not a historical one. With written governance norms, elected leadership, and formal endowment procedures, the customs discussed here functioned at scale, across regions, and throughout centuries.

These represent intentional institutional architectures created and preserved over many centuries, not accidental features of small-town commerce. The paper's argument shifts from historical observation to theoretical claim as a result of this convergence: IKS financial traditions provide cross-cultural, pre-modern empirical evidence for the practical validity of stakeholder-oriented enterprise governance, proving that the conflict between profit and community welfare is a particular aspect of the shareholder-primacy model that became dominant globally following the Industrial Revolution rather than a fundamental aspect of commerce itself.

Research Methodology

This study employs a conceptual-historical method, appropriate for work aimed at theoretical synthesis and policy inference rather than hypothesis testing, and consistent with precedents in accounting history research (Mattessich, 1998; Sihag, 2004). The methodology has four components.

The literature review combined database searches across JSTOR, Scopus, Web of Science, and the EPW Research Foundation archive with citation tracking from foundational monographs. Where primary archival data is unavailable in journal form, key historical monographs were included; peer-reviewed indexed scholarship was prioritised throughout.

Traditions were selected against three explicit criteria. To ensure the widest coverage of IKS financial practice within a single paper, each tradition had to meet three requirements: (a) availability of credible, peer-reviewed scholarly evidence; traditions without documented archival support were excluded; (b) direct relevance to at least one of the paper's four stated research



objectives; and (c) domain distinctiveness. Each tradition represents a different domain of financial practice — bookkeeping, credit instruments, enterprise governance, public finance, and community savings — ensuring comprehensive coverage of the IKS financial landscape. Customs unique to certain regions that lack solid cross-regional scholarly record are identified in the Scope of the Study section as deserving of further investigation.

A comparative institutional analysis then maps each indigenous tradition against its modern equivalent using a structured six-dimension framework: accountability mechanisms, credit and payment instruments, enterprise governance structures, welfare obligations, risk-sharing mechanisms, and ecological or resource responsibilities. This comparison is presented formally in Table 1.

Finally, the study situates these historical findings within contemporary Indian regulatory frameworks — the Companies Act 2013, SEBI's BRSR framework, the NEP 2020 guidelines, and the Ministry of Education's 2023 implementation guidelines — to assess the extent to which existing institutions already, implicitly or explicitly, reflect IKS principles. The limitations of this approach are discussed in the Critical Assessment section.

India's Indigenous Financial Architecture: A Survey

The Bahi-Khata: Accounting as Moral Record

One of the first known systems of systematic financial record-keeping in the world is the Bahi-Khata, meaning the "bound account book" of pre-colonial Indian trading societies. The Bahi-Khata recorded transactions using a system of jama-udhar, or credit and debit entries on both sides of every transaction, which is similar to what we now refer to as double-entry bookkeeping. It was written in Mahajani script, a specialised commercial script created by merchant communities and different from Devanagari. Lall Nigam (1986), examining surviving Bahi-Khatas, found a technically precise system tracking outstanding balances, seasonal adjustments, and interest calculations.

What distinguished the Bahi-Khata from Western bookkeeping was not its technical architecture but its ethical one. Every account corresponded not merely to a transaction but to a relationship — a person, a family, a sustained commercial bond. As business historian Dwijendra Tripathi (2004) documented, merchant communities understood the Bahi-Khata as a moral record as much as a financial one: a document in which a trader's standing, trustworthiness, and reliability in the marketplace were inscribed alongside debits and credits.

The contemporary relevance of this tradition is direct. The systemic override of internal controls by top management was recorded in post-investigation reports on the Satyam accounting scam (2009) and the IL&FS financial collapse (2018). These failures were not related to accounting technique but were instead due to an ethical commitment to ensure proper disclosure. According to the Bahi-Khata tradition, incorporating moral accountability into accounting practice is not idealistic; rather, India's own commercial history reveals that this design approach was previously institutionally accepted and widespread.

The Hundi: Trust as Financial Infrastructure

The Hundi was a written payment instrument — functioning analogously to a modern bill of exchange — that transferred financial value across great distances through community trust rather than legal enforcement. A merchant in eighteenth-century Ahmedabad wishing to pay a supplier in Dhaka would purchase a Hundi from a local Shroff (indigenous banker), whose correspondent in Dhaka would pay the stated amount to the bearer upon presentation. No currency crossed those 1,500 kilometres. The instrument worked entirely on the Shroff network's multi-generational reputation for honouring obligations — a reputation maintained through social and community accountability rather than courts.

Historians Lakshmi Subramanian (1996) and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1990) have documented these Shroff networks extending across South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and East Africa — one of the most geographically extensive commercial trust networks of the pre-modern world. The system had no institutional infrastructure of the modern state. It ran on community enforcement mechanisms central to IKS commercial institutions.

It is worthwhile to consider the comparison with India's Unified Payments Interface. During FY 2024–2025, UPI processed 185.8 billion transactions, or roughly 1,550 crore (15.5 billion) every month on average (NPCI, 2025). Both systems are efficient because they integrate trust into the payment infrastructure itself and reduce the cost of transferring value to almost zero. UPI accomplishes this through digital identity and institutional trust in the National Payments Corporation, whereas the Hundi do it through social responsibility and community repute. Across two centuries, both systems share the same



fundamental design insight: payment infrastructure performs best when built around trusted social connections rather than legal enforcement.

The Shreni: A Proto-Corporate Enterprise Model

Of all the institutions examined here, the Shreni — a guild system attested in India from at least the fifth century BCE — has the clearest structural resemblance to modern corporate governance. Major Shrenis were more than trade associations fixing prices and policing craft standards. They took deposits from both members and outsiders, conducted group investments, disbursed returns to members and charity endowments, and followed documented governance regulations, as both Kautilya's Arthashastra and the Buddhist Jataka texts explain.

Epigraphic and literary evidence allows reconstruction of the governing architecture of prominent Shrenis. In his study of guild organization from 600 BCE to 600 CE, Thaplyal (1996) documented how guild heads were accountable to members through elected processes, collective decision-making on financial matters, internal dispute resolution, and formal codes of commercial conduct at sites across the western Deccan and northern India. Epigraphic inscriptions record Shrenis diverting endowment returns to charitable and religious objectives — a structural arrangement that anticipates both contemporary CSR obligations and social impact investing. By analysing the data from a corporate governance standpoint, Jain and Mohanan (2024) confirmed that the Shreni system incorporates features like elected leadership, accountability, and stakeholder welfare integration that are almost two millennia older than formal company law.

In particular, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), which was established in 1602 and is recognised as the world's first joint-stock company with limited liability and tradeable shares, is nearly two thousand years older than major Shrenis with these governance features if they began operating around the third century BCE. This historical precedent proves that the organisational intelligence needed for collaborative company governance is not a European invention, rather than establishing direct institutional influence. It is a human innovation documented in India long before it appeared in Amsterdam.

The Companies Act 2013 (Government of India, 2013) imposes CSR obligations under Section 135, requiring qualifying companies to spend on welfare activities. Many practitioners and scholars find the exercise mechanical and disconnected from business purpose. The Shreni tradition suggests a structural reason: when community obligation is added as a regulatory requirement to an enterprise designed around profit maximisation, it functions as a corrective imposition; when it is constitutive of the enterprise's purpose from the beginning, as it is in the Shreni.

The Arthashastra: Financial Accountability by Design

The Arthashastra, credited to Kautilya, is best known as a treatise on statecraft. Contemporary scholarship, drawing on the critical edition translated by Patrick Olivelle (Kautilya, 2013), places its composition between approximately the first century BCE and the third century CE. It makes an equally significant but more underappreciated contribution to financial governance.

A comprehensive system of public financial management is outlined in Book II of the Arthashastra: a central treasury with stringent access controls; revenue collectors (samaharta) subject to frequent external audits; a dedicated inspectorate to detect misappropriation; a system of account reconciliation at regular intervals; and graduated penalties for financial misconduct calibrated to the degree of trust held by the offending official. The sophistication of this system has been noted by accounting historian Sihag (2004) and scholar Mattessich (1998), who point out that it anticipated contemporary ideas like internal controls, performance auditing, and division of financial obligations.

The psychological realism of the Arthashastra's perspective to human motivation in positions of financial authority is what sets it apart. Kautilya did not create institutions of accountability based on the notion of official virtue. He explicitly assumed temptation when designing them. His observation that it is as hard to tell when a government employee with access to public funds is embezzling as it is to know when a fish swimming in water is drinking (Kautilya, 2013) encodes a theory of financial misconduct with rigorous and contemporary institutional implications: prevention necessitates system design rather than moral aspiration. Make wrongdoing monetarily costly, structurally challenging, and consistently observable.

The Comptroller and Auditor General, the Central Vigilance Commission, and the concurrent audit obligations of public sector banks are examples of modern Indian institutions that are explicitly mapped onto this structure. Each applies the Kautilyan logic of institutional design to restrain human temptation. However, neither the governance documents of these institutions nor the commercial and public administration programs that train their future officials recognise this intellectual heritage.

**Community Financial Institutions: Inclusion Through Solidarity**

India has maintained a family of community-based financial institutions built on mutual trust, shared risk, and reciprocal accountability. The most well-known is the chit fund, in which participants contribute a certain amount on a regular basis to a shared pool, and each participant alternately receives the entire amount that has accrued. For households with irregular incomes and no banking accounts, the instrument offers both a disciplined savings mechanism and access to a significant payment without the need for collateral or formal credit history.

The nidhi, a mutual benefit fund where members save together and lend to one another at low interest rates, and the bhishi and kuri of Kerala and Maharashtra share the same basic rationale. These institutions work because financial products are not imposed through external frameworks but embedded in pre-existing social relationships of trust and mutual obligation.

According to NABARD (2023), there are currently over twelve million Self-Help organisations with over 130 million members, most of them are rural women. The SHG model, which is widely acknowledged as one of India's most successful financial inclusion initiatives (Arun & Hulme, 2009), is institutionally similar to the bhishi and chit fund in that it involves recurring group savings within a reliable community organization that are connected to mutual accountability and credit availability. Financial inclusion research and policy have failed to adequately recognise the connection between this modern movement and India's long-standing rotating credit customs.

Comparative Analysis: Indigenous Traditions and Their Contemporary Parallels

Table 1 maps the five indigenous financial traditions against their contemporary institutional equivalents across six analytical dimensions. The framework serves three purposes: it gives the study's argument concrete, testable form; it shows the breadth of IKS relevance across multiple domains of commerce; and it provides the analytical base for the policy recommendations that follow.

Table 1: IKS Financial Traditions and Their Contemporary Parallels

Dimension	IKS Financial Tradition	Contemporary Parallel
Accountability	Bahi-Khata — the moral ledger book	Financial Reporting Standards (Ind AS)
Credit Instruments	Hundi — trust-based payment across distances	Letter of Credit / Bill of Exchange
Enterprise Governance	Shreni — guild with accountability codes and elected leadership	Corporate Board & ESG Governance
Welfare Obligation	Dharmic charitable endowments and redistribution	CSR under Companies Act, 2013
Risk Sharing	Chit funds and community savings circles	Microfinance & SHG-Bank Linkage
Ecological Responsibility	Sacred grove endowment economics	Green Finance & Sustainability Accounting

Source: Author's Compilation

Four observations follow from this mapping. First, the convergences are structural and functional, not superficial. Each row in Table 1 represents a shared institutional logic, not a surface resemblance. The Hundi and the letter of credit share the logic of value transfer through institutionalised trust, the Shreni and the ESG-governed corporation share the logic of enterprise accountability to several stakeholders, and the Bahi-Khata and Ind AS share the logic of systematic bilateral record-keeping. The convergence is not coincidental. Even in cases where the institutional solutions developed separately, the fundamental economic issues—such as how to control joint enterprise, how to convey value without cash, and how to keep accounting honest—are universal.

Second, IKS institutions consistently outperform their contemporary counterparts on ethical embeddedness. In every instance, the IKS solutions exceed their contemporary equivalents on this dimension and even predate them. The Hundi created reputational capital that operated for centuries without enforcement infrastructure; the Shreni institutionalised welfare obligations as part of enterprise purpose rather than as an add-on to compliance; and the Bahi-Khata integrated accountability into community identity rather than regulatory compliance. In each case, the indigenous institution solved the ethical grounding problem that its modern counterpart is still working on. This is an analytical observation about institutional design, not nostalgia.

Third, the structural-versus-genealogical distinction matters here. The 'Contemporary Parallel' column should not be read as claiming that modern Indian institutions consciously derived from IKS traditions. What the table demonstrates is precisely the phenomenon that stakeholder theory identifies as the central challenge of contemporary corporate governance: enterprises



designed primarily around profit maximisation tend to externalise social and environmental costs, creating the accountability deficits that ESG, BRSR, CSR, and SHG programmes are attempting to correct. The IKS traditions examined here are evidence that alternative institutional logics — in which social accountability is constitutive rather than corrective — are not theoretical constructs but proven historical realities.

One important qualification must accompany this analysis. The table does not assert that native Indian financial systems were free from exploitation and exclusion or that they were, by all accounts, more effective than contemporary ones. Several of these customs routinely barred women and lower-caste groups from formal participation, as the limitations section details. Incorporating the ethical design logic of IKS traditions into modern institutions while keeping an open mind regarding the historical social exclusions that preceded them is the case for critical appropriation.

Implications for Commerce Education, Governance, and Policy

Rethinking Commerce Curricula Under NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020, and the Ministry of Education's (2023) subsequent implementation guidelines, have created a formal mandate for IKS integration into higher education curricula. The discipline of commerce has been slow to respond. At present, the typical undergraduate commerce curriculum introduces accounting through the Pacioli-derived double-entry framework, corporate governance through Anglo-American shareholder theory, and financial history through Western institutions. India's own financial heritage, if it appears at all, occupies at most a single chapter in an optional elective.

The intellectual costs are real. After completing this program, a graduate will learn accounting as if double-entry bookkeeping were a European invention, study corporate governance as if enterprise accountability to the community began in Amsterdam in 1602, and experience microfinance as if community-based rotating credit were a late 20th-century invention. The historical record indicates otherwise in each instance. In addition to being culturally undesirable, this miseducation prevents access to intellectual resources that could actually improve analytical knowledge of equitable finance, sustainable governance, and ethical accounting.

Sustainable Finance and the BRSR Framework

A sincere commitment to sustainability disclosure is demonstrated by SEBI's Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework, which was launched in 2021 (SEBI, 2021) and made mandatory for the top 1,000 listed businesses by market capitalisation starting in the fiscal year 2022–2023. BRSR needs a conceptual base that goes beyond regulatory duty if it is to produce real behavioural change instead of compliance documentation.

That foundation comes from India's indigenous commercial past. The fundamental tenet of stakeholder theory—that an enterprise must be accountable to all those it affects, not just investors—is expressed in the Shreni's inherent community welfare obligations, the Arthashastra's emphasis on the ruler's welfare purpose, and the dharmic framework within which India's great trading communities understood commercial activity (Freeman, 1984). The primary disclosure criteria of BRSR, which focus on environmental performance, community development, employee welfare, and responsible sourcing, align with the accountability dimensions outlined in Arthashastra institutional design and Shreni governance rules. Using this legacy in BRSR policy debate could change the focus from "what must companies report" to "what kind of enterprise should Indian companies be"—that is, from compliance to purpose.

India's own government has begun to recognise this. The Ministry of Education's (2023) guidelines formally mandate IKS integration in higher education, specifying that IKS-related credit requirements should be linked to the student's major discipline. India's indigenous commercial heritage is not lost. It is recoverable, and the institutional conditions for its recovery are now formally in place.

Financial Inclusion: Learning From the Community Finance Tradition

As of August 2024, over 53 crore (530 million) Jan Dhan accounts had been opened, with deposits totalling Rs. 2.31 lakh crore (Ministry of Finance, 2024). However, for hundreds of millions of Indians, quality financial inclusion—measured by active usage, affordable credit access, and uptake of insurance and savings products suited to irregular incomes—remains a critical unmet need. The formal system has been sluggish to adopt design elements from the IKS legacy of community-based finance.

The social collateral mechanism of SHG-based microfinance and the reputational credit scoring techniques being developed by fintech platforms are directly anticipated by the Hundi tradition's emphasis on relationship-based creditworthiness



assessment, which evaluates a borrower's trustworthiness through community knowledge rather than formal collateral. The communal savings and mutual support model of the chit fund and nidhi heritage provides a blueprint for financial service product design that is tailored to the income-volatility patterns and social solidarity structures of low-income households. These are not antiquarian curiosities. They are practical institutional prototypes whose design logic formal inclusion programmes have independently rediscovered.

Critical Assessment: Scope, Limitations, and Necessary Cautions

What This Study Does Not Argue

Two limits on the argument require explicit statement. The first concerns scope: this paper does not argue that indigenous Indian financial systems were superior in all respects to modern accounting and finance, or that India should replace internationally harmonised standards like Ind AS with the Bahi-Khata. Indian businesses operating in global capital markets require standards enabling cross-border comparability and investor communication. The argument is for careful integration, not replacement.

The second limit concerns equity. Indigenous financial traditions were not equitable or universally beneficial. The Shreni system largely excluded women from formal commercial participation. Shroff networks, for all their efficiency, could extract high interest rates from indebted peasants and artisans who had few alternatives. Chit funds in unregulated forms have been vehicles for fraud, devastating the savings of vulnerable households. Honest engagement with IKS traditions in commerce education and policy must reckon with these exclusions, not elide them.

Scope of the Study

Five indigenous financial traditions satisfying the three selection criteria — peer-reviewed evidence, relevance to research objectives, and domain distinctiveness — are included in this study. India has a far richer financial history. The temple economy systems of mediaeval South India, with their sophisticated endowment management and community welfare functions; the maritime trading institutions of the Malabar coast and their integration into global Indian Ocean commerce; and the financial practices of women's communities across various periods and regions are examples of traditions of similar historical depth that call for separate scholarly treatment.

Methodological Limitations

This study cannot prove a causal link between IKS traditions and contemporary institutional outcomes because it is a conceptual-historical investigation based on secondary sources. Instead of being causal or genealogical, the comparison mappings in Table 1 are structural and functional. These limitations do not undermine the study's main conclusions. Multiple distinct streams of peer-reviewed scholarship support the structural convergences seen in Table 1, which transcend the limitations of any one stream. The conceptual validity of the comparative framework and the practical applicability of its policy suggestions can be established without the additional archival and ethnographic research that would be required for causal and genealogical assertions (an agenda outlined in the Future Research Directions section).

The secondary literature on several traditions examined — particularly the Shreni and the Hundi — remains weighted toward northern India and the western Deccan, reflecting the geographical distribution of surviving epigraphic evidence. Generalisations to other regions of the subcontinent should be made with caution, a limitation acknowledged in Section 7.2 and informing the study's recommendation for further regional archival research in Section 9.4.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the analysis in the present study, the following four recommendations are directed to the relevant institutional actors:

Recommendation 1 — Commerce Curriculum Reform (directed to ICAI and UGC): ICAI and the University Grants Commission should jointly develop a mandatory foundation module on the History and Ethics of Indian Accounting, to be integrated into the CA Foundation curriculum and into the core commerce curriculum at undergraduate and postgraduate levels under the NEP 2020 framework. The module should introduce the Bahi-Khata tradition, the Arthashastra's financial governance framework, and community finance institutions with reference to their contemporary relevance. A first step would be commissioning a curriculum development working group with representation from accounting history, commerce education, and IKS scholarship within twelve months of this recommendation's adoption.

Recommendation 2 — ESG Framework Enrichment (directed to SEBI and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs): A formal study should be commissioned — through the National Foundation for Corporate Governance or an equivalent body —



examining how the Shreni model's structural integration of commercial and community obligations can inform the design of India's BRSR and CSR regulatory frameworks. Specifically, the study should examine whether BRSR reporting requirements can be redesigned to elicit evidence of purpose-integrated governance rather than compliance-based welfare spending, drawing on documented IKS precedents. The study should report within eighteen months of commissioning.

Recommendation 3 — Financial Inclusion by Design (directed to RBI and NABARD): RBI and NABARD should incorporate the design principles of India's indigenous community finance tradition — relationship-based credit assessment, collective financial solidarity, and community accountability — into the architecture of next-generation financial inclusion programmes, including the Credit Guarantee Fund for SHGs and the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. Concretely, the assessment criteria for SHG graduation to higher credit tiers should include community trust indicators alongside financial performance metrics, building on the relational credit logic that made the Hundi system effective.

Recommendation 4 — Interdisciplinary Research Investment (directed to ICSSR and commerce research community): ICSSR should designate indigenous Indian financial traditions as a priority research area under its national seminar and research project funding streams, and leading commerce research journals in the UGC-CARE list should dedicate special issues to this theme within a two-year horizon. The scholarly conversation between accounting history, economic history, and commerce scholarship has been proceeding for decades; the institutional incentives to bring it into the mainstream of Indian commerce research are now available and should be used.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The five traditions examined here — Bahi-Khata, Hundi, Shreni, Arthashastra framework, and community savings institutions — are not arbitrarily assembled. Each carried institutional principles — ethical embeddedness in accounting, trust-based payment infrastructure, stakeholder-oriented enterprise governance, accountability by design, and solidarity-based financial inclusion — that directly address the governance failures ESG frameworks, financial inclusion programmes, and anti-corruption mechanisms are working to correct today. The consistency across five independently developed traditions, spanning bookkeeping to enterprise governance to community finance, is itself part of the argument.

Theoretical and Scholarly Contribution

The study contributes on three levels. At the synthetic level, the paper brings together accounting history, economic history, and institutional economics into what is, to the author's knowledge, the most comprehensive single treatment of indigenous Indian financial traditions oriented toward contemporary commerce scholarship. The analytical contribution is the six-dimension comparative framework in Table 1, mapping each tradition to its modern institutional counterpart with theoretical precision grounded in Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory — a framework that also demonstrates that stakeholder-oriented enterprise governance has pre-modern empirical precedents in India predating its theorisation in Western management scholarship. The normative contribution consists of four policy recommendations, each addressed to a specific institutional actor and derived directly from the comparative analysis rather than appended as conventional afterthought.

Practical Implications

For commerce educators, IKS integration under NEP 2020 is not a cultural concession — it is an intellectual upgrade. Students who understand both the Bahi-Khata and double-entry accounting, both the Shreni and the modern company, grasp what commercial institutions are and what they are for in ways that a purely Western curriculum cannot provide. For policymakers and regulators, the study's comparative framework provides a tool for evaluating whether proposed institutional designs — in BRSR, in SHG credit assessment, in CSR architecture — are drawing on the full range of available institutional knowledge, including the knowledge preserved in India's own commercial heritage.

Future Research Directions

Three research directions merit priority. The first is archival recovery: the IKS evidence base for commerce scholarship would be substantially strengthened by regional and community-specific traditions not covered here, such as the temple economy endowment systems of mediaeval South India, the maritime trading institutions of the Malabar coast, and the financial practices of women's communities across different periods and regions. A second priority is empirical: do modern Indian financial institutions that are structurally based on IKS principles—especially community-owned cooperatives and SHG-based microfinance—perform differently on inclusion and sustainability metrics than institutions that are not? This type of institutional comparison is necessary to move the argument from conceptual to evidential. A third line of investigation that



transcends any one national tradition would be made possible by placing India's experience within a global comparative framework and looking for similarities with indigenous financial systems in other post-colonial economies. The ledger of the future will be richer if it reads the ledgers of the past, not to replicate them, but to extract the lessons that the present desperately needs from their institutional logic.

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NATURAL DYES: SOURCES, CHEMISTRY, EXTRACTION TECHNOLOGIES, AND EMERGING APPLICATIONS

Renu Dogra

Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, SCVB Government College Palampur, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

Growing environmental concerns and the adverse effects of synthetic dyes have renewed global interest in natural dyes as sustainable alternatives for textile and allied industries. Natural dyes are obtained from renewable resources such as plants, animals, microorganisms, and minerals and are valued for their biodegradability, low toxicity, and eco-friendly nature. This review presents a comprehensive overview of the major sources and chemical classification of natural dyes, including indigoids, anthraquinones, flavonoids, anthocyanins, carotenoids, and related pigments. Various extraction techniques, including aqueous, solvent, supercritical fluid, and ultrasound-assisted extraction, are discussed with emphasis on their efficiency and environmental sustainability. The review also highlights conventional and advanced dyeing methods, the role of mordants in improving dye fixation and fastness, and recent innovations in functional textiles, biomedical applications, renewable energy, biosensors, and intelligent packaging. Although natural dyes face challenges such as lower color fastness, limited standardization, and scalability, recent advances in green chemistry, biotechnology, and sustainable processing technologies have significantly enhanced their commercial potential. Continued research on eco-friendly extraction methods, bio-based mordants, and industrial-scale processing is expected to accelerate the adoption of natural dyes and support the development of environmentally sustainable textile and allied industries.

Keywords: Natural dyes, Plant pigments, Extraction techniques, Mordants, Sustainable, Green chemistry.

Introduction

Color has played a vital role in human civilization for thousands of years, with natural dyes being extensively used in textiles, food, cosmetics, medicine, and artistic applications. Before the discovery of synthetic dyes in the nineteenth century, natural colorants obtained from plants, animals, microorganisms, and minerals were the primary source of coloration. However, following the synthesis of the first aniline dye by William Henry Perkin in 1856, synthetic dyes rapidly replaced natural dyes because of their lower production cost, wider color range, excellent reproducibility, and superior fastness properties. Despite these advantages, the large-scale production and use of synthetic dyes have led to serious environmental and health concerns, including the generation of toxic effluents, poor biodegradability, and the release of hazardous aromatic compounds.

The growing awareness of environmental sustainability and stringent environmental regulations have renewed interest in natural dyes as eco-friendly alternatives. Natural dyes are biodegradable, renewable, and generally exhibit low toxicity while many also possess valuable biological properties such as antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and ultraviolet (UV)-protective activities. These multifunctional characteristics have expanded their applications beyond textile coloration to include food products, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, biomedical materials, smart textiles, renewable energy devices, and intelligent packaging.

Despite their environmental advantages, the widespread commercialization of natural dyes remains limited because of challenges such as low extraction efficiency, variability in shade, limited color fastness, dependence on seasonal raw materials, and lack of standardized processing techniques. Recent advances in green extraction technologies, eco-friendly mordants, nanotechnology, biotechnology, and advanced dyeing processes have significantly improved the performance and industrial applicability of natural dyes. These developments have opened new opportunities for sustainable textile manufacturing and other high-value applications.

This review provides a comprehensive overview of the sources, chemical classification, extraction methods, dyeing techniques, mordanting processes, and emerging applications of natural dyes. It also discusses current challenges and future prospects, emphasizing the importance of sustainable technologies for promoting the industrial utilization of natural dyes.

Literature Review

Natural dyes have attracted increasing research interest due to growing environmental concerns associated with synthetic dyes and the demand for sustainable alternatives. Derived from renewable sources such as plants, animals, microorganisms, and minerals, natural dyes are biodegradable, non-toxic, and environmentally friendly, making them suitable for textile, food, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical applications (Cardon, 2007; Gulrajani, 2001). Among these, plant-based dyes are the most abundant and widely used because of their availability and diverse pigment composition (Bhuyan & Saikia, 2004).



Several studies have focused on the chemistry, extraction, and application of natural dyes. Conventional extraction methods, including aqueous and solvent extraction, remain widely used, while advanced techniques such as supercritical fluid extraction and ultrasound-assisted extraction have been developed to improve extraction efficiency and pigment quality with reduced environmental impact (Bechtold & Mussak, 2009; Yusuf et al., 2017). Research has also emphasized the importance of mordants in enhancing dye fixation, color strength, and fastness properties, with increasing attention being given to eco-friendly mordants as alternatives to conventional metallic salts (Samanta & Agarwal, 2009).

Recent advancements have expanded the applications of natural dyes beyond conventional textile coloration. Many natural pigments possess antioxidant, antimicrobial, and UV-protective properties, making them suitable for functional textiles, medical fabrics, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical products (Shahid & Mohammad, 2013). Singh et al. (2005) further demonstrated the antimicrobial potential of several plant-derived dyes, highlighting their application in hygienic and healthcare textiles. In addition, natural pigments such as anthocyanins, chlorophylls, and carotenoids have shown promise in dye-sensitized solar cells, intelligent packaging, and biosensing technologies (Yadav et al., 2023).

Despite their environmental advantages, natural dyes face challenges such as limited color fastness, variability in raw materials, and higher production costs. However, recent developments in green extraction technologies, biotechnology, and sustainable dyeing processes have significantly improved their commercial potential. As highlighted by Islam et al. (2026), continued research and technological innovations are expected to promote the wider industrial adoption of natural dyes as sustainable alternatives to conventional synthetic colorants.

Research Methodology

This study is based on a comprehensive review of published literature on natural dyes and their applications. Relevant research articles, review papers, books, conference proceedings, and technical reports were collected from scientific databases including Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Wiley Online Library, and Taylor & Francis. Keywords such as *natural dyes*, *plant pigments*, *natural colorants*, *extraction techniques*, *mordants*, *textile dyeing*, *green extraction*, and *sustainable textiles* were used to identify relevant publications.

The collected literature was critically analyzed to gather information on the sources, chemical classification, extraction methods, dyeing techniques, mordanting processes, and recent applications of natural dyes. Priority was given to peer-reviewed publications published in the last two decades, while classical studies were included where historically significant. The reviewed information was systematically organized into thematic sections to provide a comprehensive overview of the current status, recent developments, challenges, and future prospects of natural dyes for sustainable industrial applications.

Analysis

The literature indicates that natural dyes represent a promising alternative to synthetic dyes because of their renewable origin, biodegradability, and low environmental impact. Plant-derived pigments remain the most abundant and commercially important source of natural colorants, while microbial pigments have emerged as an attractive alternative due to their rapid production, scalability, and consistent quality. Advances in extraction technologies, particularly supercritical fluid extraction and ultrasound-assisted extraction, have significantly improved extraction efficiency, pigment purity, and sustainability compared with conventional methods.

Although natural dyes possess additional functional properties such as antimicrobial, antioxidant, and UV-protective activities, their industrial utilization is still constrained by issues including lower color fastness, limited shade reproducibility, seasonal availability of raw materials, and higher production costs. The literature further suggests that the use of eco-friendly mordants, green extraction processes, and advanced dyeing technologies can substantially enhance dye performance while reducing environmental pollution. Overall, continued advancements in biotechnology, nanotechnology, and green chemistry are expected to improve the commercial feasibility of natural dyes and support their wider adoption in sustainable textile manufacturing and other high-value industrial applications.

Sources of Natural Dyes

Natural dyes are primarily obtained from four main sources. They can be extracted from plants, animals, microorganisms, minerals, and certain other natural materials.

Plants

Plants are the most important source of natural dyes, with leaves, roots, flowers, fruits, bark, and seeds serving as major dye-yielding parts. The natural pigments present in these plant tissues are responsible for their characteristic colors. Chlorophyll



imparts the green color to leaves, while carotenoids produce yellow, orange, and red shades in flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Anthocyanins contribute colors ranging from orange and red to purple and dark blue in many flowers and fruits. For example, the characteristic colors of mangoes and tomatoes are due to carotenoids and lycopene, respectively, whereas cornflowers, blueberries, mulberries, and strawberries are rich in anthocyanins. Betalains, found in the vacuoles of certain plants, are responsible for the deep red and yellow coloration of beetroot. During seasonal leaf senescence, the degradation of chlorophyll and the varying proportions of carotenoids and anthocyanins cause leaves to change from green to yellow, orange, or red. Since plant parts such as leaves, flowers, fruits, and roots are renewable and abundantly available, they represent a sustainable and eco-friendly source of natural dyes.

Animal Sources

Animals also serve as important sources of natural dyes, with the most common examples being carminic acid, astaxanthin, and lac dyes. Carminic acid, which produces shades ranging from pink to reddish-purple, is obtained from the dried bodies of female cochineal insects (*Dactylopius coccus* Costa). It has long been used as a natural colorant in the food, cosmetic, pharmaceutical, and textile industries and is approved for use under food regulations in many countries. Astaxanthin, a red–orange ketocarotenoid, occurs naturally in various aquatic organisms, including shrimp, crabs, and fish. Owing to its intense coloration and strong antioxidant properties, it is widely used as a natural color additive in food, aquaculture, and other industrial applications. Lac dyes are another important group of natural animal-derived colorants, obtained from lac insects. These dyes contain several laccaic acids and produce pink, red, and purple shades. They have been used for centuries in textile dyeing, painting, and artistic applications. More recently, novel quinone-based pigments have been isolated from the deep-sea crinoid *Hyalocrinus naresianus*, highlighting the potential of marine organisms as emerging sources of natural dyes. With continued exploration of marine biodiversity, deep-sea animals are expected to provide new and valuable natural colorants for future applications.

Microbial Sources

Microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi, and certain algae, represent an important and promising source of natural dyes. They produce a wide variety of pigments, such as carotenoids (β -carotene, canthaxanthin, and astaxanthin), bacteriochlorophylls, flavins, indigoids, melanins, prodigiosin, violacein, phycocyanin, and xanthomonadin, which have applications in the food, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and textile industries. Among microorganisms, fungi have attracted considerable attention because of their high pigment-producing potential. Several pigment-producing fungi, including *Aspergillus niger*, *Monascus* spp., *Penicillium purpurogenum*, *Epicoccum nigrum*, and *Fusarium* spp., have been identified as valuable sources of natural colorants. Some fungal pigments are already commercially used, such as *Monascus* pigments, arpink red from *Penicillium oxalicum*, riboflavin from *Ashbya gossypii*, and β -carotene from *Blakeslea trispora*. Among these, *Monascus* pigments have been widely used as food colorants since the late nineteenth century and remain particularly popular in Asian countries, especially China and Japan.

Compared with plant- and animal-derived dyes, microbial pigments offer several advantages, including year-round production, rapid growth on inexpensive culture media, high productivity, and ease of large-scale cultivation. They also exhibit good stability, a broad range of color shades, high solubility, and simple downstream processing. Because most microbial pigments are biodegradable, eco-friendly, and exhibit low toxicity, they are increasingly considered sustainable alternatives to synthetic colorants for applications in the food, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and textile industries. Among microbial sources, fungi are regarded as one of the most promising and readily available producers of natural dyes.

Mineral Sources

Minerals are another important source of natural dyes, although their applications are primarily limited to art, architecture, handicrafts, and the restoration of historical artifacts rather than food or textile industries. Mineral pigments are obtained by refining naturally occurring minerals and have been used since ancient times for decorative and artistic purposes. For example, cinnabar has long served as a brilliant red pigment in ancient Roman art, ornamental objects, and medieval illuminated manuscripts. Similarly, aerinite, a light-blue mineral found in the southern Pyrenees, was extensively used in Romanesque wall paintings in Andorra and Catalonia, Spain. Natural ultramarine, derived from the semi-precious stone lapis lazuli, is another historically significant mineral pigment. Its characteristic blue color arises from sulfur-containing chromophores enclosed within the sodalite crystal structure. Throughout history, artists and craftsmen have obtained a wide range of colors, including blue, green, red, and black, from naturally occurring rocks and minerals. Owing to their excellent color stability and durability, mineral dyes are particularly well suited for artistic, architectural, and cultural heritage applications, rather than as colorants for food or other biological products.



Classifications of Natural Dyes

Natural dyes can be classified into several major categories based on their chemical structure. The principal classes include carotenoids, polyphenols, porphyrins, alkaloids, and quinones, each possessing distinct chemical properties, color characteristics, and applications.

Indigoid Dyes

Indigoid dyes are among the oldest known natural dyes and have been used for over 4,000 years. Archaeological evidence indicates that the linen wrappings of ancient Egyptian mummies were dyed with indigo. Although indigo was initially used as a black dye, its remarkable ability to produce deep blue shades later made it one of the most valuable natural colorants. The principal coloring compound is indican, a glucoside that occurs naturally in the leaves of *Indigofera tinctoria* and several other plant species, including *Isatis tinctoria* (dyer's woad), *Polygonum tinctorium*, *Wrightia tinctoria*, and *Mercurialis leiocarpa*. India is home to approximately 54 species of *Indigofera*, of which 10–12 species are capable of producing indigo dye, while only a few have been commercially exploited.

Indigo and related indigoid compounds belong to the vat dye class and are widely used for dyeing both cellulose and protein fibers because of their excellent color fastness and durability. In addition to their importance in the textile industry, indigo compounds have attracted considerable interest for their medicinal properties, including anticancer, anti-inflammatory, antiulcer, and astringent activities.

Anthraquinone Dyes

Anthraquinone dyes constitute one of the most important classes of natural dyes and are characterized by a fused three-ring quinonoid structure with an extended conjugated system that imparts intense coloration. Most naturally occurring red dyes belong to this group and are derived from both plant and animal sources. The principal plant sources include *Rubia tinctorum* and *Rubia cordifolia* (madder), which have been used for textile dyeing for more than 4,000 years. The major anthraquinone pigments present in these plants include alizarin, purpurin, and munjistin, all of which produce brilliant red shades, particularly when applied with aluminum-based mordants. Alizarin gained historical significance as the first natural dye to be synthesized commercially in 1869.

Other important anthraquinone compounds include emodin, obtained from Persian berries and several medicinal plants, and carminic acid, the principal pigment of the cochineal insect (*Dactylopius coccus*), which produces bright scarlet shades on wool and silk when used with tin or alum mordants. Another historically significant insect-derived anthraquinone dye is kermesic acid, extracted from the female insect *Kermes ilicis*, which imparts reddish tones to silk, tussar silk, and wool. Anthraquinone dyes are generally classified as mordant dyes, as they require metallic salts to form stable dye–fiber complexes, resulting in excellent color brilliance and good fastness properties.

α -Naphthoquinone Dyes

α -Naphthoquinone dyes are an important class of natural quinone-based colorants characterized by a naphthalene ring system containing a quinone functional group. The most well-known member of this class is lawsone (2-hydroxy-1,4-naphthoquinone), the principal coloring compound of henna (*Lawsonia inermis*), which is extensively cultivated in India, Egypt, and several other tropical and subtropical regions. Lawsone has been traditionally used for dyeing hair, skin, leather, wool, and silk, producing orange to reddish-brown shades with excellent durability. Another important α -naphthoquinone pigment is juglone (5-hydroxy-1,4-naphthoquinone), which is extracted from the green husks of unripe walnuts (*Juglans* spp.). Juglone imparts yellowish-brown to orange shades and has been used historically for coloring textiles, wood, and leather. These dyes are generally classified as disperse dyes and are valued for their good affinity toward natural fibers, producing stable orange to brown hues with satisfactory fastness properties.

Flavonoid Dyes

Flavonoids are one of the largest and most widely distributed groups of natural plant pigments. The term flavonoid is derived from the Latin word *flavus*, meaning "yellow," reflecting the characteristic color of many compounds in this class. Chemically, flavonoids are aromatic oxygen-containing heterocyclic compounds with a 2-phenyl-1,4-benzopyrone skeleton and are predominantly localized in the epidermal tissues of plants. Besides contributing to the coloration of flowers, fruits, and leaves, flavonoids play important physiological roles, including antioxidant activity, ultraviolet (UV) protection, and defense against pathogens.



Flavonoid dyes primarily produce yellow shades and are classified into several subclasses, including flavones, flavonols, isoflavones, aurones, and chalcones. Most natural yellow dyes are hydroxyl- and methoxy-substituted derivatives of flavones and flavonols. One of the best-known examples is luteolin, the principal pigment present in weld (*Reseda luteola*), which produces brilliant, bright yellow shades with excellent fastness on wool and silk. Other important flavonoid pigments used as natural dyes include quercetin, fisetin, and isorhamnetin, which are widely distributed in various plants and yield attractive yellow to golden-brown hues. Owing to their vibrant colors, biodegradability, and additional bioactive properties, flavonoid dyes continue to be important natural colorants for textile, food, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical applications.

Dihydropyran Dyes

Dihydropyran dyes are structurally related to flavonoids and are characterized by substituted dihydropyran ring systems. The most important compounds in this class are haematoxylin and its oxidized form, haematein, which are obtained from the heartwood of logwood (*Haematoxylum campechianum*). These pigments have long been valued as natural dyes for producing deep black, blue, violet, and purple shades on silk, wool, and cotton, particularly when used in combination with suitable mordants. Other notable sources of dihydropyran-type dyes include brazilwood (*Caesalpinia echinata*) and sappanwood (*Biancaea sappan* syn. *Caesalpinia sappan*), both of which yield red to reddish-brown colorants. Owing to their excellent affinity for natural fibers and their ability to produce rich, durable shades, dihydropyran dyes have been widely employed in textile dyeing, histological staining, and traditional artistic applications.

Anthocyanidin Dyes

Anthocyanidins and their glycosylated derivatives, known as anthocyanins, constitute one of the most important classes of natural plant pigments. The term anthocyanin is derived from the Greek words anthos (flower) and kyanos (blue). Chemically, anthocyanins are glycosides of 2-phenylbenzopyrylium (flavylium) salts, with the flavylium cation representing the most stable and intensely colored form. These water-soluble pigments are widely distributed throughout the plant kingdom and are responsible for the red, purple, and blue coloration of many flowers, fruits, and vegetables, including apples, grapes, berries, red cabbage, and eggplant.

The color exhibited by anthocyanins depends on several factors, including the number and position of hydroxyl and methoxy groups on the anthocyanidin nucleus, the type and number of attached sugar moieties, the presence of acyl groups, metal ion complexation, and, most importantly, the pH of the surrounding medium. Under acidic conditions, anthocyanins typically appear red due to the predominance of the flavylium cation, whereas they become purple at neutral pH and blue under alkaline conditions. This pH-dependent color variation makes anthocyanins valuable as natural pH indicators in addition to their use as food colorants.

A notable anthocyanidin-based dye is carajurin, isolated from the leaves of *Fridericia chica* (formerly *Bignonia chica*), which has traditionally been used as a direct orange dye for wool and cotton. Owing to their vibrant colors, antioxidant properties, and low toxicity, anthocyanins have gained considerable importance as sustainable natural colorants in the food, textile, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical industries.

Carotenoid Dyes

Carotenoids are a class of naturally occurring tetraterpenoid pigments characterized by a long, conjugated polyene chain that is responsible for their intense yellow, orange, and red colors. These pigments are widely distributed in plants, algae, fungi, and certain microorganisms, and they also occur in animals through dietary accumulation. The extensive conjugated π -electron system enables carotenoids to absorb visible light, giving rise to their characteristic coloration. The term carotene originated from the orange pigment isolated from carrot (*Daucus carota*) by Wackenroder in 1831.

Naturally occurring carotenoids are broadly classified into two groups: carotenes, which are hydrocarbons lacking oxygen-containing functional groups, and xanthophylls, which contain oxygenated substituents such as hydroxyl or epoxy groups. β -Carotene, abundant in carrot (*Daucus carota*), is a representative carotene and an important precursor of vitamin A. In contrast, lutein, a major xanthophyll found in marigold (*Tagetes erecta*), is widely used as a natural yellow colorant in food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and textile applications. In addition to their coloring properties, carotenoids possess significant antioxidant activity and provide important health benefits, making them one of the most commercially valuable classes of natural pigments.



Extraction of Plant Natural Colorants

Natural dyes cannot be used directly from their raw plant sources because the coloring compounds are embedded within plant tissues and require extraction before application. The direct use of raw materials often results in poor dye yield, inconsistent color quality, and reduced reproducibility. Therefore, efficient, economical, and environmentally friendly extraction methods are essential to obtain the principal coloring compounds while preserving their chemical stability and minimizing contamination. The selection of an appropriate extraction technique depends on several factors, including the nature of the pigment, the plant source, solvent compatibility, extraction efficiency, cost, and environmental impact.

With increasing demand for sustainable and eco-friendly colorants, several extraction techniques have been developed to maximize pigment recovery while complying with consumer preferences and regulatory standards. The major extraction methods used for plant-derived natural dyes include:

Simple aqueous extraction

Simple aqueous extraction is one of the oldest, simplest, and most widely used methods for obtaining natural colorants from plant materials. It uses water as the extraction medium and is suitable for water-soluble pigments such as anthocyanins and certain flavonoids. In this technique, the raw plant material is first cleaned, dried, and finely chopped or ground into powder to increase the surface area available for extraction. The processed material is then boiled in water for a specified period to facilitate the release of the coloring compounds into the extraction medium. After extraction, the solution is cooled to room temperature and filtered to remove insoluble plant residues. The resulting filtrate, containing the extracted pigments, is subsequently used as the dye solution for textile dyeing or other applications.

This method is inexpensive, safe, and environmentally friendly but may provide lower extraction efficiency for some pigments. The efficiency of aqueous extraction depends on several process parameters, including extraction temperature, extraction time, pH of the medium, raw material concentration, and the material-to-liquor ratio. These variables significantly influence pigment yield, color intensity, and stability. Therefore, the optimum extraction conditions are established by evaluating the absorbance or optical density of the extract at its maximum absorption wavelength using a UV-Visible spectrophotometer. The conditions that produce the highest absorbance are generally considered optimal, as they indicate the maximum concentration of extracted coloring compounds.

Solvent Extraction

Solvent extraction is a widely employed method for isolating natural colorants from plant and animal materials, particularly when the pigments exhibit limited water solubility. In this technique, the raw material, such as leaves, roots, bark, wood, or resinous insect secretions, is first cleaned, dried, and ground into a fine powder to enhance solvent penetration and extraction efficiency. The powdered material is then extracted using suitable equipment, such as a Soxhlet apparatus or a steam-heated extractor, which allows continuous contact between the solvent and the sample.

A variety of organic solvents, including ethanol, methanol, acetone, chloroform, diethyl ether, *n*-hexane, and aqueous alkaline solutions, may be used depending on the polarity and chemical nature of the target pigment. The extraction is typically carried out for approximately 4 hours or until complete pigment recovery is achieved. Following extraction, the solvent is removed by evaporation, usually over a water bath or by using a rotary evaporator, leaving behind the crude dye extract. The dried extract is then weighed, and the extraction yield is calculated as the percentage of dye recovered relative to the initial weight of the raw material. Solvent extraction generally provides higher pigment yields and improved extraction efficiency compared with simple aqueous extraction, although careful solvent selection is essential to ensure pigment stability, safety, and environmental sustainability.

Supercritical Fluid Extraction (SFE)

Supercritical fluid extraction (SFE) is an advanced and environmentally friendly technique used for the extraction of natural colorants. It has gained considerable attention as an alternative to conventional solvent extraction because it eliminates the need for hazardous organic solvents and reduces solvent recovery costs. In this method, carbon dioxide is commonly used as the extraction solvent above its critical temperature and pressure, where it exhibits both gas-like diffusivity and liquid-like solvating power. Supercritical CO₂ is non-toxic, non-flammable, inexpensive, chemically inert, and leaves no solvent residues in the final product, making it particularly suitable for food, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and textile applications. SFE is especially effective for extracting non-polar pigments such as carotenoids, including β -carotene, lycopene, and xanthophylls. The technique offers several advantages, including high extraction efficiency, excellent product purity, reduced thermal degradation of heat-sensitive compounds, and minimal environmental impact. Consequently, SFE has emerged as a promising



green technology for the sustainable extraction of natural dyes. SFE is considered a green extraction technology because it minimizes solvent residues, preserves heat-sensitive compounds, and produces high-purity extracts.

Ultrasound-Assisted Extraction (UAE)

Ultrasound-assisted extraction is a rapid and efficient extraction technique that employs high-frequency ultrasonic waves to enhance the release of natural pigments from plant materials. The ultrasonic waves generate cavitation bubbles that collapse near the plant tissue, disrupting cell walls and facilitating solvent penetration and mass transfer. This process increases extraction efficiency while reducing extraction time, solvent consumption, and energy requirements. UAE is particularly advantageous for the extraction of heat-sensitive pigments because it can be performed at relatively low temperatures, thereby minimizing pigment degradation and improving extract quality. Owing to its simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and eco-friendly nature, ultrasound-assisted extraction has become one of the most promising techniques for the sustainable production of natural dyes.

Dyeing Methods

Natural dyes can be applied to textile materials using both conventional and advanced dyeing techniques. The choice of dyeing method depends on the type of fiber, the nature of the dye, and the desired color intensity and fastness properties.

Conventional Dyeing Methods

Conventional dyeing is the most widely used method for applying natural dyes to textiles. In this process, the fabric is immersed in a dye bath containing the extracted dye solution under controlled conditions of temperature, time, and pH. Protein fibers such as silk and wool generally exhibit good affinity for natural dyes and can often be dyed directly. In contrast, cellulosic fibers such as cotton usually require the use of a mordant to improve the fixation of dye molecules and enhance color strength and fastness. Dyeing is typically carried out at elevated temperatures to facilitate dye penetration and uniform coloration. Conventional dyeing can also be integrated with traditional printing techniques and gel-based formulations to produce precise patterns and decorative textile designs.

Advanced Dyeing Methods

Recent advances in textile processing have led to the development of innovative dyeing technologies that improve dye uptake, color fastness, and environmental sustainability. Ultrasound-assisted dyeing enhances dye penetration through the cavitation effect, which disrupts dye aggregates, removes trapped air from fiber capillaries, accelerates dye diffusion, and improves agitation of the dye bath. As a result, this method reduces dyeing time, energy consumption, and chemical usage while achieving higher dye exhaustion and more uniform coloration. Plasma treatment is another advanced surface modification technique that alters the fiber surface without affecting its bulk properties. Plasma activation increases surface energy and introduces reactive functional groups, thereby improving the affinity of textile fibers for natural dyes and reducing the need for excessive mordants and chemicals. In addition, radiation-assisted treatments, such as ultraviolet (UV) and gamma irradiation, have been investigated to enhance dye fixation, improve color fastness, and modify fiber surfaces. These advanced dyeing technologies offer significant advantages over conventional methods by increasing process efficiency, reducing environmental impact, and promoting sustainable textile production.

Mordants

Natural dyes generally exhibit limited affinity for textile fibers and therefore often require the use of mordants to improve dye fixation and color fastness. The term mordant is derived from the Latin word *mordere*, meaning "to bite," reflecting its role in binding dye molecules firmly to the fiber. A mordant is a substance that forms a stable coordination complex with both the dye and the textile fiber, thereby enhancing dye uptake, color intensity, and resistance to washing, rubbing, and light. Commonly used mordants include alum (potassium aluminum sulfate), potassium dichromate, ferrous sulfate, copper sulfate, zinc sulfate, tannins, and tannic acid. These mordants not only improve dye fixation but also influence the final shade by forming different metal-dye complexes, thereby producing a wide range of colors from the same natural dye. However, several metallic mordants, particularly chromium- and copper-based compounds, are associated with environmental and health concerns due to their toxicity. Consequently, their use is increasingly being restricted, and greater emphasis is being placed on environmentally benign alternatives such as alum and plant-derived tannins.

Mordanting can be carried out by three principal methods:

- Pre-mordanting – The textile material is treated with the mordant before dyeing, allowing the mordant to bind to the fiber prior to dye application.



- Meta-mordanting (simultaneous mordanting) – The mordant and dye are applied together in the same dye bath, enabling simultaneous complex formation during dyeing.
- Post-mordanting – The dyed fabric is treated with the mordant after dyeing to improve dye fixation and modify the final shade.

Based on their chemical nature, mordants are broadly classified into three categories: metallic mordants (metal salts), tannin-based mordants, and oil mordants. Among these, metallic salts remain the most widely used because of their high effectiveness, while tannins and other bio-based mordants have gained increasing attention as sustainable and eco-friendly alternatives in natural dyeing.

Innovative Applications of Natural Dyes

Natural dyes have applications beyond textile coloration due to their biodegradable, biocompatible, and bioactive properties. They are increasingly used in functional textiles with antimicrobial and UV-protective properties, as natural sensitizers in dye-sensitized solar cells (DSSCs), and in biomedical, cosmetic, food packaging, and pharmaceutical applications owing to their antioxidant and therapeutic potential. Besides these applications natural dyes and pigments are also used as following fields.

UV-Shielding Textiles

Natural dyes rich in polyphenols and flavonoids can absorb or block harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation, providing fabrics with enhanced UV-protective properties. Such UV-shielding textiles offer improved protection against sun exposure while serving as an eco-friendly alternative to conventional UV-protective finishes.

Antimicrobial Textiles

Natural dyes such as henna, pomegranate peel extract, and neem possess inherent antimicrobial properties that inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi. When applied to fabrics, these dyes impart antimicrobial functionality, making them suitable for medical textiles, sportswear, bedding, and other hygienic textile applications.

Cell imaging

Fluorescent natural dyes are also applicable in cell imaging with good results. A beetroot extracted fluorescent dye is an example of this type of application.

Dye-Sensitized solar cells

Utilization of natural dyes is a capable development in the field of DSSC technology. Natural pigments in form of anthocyanin, carotenoid, flavonoid and chlorophyll are now replacing costly metal complex sensitizers and replacing pricey chemical synthesis methods through simple extraction processes. Thus, natural dyes are cost effective, abundant and safe substances cause no environment hazard.

Indicator substances

Presently, many novel packaging materials made of environment benign biodegradable polymers such as polylactide and polyhydroxy butyrate with the utilization of natural dyes or pigments are being used in the food and other industries. Natural colorants play the role of indicator, shifting color due to effect of external factors, and provide the materials of the uniqueness of intelligent packaging, here color changes expresses the lifetime of the materials. Thus use of natural colorants is helpful for preparing fully biodegradable new generation materials.

Biosensors

Some of natural dye like indigo have electrochemical activity and can be used as a biosensors.

Cancer therapy

Natural dye like punica granatum exhibited potential activity against cancer. Cancer detection is also done by dye based nanomedicine and fluorescent optical imaging.

Corrosion inhibitors

Natural dyes molecules such as curcumin, lawson, berberine obtained from plant materials have N, S, O heteroatom in their structure and due to this they are exhibited corrosion inhibition efficiency for various metals in different media. These are important cost effective green corrosion inhibitors for future perspectives.



Natural dyes versus synthetic dyes

Natural and synthetic dyes differ significantly in terms of their source, environmental impact, performance, and applications. Natural dyes are derived from renewable resources such as plants, animals, microorganisms, and minerals. They are biodegradable, non-toxic, and environmentally friendly, making them a sustainable alternative to synthetic dyes. However, they often exhibit lower color fastness, limited shade availability, batch-to-batch variation, and higher production costs, which restrict their large-scale industrial application.

In contrast, synthetic dyes are manufactured through chemical processes and are valued for their wide color range, excellent color fastness, high reproducibility, and cost-effectiveness. Despite these advantages, their production and use generate toxic effluents, hazardous by-products, and non-biodegradable waste, posing serious environmental and health concerns.

Recent advances in green chemistry, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and sustainable textile processing are helping bridge the gap between natural and synthetic dyes. The development of bio-based synthetic dyes, eco-friendly mordants, closed-loop dyeing systems, and bioengineered pigments offers promising opportunities to reduce environmental pollution while maintaining desirable dyeing performance. As environmental regulations become more stringent and consumer demand for sustainable products continues to grow, the adoption of environmentally benign dyeing technologies and the commercialization of natural dyes are expected to increase. Achieving a balance between dye performance, environmental sustainability, and economic feasibility will be essential for the future development of the global dyeing and textile industries.

Conclusion

Natural dyes have re-emerged as sustainable alternatives to synthetic dyes owing to their biodegradability, renewability, low toxicity, and eco-friendly nature. Although challenges such as limited color fastness, lack of standardization, and large-scale production remain, advancements in extraction techniques, eco-friendly mordants, and modern dyeing technologies have significantly improved their commercial potential. Continued research, process standardization, and industrial adoption will further enhance the use of natural dyes in textiles, food, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical applications, supporting the global transition toward sustainable and environmentally responsible manufacturing.

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EXPLORING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A CONCEPTUAL AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK FOR KANGRA VALLEY, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Rahul¹, Manish Kumar Sharma²

1 Research Scholar, UITHM, Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab, India

2 Director, UITHM, Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab

Abstract

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) have gained increasing attention as locally grounded approaches for achieving sustainable development. However, their application within community-based tourism (CBT), particularly in Himalayan destinations, remains underexplored. This study aims to examine the potential of IKS in promoting community-based sustainable tourism in Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh, and to develop a conceptual framework linking indigenous knowledge with tourism development outcomes. The study adopts a conceptual and multidisciplinary research design based on a systematic review of secondary literature related to Indian Knowledge Systems, community-based tourism, cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism. Relevant literature was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key relationships among community participation, cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and tourism sustainability. The findings indicate that IKS can serve as a strategic resource for enhancing local participation, safeguarding cultural heritage, promoting eco-friendly tourism practices, and strengthening livelihood opportunities. Based on these findings, a conceptual framework is proposed that integrates indigenous knowledge assets with sustainable tourism processes and outcomes. The study contributes to tourism literature by positioning IKS as a practical mechanism for destination resilience and inclusive development. The framework offers policy and managerial implications for tourism planners, local communities, and destination management organizations seeking sustainable tourism pathways in Himalayan regions while supporting SDGs 8, 11, and 12.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems, Community-Based Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Kangra Valley, Sustainable Development, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Cultural Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Introduction

Indeed, tourism has emerged as the light of all the significant transformations in the realm of economic development in addition to employment and the transformation of various regions in the modern era. (Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 M A Y 2 0 2 4, 2024) Tourism leads to diversification of incomes, infrastructural development, entrepreneurial activity, and intercultural relations. However, rapid expansion of tourism has given rise to several important environmental concerns such as exploitation, commoditization of local cultures, resource depletion, and marginalization of the hosts. (Komang et al., n.d.) Most importantly, the traditional strategies for tourism development emphasized short term economic gains while neglecting the issue of sustainability. In fact, sustainable development is imperative for environmental harmony and strong socio-cultural identity. (Hariram et al., 2023)

It is for this reason that sustainable tourism has received the attention of policy makers and academia in response to such concerns. Sustainable tourism emphasizes more on the harmonious blend between economic sustainability, environmental conservation, and social-cultural prosperity. (Abreu et al., 2024) Against this background, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged as an important concept that facilitates the involvement of local communities in the process of tourism planning, management, ownership, and benefit-sharing. (Building Strong and Resilient Tourism Destinations, 2025a) CBT seeks to ensure that tourism development will improve the lives of the local people, build social capital, and preserve their cultural legacy. Additionally, it enables visitors to have deeper and more enriching experiences through interaction with the culture, lifestyle, and natural environment. Despite its promise, however, many CBT initiatives have faced challenges due to lack of government support, commercialization effects, and skill development and poor incorporation of local cultural resources into tourism products. (Jackson, 2025a)

Thus, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent a perfect yet unexploited forum through which the community-based sustainable tourism may be promoted. Indian Knowledge Systems refer to the accumulated knowledge, values, practices, and localized wisdom that have been acquired through time by the Indian community. (Mandavkar, n.d.) The Indian Knowledge Systems include traditional ecological knowledge, vernacular architecture, local cuisine, arts and crafts, important health care systems, agriculture, indigenous political governance, spirituality, and culture. Far from representing vestiges of the old, such



knowledge systems may actually reflect the adaptive and localized solutions that are capable of meeting the present-day challenges of sustainability. (Berhanu Melese et al., 2026) Recently, their relevance has been recognized in particular in the fields of education, cultural revival, environmental stewardship, and local development.

Integration of IK into tourism could result in numerous tourism benefits for the destination as well as the local host communities. The traditional ecological knowledge will enable proper resource use, reduced wastage, and conservation of biodiversity and climate-sensitive tourism. (Suardana et al., 2022) Tourism product authenticity and visitor satisfaction can be achieved through the use of indigenous arts and craft, cuisine, folk culture, traditions, and celebrations. Relationships between hosts and guests can be improved through community values of hospitality, cooperation, and collective responsibility. (Building Strong and Resilient Tourism Destinations, 2025b) In addition, IKS tourism products could generate more income in terms of homestays, cultural activities led by local guides, craft markets, health, and agri-tourism. Thus, incorporating IKS into tourism planning can result in development paths that are culturally driven, environmentally sound, and inclusive.

These regions in the Himalaya offer particularly informative case studies for examining these connections owing to their easy accessibility, rich cultural history, and increased tourism. Among such locations, Kangra Valley situated in Himachal Pradesh stands out as a suitable site, where this research can be carried out. (Bhatia, n.d.) Kangra Valley is characterized by the presence of natural scenic views, tea plantations, temples, monasteries, fortresses, rural settlements, as well as strong cultural heritage, which takes place in the foothills of the Dhauladhar Mountains. (Apollo et al., n.d.) This place possesses a vibrant culture that finds its expression through unique architectural structures, traditional agricultural techniques, folk art, cuisine, and festivals, as well as religious practices. (Khan & Sharma, 2024) At the same time, increasing numbers of tourists create both advantages and pressures related to the environmental preservation, economic sustainability, and cultural heritage conservation of the region. In such a way, Kangra Valley appears to be an ideal Himalayan location for exploring the issues of CBT from the perspective of Indian knowledge systems. (Maliha et al., n.d.)

There have been many studies in the last few decades on issues like sustainable tourism, rural tourism, heritage tourism, and community participation; however, very little attention has been paid towards developing systematic frameworks for including IKS within community tourism initiatives in any destination, particularly those located in the Himalayan region. (Blöse & Gumbo, 2024a) Most of the existing literature views culture as a resource for tourism, without conducting any detailed study related to developing indigenous knowledge as an instrument for effective development purposes. (Dey & Biswas, 2026) This creates a significant research gap in terms of understanding the impact of IKS on tourism governance and other issues.

It is within this context that the present study adopts a multidisciplinary theoretical perspective based on the analysis of secondary data in order to explore the application of Indian Knowledge Systems as an instrument for the development of sustainable tourism in Kangra Valley communities. (Verma et al., 2024) The model proposed in the paper would see IKS as an element contributing to the process of democratic empowerment, culture preservation, and ecology of sustainable tourism that would yield socio-cultural integrity, ecological balance, and economic growth amongst local communities. (Lavaredas et al., 2025) Furthermore, the model under consideration may be viewed as related to the implementation of certain SDGs including SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). (Jackson, 2025b) This research would therefore enrich the present tourism discourse, highlighting indigenous knowledge as not only cultural heritage to be preserved but also a means of developing tourism destinations.

Research Objective

- The importance of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the promotion of sustainable community tourism in Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh will be investigated.
- The role played by IKS in improving community involvement, culture conservation, and eco-friendly tourism management practices will be identified.
- The tourism development potential of Kangra Valley using indigenous knowledge systems will be evaluated.

Methodology

This study adopts a conceptual and multidisciplinary research design to explore the role of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in promoting community-based sustainable tourism in Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh. The study is based entirely on



secondary data collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy reports, conference proceedings, and institutional publications related to Indian Knowledge Systems, community-based tourism, cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism.

The literature was identified through a systematic search of academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, using keywords such as *Indian Knowledge Systems*, *Community-Based Tourism*, *Sustainable Tourism*, *Indigenous Knowledge*, *Cultural Heritage*, and *Himalayan Tourism*. Relevant studies published in English were screened based on their relevance to the objectives of the study. Duplicate and unrelated records were excluded during the screening process.

The selected literature was analyzed using thematic analysis. Key concepts, recurring themes, and relationships were identified and grouped into major thematic areas, including community participation, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and local economic development. Based on the synthesis of these themes, a conceptual framework was developed to explain how Indian Knowledge Systems can contribute to sustainable tourism outcomes in Kangra Valley.

The proposed framework aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 11, and 12 and provides a foundation for future empirical research and policy applications.

Review of Literature

The literature review was undertaken to examine the relationship between Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), community-based tourism, cultural sustainability, and sustainable destination development. (Blose & Gumbo, 2024a) Relevant literature was selected from peer-reviewed journals, books, conference proceedings, and institutional reports focusing on indigenous knowledge, community participation, heritage tourism, and sustainable tourism. Through thematic analysis, recurring concepts and patterns were identified and grouped into five major themes. These themes provide the theoretical foundation for understanding how Indian Knowledge Systems can contribute to community-based sustainable tourism in Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh.

Indian Knowledge Systems and Sustainable Tourism

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) comprise traditional knowledge, values, practices, and institutions developed through long-term interactions between communities and their natural and cultural environments. (Blose & Gumbo, 2024a) These systems encompass ecological knowledge, water conservation techniques, traditional agriculture, vernacular architecture, handicrafts, cuisine, healthcare practices, and social governance mechanisms. Recent studies suggest that indigenous knowledge systems can contribute significantly to sustainability by promoting resource efficiency, biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation, and responsible resource use. (Blose & Gumbo, 2024b) Unlike conventional development models that prioritize economic growth, IKS emphasizes balance between environmental, social, cultural, and economic dimensions of development. Consequently, IKS can provide a locally relevant foundation for sustainable tourism planning and destination management.

Community-Based Tourism and Community Empowerment

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is widely recognized as an important approach to sustainable tourism development because it places local communities at the centre of tourism planning, ownership, management, and benefit-sharing processes. (Dangi & Jamal, 2016a; Salazar, 2012a) Existing studies indicate that community participation enhances local empowerment, strengthens social capital, generates employment opportunities, and improves the distribution of tourism benefits. Tourism activities such as homestays, local guiding services, handicrafts, cultural performances, and agri-tourism initiatives have been shown to create livelihood opportunities for residents. (Dangi & Jamal, 2016b) However, previous research also identifies challenges including inadequate governance, unequal benefit distribution, limited skills, and excessive commercialization. These challenges highlight the need for culturally grounded and community-oriented approaches, where Indian Knowledge Systems can play a supportive role.

Cultural Heritage, Authenticity, and Tourism Experiences

Cultural heritage represents one of the most valuable assets for tourism destinations. Heritage resources include traditional architecture, religious sites, festivals, rituals, folklore, handicrafts, cuisine, music, and storytelling traditions. (Dehal et al., 2025) Contemporary tourists increasingly seek authentic and immersive experiences that provide meaningful engagement with local culture. Studies have demonstrated that authenticity positively influences visitor satisfaction, destination image, emotional attachment, and revisit intentions. (Salazar, 2012b) Nevertheless, uncontrolled tourism development may lead to the commodification and dilution of local traditions. Therefore, the preservation and interpretation of cultural heritage through

community participation is essential for maintaining destination authenticity. Indian Knowledge Systems contribute to this process by preserving traditional practices, collective memory, and cultural identity.

Sustainable Tourism in Himalayan and Mountain Regions

Mountain destinations possess significant tourism potential due to their natural landscapes, cultural diversity, spiritual significance, and recreational opportunities.(Mutana & Mukwada, 2018) However, Himalayan destinations also face considerable environmental challenges, including waste generation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, climate vulnerability, and pressure on local resources. Previous studies emphasize that sustainable tourism in mountain regions requires locally adapted planning approaches, carrying-capacity management, environmental conservation, and community participation.(Rogowski et al., 2025) Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems can support these objectives by providing locally developed solutions for environmental stewardship and sustainable resource management. Therefore, the integration of IKS into tourism planning is particularly relevant for Himalayan destinations such as Kangra Valley.

Research Gap and Significance for Kangra Valley

Although previous studies have extensively examined sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, cultural heritage tourism, and indigenous knowledge systems independently, limited research has explored their integration within a single conceptual framework. Furthermore, very few studies have investigated how Indian Knowledge Systems can function as a strategic mechanism for promoting community-based sustainable tourism in Himalayan destinations. Kangra Valley possesses rich cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, tea landscapes, religious sites, handicrafts, village traditions, and ecological resources; however, the tourism potential of these assets remains underexplored from an IKS perspective. This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive framework that explains how Indian Knowledge Systems can contribute to community participation, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and local economic development within the context of Kangra Valley.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on the information obtained from the literature review, the current study will present a conceptual framework that would help explain the role that the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) plays in promoting sustainable tourism in communities within the Kangra Valley region of Himachal Pradesh..(Rai & Mishra, 2023) This conceptual framework attempts to incorporate the cultural, social, economic, and environmental aspects through a process of development that is local-based. Traditional knowledge systems play a strategic role in generating destination benefits.

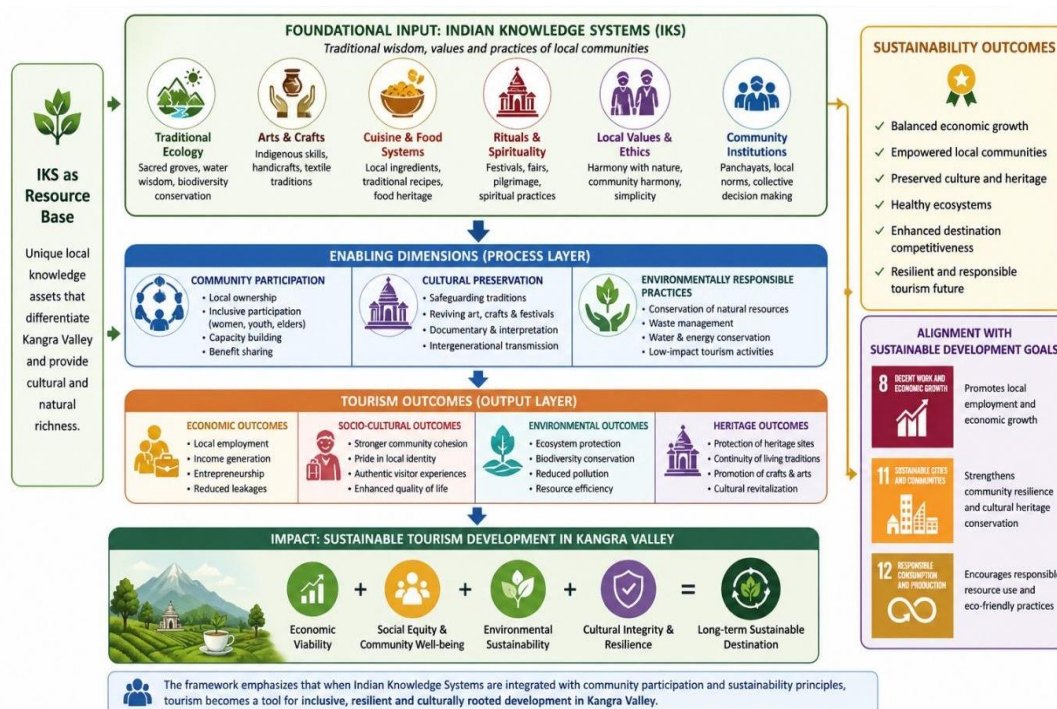


Figure 1 Proposed Conceptual Framework for IKS-Driven Community-Based Sustainable Tourism in Kangra Valley

Source: Developed by the authors based on reviewed literature.

Explanation of the Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework describes how Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) can be used strategically to promote sustainable tourism within the communities of Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh. The conceptual framework is organized into four interrelated levels: input level, process level, output level, and impact level. (Katoch et al., n.d.)

The first level includes the input base and consists of Indian Knowledge Systems like ecological knowledge, handicrafts, cuisine, rituals, folk culture, ethics, and traditional institutions. Such Indian Knowledge Systems act as distinctive destination features, portraying the culture of the Kangra Valley. These assets are not artificially created tourism products but are based on authentic knowledge. (Koto, n.d.)

This layer contains the process or enabling dimensions through which the traditional resources are developed into viable tourism products. The involvement of the community is key at this stage because the people of the area get involved in ownership, decision-making, entrepreneurial activity, and service provision. (Vidyarthi et al., 2013) Preservation of culture ensures that the development of tourism does not jeopardize the culture of the local people in terms of their festivals, architecture, crafts, and societal values. Environmentally friendly methods like waste management, water preservation, use of indigenous materials, and low-impact tourism ensure ecological balance.

Layer three shows the tourism benefits achieved as a result of the effective use of IKS and community-based tourism. (Wani et al., 2024) Employment creation, increased incomes of households, enterprise development, genuine experience for tourists, enhanced destination image, and heritage site preservation are among the tourism benefits realized.

Layer four, the final one, focuses on the long-term effects of tourism. It involves sustainable development of tourism activities in Kangra Valley. This entails growth in tourism activities that are in balance with environmental concerns, social and cultural concerns, and inclusive economic development. In other words, tourism activities in Kangra Valley should aim at growing the number of tourists but also improving the quality of life of the locals. (Budeanu et al., 2016) The theoretical model proves to be in line with some of the most critical international sustainability targets, namely SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Implementation Pathway for Destination Stakeholders



Figure 2 Proposed Conceptual Framework for Implementation Pathway for Destination Stakeholders

Source: Developed by the authors based on reviewed literature.

The initial phase includes the inventorying of indigenous knowledge systems locally available. This may include mapping of local natural resources, local practices, local heritage, local crafts, local cuisine, local rituals, local institutions, and local knowledge systems that may be used for tourism purposes. Documentation of such activities at this phase will facilitate the identification of special attributes of the tourist destination. (Sharma A & Sharma, 2015)

The next phase will include mobilization of local communities. The local community, local women, local youth groups, local artists, local farmers, self-help groups, village committees, and tourism entrepreneurs need to be involved in the decision-making process. Capacity building awareness-raising initiatives are crucial at this stage.



The final phase comprises product development based on local culture and local resources. Some of the possible tourism products may include homestays, village tours, tea tourism circuits, culinary tourism, handicraft training, spiritual tourism, eco-tours, and local festivals.

Stage four highlights the importance of promoting responsible tourism practices. Some of these include waste management, water management, the utilization of local resources, respecting local traditions, educating visitors, sustainable transport modes, and environmentally friendly operations. (Bhandari, 2023) Responsible tourism guarantees that tourism development will not harm local resources.

In stage five, stakeholders must monitor social, economic, and environmental impacts. They must continuously evaluate job creation, financial gains, tourist satisfaction, environmental effects, cultural preservation, and local quality of life.

Findings

IKS as a Foundation for Sustainable Tourism

The reviewed literature indicates that Indian Knowledge Systems provide a strong foundation for sustainable tourism development through traditional ecological knowledge, local governance practices, cultural values, and resource management systems. These indigenous knowledge systems promote environmental stewardship, cultural continuity, and responsible utilization of local resources. The findings suggest that IKS can serve as a locally grounded approach for achieving sustainable tourism outcomes while preserving the unique identity of tourism destinations.

Community Participation and Empowerment

Community participation emerged as a critical factor in sustainable tourism development. The literature highlights that active involvement of local residents in tourism planning, management, and ownership enhances social inclusion, strengthens local governance, and improves the distribution of tourism benefits. The findings further indicate that Indian Knowledge Systems encourage collective decision-making and community responsibility, thereby supporting long-term destination sustainability.

Cultural Heritage and Destination Authenticity

The analysis reveals that cultural heritage plays a significant role in enhancing destination attractiveness and visitor experiences. Traditional festivals, handicrafts, architecture, cuisine, folklore, and spiritual practices contribute to the authenticity of tourism destinations. The findings indicate that integrating these cultural resources into tourism products can improve visitor satisfaction while simultaneously preserving local traditions and cultural identity.

Environmental Sustainability and Indigenous Knowledge

The literature demonstrates that indigenous knowledge systems contribute significantly to environmental conservation through traditional resource management practices, biodiversity protection, water conservation, and climate adaptation strategies. These practices are particularly relevant in ecologically sensitive Himalayan destinations where sustainable tourism development requires a balance between tourism growth and environmental protection.

Economic Development and Livelihood Opportunities

The findings indicate that IKS-based tourism initiatives can generate substantial socio-economic benefits for local communities. Tourism products based on traditional knowledge, local cuisine, handicrafts, tea heritage, village experiences, and cultural activities can create employment opportunities, strengthen local entrepreneurship, diversify income sources, and contribute to rural development. These benefits support the long-term sustainability of tourism destinations while improving community well-being.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Indian Knowledge Systems should be viewed not merely as elements of cultural heritage but as strategic resources for sustainable tourism development. The thematic analysis reveals that IKS contributes to sustainable tourism through four major pathways: community empowerment, cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and local economic development.

The proposed framework extends existing tourism literature by integrating Indian Knowledge Systems, community-based tourism, and sustainable destination development within a single conceptual model. While previous studies have examined these dimensions separately, the present framework highlights their interdependence and demonstrates how indigenous knowledge can support sustainable tourism outcomes in Himalayan destinations.



The findings further suggest that tourism development strategies focusing exclusively on economic growth may overlook critical cultural and environmental dimensions. In contrast, the integration of IKS into tourism planning can promote more balanced and inclusive development by ensuring that local communities remain central beneficiaries of tourism activities. Consequently, the proposed framework provides a holistic perspective for understanding sustainable tourism development in culturally rich and environmentally sensitive destinations such as Kangra Valley.

Conclusion

This research examined the possible contribution of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) towards developing sustainable tourism within the community in Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh. Based on the literature review, it was found that the use of traditional knowledge systems would contribute significantly to the development of tourism by promoting participation in the process, supporting cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and income generation in the respective areas.

The framework indicates that Kangra Valley has immense tourism potential due to its tea heritage, temples, handicrafts, villages, cuisine, and nature. The above factors should form part of tourism planning and can contribute to socio-economic stability and ecology.

The paper makes a more definitive statement that sustainable tourism should not only focus on the growth in visitor numbers but on increasing community welfare, protecting culture, and conserving natural resources. The Indian Knowledge Systems provide a realistic destination development approach to achieve these objectives.

The framework together with SDG 8, SDG 11, and SDG 12 demonstrate that locally based tourism models can be integrated into the global sustainable development agenda.

Practical Implications

The proposed framework offers several practical implications for policymakers, tourism planners, destination management organizations, and local communities.

For policymakers, the framework highlights the need to integrate Indian Knowledge Systems into tourism development policies, heritage conservation strategies, and community-based tourism programmes. Government agencies may support local tourism initiatives through capacity-building programmes, financial assistance, and institutional support mechanisms.

For local communities, the framework demonstrates how indigenous knowledge, traditional skills, cultural practices, handicrafts, cuisine, and agricultural heritage can be transformed into sustainable tourism products. Community-led initiatives such as homestays, cultural festivals, tea tourism experiences, handicraft enterprises, and village tourism can generate employment and strengthen local livelihoods.

For destination management organizations, the framework provides a practical approach for developing authentic tourism experiences that differentiate Kangra Valley from competing destinations. Tourism planning should prioritize cultural authenticity, environmental conservation, and community participation rather than focusing solely on increasing visitor numbers.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This current study is conceptual in nature and uses secondary data. Hence, the theoretical model proposed has not yet been validated using empirical data. Moreover, the limited scope to the Kangra Valley may restrict the generalizability of findings to other destinations.

Future research may validate the framework using surveys, interviews, and comparative analysis in other Himalayan valleys. Other areas to explore could be women entrepreneurship, youth involvement, digital marketing of the product and economic benefits of IKS tourism initiatives.

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INTEGRATING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS WITH CYBERCRIME PREVENTION: SAFEGUARDING THE YOUTH FROM NEGATIVE DIGITAL INFLUENCES

Dr. Priyanka Dhareula Rana

Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Application, Government Degree College, Sanjauli, Shimla, (H.P.)

Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technologies in India has significantly transformed communication, education, and economic systems. However, this growth has also led to an alarming rise in cybercrime, particularly affecting the youth who constitute a major segment of internet users. Studies indicate that cybercrime cases in India have increased drastically, with hundreds of thousands of incidents reported annually, highlighting the vulnerability of young users in cyberspace. Cybercrime affects youth in multiple ways as there are different types of cybercrimes namely, cyberbullying, identity theft, phishing and financial fraud, online harassment, exposure to harmful content. Psychologically, victims often experience anxiety, depression, and loss of self-esteem. Socially, cybercrime disrupts relationships, academic performance, and social behavior. Behaviorally, youth may develop addictive tendencies or engage in unethical activities. Studies indicate that lack of awareness and ethical understanding contributes significantly to these issues.

At the same time, traditional Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), rooted in ethical values, holistic education, and moral discipline, offer a unique framework for addressing behavioral and ethical challenges in modern society. This research paper explores how Indian Knowledge Systems can be integrated with cybercrime prevention strategies to reduce cyber risks and protect young individuals from negative digital influences such as cyberbullying, addiction, misinformation, and unethical online behavior. The study adopts a qualitative and analytical methodology, reviewing existing literature on cybercrime trends, youth behavior, and traditional Indian philosophies.

The research findings suggest that incorporating principles such as Dharma (righteousness), Ahimsa (non-violence), sanyam (self-discipline) and ethical responsibility into digital education can significantly improve cyber awareness and behavior among youth. Furthermore, combining technological solutions with value-based education can create a holistic approach to cyber safety. The paper concludes by recommending policy reforms, curriculum integration, and community-based awareness programs to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern cybersecurity practices.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems; Cybercrime Prevention; Digital Ethics; Youth; Cybersecurity Awareness.

Introduction

Youth, especially students and young professionals, are among the most active users of digital platforms. However, research shows that a significant proportion of young users lack adequate awareness of cyber safety practices and ethical online behavior. This lack of awareness makes them easy targets for cybercriminals and increases their likelihood of engaging in risky or unethical online activities.

At the same time, India possesses a rich heritage of knowledge systems encompassing philosophy, ethics, education, and social conduct. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), derived from ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and Classical Philosophies, emphasize moral values, self-regulation, and holistic development. These principles can provide a strong foundation for addressing contemporary issues such as cybercrime. Very few studies attempt to integrate traditional knowledge systems with cyber governance, making this research both relevant and original. There is a critical lack of interdisciplinary research integrating Indian Knowledge Systems with cybercrime prevention frameworks, particularly in addressing youth vulnerability and behavioral transformation in digital environments. Present research addresses this gap by proposing a holistic model combining IKS with cybercrime prevention.

This paper attempts to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern technological challenges by examining how Indian Knowledge Systems can be integrated into cybercrime prevention strategies and how such integration can help protect the youth from negative digital influences.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research are:

- To analyze the current trends and impact of cybercrime among Indian youth.



- To examine the role of Indian Knowledge Systems in shaping ethical behavior.
- To explore the integration of traditional values with modern cybersecurity practices.
- To identify strategies for protecting youth from negative cyber influences.
- To propose a holistic framework combining technology and value-based education.

Literature Review

Existing literature on cybercrime primarily focuses on legal, technical, and behavioral aspects, while limited attention has been given to integrating traditional ethical frameworks such as Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). This section critically reviews existing research in three domains: cybercrime and youth vulnerability, cybersecurity awareness and prevention, and the relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in ethical behavior formation.

Cybercrime and Youth Vulnerability

National Crime Records Bureau reports and related studies indicate that cybercrime is no longer isolated but systemic and expanding across sectors. Research by Dandotiya and Veer (2025) emphasizes that although India has established legal frameworks such as the IT Act, 2000, cybercrime governance remains fragmented and reactive rather than preventive. Similarly, Nakkeeran and Singh (2024) argue that enforcement challenges such as jurisdictional issues, lack of technical expertise, and inadequate infrastructure hinder effective cybercrime prevention. Mishra and Bhatnagar (2025) emphasize that cyber delinquency among juveniles is influenced by psychological, social, and technological factors, including peer pressure, anonymity, and lack of awareness.

A critical gap in this literature is the predominant focus on legal and technical responses, with insufficient attention to preventive, value-based approaches that address root behavioral causes. Tiwari, Rai, and Sisodia (2023) analyze cybercrime against Indian youth on social media and identify major threats such as cyberbullying, phishing, identity theft, and online harassment. The study concludes that youth vulnerability is primarily due to high digital exposure combined with low awareness levels, yet it does not propose any ethical or cultural frameworks to address this vulnerability.

From a psychological perspective, youth are more prone to risk-taking behavior, impulsivity, and identity experimentation. Studies show that anonymity in cyberspace reduces accountability, encouraging unethical behavior. This aligns with criminological theories such as Space Transition Theory by Jaishankar (2008), which explains behavioral shifts between physical and virtual environments. However, Jaishankar's theory, while influential, has been critiqued for its Western-centric assumptions and limited application to non-Western cultural contexts. Further research in cyber psychology indicates that cybercrime involvement is often linked to lack of emotional regulation, social validation needs, and digital addiction. These psychological insights remain largely disconnected from cultural and ethical education frameworks, representing a significant research gap.

Cybersecurity Awareness and Prevention

One of the most consistent findings in the literature is the low level of cybersecurity awareness among youth. Shah (2016) found that internet users in India are not sufficiently aware of cyber threats despite high usage levels, though the study is limited by its small sample size and lack of longitudinal data. A conceptual study by Kumar (2025) emphasizes the role of educators in promoting cyber awareness, suggesting that current education systems fail to adequately address cybersecurity risks. While Kumar's work is valuable for its focus on educators, it remains conceptual without empirical validation.

Kanniah and Pathak (2025) argue that institutions like the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) provide structural support but do not sufficiently address behavioral and ethical dimensions of cybercrime. This creates a critical gap where users have access to technology but lack ethical and cognitive frameworks to use it responsibly. The authors correctly identify the problem but stop short of proposing concrete ethical frameworks that could fill this gap.

Similarly, Routine Activity Theory by Cohen and Felson (1979) explains cybercrime as a convergence of motivated offender, suitable target, and absence of capable guardians. In the Indian context, rapid digitalization without proportional awareness creates ideal conditions for cybercrime proliferation. However, Routine Activity Theory has been criticized for its deterministic assumptions and failure to account for cultural and moral factors that influence both offender motivation and victim vulnerability.



A study by Pew Research Center highlights that over 59% of teenagers have experienced some form of cyber harassment globally, indicating a widespread behavioral issue. Indian studies further suggest that cyber ethics education is minimal, leading to a gap between technological skills and moral reasoning (Chawla, Kapoor, & Chawla, 2023). The literature clearly demonstrates that cybercrime is not merely a technological issue but a multidimensional problem involving behavioral, psychological, and ethical factors. While significant progress has been made in legal and technological domains, there is a notable lack of focus on preventive and value-based approaches, particularly those drawing from indigenous cultural and philosophical traditions.

Relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems

Very limited literature directly addresses the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems with cybersecurity. However, interdisciplinary studies suggest that ethical education can significantly influence digital behavior. Emerging research in cyber ethics indicates that technical knowledge alone is insufficient, while ethical reasoning improves decision-making and value-based education reduces risky behavior (Chawla et al., 2023). Radhakrishnan's (1923) foundational work on Indian philosophy emphasizes internal moral regulation over external enforcement, making it highly relevant for digital environments where external regulation is limited.

The critical gap in existing scholarship is the absence of a systematic framework that translates IKS philosophical principles into practical cybercrime prevention strategies. While several studies acknowledge the importance of ethics, none have operationalized indigenous ethical frameworks for digital contexts. This research addresses this gap by proposing specific applications of IKS principles to cyber challenges.

Critical Analysis and Research Gap

The literature review reveals several critical gaps. First, most cybercrime research adopts Western theoretical frameworks without considering their applicability to Indian cultural contexts. Second, the behavioral and ethical dimensions of cybercrime remain underexplored compared to technical and legal aspects. Third, while Indian Knowledge Systems are acknowledged as ethically rich, they have not been systematically integrated into cybersecurity discourse. Fourth, existing studies on youth vulnerability focus predominantly on victimization rather than prevention through ethical education. Finally, there is a lack of interdisciplinary research bridging traditional philosophy and modern digital governance.

This research addresses these gaps by proposing a conceptual framework that operationalizes IKS principles for cybercrime prevention, with specific focus on youth behavioral transformation.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and conceptual research methodology comprising four interconnected approaches:

Secondary Data Analysis

The research relies extensively on secondary data sources including academic journals, government reports (particularly from the National Crime Records Bureau), research papers on cybercrime and youth behavior, and policy documents. Sources were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives, currency (preference given to studies from 2020-2026), and credibility (peer-reviewed journals and official government publications).

Theoretical Framework Analysis

Core principles of Indian Knowledge Systems were examined through primary philosophical texts including the Vedas, Upanishads, and commentaries by scholars such as S. Radhakrishnan. Key concepts including Dharma, Ahimsa, Karma, Sanyam, and Vidya were analyzed for their applicability to digital ethics and cyber behavior. This analysis involved identifying philosophical definitions, examining traditional applications, and extrapolating these to contemporary digital contexts.

Comparative Analysis

Modern cybersecurity approaches were compared with traditional ethical frameworks using a thematic comparison method. Western cyber ethics models (particularly Kantian and utilitarian approaches) were contrasted with Eastern value-based models. This comparison examined similarities, differences, and potential complementarities in addressing cybercrime.

Interpretative Approach

Connections between ancient values and contemporary cyber challenges were drawn through interpretative analysis. This involved identifying relevant philosophical principles, mapping them to specific cyber threats, and proposing practical



applications. The interpretative approach acknowledges that IKS texts were not written with digital technologies in mind, requiring thoughtful extrapolation of core principles to new contexts.

Limitations

The research does not rely on primary data collection but synthesizes existing knowledge to propose a conceptual integration model. As a conceptual study, it does not provide empirical validation of the proposed framework. Future research should include empirical studies to evaluate the effectiveness of IKS integration in cybersecurity education.

Current Trends and Impact of Cybercrime among Indian Youth

Below mentioned 'Table' depicts trends in cybercrime from 2023 to 2026. Till 2023 traditional Patterns were followed. Financial fraud like phishing, banking frauds dominated with limited awareness and reporting along with fewer psychologically complex scams existed. In 2025–26 Cybercrime now clusters into 3 major categories firstly, financial extraction crimes namely phishing, UPI fraud, investment scams, digital arrest with large share and highest losses. Secondly, psychological exploitation crimes namely, sextortion, romance scams, cyber stalking, digital arrest (fear-based) which is the fastest-growing segment. Thirdly, technical / infrastructure crimes like ransomware, data breaches, malware, hacking having lower volume and higher sophistication. Cybercrime has shifted from “technical hacking” to “human hacking”. Phishing is still the backbone of most scams. Sextortion & digital arrest are the breakout crimes of 2026. AI-driven fraud is the next wave.

Cybercrime Distribution (India)

Cybercrime Type	2023 Distribution Pattern	2025–26 Distribution Pattern	Trend
Phishing / OTP / Banking Fraud	Dominant category (40–50% combined fraud types)	Still dominant base (feeds most scams)	Stable but evolving
Investment Scams (trading/crypto apps)	Limited but growing	30–35% of complaints	Massive rise
Sextortion	Emerging / low visibility	15–20% of total complaints	Explosive growth
Cyber Stalking / Harassment	Moderate (especially against women)	Very high complaint volume (45k+)	Strong growth
Digital Arrest Scam	Almost non-existent	5–6% cases, high-value losses	Fastest-growing (value)
Romance / Matrimonial Scam	Hidden in fraud categories	Moderate, still underreported	Gradual rise
Identity Theft / Impersonation	Common (bank KYC, SIM swap)	Highly integrated into scams	Stable but critical
UPI / Payment App Fraud	Growing with digital payments	One of the biggest fraud channels	High growth
Online Shopping / E-commerce Fraud	Moderate	Declining share (relative)	Reduced importance
Social Media Account Hacking	Common nuisance crime	Still frequent but less financial impact	Stable
Ransomware Attacks	Increasing (businesses targeted)	More sophisticated, targeted	Steady rise
Data Breaches / Data Leaks	Limited public awareness	Increasing sharply (corporate focus)	Growing concern
Child Exploitation / CSAM	Underreported	Rising detection & reporting	Serious concern
Fake Apps / Malware	Present but smaller share	Growing with APK scams	Increasing
Deepfake / AI-enabled Fraud	Rare	Emerging threat (voice/video scams)	New-age growth

Figure - a : below illustrates how cybercrime affects youth, from exposure to the internet, through vulnerable behavior (e.g., lack of awareness), to victimization and intervention. This flowchart demonstrates how youth may move from simply using the internet to becoming victims of cybercrimes due to inadequate awareness. The intervention phase includes parental involvement, legal action, and education.

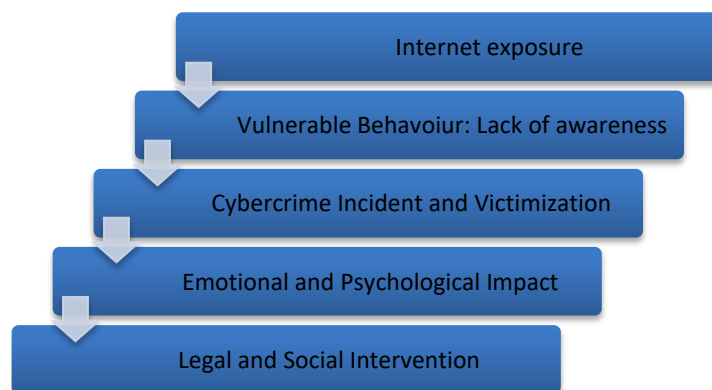


Figure - a : The Cycle of Cybercrime among Indian Youth

Integration of IKS with Cybercrime Prevention

Indian Knowledge Systems are rooted in ancient philosophical traditions that emphasize on Ethical conduct, Self-discipline and Social responsibility. The key concepts include Dharma (righteousness), Ahimsa (non-violence), Karma (action and consequence), Sanyam (self-control) and Vidya (education). According to S Radhakrishnan, Indian philosophy promotes internal moral regulation rather than external enforcement, making it highly relevant for digital environments where regulation is limited. Although traditionally applied in social and spiritual contexts, these principles can be extended to cyberspace as stated in Table below:

IKS Principles integrated with Cyber Applications.

IKS Principle	Key Philosophy	Cyber Application
Dharma	Duty-based ethics (similar to Kantian ethics but more contextual)	Ethical online behavior
Ahimsa	Non-violence in thought, word, and action	Avoiding cyber bullying
Karma	Consequence-based moral accountability	Accountability for digital actions
Sanyam	Self-regulation and mindfulness	Controlling screen time and impulses
Vidya	Education	Awareness and critical thinking

Very limited literature directly addresses the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems with cyber security. However, interdisciplinary studies suggest that ethical education can significantly influence digital behavior. Emerging research in cyber ethics indicates that technical knowledge alone is insufficient, while ethical reasoning improves decision-making and value-based education reduces risky behavior. Very few studies attempt to integrate traditional knowledge systems with cyber governance, making this research both relevant and original. Thus, integrating IKS with modern cybersecurity frameworks can provide a holistic and sustainable solution to protect youth from negative cyber influences.

In a study by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), reports indicate that cybercrimes against women and children are rising, with over 9.5 lakh cases reported over the last five years as of March 2026.

Case Studies

In 2026, a 16-year-old girl from Delhi, who was an avid user of social media platforms, became the target of cyberbullying after posting a video of herself on Instagram. The video, intended to promote body positivity, was mocked by several online users, leading to severe emotional distress and public ridicule. The bullying escalated, leading to threats and defamatory posts about her. Her parents, after noticing the changes in her behavior, reported the incident to the police, who tracked the online perpetrators. The case was escalated to the cybercrime unit, which identified the accused and initiated legal proceedings. The authorities, in collaboration with social media platforms, removed harmful content and helped the girl receive counseling for her emotional distress. This case highlights the vulnerabilities that youth face in the online world, particularly when they are not equipped with adequate awareness and coping mechanisms. The role of Indian Knowledge Systems, such as *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and *Dharma* (ethical duty), could have been integral in educating the youth about respecting others online and refraining from harmful behavior.

Phishing is one of the most common forms of cybercrime affecting internet users globally. The rise of digital payment systems in India has led to a surge in phishing-related fraud. A 19-year-old university student in Bangalore fell victim to a phishing

scam. The student received a text message purportedly from a popular e-commerce platform, informing him of an issue with his account and requesting his credentials for verification. He unwittingly entered his login details and bank account information, which were later used for unauthorized transactions. The student immediately reported the incident to his bank and the police. The bank froze his account, and the police tracked the IP address used by the cybercriminals. Although the transaction was not fully reversed, the incident was used as a learning opportunity for the student and the university, leading to a campus-wide cyber awareness campaign. This case demonstrates the lack of cybersecurity awareness among youth, even those with advanced digital literacy. Integrating teachings of *Karma* (the consequences of one's actions) and *Vidya* (knowledge) from Indian Knowledge Systems could have prepared the student to better identify phishing attempts.

A 15-year-old boy from Pune developed a severe addiction to an online multiplayer game. He spent several hours daily playing the game, which affected his academic performance and led to social isolation. His parents, concerned about his declining behavior, sought professional help. The boy was diagnosed with internet gaming disorder and underwent therapy for addiction. During therapy, the counselor integrated principles of *Sanyam* (self-discipline) from Indian Knowledge Systems, encouraging the boy to regain control over his impulses and adopt healthier time management practices. The family also participated in awareness sessions about balancing technology use. This case underscores the psychological and social consequences of excessive gaming. Indian Knowledge Systems can offer preventative measures by promoting mindfulness, self-regulation, and an ethical understanding of balance in all aspects of life.

The Bois Locker Room Case In 2020, a group of teenage boys created a private Instagram group where they shared morphed images of girls and engaged in explicit, degrading conversations. The case gained national attention and raised serious concerns about youth behavior online. Delhi Police initiated an investigation under IT laws and juvenile justice provisions. Schools began introducing digital ethics sessions. This case shows that cybercrime is not only technical but deeply ethical, reinforcing the need for value-based education.

Hackers compromised the ATM server of Cosmos Bank in Pune and siphoned off over 94 crore through coordinated global withdrawals. Although executed by organized criminals, such attacks expose youth to financial cyber risks and demonstrate consequences of weak cybersecurity awareness. Youth must understand cyber responsibility not just as users, but as future professionals in digital ecosystems.

The Blue Whale Challenge allegedly encouraged teenagers to perform harmful tasks leading to self-harm. Several suspected cases emerged in India around 2017. It leads to psychological manipulation, social isolation and extreme vulnerability among adolescents. Here IKS plays an imperative role by emphasize mental resilience, which can act as a preventive framework against such digital threats.

With the rise of UPI platforms like Google Pay and PhonePe, fraudsters increasingly target students and young users through fake payment requests and QR scams. This case highlights the importance of combining digital literacy with wisdom-based education.

Proposed holistic Framework combining technology and value- based education

Integrating ethical teachings from IKS into school curricula can promote responsible digital behavior. A cognitive framework is shown in Figure - b below which is based on Dharma, Ahimsa, Sanyam and Vidya that can guide online interactions. Community-based programs can combine traditional wisdom with modern cyber security practices. Indian culture emphasizes collective responsibility, which can help monitor and guide youth behavior. This integration can further lead to safe internet usage, responsible conduct and cyber resilience. This model demonstrates how IKS values influence cognition, which in turn shapes online behavior.

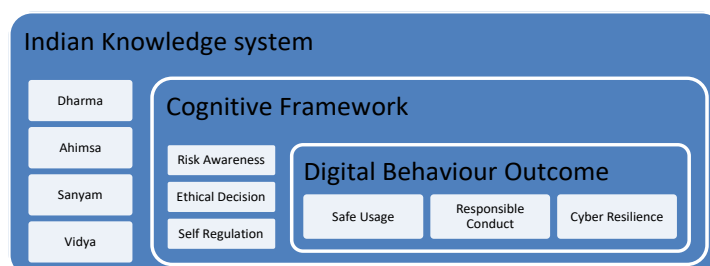


Figure - b: Integrated Ethical-Cyber Behavioral Model

Combining ethical education with tools such as parental controls and cybersecurity software enhances effectiveness. A Venn diagram (Figure - c) illustrating the intersection of cybersecurity tools, traditional values, and youth engagement to combat cybercrime:

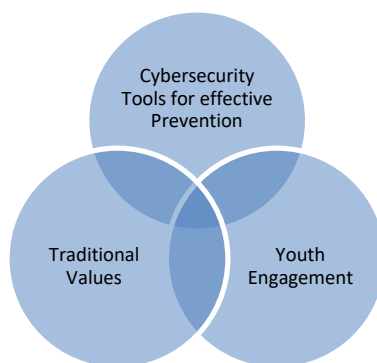


Figure - c: A Venn diagram illustrating the intersection of Cybersecurity Tools, Traditional Values, and Youth Engagement to combat cybercrime

This diagram suggests that a combination of technical solutions (e.g., firewalls, antivirus software), traditional moral values (e.g., respect, responsibility), and active youth participation in cyber awareness programs creates a holistic strategy to combat cybercrime.

Figure - d below represents decision-making flow using Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in cybercrime that focuses on integrating traditional wisdom, community values, and contextual understanding with modern digital investigation methods. IKS emphasizes collective responsibility, ethical awareness, and local context, which can guide responses to cybercrime in culturally sensitive environments.

The flow typically begins with contextual awareness, where investigators consider social norms, local practices, and community behavior patterns alongside digital evidence. This is followed by community-informed analysis, where insights from local knowledge networks help interpret suspicious activities, such as identifying unusual communication patterns or fraud tactics adapted to specific regions.

Next is ethical decision-making, grounded in IKS principles like fairness, restoration, and social harmony rather than purely punitive approaches. This can influence whether actions prioritize education, rehabilitation, or strict enforcement. Finally, the process moves to adaptive response, combining technical cybersecurity measures with community engagement—such as awareness campaigns or local reporting systems—to prevent future cybercrimes. Overall, using IKS in cybercrime decision-making creates a more holistic, inclusive, and context-aware approach that complements conventional digital forensics.

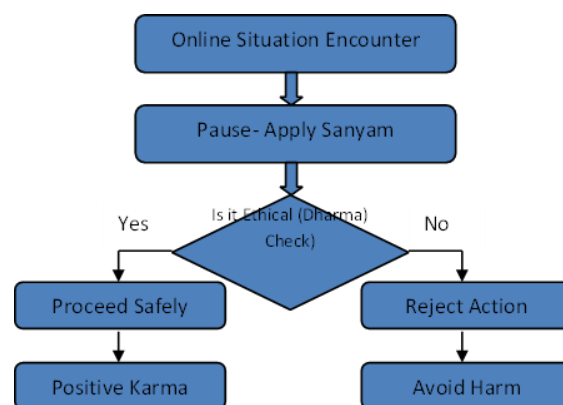


Figure - d: Decision-Making Flow Using IKS in Cyberspace

Comparative Analysis of Eastern and Western Cyber Ethics



Broadly, cyber ethics can be examined through two philosophical orientations: Western regulatory models and Eastern value-based approaches. Comparative studies in cyber ethics show that Eastern philosophies offer holistic and preventive approaches, unlike Western models that are largely regulatory. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) provide a normative ethical framework, unlike Western cyber ethics which is often rule-based. The rapid expansion of cyberspace has intensified the need for robust ethical frameworks to regulate digital behavior and prevent cybercrime. While both aim to mitigate cybercrime, they differ significantly in their foundations, methods, and effectiveness in addressing emerging digital challenges.

Western cyber ethics is primarily grounded in rule-based and rights-based traditions influenced by thinkers such as Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham. These frameworks emphasize compliance, accountability, and enforcement through formal institutions. In practice, Western societies rely heavily on legal instruments and international conventions to combat cybercrime. For instance, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) establishes strict data protection standards and imposes penalties for non-compliance (European Parliament, 2016). Similarly, the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime provides a global framework for harmonizing cyber laws and facilitating international cooperation (Council of Europe, 2001).

In India, a comparable regulatory approach is reflected in the Information Technology Act 2000, which criminalizes offenses such as hacking, identity theft, and online fraud (Government of India, 2000). These legal frameworks demonstrate a strong emphasis on deterrence through punishment and surveillance. However, scholars argue that such approaches are largely reactive, addressing cybercrime after its occurrence rather than preventing it (Jaishankar, 2008). The effectiveness of purely regulatory systems is further limited by anonymity, jurisdictional challenges, and the rapid evolution of digital technologies.

In contrast, Eastern approaches—particularly those rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems emphasize on internal moral regulation and ethical self-discipline. Concepts such as Dharma (duty), Ahimsa (non-violence), Karma (consequences of actions), and Sanyam (self-control) focus on shaping individual behavior from within. According to S Radhakrishnan, Indian philosophy prioritizes inner ethical development over external enforcement (Radhakrishnan, 1923). This orientation is particularly relevant in cyberspace, where monitoring and enforcement are inherently limited.

The Eastern model offers a preventive approach to cybercrime by addressing the root causes of unethical behavior. For example, Ahimsa discourages cyberbullying by promoting empathy, while Sanyam helps regulate impulsive online actions such as excessive social media use or participation in harmful digital activities. Studies in cyber psychology suggest that ethical awareness significantly influences online behavior, reinforcing the importance of value-based education (Chawla et al., 2023). Unlike Western systems, which focus on compliance, Eastern ethics fosters behavioral transformation.

Nevertheless, Eastern approaches are not without limitations. They depend heavily on cultural acceptance and long-term educational processes, making large-scale implementation challenging. Moreover, ethical self-regulation alone cannot effectively combat organized cybercrime, which requires robust legal and technological interventions. Therefore, a hybrid model that integrates Western regulatory frameworks with Eastern ethical principles is essential. Legal instruments such as the IT Act and international conventions provide structural enforcement, while Indian Knowledge Systems contribute to behavioral transformation. This integrated approach offers a more comprehensive and sustainable strategy for cybercrime prevention, particularly among youth.

Results and Discussion

This analysis indicates that Cybercrime is rapidly increasing, posing significant risks to youth. Awareness levels remain low, despite widespread internet usage. Indian Knowledge Systems provide a strong ethical foundation that can complement technical solutions. Integration of values and technology is more effective than standalone approaches. The discussion highlights that modern cybersecurity strategies often focus on technical solutions, neglecting behavioral and ethical dimensions. By incorporating IKS principles, a more holistic approach can be developed. By integrating Indian Knowledge Systems with modern cybersecurity education, we can create a multi-layered approach to combat cybercrime and protect youth from digital threats. Case studies reveal real-world consequences of cybercrime and how education in ethical behavior, self-discipline, and awareness can mitigate such risks. The implementation of these integrated solutions requires collaboration between government bodies, educational institutions, and the private sector. By equipping young people with the right tools and ethical frameworks, we can protect them from the negative impacts of cyberspace and guide them towards responsible digital citizenship. Cybercrime in India is not merely a technological issue but a behavioral and ethical crisis, requiring integration of Indian Knowledge Systems to balance rapid digitalization.



Research Gap

Existing cybercrime literature primarily emphasizes legal enforcement, technological safeguards, and awareness programs. Limited studies have explored culturally rooted ethical frameworks for cybercrime prevention. Furthermore, the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems with digital ethics education remains largely unexplored. This study addresses this gap by proposing a holistic framework that combines traditional values with modern cybersecurity practices.

Conclusion

The increasing prevalence of cybercrime in India presents a serious challenge, particularly for the youth who are highly active in digital spaces. While technological advancements have improved connectivity and access to information, they have also introduced significant risks.

This research highlights that Indian Knowledge Systems offer valuable insights into ethical behavior, self-discipline, and social responsibility, which are essential for addressing cybercrime. By integrating these traditional values with modern cybersecurity practices, a holistic framework can be developed to safeguard young individuals.

The study concludes that protecting youth from negative cyber influences requires a multi-dimensional approach involving education, policy, technology, and cultural values. Future research should focus on empirical studies to evaluate the effectiveness of integrating IKS into cybersecurity education.

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TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARKS: EVIDENCE FROM HIMACHAL PRADESH

Prashant Kashyap¹, Manju Soren²

1 Research Scholar, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Central University of Haryana, Mahendragarh, Haryana, India

2 Research Scholar, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Central University of Haryana, Mahendragarh, Haryana India

ABSTRACT

The present study examines the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in the promotion of sustainable tourism in protected areas of Himachal Pradesh, India. The study is situated in the broader debate of sustainable development and Indian Knowledge Systems and adopts a conceptual and qualitative methodology to examine the interface between indigenous knowledge, community participation and policy frameworks in five national parks – Great Himalayan National Park, Pin Valley National Park, Khirganga National Park, Inderkilla National Park and Simbalbara National Park. A thematic synthesis is used to develop a conceptual framework linking TEK with sustainable tourism outcomes, using secondary data from the academic literature, institutional reports and policy documents. The findings show that TEK plays a major role in biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and community-based livelihood generation. But its adoption into official tourism governance is constrained by institutional, epistemological and policy-related barriers. The study adds to the theory of sustainable tourism, by moving TEK from a peripheral to a central element. It also points to the importance of TEK in the search for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – especially SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 8 and SDG 12. Finally, the paper proposes policy recommendations for the integration of TEK into tourism planning and governance, highlighting community-based approaches, participatory decision-making and context-specific strategies. This research helps to bridge the gap between indigenous knowledge systems and modern sustainability frameworks, providing insights for policymakers, researchers and practitioners working in fragile mountain ecosystems.

Keywords: Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Sustainable Tourism, Himachal Pradesh, National Parks, Indian Knowledge Systems, Community-Based Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism in mountain ecosystems has emerged as one of the most dynamic and yet contested areas in the broader discourse of sustainable development, especially in ecologically fragile areas such as the Himalayas (Mahar et al., 2024; Wani et al., 2025). Protected areas and especially national parks are increasingly promoted as key sites of convergence between biodiversity conservation, economic development and community livelihoods through tourism-led initiatives (Sati, 2025). Nonetheless, the rapid growth of tourism in these fragile environments has also led to increased ecological pressures such as habitat degradation, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable resource consumption (Von Dach et al., 2026). The Himalayan region is among the 25 most important biodiversity hotspots in the world and is highly vulnerable due to fragile ecosystems, steep altitudinal gradients and increasing exposure to climate change (Kumar & Sahoo, 2021; Sheetal Verma, 2023). In this context, Himachal Pradesh is a unique socio-ecological landscape of ecological diversity and rich cultural heritage (E. Sharma et al., 2019). The state has five major national parks namely Great Himalayan National Park, Pin Valley National Park, Khirganga National Park, Inderkilla National Park and Simbalbara National Park which represent distinct ecological zones from alpine ecosystems to Shivalik foothills (*HP Forest Protected Area Network*, 2 may, 2026.; Rodgers et al., 2002). The dense biodiversity of these protected areas comprises endangered species such as the snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) and Himalayan musk deer and sustains the livelihoods of indigenous communities that are intimately connected with natural ecosystems (Aryal et al., 2014). Tourism in Himachal Pradesh has grown significantly in the past few decades, supported by better infrastructure, higher disposable income and the increasing popularity of nature-based tourism, leading to a steady growth in tourist arrivals and sectoral contribution to the state economy (Nagrath & Sood, 2024). Tourism is important for the economic development of the region; however, the unregulated growth of tourism has resulted in several environmental and socio-cultural problems such as accumulation of waste, water scarcity, habitat fragmentation and degradation of traditional lifestyles (Shashwat et al., 2025). These challenges are especially pronounced in protected areas where conservation goals often clash with tourism-led development (Rahimzadeh, 2026).

Traditionally, tourism development has been predominantly based on a utilitarian approach that prioritizes economic benefits rather than ecological sustainability and cultural integrity (Gössling et al., 2012; Sharpley, 2020). Such approaches often marginalize local communities and ignore indigenous knowledge systems, resulting in policies that are disconnected from



local ecological realities and undermine long-term sustainability (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013; Sinthumule, 2023; Verma et al., 2024). To address these limitations, there has been a growing academic interest in Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as a valuable resource for sustainable environmental management and governance (Berkes, 2017; Berkes et al., 2000; Tengö et al., 2014). TEK is a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief that is passed down from generation to generation through cultural traditions by adaptive processes (Berkes, 2017; Shackeroff & Campbell, 2007). This knowledge system requires a holistic understanding of ecosystems (species behaviour, climate variability and patterns of sustainable resource use) (Berkes, 2017; Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013; Sinthumule, 2023).

TEK is reflected in the Himalayas in a variety of practices including transhumance (seasonal migration of pastoral communities), sacred grove conservation, community-managed forests and indigenous agricultural systems (A. Singh & Arya, 2025.; S. Singh et al., 2019). These practices can contribute to biodiversity conservation and to increase resilience to environmental change especially under climate variability (Dungel et al., 2025; Rakova & Winter, 2020). Importantly, TEK is not a stagnant or outdated body of knowledge; rather, it is dynamic, adaptive and constantly evolving in response to changing socio-economic and environmental conditions (Dungel et al., 2025). It has increasingly been recognized in global sustainability frameworks, especially in biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation strategies (Bai et al., 2019; Bennett et al., 2019). Nevertheless, TEK has great potential but its incorporation in tourism planning and policy frameworks is limited, especially in the Indian Himalayan region (Singh. et al., 2023; Sati, 2025). Current tourism policies are largely focused on building infrastructure and increasing tourist numbers, rather than on ecological sustainability and community participation (Verma et al., 2024). As a result, there is a disconnect between conservation policies and local knowledge systems. This gap suggests the need for a more inclusive and interdisciplinary approach, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern scientific and governance frameworks.

In this context, the present study aims to study the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in promoting sustainable tourism in National Parks of Himachal Pradesh. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) investigate the role of TEK in biodiversity conservation and tourism management; (2) investigate the connection between indigenous practices and sustainable tourism outcomes; (3) identify challenges in the integration of TEK into formal policy frameworks; and (4) suggest a conceptual framework linking TEK, community participation and policy support to sustainable tourism outcomes. The study adopts a conceptual and interdisciplinary approach to contribute to the emerging discourse on Indian Knowledge Systems and sustainable development and to provide policy-relevant insights for managing tourism in fragile mountain ecosystems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Tourism in Protected Regions

The notion of sustainable tourism has gained significant traction over the last three decades as a reaction to the adverse environmental and socio-cultural effects of mass tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Butler, 1999). Sustainable tourism offers an equitable alternative that addresses environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability. Protected areas have been instrumental in sustainable tourism particularly national parks, due to their dual functions of protecting biodiversity and supporting tourism development (Eagles & McCool, 2002). The dynamics of tourism in mountain ecosystems such as the Himalayas are particularly complex due to ecological fragility, limited carrying capacity and climate sensitivity (Misra et al., 2024; Nyaupane & Timothy, 2022). The mounting pressures of tourism in the Himalayan region have been found to include effects on soil erosion, the preservation of wildlife and waste management issues (Geneletti & Dawa, 2009). These effects are compounded by carbon footprint increases and natural resource consumption of increased tourism, putting additional pressure on fragile environments (Becken & Patterson, 2006; Gössling et al., 2012). Traditionally, to manage visitor numbers, limits are set, and the carrying capacity is identified and controlled to determine the feasibility of sustainable tourism in protected areas (Manning, 2007; Saveriades, 2000). In more modern research, this method has been criticised as it ignores dynamic social-ecological systems and is not responsive to such developments (McCool & Lime, 2001; Saarinen, 2006). Alternative forms of modern, management strategies such as dynamic methods have been recommended due to the need for such management style to take account of stakeholder opinions and be responsive and to be able to deal with unforeseen occurrences (Armitage et al., 2009; Plummer & Fennell, 2009). Community based tourism has further played an influential part due to local involvement as it has been observed to lead to better sharing of resources and the protection of cultures and reducing negative ecological impacts (Murphy, 2013; Scheyvens, 1999) but has led to some criticisms regarding it enabling eliticism and limitations to capacity etc. (Zapata et al., 2011)(Goodwin & Santilli, 2009.; Manyara & Jones, 2007). Thus, although the idea of sustainable tourism frameworks has evolved, their application in protected areas continues to be patchy, especially in developing regions such as the Indian Himalayas (Karanth & DeFries, 2011).



Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK): Conceptual Foundation and Debates

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is increasingly being recognized as a key element of sustainable environmental management and governance (Berkes & Berkes, 2008; Ebhuoma, 2024; Folke, 2004; Khosravi Mashizi & Escobedo, 2025). TEK is generally conceptualized as a cumulative body of knowledge, practices and beliefs that are transmitted across generations through adaptive processes (Casi et al., 2021; Dorji et al., 2024). It includes ecological knowledge, resource management practices, cultural values and spiritual beliefs that govern human-environment relationships (Silva-Ávila et al., 2025; Tran et al., 2025). TEK is characterized by three core characteristics: Holistic understanding of ecosystems, Long-term experiential knowledge and Integration of cultural and ethical values (Dorji et al., 2024; Judijanto & Gumelar, 2025). TEK has been extensively documented to contribute to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of resources and climate resilience (Dorji et al., 2024; Ebhuoma, 2024; Negi et al., 2025). In the Himalayan context, TEK is crucial to agriculture, forest management and water conservation helping communities to adapt to diverse environmental conditions (Witharana et al., 2025). However, the use of TEK in formal scientific and policy contexts is still debated (Ciocco et al., 2024; Nyahunda, 2024). One of the biggest debates is about the epistemological differences between TEK and Western scientific knowledge systems (Tran et al., 2025). Scientific knowledge is based on standardized methods and empirical validation, whereas TEK is usually learned through experiential learning and cultural transmission (Casi et al., 2021). This has created challenges in validating and integrating knowledge (Ciocco et al., 2024). Another significant issue concerns power relations and appropriation of knowledge. Scholars have argued that TEK is often marginalized or selectively incorporated into policy frameworks, without adequate recognition or benefit sharing for indigenous communities (Silva-Ávila et al., 2025). Ethical concerns and intellectual property rights further complicate the use of TEK in research and policy (Judijanto & Gumelar, 2025; Nyahunda, 2024).

Moreover, there is an increasing critique of the romanticization of TEK that tends to portray indigenous knowledge as inherently sustainable or static (Tran et al., 2025). In fact, TEK is dynamic and subject to change under socio-economic pressures such as globalization, migration and market integration. These debates highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of TEK as a context-specific, evolving and politically embedded knowledge system.

TEK in the Himalayan Context: Adaptation, Resilience and Transformation

The Himalayan region provides a rich empirical context to examine the role of TEK in socio-ecological systems, given its long history of human-environment interaction and cultural diversity (Chaudhary et al., 2018; Witharana et al., 2025). Harsh climatic conditions, limited resources and environmental variability have been dealt with by indigenous communities of this region through several adaptive strategies rooted in TEK (Dorji et al., 2024; Negi et al., 2025). Key TEK practices in the Himalayas are Transhumance (seasonal migration of pastoral communities) Sacred groves and landscapes, Terrace farming and crop diversification Traditional water management systems, these practices are playing a major role in the conservation of biodiversity and the stability of ecosystems (Negi et al., 2025; Ray et al., 2014). For example, sacred groves act as biodiversity reservoirs, preserving endemic species and ecological balance (Ormsby & Bhagwat, 2010). In the same vein, conventional agricultural practices foster improved soil conservation and food security in fragile mountain environments (Chaudhary et al., 2018). Recent studies also highlight the role of TEK in adapting to climate change. Local knowledge is used by Indigenous communities to manage water resources, choose climate-smart crops and mitigate natural hazards (Witharana et al., 2025). TEK-based practices are more flexible and context-specific than standardized scientific methods and are particularly useful in dynamic settings (Dorji et al., 2024).

But the Himalayan TEK system is being heavily altered through modernization, migration and policy neglect (Negi et al., 2025). Changing livelihoods, loss of cultural practices and limited institutional recognition are the driving forces behind the erosion of traditional knowledge (Kumar et al., 2023). Thus, while TEK still has an important role to play in Himalayan sustainability, it is facing increasing challenges and its continuity and effectiveness are under threat.

Integration of TEK and the Tourism Systems: Opportunities and Challenges

The incorporation of TEK into tourism systems provides a promising approach to sustainable tourism, particularly in protected areas (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Saayman, 2018). TEK principles are aligned with community-based tourism models that highlight local involvement, cultural conservation and environmental sustainability (Saayman, 2018). TEK's Role in Sustainable Tourism: Environmental Conservation: Indigenous practices encourage low-impact resource utilization and biodiversity preservation (Brondizio et al., 2021), Cultural Authenticity: Tourism experiences grounded in local customs enhance visitor involvement (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022), Community Empowerment: Local involvement guarantees fair distribution of tourism benefits (Giampiccoli et al., 2024).

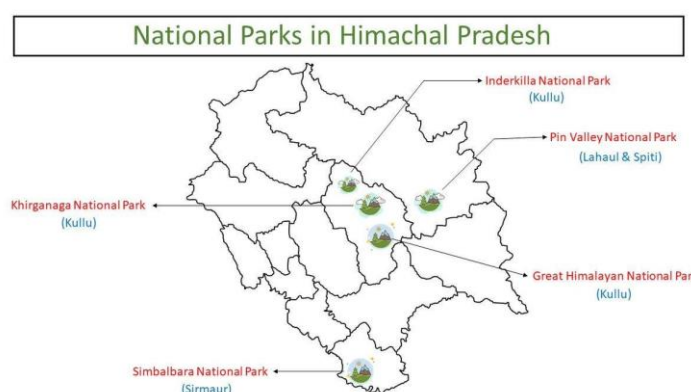
The empirical evidence suggests that the involvement of TEK in tourism planning results in better sustainability outcomes, such as greater environmental consciousness among tourists and higher community participation (Burke et al., 2023). However, several challenges exist in enabling this integration. There is a lack of institutional recognition of TEK in tourism policies and governance frameworks (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Saayman, 2018). The commercialization of culture can result in the commodification of indigenous traditions, which in turn can erode their authenticity and value (Marbun, 2025; Salazar, 2012). Power imbalances among stakeholders often result in marginalization of local communities in decision-making (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). Recent focus in the literature has been on co-management approaches that combine scientific and traditional knowledge systems in a participatory governance approach (Armitage et al., 2009). These approaches emphasize collaboration, co-production of knowledge and shared decision making and provide a more inclusive model of sustainable tourism development (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Tengö et al., 2014).

Despite growing scholarly interest there are several important gaps in the literature: Little attention to TEK in Indian protected area tourism. Most of the studies are confined to Nepal or global situation. Very few studies are conducted with reference to Himachal Pradesh. Not covering hidden national parks Most of the previous research has been directed at popular sites, ignoring parks like Inderkilla and Simbalbara. Weak integration of TEK and policy frameworks, there is a lack of studies on how TEK can be institutionalized in tourism governance. Absence of interdisciplinary synthesis. Very few studies have integrated tourism, ecology and Indian Knowledge Systems in a single framework. Limited exploration of TEK under climate change and tourism pressures. The relationship between tourism growth and erosion of TEK has been under-researched. This study addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive conceptual analysis of TEK in five national parks in Himachal Pradesh, community participation and policy support for sustainable tourism outcomes.

STUDY AREA

Himachal Pradesh National Parks

Himachal Pradesh is located in the western Himalayas and has five officially designated national parks which include Great Himalayan National Park, Pin Valley National Park, Khirganga National Park, Inderkilla National Park and Simbalbara National Park. Collectively these protected areas encompass a variety of ecological zones ranging from alpine ecosystems to Shivalik forests and cold desert landscapes. These parks are not only biodiversity hotspots but also cultural landscapes, where traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) has historically guided human-environment interactions.



The Great Himalayan National Park in Kullu district is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The protected area in Kullu district is largest in the state of Himachal Pradesh, and boasts incredible biodiversity. Encompassing more than 1,100 sq km, it stretches from subtropical forest to alpine meadow habitat. From a TEK viewpoint, GHNP is of significant interest for: traditional grazing systems (transhumance), traditional resource use within sacred forests and community-based conservation organisations.

In the past, indigenous TEK had ensured that the forests were managed in accordance with contemporary conservation principles. Pin Valley National Park Pin Valley National Park is a UNESCO designated Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve located in the Lahaul-Spiti district. Extreme climates with a rich, high-altitude plant and animal biodiversity, this cold desert environment is home to species like the snow leopard and Siberian ibex. Indigenous TEK within this region includes practices: of water management using a network of glacial irrigation systems, traditional agriculture (barley, peas), and a Buddhist



ecological ethic of non-violence towards animals. GHNP TEK has potential for sustainable tourism as these are more or less sustainable modes of life. Khirganga National Park Khirganga National Park is located in Kullu district in Parvati Valley, and is a sacred landscape as well as popular destination for trekking. The park, created in 2010, at the intersection of biogeographic zones and thus of considerable ecological significance. TEK is represented in this area by: the culture associated with sacred hot springs, local customs governing how natural resources can be exploited, and traditions of trekking that honor the integrity of local ecology.

There are, however, many threats to these practices due to increased pressure from the tourist industry. The Inderkilla National Park another national park in the Kullu district is the least well-known protected area in Himachal. It covers roughly 100 sq km and supports a diversity of plant and animal species including musk deer and wildlife native to the Himalaya. Its relative isolation has helped preserve: Traditional Forest use practices, Low impact human interactions and Intact ecological systems. It is a perfect example of how traditional knowledge combined with limited tourism can help conservation. Simbalbara National Park is located in Sirmaur district and represents a Shivalik ecosystem with Sal forests and grasslands. It is the smallest national park in the state, covering around 27.88 sq. km. Simbalbara is a low-altitude park, unlike the high-altitude parks in the Himalayas. Plains-hill transitional ecology Traditional forest-dependent livelihoods Indigenous knowledge of forest biodiversity This diversity underscores the wide relevance of TEK to ecological zones.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design and Philosophical Positioning

The present study is based on conceptual and qualitative research design. It tries to understand the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in sustainable tourism in protected areas of Himachal Pradesh. Conceptual research is especially suitable for emerging and interdisciplinary fields, where the development of knowledge is based on theoretical integration rather than primary data generation (Jaakkola, 2020; Xin et al., 2013).

Research Methodology Approach and Rationale

The research adopts a theory building conceptual approach, drawing on insights from a range of disciplines including tourism studies, environmental science and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) to develop an integrated analytical framework (Jaakkola, 2020). Conceptual research is important for advancing academic discourse through the development of relationships between constructs, identification of gaps in theory and suggestion of new frameworks for empirical testing.

Sources of data and selection criteria

The study relies exclusively on secondary data, comprising articles in reviewed and cited scientific journals, books, institutional reports, government publications and policy documents. Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar search platforms were employed to identify useful materials. The reports generated by UNWTO, IUCN and IPBES were referred to. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and Himachal Pradesh Forest Department's documents also helped obtain data. The contextual information was found for the following five national parks in Himachal Pradesh: Great Himalayan National Park, Pin Valley National Park, Khirganga National Park, Inderkilla National Park and Simbalbara National Park.

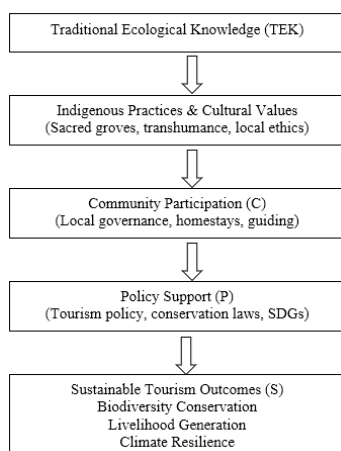
Analytical Approach: Thematic Synthesis

The research utilised thematic synthesis in the analysis of secondary sources of data. The three stages involved in this research were: identifying, coding and abstracting concepts related to traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), sustainable tourism, community participation and policy. The next stage involved the extraction of descriptive themes and finally the construction of analytic themes that draw relationships between TEK and outcomes of sustainable tourism. These themes were interpreted with respect to the research goals and were incorporated in the construction of the conceptual framework. This process enhanced transparency and methodological rigor in the synthesis of evidence (Nowell et al., 2017).

Development of Conceptual Framework

The study proposes a conceptual framework that conceptualizes sustainable tourism outcomes as a function of three major variables, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Community Participation (C) and Policy Support (P).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Linking Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Community Participation and Policy Support to Sustainable Tourism Outcomes



Source: Developed by the Authors.

The framework integrates insights from Social-Ecological Systems Theory (Folke et al., 2016), the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Serrat, 2017), Community-Based Tourism Theory (Saayman, 2018) and Knowledge Integration Theory (Kohsaka & Rogel, 2021). It proposes that the interaction of TEK, community participation and policy support contribute to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, livelihood generation and cultural preservation in Himalayan national parks.

FINDINGS

Reconsidering Sustainable Tourism with Traditional Ecological Knowledge

The research has shown that TEK must be seen not as an extra-module in the existing framework but as a key element for promoting sustainable tourism practices in protected areas of the Himalayan region. This viewpoint is also in agreement with recent research studies which has highlighted the role played by indigenous knowledge systems in strengthening the socio-ecological systems' resilience. Moreover, the alternative model advocated in this paper puts emphasis on the limitations of natural resources, ecological ethics, economic viability in the long run and social viability, unlike standard tourism approaches focusing on economic development and infrastructure extension which can, in the highly sensitive mountain environment where 'small kicks can result in disproportionate damage', be of severe adverse ecological consequences. This study presents a theoretical framework, which demonstrates how policy makers and international community do not solely hold the fate of environmental governance in this unique region, rather, it is derived from the interface of indigenous knowledge, community involvement and policy enablement which ensures better outcomes of sustainability.

Variability of TEK across Contexts: Comparative Perspectives among National Parks

This research is important because it compared 5 national parks in Himachal Pradesh and show TEK is not universal and is adaptive and context-specific. Regarding Great Himalayan National Park there are eco-development committees and alternative livelihood programmes show partial integration with some consideration to the idea of community conservation; however, restricted legal status to TEK reflects the gap between policy and practice showing that there is participation mechanism exists which are mostly failed to be integrated with indigenous knowledge on decision-making process. Contrary to that TEK at Pin valley National Park is a climate adaptation mechanism which supports and ensures effective adaptation from glacier-fed irrigation to selection of crops to meet with worst environmental conditions. This supports findings on other researches that TEK contribute in building capacity for adaptation for people living in the climate vulnerable area. Tourism leads to commercialisation and culture change Khirganga National Park showed the contrast and conflict between indigenous practice and the expansion of the tourist sector. Where once sacred areas regulate resource use to promote and support tourism they are being used as commercial commodities that support the cultural commodification which are associated to culture change and ecological degradation. Similar example can be reflected in other analyses on tourism-based commodification. Alternative models of low tourism high conservation Inderkilla National Park, show how a low-tourism destination can achieve significant level of conservation with high reliance of traditional knowledge.

This challenges a current ideology that there has to be an escalation of tourism to develop economies, finding it a strong example that TEK and low tourism can have significant results.



Moreover, Inderkilla National Park case suggests TEK and sustainability are closely linked with minimal influence from market-based activities. Inderkilla National Park may be contrasted to that of Simbalbara National Park which showed TEK adaptable in different type of ecosystem as its Shivalik ecosystem which are at lower altitude demonstrate evidence of utilisation of indigenous knowledge in forest biodiversity and human-wildlife co-existence; suggesting that TEK not only restricted to high altitude site but could be use across variety of ecosystem. In conjunction these cases reinforce the necessity for the implementation of a context specific strategy and the unlikely eventuality of a single policy approach towards sustainable tourism across the entire heterogeneous ecosystems.

TEK and the SDGs: A Multi-Faceted Contribution

The inclusion of TEK in tourism systems directly contributes to several of the SDGs, emphasizing the global significance of this approach. SDG 13 (Climate Action): TEK-based water conservation and climate-resilient agriculture enhance adaptive capacity in vulnerable mountain regions. SDG 15 (Life on Land): Sacred groves and community-managed forests help conserve biodiversity and restore ecosystems. SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): Community-based tourism generates livelihood opportunities and sustains ecological integrity. SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production): TEK encourages sustainable use of resources and low-impact lifestyles. These linkages demonstrate that TEK is both locally relevant and contributes to global sustainability agendas, and make the case that indigenous knowledge systems are key to realizing the SDG.

Closing the Gap between TEK and Policy Frameworks

The persistent gap between TEK and formal policy structures is one of the key findings of this study. Indigenous knowledge is increasingly present in global conversations around sustainability, but its incorporation into tourism governance remains limited. There are a number of reasons that can explain this gap. Epistemological differences between scientific and traditional knowledge systems. Institutional rigidity that supports standardized approaches over context-specific practice. Power asymmetries that push local communities to the margins of decision-making processes. To close this gap, the transition to co-management and knowledge co-production models, where local communities are active in governance, is needed. These approaches increase the effectiveness of policies and also ensure equity and legitimacy of conservation activities.

Contributions to theory

The study makes three key contributions to the existing scholarly literature: Repositioning of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in the discourse on sustainable tourism This study questions the often-accepted view of TEK being at the periphery of the Sustainable Tourism discourse and firmly positions it at the heart of sustainable tourism systems. Expanding the Social-Ecological System's framework by including TEK This paper explores how indigenous knowledge enhances the resilience and adaptability of coupled human-natural system through integrating TEK into the socio-ecological systems analysis of Himalayan ecosystems. Indigenizing tourism discourse through IKS This study contributes to the widening of recognition given to IKS in the global discussions for sustainable development and fills the gap between local knowledge systems and international academic approaches.

The results carry implications for policy makers and managers The study indicates a need for the following policies for tourism planning at the policy-making level; Institutionally recognizing TEK in national park and tourism policy at the higher level. Policies and financial mechanisms supporting TEK-based Community Based Tourism. Managing the scale of tourism intensity in environmentally fragile areas such as Khirganga. Including TEK in visitor education programmes at the national parks. Developing institutional capacity for creating digital libraries of the indigenous knowledge.

It can be clearly observed that these recommendations address the need to have people-centered participatory approach in tourism practices in the Himalaya that addresses sustainable development as it reflects globally promoted integrated and sustainable approaches for local community development.

A better management strategy that rethinks the knowledge systems and governance for sustainable tourism at the Himalayas' national parks is needed. The comparison clearly establishes the fact that the TEK are not only historical vestiges but the active and dynamically changing knowledge systems of mountain communities. But TEK becomes effective if they are given importance, policy support and the involvement of local community is established; if the policies are implemented by the governments and accepted by the local people the local sustainable strategies could ensure that even a burgeoning form of tourism and development practices have the possibility to coexist, complementing their indigenous approaches for sustainable future.



DISCUSSION

The results suggest that Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is an important component for sustainable tourism development in the protected areas of Himachal Pradesh. The local communities of these national parks possess thorough, in-depth knowledge pertaining to biodiversity conservation, management of natural resources, seasonal changes in environment and conservation methods traditionally practiced within their own socio-cultural contexts. These imply the argument which sees TEK not only as a cultural resource but as a functional approach towards operationalizing sustainability agendas for the conservation of natural resources for sustainable tourism in a protected landscape. It also reveals the intrinsic relationship of TEK with the process of conservation of biodiversity through tradition-based management of natural resource management such as regulated extraction of natural resources, protection of sacred landscape, nomadic systems of grazing, and community ownership and use. Therefore, the ongoing use of traditional knowledge contributes to conservation outcomes and also supports cultural heritage. The results strongly supported an active role for local people in sustainable tourism development in the study region, with participation in tourism planning, the management of resources, the presentation of cultures and even service delivery, having an effect on the overall reception for tourism at the local level and on the even distribution of benefits. This accords fully with the findings of the Community-Based Tourism Theory which claims that better participation and communication is conducive for overall sustainability as well as improving community quality of life. For these reasons local knowledge holders should be actively involved in the governance process as an effective way to foster an optimal visitor experience and secure local futures.

In addition to these important results other information came out which also show the difficulties encountered by people involved with tourism and TEK in their quest for sustainability. First of all, the process of modernization, increased urbanization and outward migration has caused an erosion of local traditional knowledge resources. Another important problem which emerged from this study was that while existing legal frameworks do often not recognize, and give few chances for participation, of the existing, local people that may provide useful traditional ecological knowledge, policy has very few mechanisms of supporting. For all these reasons more mechanisms are needed to protect and transfer TEK to new generations. The findings suggest that traditional environmental knowledge remains highly relevant to contemporary sustainability challenges. Therefore, the study adds to the increasing discourse on the integration of traditional knowledge with modern tourism planning and protected area management. By recognizing TEK as a valuable knowledge system, it is possible to develop more inclusive, culturally sensitive and environmentally sustainable tourism models in Himalayan national parks and other protected areas across India. The findings also support the Social-Ecological Systems perspective, which emphasizes the interconnected relationship between local communities and ecological resources. The continued application of TEK demonstrates how cultural knowledge contributes to the resilience and sustainability of protected area ecosystems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

Conclusion

This research was designed to investigate the role of TEK in establishing and promoting sustainable tourism in HP, especially within 5 nationally important ecologically and culturally diverse protected areas. The research has a conceptual and interdisciplinary perspective, and illustrates how TEK is a significant resource in tourism planning, environmental governance and the sustainable development discourse, but is underutilized. This research highlights how TEK can contribute to sustainability via a range of interwoven pathways; from supporting community adaptation to climate change, to contributing to biodiversity conservation, and informing sustainable natural resource management practices. Indeed, local transhumance practices, sacred landscape management practices, and traditional forest and agricultural land management can draw on the strong indigenous 'ecological ethic' that informs contemporary 'sustainable' development. They assist in building ecological resilience but also facilitate the preservation and reinforcement of a people's identity and social cohesion. Crucially, this study argues that the creation of successful and sustainable tourism in the protected national parks of HP cannot be attributed solely to planning regimes and techno-fixes, but is contingent on the intersection of knowledge systems, collective participation and enabling governance structures and policies. The conceptually framework put forward demonstrates how the interplay of TEK, participatory forms of governance, and enabling policies can produce multiple forms of outcomes that contribute towards sustainability (e.g. Diversification of local livelihoods, resilience of local people to impacts of climate change, cultural integrity of local populations). Likewise, comparing patterns across 5 contrasting protected areas the TEK knowledge system is shown to be context-specific and locally adapted. Partially the process of incorporating traditionally held ecological practices can be seen to be occurring in GHNP and PVNP, while Khir Ganga illustrates how TEK can become more vulnerable where communities are exposed to increased levels of tourism-related stress.



Alternatively, Inderkilla and Simbalbara both illustrated how in areas with limited tourist engagement and with strongly embedded traditional ways of knowing and practices ecological integrity has been and continues to be largely successfully maintained, highlighting the non universal solutions for managing tourism in mountainous areas. Crucially, this thesis contributes a significant new finding: that TEK needs to transition from the margins of the debate around sustainable tourism to the core, or central component, of our understanding of sustainable tourism, thereby moving towards models where, in place of an emphasis upon economics, our conceptions of sustainable tourism are ecologically viable, culturally sensitive and socially robust.

Scientific Contributions

This study makes the following crucial contributions: Firstly, it addresses a significant knowledge gap in sustainability literature by contributing to the conceptual enhancement of the discourse of sustainable tourism with TEK. Secondly, it builds on the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework by articulating the mechanisms through which TEK supports resilience, adaptive capacity and sustainability of coupled human and natural systems. Thirdly, it enriches the novel literature on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) by grounding indigenous ecological knowledge and practices in global sustainability debates and bridging local knowledge systems with global academic discussions. Fourthly, it contributes empirical knowledge with the inclusion of understudied protected areas namely Inderkilla and Simbalbara national parks for a comparative analysis.

Policy Implication and Future Research Directions

The research provides the following tangible policy suggestions for concerned stakeholders as an outcome of this study: Formal Recognition for Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Policy Makers should recognize Traditional Ecological knowledge (TEK) as legitimate and crucial knowledge system in relation to conservation and tourism initiatives. This could be initiated by ensuring its involvement in management plans of protected areas, environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and in formulated tourism policy frameworks. Foster community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives in Protected Areas Tourism in Protected Area must emphasize community-based initiatives such as homestays, local guiding programs and cultural ecotourism tours which would enable enhanced local ownership and increased sharing of economic benefits thereby contributing towards greater conservation efforts.

Tailor fit tourism planning to the Specific Ecological and Socio-Cultural Setting Tourism plans must be unique for each protected areas since the ecological as well as social set up varies in the case of Himalaya National Parks- for example- strict restriction of Tourism activity within sensitive and ecologically fragile zones like Khirganga and support and develop community friendly low-impact ecotourism in non-frequented areas such as Simbalbara and Inderkilla Incorporate TEK in Conservation Education Efforts Conservation authority of protected area should encourage and include traditional knowledge in the interpretative centres of protected areas, Eco-guiding services and also in the school children curriculum through environmental education programs. These measures will result in a more effective communication to tourists about the conservation issues. Establish repository for Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) It is also important to take action for immediate Documentation and Digital Preservation of TEK: Establishing a central digital repository/archive of TEK; Promoting community-led TEK documenting processes; and strengthening of research initiatives for TEK. This is needed in order to prevent the loss of knowledge due to modernization and generational turn-over. Strengthening Participatory Governance, to bridge the gap between policy and practice Inclusion of local communities in decision making processes Co-management models for protected areas Strengthening local institutions and governance mechanisms. Alignment with SDGs, Tourism policies should explicitly align with global sustainability frameworks by leveraging TEK to: Improve climate resilience (SDG 13), Conserve biodiversity (SDG 15), Promote sustainable livelihoods (SDG 8) and promote responsible consumption (SDG 12).

This study presents a comprehensive conceptual framework, but there are several avenues for future research: Empirical validation of the proposed framework through field-based studies in Himalayan regions. Comparative studies in other Himalayan states (Uttarakhand, Sikkim etc.) Assessment of the role of TEK in indicators of tourism sustainability, Impact of climate change on TEK systems under increasing tourism pressure, Investigation of digital technologies for preservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge. Such studies will further enhance the integration of TEK into sustainable tourism theory and practice. Technocratic or market-driven approaches alone cannot achieve sustainable tourism in fragile mountain ecosystems such as the Himalayas. It requires a holistic and culturally grounded paradigm that recognizes the value of traditional ecological knowledge as a living, adaptive and context-specific system. Himachal Pradesh could become a global model of sustainable tourism that demonstrates the harmonious coexistence of ecological integrity, cultural heritage and economic development by linking indigenous knowledge systems with contemporary policy frameworks.



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INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE: REIMAGINING PUBLIC POLICY THROUGH INDIGENOUS ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Poonam

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Political Science, Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Khanpur Kalan, Sonapat, Haryana

Abstract

The search for sustainable and inclusive governance models has intensified in response to contemporary challenges such as environmental degradation, declining institutional trust, governance deficits, and uneven development outcomes. Within this context, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) offer a valuable intellectual resource for rethinking public policy and governance beyond purely technocratic approaches. Rooted in centuries of philosophical reflection, administrative practice, and community-based institutions, IKS encompasses principles of ethical leadership, collective welfare, ecological balance, decentralization, and participatory decision-making. This paper examines the relevance of indigenous administrative traditions embedded in Indian intellectual and political thought for contemporary governance reforms and sustainable futures. Drawing upon classical sources, including the Arthashastra, the Mahabharata, Buddhist political traditions, and Panchayati institutions, the study explores how these traditions conceptualized statecraft, public accountability, and social responsibility. Using a qualitative and interdisciplinary methodology based on textual analysis, policy review, and comparative interpretation, the paper analyzes the resonance of indigenous governance principles within contemporary initiatives such as the National Education Policy 2020, Mission LiFE, Digital India, and the Aspirational Districts Programme. The study argues that Indian Knowledge Systems should not be viewed merely as historical inheritances but as evolving frameworks that can contribute to contemporary debates on governance effectiveness, democratic participation, and sustainability. While acknowledging the challenges associated with integrating traditional knowledge into modern policy environments, the paper contends that critical engagement with indigenous administrative wisdom can enrich governance institutions and support the pursuit of sustainable futures.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems; Governance; Public Policy; Indigenous Administration; Sustainable Development

Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed unprecedented transformations in governance, public administration, and development policy. Governments across the world confront increasingly complex challenges that transcend conventional administrative boundaries, including climate change, social inequality, declining public trust, rapid technological change, and pressures on democratic institutions. These challenges have prompted scholars and policymakers to reconsider the foundations of governance and explore alternative knowledge traditions capable of informing more sustainable and socially responsive policy frameworks. For much of the modern period, public administration has been shaped by bureaucratic rationality, managerial efficiency, and centralized policy structures. Although these approaches have contributed significantly to state-building and development, they have often been criticized for insufficient attention to cultural contexts, community participation, ethical considerations, and ecological sustainability. Contemporary governance debates, therefore, increasingly emphasize the importance of locally grounded knowledge systems and context-sensitive approaches that can complement modern administrative institutions.

Within this intellectual environment, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) have attracted renewed scholarly and policy interest. IKS encompasses diverse traditions of knowledge developed in the Indian subcontinent across fields such as governance, ethics, economics, law, education, ecology, and social organization. Rather than separating these domains into distinct disciplines, many Indian traditions approached governance as an integrated activity linking moral responsibility, social welfare, environmental stewardship, and political authority. Consequently, governance was understood not merely as the exercise of power but as the maintenance of social order, public welfare, and collective well-being (Radhakrishnan, 2008; Sen, 2005). The growing relevance of IKS is reflected in recent policy developments. The National Education Policy (2020) emphasizes the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into education and research, while initiatives such as Mission LiFE highlight traditional ecological values in addressing environmental challenges. Similarly, contemporary governance reforms increasingly stress decentralization, citizen participation, and community-led development—principles that have long been present within indigenous administrative traditions. These developments suggest that traditional knowledge systems continue to offer conceptual resources for addressing contemporary policy concerns.



However, the revival of IKS also raises important questions. Can principles derived from historical governance traditions meaningfully contribute to modern democratic institutions? How can indigenous administrative practices be adapted without romanticizing the past or overlooking contemporary constitutional values? To what extent can such traditions contribute to sustainable futures in an increasingly globalized and technologically driven world? Addressing these questions requires moving beyond simplistic celebrations of tradition and engaging critically with both the possibilities and limitations of indigenous governance frameworks.

This paper argues that Indian Knowledge Systems offer valuable normative and institutional insights for contemporary governance reform. By examining key administrative ideas embedded in classical texts and community institutions, the study demonstrates how indigenous traditions can contribute to more participatory, accountable, ethically informed, and sustainable approaches to public policy. The analysis further highlights the relevance of these traditions to contemporary discussions on sustainable futures, emphasizing the need for governance models that balance economic development with social inclusion, cultural continuity, and ecological responsibility.

Review of Literature

The growing scholarly interest in indigenous knowledge systems reflects a broader shift in governance studies toward recognizing the importance of culturally embedded forms of knowledge and institutional practice. Early public administration scholarship was largely dominated by Western bureaucratic models emphasizing hierarchy, efficiency, and administrative neutrality. While these approaches provided important foundations for modern governance, critics have argued that they often marginalize local knowledge traditions and overlook the social and cultural contexts within which governance operates (Bevir, 2012; Pierre & Peters, 2021).

Studies on Indian political thought have demonstrated that governance occupied a central place within classical intellectual traditions. Banerjee (2010) highlights that ancient Indian political institutions developed sophisticated understandings of statecraft, law, diplomacy, and public administration. Similarly, Rangarajan's translation and interpretation of the *Arthashastra* reveal an elaborate administrative framework that emphasized welfare, accountability, fiscal management, and strategic governance. Contemporary scholars increasingly view these traditions not merely as historical artifacts but as sources of governance principles relevant to current policy challenges.

Research on decentralization and local governance has further strengthened interest in indigenous administrative practices. Mathew (2017) argues that democratic decentralization in India cannot be fully understood without considering the historical legacy of local self-governing institutions. Panchayati traditions are often cited as examples of community participation, collective decision-making, and local accountability. These features resonate strongly with contemporary theories of participatory governance, which emphasize citizen engagement as a means of enhancing policy legitimacy and effectiveness.

The literature on governance reform has also highlighted the significance of ethical leadership and public accountability. Good Governance Theory emphasizes transparency, responsiveness, participation, rule of law, and accountability as essential components of effective governance. Several scholars have noted that many of these principles find conceptual parallels within Indian traditions of *dharma*, *lokasangraha* (collective welfare), and *rajadharma* (ethical responsibilities of rulers). Nevertheless, the relationship between these traditions and modern governance institutions remains an area requiring deeper scholarly investigation.

Another important body of literature concerns sustainability and environmental governance. Contemporary sustainability discourse increasingly recognizes the value of indigenous ecological knowledge in addressing environmental crises. Shiva (2016) argues that traditional knowledge systems often embody ecological perspectives that challenge unsustainable development models. Similar arguments have emerged in global discussions of sustainable governance, where local knowledge is increasingly regarded as a resource for environmental resilience and community-based resource management.

International scholarship also provides comparative perspectives on indigenous self-governance initiatives in Canada, and Bhutan's development philosophy demonstrates that traditional knowledge systems can inform contemporary public policy while coexisting with modern democratic institutions. These examples suggest that indigenous traditions can contribute to policy innovation, provided they are critically adapted to contemporary political and constitutional contexts.

Despite growing interest in Indian Knowledge Systems, existing scholarship reveals several gaps. Much of the literature remains either historical or descriptive, focusing on documenting traditional practices rather than evaluating their policy relevance. Furthermore, limited attention has been devoted to systematically examining how indigenous administrative



principles can contribute to governance reforms aimed at achieving sustainable futures. This study seeks to address this gap by connecting classical governance traditions with contemporary public policy debates and exploring their potential contributions to inclusive, participatory, and sustainable governance systems.

Contemporary governance scholarship has increasingly moved beyond traditional hierarchical models of administration toward participatory, networked, and collaborative approaches. Rhodes (1996) argues that governance involves interactions among state and non-state actors rather than exclusive reliance on governmental authority. Similarly, Bevir (2012) emphasizes the importance of dialogue, institutional flexibility, and citizen engagement in addressing complex public problems. Ostrom (1990) further demonstrates how community-based institutions can successfully manage common resources through collective action and shared responsibility. These theoretical perspectives provide a valuable analytical framework for examining the contemporary relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems, particularly in relation to decentralization, participation, accountability, and sustainable governance.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine the conceptual foundations of Indian Knowledge Systems in relation to governance and public administration, analyze major indigenous administrative principles reflected in classical and community-based traditions, evaluate their relevance for contemporary governance reforms, explore their manifestation within selected public policy initiatives, and assess both the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating indigenous governance perspectives into modern democratic institutions.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, analytical, and interdisciplinary research design. The research is primarily based on secondary sources and seeks to bridge historical, political, and public policy perspectives. Rather than treating Indian Knowledge Systems as static historical phenomena, the study examines their contemporary relevance through critical interpretation and comparative analysis.

Selection of Sources

The study draws upon three broad categories of sources:

- Classical Texts: Foundational texts such as the *Arthashastra*, the *Mahabharata*, Buddhist political traditions, and historical accounts of local self-governing institutions have been examined to identify governance-related concepts and administrative practices.
- Academic Literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and contemporary research on governance, decentralization, indigenous knowledge systems, public administration, and sustainable development have been consulted to situate the analysis within existing academic debates.
- Policy and Institutional Documents: Government reports, policy frameworks, and official publications, including the National Education Policy 2020, Mission LiFE documents, and NITI Aayog reports, have been analyzed to explore contemporary applications of indigenous governance principles.

Sources were selected on the basis of their relevance to governance, public policy, administrative thought, and sustainability. Literature unrelated to these themes was excluded to maintain conceptual coherence and analytical focus.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is guided by three interconnected perspectives:

Governance Perspective: Examining how indigenous administrative traditions address issues such as accountability, participation, leadership, public welfare, and institutional effectiveness.

Public Policy Perspective: Assessing whether governance principles derived from Indian Knowledge Systems can contribute to contemporary policy design, implementation, and evaluation.

Sustainability Perspective: Evaluating the potential contribution of indigenous governance traditions to sustainable futures through ecological stewardship, community participation, and long-term social resilience.

The study employs textual interpretation, comparative analysis, and normative evaluation to identify both continuities and divergences between traditional governance frameworks and contemporary administrative systems.



Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relies primarily on secondary sources and textual interpretation rather than field-based empirical investigation. Second, classical texts often reflect specific historical and socio-political contexts, making direct application to contemporary governance problematic. Third, indigenous traditions are diverse and internally complex; therefore, no single framework can fully represent the entirety of Indian Knowledge Systems. Finally, the study focuses primarily on governance-related dimensions of IKS and does not attempt to examine all domains of indigenous knowledge. Despite these limitations, the research provides a useful framework for understanding how indigenous administrative traditions may inform contemporary governance reforms and contribute to sustainable futures.

Understanding Indian Knowledge Systems

Indian Knowledge Systems represent a cumulative body of intellectual, ethical, social, and practical knowledge developed across centuries within the Indian subcontinent. These systems encompass diverse fields including governance, jurisprudence, economics, ecology, education, medicine, and philosophy. Unlike modern disciplinary structures that frequently separate social, political, and environmental concerns into distinct categories, Indian traditions generally approached these domains as interconnected dimensions of collective life.

A defining characteristic of Indian Knowledge Systems is their emphasis on relational thinking. Governance, social organization, environmental stewardship, and ethical conduct were often viewed as mutually reinforcing rather than independent spheres of activity. Political authority was not understood solely in terms of power or control but in relation to broader responsibilities toward society and nature.

Several foundational concepts have influenced governance-related thinking within Indian traditions:

Dharma refers to the principles of ethical conduct, responsibility, and social order that guide individual and collective action.

Lokasangraha emphasizes the preservation of social harmony and the promotion of collective welfare.

Sarvodaya embodies the ideal of development that benefits all sections of society rather than a privileged minority.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam promotes an inclusive worldview that recognizes interconnectedness among communities and societies.

Together, these concepts provide a normative framework that places ethical responsibility, social inclusion, and ecological balance at the center of governance processes. Their significance lies not merely in their historical origins but in their potential to contribute to contemporary discussions on democratic governance, public accountability, and sustainable development.

Indigenous Administrative Traditions in Ancient India

Kautilya and the Arthashastra

Among the most influential contributions to Indian administrative thought is the *Arthashastra*, traditionally associated with Kautilya. Rather than presenting governance solely as the exercise of political authority, the text conceptualizes administration as a systematic process requiring institutional competence, economic stability, and public welfare. A notable feature of Kautilya's approach is the recognition that effective governance depends upon administrative capacity. The text outlines mechanisms for revenue management, bureaucratic oversight, public finance, and strategic planning, suggesting an awareness of institutional challenges that remain relevant to contemporary public administration. Governance is portrayed as a practical activity requiring both ethical judgment and managerial competence (Banerjee, 2010; Kautilya, 1992). The significance of the *Arthashastra* for contemporary governance lies less in the direct replication of its prescriptions and more in its recognition that public institutions must balance efficiency, accountability, and welfare considerations. This perspective continues to resonate with modern debates concerning state capacity, administrative effectiveness, and policy implementation.

Rajadharma in the Mahabharata

The concept of *Rajadharma* offers another important perspective on governance within Indian political thought. Rather than viewing rulers as autonomous holders of power, the tradition places emphasis on obligations associated with public authority. Political leadership is evaluated not only by administrative success but also by adherence to principles of justice, fairness, and public responsibility.

From a contemporary perspective, *Rajadharma* may be interpreted as an early reflection on ethical governance. The tradition highlights the importance of accountability and restraint in the exercise of authority, suggesting that legitimacy derives from



service to the broader community rather than from power alone. Such ideas remain relevant in modern democratic contexts where public trust increasingly depends upon perceptions of integrity and responsible leadership.

Buddhist Administrative Ethics and the Ashokan Experience

Buddhist political traditions contributed an important ethical dimension to governance discourse by emphasizing compassion, moderation, and public welfare. These principles became particularly visible during the reign of Ashoka, whose administrative reforms reflected a concern for social cohesion and moral responsibility.

Ashokan governance is noteworthy not because it abandoned state authority but because it sought to align political power with broader social objectives. Public welfare measures, attention to social harmony, and concern for environmental protection illustrate an approach in which governance was linked to the well-being of both communities and the natural environment. In contemporary terms, this tradition offers insights into the role of values in public administration. It suggests that effective governance cannot be evaluated solely through economic indicators or administrative efficiency but must also consider social inclusion, ethical responsibility, and long-term sustainability.

Traditional Panchayati Institutions

Local self-governing institutions constituted a significant component of India's historical administrative landscape. Village-level governance structures facilitated decision-making, conflict resolution, resource management, and collective action through community participation. The importance of these institutions lies in their recognition that governance functions are often most effective when exercised close to the communities they affect. Local knowledge, social accountability, and participatory decision-making enabled communities to address issues in ways that reflected contextual realities. While contemporary democratic institutions differ substantially from historical village systems, the underlying principles of decentralization, participation, and community engagement continue to influence modern governance frameworks. The enduring relevance of Panchayati traditions can therefore be understood not as institutional continuity but as the persistence of governance values that prioritize local agency and collective responsibility.

Core Governance Principles Derived from Indian Knowledge Systems

Ethical Leadership

One of the most significant contributions of Indian Knowledge Systems to governance discourse is the emphasis placed on ethical leadership. In many classical traditions, leadership was viewed not merely as a position of authority but as a public responsibility requiring moral discipline, accountability, and commitment to collective welfare. The legitimacy of governance depended as much on the character of leaders as on the institutional structures they operated (Radhakrishnan, 2008). Contemporary governance literature increasingly recognizes that administrative effectiveness alone cannot guarantee public trust. Corruption, policy failures, and declining institutional legitimacy often arise when governance lacks ethical foundations. Indigenous governance traditions address this concern by emphasizing integrity, restraint, and responsibility as essential attributes of leadership. Such perspectives align with contemporary discussions of ethical governance and public service values, highlighting the continued relevance of moral accountability in democratic systems.

Decentralization and Subsidiarity

A recurring theme within Indian administrative traditions is the recognition that decision-making should occur as close as possible to affected communities. Historical governance structures often acknowledged the importance of local institutions in managing resources, resolving disputes, and addressing community needs.

Modern governance theory similarly emphasizes decentralization as a means of improving responsiveness, participation, and policy effectiveness. Local institutions possess contextual knowledge that centralized authorities may lack, enabling more appropriate and adaptive policy interventions. Decentralization also contributes to democratic legitimacy by allowing citizens greater influence over decisions that affect their daily lives (World Bank, 2023; Ostrom, 1990). From the perspective of sustainable futures, decentralized governance strengthens institutional resilience by distributing decision-making authority and encouraging local problem-solving capacities. This becomes particularly important in addressing environmental and developmental challenges that vary significantly across regions and communities.

Citizen Participation

Indian governance traditions frequently emphasized collective involvement in community affairs. Decision-making processes often relied upon consultation, deliberation, and community engagement rather than exclusive reliance on centralized authority (Mathew, 2017).



Contemporary governance scholarship similarly identifies citizen participation as a crucial component of democratic legitimacy. Participation improves transparency, strengthens accountability, and enhances the quality of public decision-making by incorporating diverse perspectives and local knowledge. Furthermore, participatory mechanisms encourage citizens to become active stakeholders in governance rather than passive recipients of state services.

The relevance of participation has become increasingly significant in the context of sustainable development, where long-term policy success frequently depends upon community ownership and public cooperation. Indigenous traditions, therefore, provide valuable insights into building governance systems that are both democratic and socially responsive.

Consensus and Deliberation

Another important principle embedded within Indian governance traditions is the preference for deliberative decision-making. Rather than relying exclusively on majoritarian approaches, many traditional institutions sought to achieve collective agreement through discussion and consultation.

This emphasis on deliberation resonates strongly with contemporary theories of deliberative democracy, which argue that public decisions gain legitimacy when they emerge through informed dialogue and reasoned debate. Consensus-oriented approaches can contribute to social cohesion, reduce conflict, and improve policy acceptance by ensuring that diverse viewpoints are considered.

Ecological Stewardship

Environmental sustainability constitutes one of the most pressing governance challenges of the twenty-first century. Indian Knowledge Systems contain a long-standing tradition of ecological thinking that emphasizes interdependence between human societies and the natural environment.

Rather than viewing nature exclusively as an economic resource, many indigenous traditions conceptualized ecological systems as integral to collective well-being. This perspective encouraged practices of conservation, responsible resource use, and long-term stewardship. Such approaches reflected an understanding that social prosperity ultimately depends upon environmental sustainability.

Contemporary sustainability discourse increasingly acknowledges the importance of indigenous ecological knowledge in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. The ecological dimensions of Indian Knowledge Systems, therefore, contribute directly to contemporary discussions of sustainable futures by promoting governance approaches that integrate environmental responsibility with social and economic development (Shiva, 2016; United Nations, 2015).

Contemporary Policy Relevance

National Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy (2020) represents one of the most significant institutional efforts to recognize the importance of Indian Knowledge Systems within contemporary public policy. The policy advocates greater engagement with indigenous intellectual traditions in teaching, research, and curriculum development.

Beyond cultural preservation, this initiative reflects a broader recognition that educational systems can benefit from diverse knowledge traditions. By encouraging interdisciplinary learning and contextual understanding, the policy seeks to strengthen the connection between education, societal needs, and sustainable development goals. The inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems also contributes to intellectual pluralism by expanding the range of perspectives available within higher education and public discourse (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Mission LiFE

Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) illustrates how traditional ecological values can inform contemporary environmental policy. The initiative emphasizes behavioral change, sustainable consumption, and environmentally responsible lifestyles as important components of climate action.

Its significance extends beyond environmental management. The programme reflects an understanding that sustainability cannot be achieved solely through technological interventions or regulatory frameworks. Instead, long-term environmental resilience requires changes in social attitudes and everyday practices. In this regard, Mission LiFE demonstrates how indigenous ecological principles can inform governance strategies to build sustainable futures (Government of India, 2023).



Digital India

At first glance, Digital India may appear disconnected from indigenous governance traditions. However, a deeper analysis reveals important points of convergence. Traditional governance systems often emphasized accessibility, accountability, and community engagement. Digital governance initiatives pursue similar objectives through technological means.

By expanding access to public services, enhancing transparency, and improving citizen-state interaction, Digital India seeks to strengthen participatory governance in contemporary contexts. Technology thus becomes a mechanism through which long-standing governance values can be adapted to modern administrative realities. The programme illustrates how traditional principles and technological innovation need not be viewed as opposing forces but can function as complementary components of governance reform.

Aspirational Districts Programme

The Aspirational Districts Programme provides an example of governance that combines centralized coordination with localized implementation. Rather than imposing uniform development models, the initiative recognizes regional diversity and encourages context-specific solutions.

This approach reflects principles long associated with indigenous administrative traditions, particularly the importance of local knowledge and community participation. By integrating data-driven policy tools with decentralized implementation strategies, the programme demonstrates how contemporary governance can benefit from both technological innovation and indigenous governance insights (NITI Aayog, 2023).

Case Studies

Social Audits under MGNREGA

Social audits have emerged as an important mechanism for promoting transparency and accountability within public administration. Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), community participation in monitoring public expenditure has strengthened oversight and reduced information asymmetries between citizens and government agencies. The significance of social audits lies in their institutionalization of participatory accountability. Although implemented within a modern legal framework, they reflect broader governance principles that prioritize public scrutiny, collective responsibility, and citizen engagement. As such, they illustrate how indigenous governance values can be adapted to contemporary democratic institutions.

Kerala's Participatory Planning Initiative

Kerala's experience with decentralized planning demonstrates the practical benefits of citizen participation in governance. The initiative enabled local communities to contribute directly to development planning, resource allocation, and policy implementation.

From a governance perspective, participatory planning enhances policy legitimacy and improves responsiveness to local needs. The Kerala experience suggests that sustainable development outcomes are more likely when citizens are involved in shaping policies rather than merely receiving them. This case, therefore, provides an important example of how participatory governance principles can contribute to inclusive and sustainable futures.

Community Water Governance in Rajasthan

Community-led water conservation initiatives in Rajasthan, including the revitalization of traditional johad systems, illustrate the practical relevance of indigenous ecological knowledge. These initiatives have improved water availability, strengthened local resilience, and promoted sustainable resource management in environmentally vulnerable regions. Their success highlights the importance of combining traditional ecological practices with contemporary development strategies. Rather than treating indigenous knowledge as outdated, such experiences demonstrate its capacity to contribute to effective and sustainable governance solutions.

Global Comparative Perspectives

Bhutan

Bhutan's development framework, centered on Gross National Happiness, represents an alternative approach to governance that prioritizes well-being alongside economic growth. The model integrates cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and social welfare into policy decision-making (United Nations Development Programme, 2025).



The Bhutanese experience demonstrates that governance frameworks informed by indigenous values can coexist with modern state institutions while offering alternative measures of development and progress.

Canada

Canada's efforts to expand Indigenous self-governance arrangements provide another example of the growing recognition of traditional knowledge systems within contemporary governance.

The Canadian experience highlights both the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating indigenous governance traditions into modern political systems. It demonstrates that successful integration requires institutional adaptation, legal recognition, and sustained dialogue between state authorities and Indigenous communities.

Collectively, these international examples reinforce the argument that indigenous knowledge systems are not merely historical legacies. They remain relevant resources for governance innovation and sustainable development in diverse political contexts.

Challenges in Integration

Despite the growing interest in Indian Knowledge Systems and their potential contribution to governance reform, the integration of indigenous administrative principles into contemporary policy frameworks presents several conceptual and practical challenges. A critical examination of these challenges is essential to avoid simplistic assumptions regarding the applicability of traditional governance models in modern democratic contexts.

Risk of Romanticizing the Past

One of the most significant challenges lies in the tendency to idealize historical governance traditions. Classical texts and indigenous institutions emerged within specific social, political, and economic contexts that differ substantially from contemporary democratic societies. Uncritical celebration of historical practices may obscure their limitations and prevent objective evaluation. Therefore, Indian Knowledge Systems should be approached as sources of insight rather than as ready-made policy solutions.

Compatibility with Constitutional Democracy

Modern governance operates within constitutional frameworks that prioritize equality, fundamental rights, secularism, and democratic accountability. Certain aspects of historical governance traditions may not align fully with contemporary constitutional principles. Consequently, the integration of indigenous knowledge requires careful interpretation and adaptation to ensure compatibility with democratic norms and legal safeguards.

Diversity within Indian Knowledge Traditions

Indian Knowledge Systems are neither uniform nor monolithic. They encompass diverse philosophical schools, regional traditions, religious influences, and institutional practices. Treating IKS as a single, coherent governance model risks oversimplification and may overlook internal debates and variations. Policymakers must therefore recognize the plurality of indigenous traditions rather than relying on selective interpretations.

Administrative and Institutional Constraints

The successful incorporation of indigenous governance principles depends upon the capacity of contemporary institutions to translate normative ideas into practical policies. Bureaucratic structures, regulatory requirements, and administrative routines often prioritize standardization and procedural efficiency. Such institutional characteristics may create barriers to the incorporation of community-centered and context-specific governance approaches.

Empirical Validation and Policy Effectiveness

While many indigenous governance principles possess normative appeal, their effectiveness within contemporary policy environments requires systematic empirical evaluation. Governance reforms must be assessed through evidence-based approaches rather than assumptions regarding historical success. Greater interdisciplinary research is therefore necessary to identify the conditions under which indigenous administrative principles can contribute effectively to public policy outcomes.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation

Governance systems must continuously adapt to technological, social, and economic change. Indigenous knowledge traditions provide valuable insights, but they cannot address all contemporary challenges independently. Effective governance requires a balanced approach that combines historical wisdom with scientific knowledge, technological innovation, and modern administrative practices. The objective should not be the replacement of contemporary governance frameworks but their enrichment through meaningful engagement with indigenous perspectives.



Globalization and Policy Transfer Challenges

Modern governance increasingly operates within global policy environments shaped by international institutions, transnational regulations, and interconnected economies. Indigenous governance principles must therefore be interpreted in ways that remain responsive to global realities. Policymakers face the challenge of preserving cultural distinctiveness while simultaneously engaging with international governance standards and development objectives.

These challenges indicate that the contribution of Indian Knowledge Systems to governance reform depends upon critical adaptation rather than direct replication. Their value lies in providing normative guidance, alternative perspectives, and context-sensitive approaches that can complement contemporary governance institutions.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the analysis undertaken in this study, several policy recommendations may be proposed to strengthen the constructive integration of Indian Knowledge Systems within governance and public administration.

First, public administration education should incorporate systematic engagement with indigenous governance traditions. Academic curricula can encourage comparative analysis between classical administrative thought and contemporary governance theories, thereby broadening intellectual perspectives within public policy education.

Second, local governance institutions should be strengthened through greater citizen participation and community engagement. Enhancing the effectiveness of Gram Sabhas and other participatory platforms can improve accountability, transparency, and policy responsiveness.

Third, policymakers should encourage the documentation and preservation of indigenous governance practices, particularly those related to environmental management, conflict resolution, and community resource governance. Such efforts can contribute to policy innovation and institutional learning.

Finally, sustained dialogue between policymakers, scholars, civil society organizations, and traditional knowledge holders is essential. Such engagement can facilitate the responsible adaptation of indigenous governance principles while ensuring alignment with constitutional values and democratic norms.

Major Findings

The analysis undertaken in this study generates several important findings regarding the relationship between Indian Knowledge Systems, governance reform, and sustainable futures.

First, Indian Knowledge Systems contain a sophisticated body of governance-related knowledge that extends beyond philosophical reflection to include practical insights into administration, accountability, leadership, and public welfare.

Second, indigenous administrative traditions conceptualize governance as a multidimensional process linking ethical responsibility, social cohesion, economic management, and ecological sustainability. This integrated perspective differs significantly from narrowly technocratic approaches to public administration.

Third, concepts such as *dharma*, *lokasangraha*, and community-centered decision-making continue to possess contemporary relevance because they emphasize public responsibility, collective welfare, and social accountability.

Fourth, principles associated with decentralization and participatory governance occupy a central place within both indigenous administrative traditions and contemporary governance theory, indicating important areas of conceptual convergence.

Fifth, ecological stewardship emerges as one of the most significant contributions of Indian Knowledge Systems to contemporary governance debates. Indigenous traditions frequently recognize the interdependence of social well-being and environmental sustainability, a principle that aligns closely with current sustainable development objectives.

Sixth, contemporary policy initiatives such as the National Education Policy 2020, Mission LiFE, Digital India, and the Aspirational Districts Programme demonstrate that elements of indigenous governance thinking are already influencing public policy in various forms.

Seventh, comparative experiences from Bhutan and Canada indicate that indigenous knowledge systems can contribute meaningfully to governance innovation when integrated through democratic and constitutionally compatible mechanisms.



Eight, sustainable futures require governance frameworks capable of balancing economic development, social inclusion, environmental responsibility, and ethical accountability. Indian Knowledge Systems offer valuable normative resources for advancing such balanced approaches.

Conclusion

The contemporary search for effective and sustainable governance models has generated renewed interest in indigenous knowledge traditions across the world. Indian Knowledge Systems represent one of the most extensive and enduring repositories of governance-related thought, encompassing ethical leadership, decentralized administration, public accountability, ecological stewardship, and community participation (Bevir, 2012; Pierre & Peters, 2021).

This study demonstrates that the significance of Indian Knowledge Systems extends beyond their historical value. Indigenous administrative traditions offer conceptual frameworks that remain relevant to contemporary governance challenges, particularly those associated with democratic legitimacy, sustainable development, citizen engagement, and environmental sustainability. Their continuing relevance is reflected in emerging policy initiatives that increasingly recognize the importance of local knowledge, participatory governance, and culturally grounded approaches to development.

At the same time, the study emphasizes that indigenous governance traditions should not be approached through romanticized or uncritical interpretations. Effective integration requires careful adaptation, empirical evaluation, and alignment with constitutional principles. The objective is not to replace contemporary governance institutions but to enrich them through constructive engagement with indigenous knowledge.

Ultimately, the study argues that sustainable futures depend not only upon technological advancement and economic growth but also upon governance systems capable of fostering social responsibility, democratic participation, and environmental stewardship. In this context, Indian Knowledge Systems offer valuable perspectives for reimagining public policy and strengthening the foundations of contemporary governance.

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भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली में कुण्डलिनी साधना

BHARTIYA GYAN PRANAALI ME KUNDILINI SADHNA

Monika¹, Dr. Satyanand²

1 Research Scholar, Centre for Yoga Studies, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh

2 Assistant Professor, Centre for Yoga Studies, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh

सार

भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली में योग विद्या शारीरिक, मानसिक, आध्यात्मिक और सामाजिक स्वास्थ्य का एक समग्र दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत करती है। योग के विविध मार्ग आत्म साक्षात्कार के लिए विभिन्न साधन हैं। इन सभी साधनों में कुण्डलिनी साधना हठयोग की उच्च स्तरीय साधना है जो सूक्ष्म शरीर के केन्द्रों को जागृत कर चेतना का विस्तार करती है। आदिनाथ भगवान शिव द्वारा प्रवर्तित एवं गुरु मत्स्येन्द्रनाथ, गोरक्षनाथ जैसे महान योगियों के द्वारा विस्तारित हठ योग परंपरा में हमें कुण्डलिनी साधना का एक व्यवस्थित एवं व्यावहारिक स्वरूप प्राप्त होता है। योग ग्रंथों में परिभाषित कुण्डलिनी शक्ति मानव शरीर के मूलाधार चक्र में सुप्त अवस्था में स्थित रहती है। प्राणायाम, बंध, मुद्रा, मंत्र एवं ध्यान के माध्यम से इस ऊर्जा का जागरण संभव बताया गया है। जिससे साधक की चेतना का क्रमिक विस्तार होता है। साधन का अंतिम लक्ष्य शिव-शक्ति सामरस्य है। वर्तमान समय में आधुनिक विज्ञान एवं चिकित्सा पद्धति कुण्डलिनी साधना को शरीर विज्ञान और मनोविज्ञान के संदर्भ में समझने का प्रयास कर रही है। प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र हठयोग ग्रंथों के आधार पर कुण्डलिनी साधना को प्रस्तुत करता है। साथ ही, साधना से संबंधित आवश्यक सावधानियों, अनुशासन एवं संभावित लाभों का सम्यक् विवेचन भी करता है।

Abstract

In the Indian Knowledge System, Yogic science presents a holistic approach to physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being. The various paths of Yoga serve as different means for attaining self-realization. Among these, Kundalini Sadhana is regarded as an advanced practice of Hatha Yoga that awakens the subtle centres of the body and facilitates the expansion of consciousness. The Hatha Yoga tradition, propounded by Adinath (Lord Shiva) and further developed by great yogis such as Matsyendranath and Gorakshanath, provides a systematic and practical framework for the practice of Kundalini Sadhana. According to the classical yogic texts, Kundalini Shakti lies dormant in the Muladhara Chakra at the base of the human body. The awakening of this latent energy is said to be achieved through practices such as Pranayama, Bandhas, Mudras, Mantra, and Meditation, leading to the gradual expansion of the practitioner's consciousness. The ultimate objective of this practice is the harmonious union of Shiva and Shakti. In contemporary times, modern science and medicine are attempting to understand Kundalini Sadhana from the perspectives of physiology and psychology. The present research paper explores the concept of Kundalini Sadhana based on the classical Hatha Yoga texts. It also provides a comprehensive discussion of the essential precautions, discipline, and potential benefits associated with this practice.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Kundalini Sadhana, Shat-Chakras (Six Chakras), Self-Realization.

प्रस्तावना

प्राचीन काल से पीढ़ी-दर-पीढ़ी संचरित होती आ रही भारतीय संस्कृति एवं परम्पराएँ न केवल आध्यात्मिक गहराई का परिचय देती हैं अपितु मानव जीवन के समग्र विकास का आधार भी प्रस्तुत करती हैं। भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली का उद्देश्य केवल प्राचीन ज्ञान के संरक्षण तक सीमित नहीं अपितु ज्ञान परंपरा के सिद्धांतों और अनुभवजन्य दृष्टिकोण के माध्यम से वर्तमान वैश्विक चुनौतियों के व्यावहारिक समाधान खोजना भी है। वर्तमान समय में मनुष्य का जीवन अनेक जटिल समस्याओं से घिरा हुआ है- जैसे मानसिक रोग, अस्वस्थ जीवनशैली, पर्यावरणीय संकट तथा सामाजिक विघटन। ऐसी परिस्थितियों में उलझे हुए मनुष्य के लिए अत्यावश्यक है कि आंतरिक संतुलन और चेतना के विकास की ओर ध्यान केन्द्रित कर आत्म तत्त्व को जानने की जिज्ञासा मन में बनाए।

कुण्डलिनी साधना केवल एक आध्यात्मिक अभ्यास नहीं बल्कि मनुष्य के आंतरिक संतुलन, जागरूकता तथा आत्म-नियंत्रण को विकसित करने का सशक्त माध्यम है। इसके द्वारा साधक शरीर और मन के मध्य सामंजस्य स्थापित कर चेतना के उच्च स्तर की ओर अग्रसर होता है, जिससे व्यक्तिगत शांति के साथ-साथ व्यापक स्तर पर समस्याओं से निपटने की क्षमता का भी विकास होता है। हठप्रदीपिका में उल्लेखित है कि “कंद के

ऊपरी भाग में सुप्त कुण्डलिनी योगियों के लिए मोक्ष परन्तु मूढ़ लोगों के लिए बन्धन का कारण है” (Digambarji & Jha, 2008, 3.103)। इस गहन संदर्भ में हम कुण्डलिनी साधना के महत्त्व को समझ सकते हैं। यह साधना पद्धति आज के युग में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य, भावनात्मक संतुलन, आंतरिक शांति तथा समग्र व्यक्तित्व विकास के लिए अत्यंत प्रासंगिक है। प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के संदर्भ में हठयोग ग्रन्थों में वर्णित कुण्डलिनी की अवधारणा, उसकी साधना विधि तथा समकालीन समय में इसके व्यावहारिक महत्त्व को विस्तार से स्पष्ट करने का प्रयास करता है।

साहित्य समीक्षा

कुण्डलिनी साधना की अवधारणा

भारतीय योग शास्त्रों में विभिन्न योग मार्गों का उल्लेख मिलता है जिनमें से एक मार्ग कुण्डलिनी योग है। आदिनाथ शिव द्वारा प्रवर्तित, मत्स्येंद्रनाथ तथा गोरक्षनाथ जैसे सिद्ध योगियों द्वारा विस्तारित हठयोग परंपरा कुण्डलिनी साधना का एक व्यवस्थित, क्रमबद्ध एवं अनुभवसिद्ध स्वरूप प्रस्तुत करती है। सामान्य अवस्था में कुण्डलिनी शक्ति प्रत्येक मनुष्य में सुप्तावस्था में पड़ी रहती है (कुवल्यानंद, 1971, पृ.9)। सिद्ध योगियों द्वारा वर्णित कुण्डलिनी शब्द का सम्बन्ध उस शक्ति से है जो गुप्त तथा सुप्तावस्था में है, यह मानव शरीर में निहित रहते हुए जागरण की प्रतीक्षा करती है। हठप्रदीपिका में उल्लेखित है कि जिस तरह सर्पों के स्वामी शेषनाग पर्वत वन सहित सम्पूर्ण पृथ्वी के आधार हैं, ठीक उसी तरह से सम्पूर्ण योग तंत्रों का आधार कुण्डलिनी है (Digambarji & Jha, 2008, 3.1)। शिव संहितानुसार कुण्डलिनी आधारकमल की कर्णिका में अत्यधिक सुंदर त्रिकोणाकार वाली योनी है जो समस्त तंत्रों में पूर्णतया गोपनीय बताई गयी है। वही विद्युल्लता के आकर वाली साढ़े तीन लपेटे लगाए हुए टेढ़ी आकर वाली परम देवता स्वरूप कुण्डलिनी सुषुम्ना के मार्ग में अवस्थित है (महेशानन्दजी, 1999, 2.23)। घेरंड संहिता में इसी के समरूप कुण्डलिनी को परिभाषित करते हुए कहते हैं कि मूलाधार में कुण्डलिनी परम ऊर्जा की देवी सोई हुई है उनका रूप तीन कुंडलियों जैसे सर्प का है। जैसे चाबी से दरवाजा खुलता है वैसे ही योग साधना द्वारा कुण्डलिनी जागृत करने के लिए सुषुम्ना को भेदना चाहिए (Digambarji, 1997, 3.40, 3.42)। षट्चक्र निरूपणम् में भी कुण्डलिनी को सर्पाकार शक्ति के रूप में परिभाषित किया गया है, जो कि साढ़े तीन लपेटों से लिपटी हुई स्वयम्भू लिंग के ऊपर सोई हुई है (वेदान्तकेशरी, 2003, पृ. 114)। गीता ज्ञानेश्वरी में संत ज्ञानेश्वर वर्णित करते हैं कि जिस प्रकार सर्पिणी का शिशु कुमकुम में नहा हुआ सा शरीर की गिंडुरी बना कर सोया रहता है उसी प्रकार कुण्डलिनी अपनी देह को साढ़े तीन बार लपेट कर अधोमुखी हो कर सोई रहती है जागृत होने पर वह प्राण स्वरूप हो जाती है (मिश्र, 2015, पृ.185)। थियोसोफिकल सोसाइटी की अध्यक्षा मैडम ब्लैवेटस्की कुण्डलिनी के बारे में लिखती हैं कि कुण्डलिनी विश्वव्यापी सूक्ष्म विद्युत शक्ति है, जो स्थूल बिजली की अपेक्षा कहीं अधिक शक्तिशाली है। प्रकाश एक लाख पचासी हजार मील प्रति सेकंड चलता है परन्तु कुण्डलिनी की गति एक सेकंड में तीन लाख पैतालिस हजार मील है (महाराजमहायोगी, 2012, पृ.25)। डॉ. बसंत जी रत्ने के विचार में कुण्डलिनी शरीर के अंदर दाहिनी वेगस नाड़ी है जहाँ से कुण्डलिनी योग में वर्णित समस्त अंगों का योग रहता है (Rele, 1960, p.51)। सर जान ने कुण्डलिनी शक्ति को ऐसी संगृहीत शक्ति कहा है जो व्यष्टि शरीर में विश्वमहाशक्ति के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में सम्पूर्ण जगत को उत्पन्न और धारण करती है (Avalon, 1950)। स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती के अनुसार, कुण्डलिनी शब्द ‘कृ’ धातु से उत्पन्न है, जिसका अर्थ गहरा स्थान या छेद है तथा यह वह सुप्त, संचित एवं संभाव्य शक्ति है जो मानव शरीर के मूलाधार चक्र में सर्पाकार अवस्था में स्थित रहती है (सरस्वती, 2005, पृ. 10)। हठयोग के प्रसिद्ध दार्शनिक ग्रन्थ सिद्ध सिद्धांत पद्धति में सृष्टि रचना की मूल शक्ति कुण्डलिनी को ही बताया गया है और कहा गया है कि “यह दो प्रकार की है प्रथम योगियों में कुण्डलिनी जब जागृत अवस्था में होती है तो प्रबुद्ध (जागृत) के नाम से जानी जाती है और द्वितीय सोई हुई कुण्डलिनी जो प्रत्येक साधारण मनुष्य शरीर में चेतनरूप होने के स्वभाववश प्रपंचों का कारक होती हैं जिसको कि अप्रबुद्ध नाम से जाना जाता है। योगी की यही प्रथम प्रकार वाली जागृत कुण्डलिनी, सोई हुई कुण्डलिनी वाले की चिंता क्रिया आदि विकारों को दूर करती हुई ऊर्ध्व गामिनी होती है। इसी ग्रन्थ में कुण्डलिनी शक्ति के तीन रूप बताये गये हैं अधः शक्ति जो कि बाह्य इन्द्रियों के लेन-देन से सम्बन्धित है, मध्या शक्ति जीवात्मा का अपने स्वरूप में स्थापित कराने में समर्थ शक्ति तथा ऊर्ध्व शक्ति उस परमेश्वर शिव का साक्षात्कार कराने वाली है” (भारती, 2014, पृ. 76-81)।

उपनिषदों में कृष्ण यजुर्वेद से सम्बन्धित योगकुण्डल्युपनिषद् में कुण्डलिनी शक्ति, सुषुम्ना नाड़ी, प्राण संचार तथा कुण्डलिनी जागरण की विधियों का विस्तृत एवं व्यवस्थित वर्णन उपलब्ध है। साथ ही वराह उपनिषद्, योगचूडामणि उपनिषद् और ध्यानबिन्दु उपनिषद् में भी कुण्डलिनी तथा षट्चक्रों का महत्वपूर्ण उल्लेख मिलता है।



कर्मयोग, भक्ति योग, ज्ञान योग, राजयोग इत्यादि सभी योग शाखाओं का समावेश कुण्डलिनी साधना में परिलक्षित होता है यह एक ऐसी योग साधना है जिसमें कि पंच तत्वों से निर्मित मनुष्य शरीर में शिव-शक्ति के मिलन स्थिति का गहन दर्शन प्राप्त होता है इसीलिए इसे महायोग भी कहा जाता है। आधुनिक समय में इसी दर्शन-क्रिया साधना पद्धति को कुण्डलिनी योग के नाम से जाना जाता है (शर्मा, 2016, पृ. 16)। कौलमत्तावाल्म्बियों की योग तांत्रिक साधना के आधार- प्राण तत्व, मनस्तत्त्व तथा बिंदुतत्त्व हैं और हठयोग का कुण्डलिनी साधना सिद्धांत भी मनुष्य शरीर में इन्हीं तीन तत्वों को परम शक्तिशाली मानता है- बिंदु (शुक्र), वायु तथा मन, परन्तु चंचलता के कारण यह अस्थिर और असंतुलित अवस्था में रहते हैं सिद्ध योगियों का कथन है कि यदि एक को वश में कर लिया जाए तो दूसरे दोनों अपने आप ही वश में हो जाते हैं (द्विवेदी, 2023, पृ. 132)। ध्यातव्य है कि योग में साधना शब्द को केवल मात्र सोच-विचार, चिन्तन-मनन तथा बौद्धिक विश्लेषण नहीं माना गया है अपितु वास्तविक साधना स्वयं की अज्ञात गहराईयों में उतरने का साहस है और स्वयं को पूरी तरह से बदल डालने के संकल्प हेतु नए जन्म के समय होने वाली प्रसव पीड़ा को सहने के समान है (शर्मा, 2016, पृ. 20)। कुण्डलिनी साधना की प्रारंभिक विधियों के निरंतर, नियमित और अनुशासित अभ्यास से सूक्ष्म नाड़ियों की शुद्धि होती है जिससे इड़ा-पिंगला में प्राण-प्रवाह संतुलित होता है और मेरुदंड की मध्यस्थित नाड़ी सुषुम्ना में सोई हुई कुण्डलिनी जागृत हो षट्चक्रों का भेदन करती हुई सहस्रार में स्थित परमशिव से एकाकार होती है। हठयोग साधक का मुख्य ध्येय यहीं विश्राम करना है इसी अवस्था को हम राजयोग के नाम से भी जानते हैं। हठविद्या के बिना राजयोग तथा राजयोग के बिना हठविद्या की प्राप्ति नहीं हो सकती (दिगम्बरजी, 2008, 2.76)। शिव संहिता कुण्डलिनी साधना की साधना पद्धतियों का विस्तृत विवेचन करती है जो साधक की चेतना को विकसित करती है। घेरंड संहिता साधना की क्रमबद्ध प्रक्रिया- षट्कर्म, आसन, मुद्रा, प्रत्याहार, प्राणायाम, ध्यान तथा समाधि कुण्डलिनी जागरण की तैयारी को स्पष्ट करती है। गोरक्ष शतक में नाड़ी, प्राण और चक्रों के नियंत्रण को साधना का आधार माना गया है। विभिन्न हठयोग ग्रंथों के विश्लेषण से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि प्रत्येक मनुष्य में कुण्डलिनी शक्ति की ऊर्जा सुप्तावस्था में है जिसका जागरण योग्य गुरु के निर्देशन में हठयोग की विभिन्न क्रिया विधियों द्वारा किया जा सकता है।

कुण्डलिनी साधना में नाड़ी शुद्धि

भारतीय योग परंपरा में नाड़ी तंत्र को प्राण ऊर्जा के सूक्ष्म प्रवाह का आधार माना गया है, जो स्थूल शरीर से भिन्न होकर सूक्ष्म शरीर में कार्य करता है। अध्यात्म विज्ञानियों का मत है कि नाड़ियों का जाल सम्पूर्ण शरीर में फैला हुआ है। यह नाड़ियाँ कंद के स्थान से निकल कर समस्त काया में फैली हुई हैं। वराहोपनिषद् में उल्लेखित है कि शरीर नाड़ियों का आधार है, नाड़ियाँ प्राण का आश्रय है, प्राण जीव का आश्रय है, जीव हंस का आश्रय है और हंस शक्ति का आश्रय है शक्ति से ही समस्त जगत स्थिर है (भारती, 2022, पृ. 260)। प्रमुख हठग्रंथ मानव शरीर में लगभग बहत्तर हजार नाड़ियों का उल्लेख करते हैं प्रायः सभी योग ग्रंथों में इनमें से तीन नाड़ियाँ इड़ा, पिंगला और सुषुम्ना को प्रमुख बताया गया है (दिगम्बरजी, 2009, 2.24; वेदान्त केशरी, 2023, पृ. 108)। कुण्डलिनी साधना में इनका विशेष महत्त्व है इड़ा नाड़ी बाई ओर स्थित होकर चंद्र, मन और शीतलता से संबंधित मानी जाती है, जबकि पिंगला दाई ओर स्थित होकर सूर्य, ऊर्जा और क्रियाशीलता का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है। सुषुम्ना नाड़ी मेरुदंड के मध्य स्थित होकर आध्यात्मिक उन्नति तथा कुण्डलिनी जागरण का मुख्य मार्ग मानी जाती है। योग ग्रंथों में नाड़ी शुद्धि को अनिवार्य बताया गया है क्योंकि नाड़ियों के शुद्ध हुए बिना प्राण का संतुलित प्रवाह संभव नहीं होता (दिगम्बरजी, 2008, पृ. 37)। सिद्ध योगियों का कहना है कि स्वास्थ्य की वास्तविक कुंजी नाड़ी शुद्धि है, नाड़ियों में अशुद्धि के कारण शरीर में प्राण के जर्जर होने से ही काया रोग ग्रस्त होती है इसलिए उपचार इन्हीं का होना चाहिए (अखण्ड ज्योति, 1994, नवंबर, पृ. 13)।

कुण्डलिनी साधना का षट्चक्र सिद्धांत

भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली में षट्चक्र सिद्धांत मानव शरीर को एक सूक्ष्म ऊर्जा-तंत्र के रूप में समझाता है जो कुण्डलिनी साधना के अंतिम ध्येय आत्म तत्त्व प्राप्ति का आधार है। षट्चक्र सिद्धांत के अनुसार मेरुदंड के आधार से भ्रूमध्य तक छह प्रमुख चक्र मूलाधार, स्वाधिष्ठान, मणिपुर, अनाहत, विशुद्ध और आज्ञा स्थित होते हैं, जो प्राण-ऊर्जा और चेतना के स्तरों को नियंत्रित करते हैं। प्रत्येक चक्र के आकार में मुख्य छह चीजें हैं- चक्र का रंग, कमल की पंखुड़ियाँ, यन्त्र तथा उसकी ज्यामितीय आकृति, बीज मंत्र, प्रतीक पशु, दिव्य प्रतीक (सरस्वती, 2005, पृ. 120)। शिव संहिता तथा षट्चक्र निरूपण में चक्रों के स्वरूप एवं आध्यात्मिक महत्त्व का विस्तार से वर्णन मिलता है। कुण्डलिनी शक्ति मूलाधार में सुप्त रहती है और साधना के माध्यम से जाग्रत होकर सुषुम्ना नाड़ी से ऊपर उठते हुए क्रमिक रूप से प्रत्येक चक्र का भेदन करती हुई चेतना का विकास करती है। इस

प्रकार चक्रों का आरोहण चेतना के परिष्कार की प्रक्रिया है। षट्चक्र सिद्धांत केवल दार्शनिक अवधारणा नहीं अपितु अनुभवजन्य साधना प्रक्रिया है। आधुनिक दृष्टिकोण में इसे मनोदैहिक विकास से भी जोड़ा जाता है, जहाँ प्रत्येक चक्र मानसिक एवं भावनात्मक अवस्थाओं को प्रभावित करता है (Pal, 2022, pp. 122-164)।

शोध पद्धति-

यह अध्ययन मुख्य रूप से गुणात्मक प्रकृति का है तथा हठयोग के प्रमुख ग्रंथों के गहन विश्लेषण एवं व्याख्यात्मक विधि पर आधारित है।

परिणाम एवं चर्चा

ग्रंथीय विश्लेषण से प्राप्त मुख्य निष्कर्ष इस प्रकार से हैं-

कुण्डलिनी साधना का स्वरूप

कुण्डलिनी साधना एक गहन आध्यात्मिक प्रक्रिया है जिसमें साधक अपनी मूलभूत सुप्त शक्ति कुण्डलिनी को जागृत कर उसे सहस्रार चक्र तक ले जाता है। यह साधना केवल शारीरिक या मानसिक अभ्यास नहीं अपितु शरीर, मन, प्राण और आत्मा के समग्र रूपांतरण की यात्रा है। कुण्डलिनी साधना में अनुशासन एक अनिवार्य पहलु है। अनुशासन के अभाव में किसी भी आध्यात्मिक मार्ग पर सफलता असंभव है। नाथ आचार्यों के मत में योगाभ्यास से पूर्व संयम की आवश्यकता रहती है (शर्मा, 1985, पृ.209)। कुण्डलिनी साधना में भी यही अनुशासन लागू होता है, साधक को संयमित जीवनशैली अपनानी चाहिए जिसमें मिताहार, नियमित दिनचर्या, ब्रह्मचर्य एवं इंद्रिय-निग्रह शामिल हैं। सभी हठयोग ग्रंथ गुरु-शिष्य परंपरा पर विशेष बल देते हैं। अनुशासन केवल बाह्य नियमों तक सीमित नहीं है बल्कि आंतरिक शुद्धि एवं आत्म-संयम का समग्र अभ्यास है। योग ग्रंथों में साधना में विघ्न उत्पन्न करने वाले तथा साधना में सहायता करने वाले तत्त्वों का उल्लेख मिलता है। आवश्यकता से अधिक भोजन, अधिक श्रम, अधिक बोलना, काम-वासना, मन की चंचलता तथा नियमों में आग्रह साधना में बाधक हैं। वहीं दूसरी ओर उत्साह, साहस, धैर्य, संकल्प, यथार्थ ज्ञान तथा जहां आवश्यक हो लोक-संग का परित्याग (दिगम्बरजी, 2008, 1.15,16) कुण्डलिनी साधना की सफलता के आधार हैं।

कुण्डलिनी साधना के प्रमुख चरण-

कुण्डलिनी योग साधना के चार चरण हैं प्रथम चरण कुण्डलिनी शक्ति का जागरण, द्वितीय कुण्डलिनी शक्ति का उत्थान, तृतीय षट्चक्रों का भेदन तथा चतुर्थ चरण में सहस्रार स्थित शिव से महामिलन होता है (शर्मा, 2016, पृ.16)। हठयोग परंपरा कुण्डलिनी साधना को एक क्रमबद्ध, अनुशासित एवं अनुभवजन्य प्रक्रिया के रूप में प्रस्तुत करती है, जिसमें शरीर, प्राण और चित्त के शोधन एवं नियंत्रण के माध्यम से चेतना का उत्कर्ष किया जाता है। ग्रंथों में वर्णित है कि सभी योग साधनाओं की चार अवस्थाएं होती हैं आरंभावस्था, घटावस्था, परिचायावस्था तथा निष्पत्ति अवस्था (महेशानन्दजी, 1999, 3.31; भारती, 2022, पृ.441)। स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती अपनी पुस्तक कुण्डलिनी योग में कुण्डलिनी जागरण के उपायों में जन्मजात कुण्डलिनी जागरण, मंत्र, तपस्या, जड़ी बूटियों द्वारा, राजयोग, प्राणायाम, क्रिया योग इत्यादि का वर्णन करते हैं (सरस्वती, 2005, पृ.33)।

चरण 1- कुण्डलिनी शक्ति का जागरण

यह प्रारंभिक चरण है जिसमें साधक मूलाधार चक्र में सुप्त कुण्डलिनी शक्ति को सक्रिय करने के लिए क्रमिक रूप से निम्नलिखित जागरण विधि एवं क्रियाओं की ओर ध्यान केन्द्रित करता है। षट्कर्म (धौति, बस्ति, नेति, त्राटक, नौली, कपालभाति) द्वारा स्थूल शरीर की शुद्धि तथा त्रिदोष साम्यता की प्राप्ति होती है। विभिन्न आसन अभ्यास से शरीर में स्थिरता एवं नाड़ी शोधन क्रिया से नाड़ियों को शुद्ध कर प्राणायाम के अभ्यास द्वारा प्राण संतुलन प्राप्त होता है। प्राणायाम प्रत्येक योगी के लिए अनिवार्य कर्म है, इसके बिना कभी भी साधक अपने लक्ष्य को प्राप्त नहीं कर सकता है (शर्मा, 1985, पृ. 211)। बन्ध (मूलबंध, उड्डियान, जालंधर) तथा मुद्राओं (महामुद्रा, महावेध, खेचरी, शक्ति चालनी आदि) का अभ्यास प्राण ऊर्जा को सुषुम्ना नाड़ी में प्रवेश करवाने के लिए किया जाता है। हठप्रदीपिका में वर्णित है कि “जैसे अनंत नाग पृथ्वी को धारण करता है, वैसे कुण्डलिनी सभी योग क्रियाओं का आधार है। जब गुरु की कृपा से सोई कुण्डलिनी जागृत होती है, तब सभी चक्र और ग्रंथियाँ भेदित हो जाती हैं” (महेशानन्दजी, 1999, 4.21; दिगम्बरजी, 2008, 3.1-5)। शिव संहिता में कुण्डलिनी को मुद्राओं के अभ्यास द्वारा जागृत करने का निर्देश दिया

गया है (महेशानन्दजी, 1999, 4.22)। घेरंड संहिता में भी शक्ति चालनी मुद्रा और भस्त्रिका प्राणायाम इत्यादि क्रियाओं द्वारा कुण्डलिनी जागरण का उल्लेख प्राप्त होता है। कुण्डलिनी साधना के प्रथम चरण में प्राण-अपान के संतुलन से आंतरिक ऊष्णता उत्पन्न होती है।

चरण 2- कुण्डलिनी शक्ति का उत्थान

नाड़ी शोधन, आसन, प्राणायाम के दृढ़ अभ्यास से कुण्डलिनी के उर्ध्वगमन के लिए सुषुम्ना उपयुक्त हो जाती है (दिगम्बरजी, 2008, 3.120) और इस उपयुक्त सुषुम्ना में कुण्डलिनी जागृत हो कर ऊपर उठती है। द्वितीय चरण में सफलता प्राप्ति हेतु आरम्भिक क्रिया विधियों (आसन, प्राणायाम, बंध और मुद्राओं) का अभ्यास, संयम और वैराग्य द्वारा निरंतर करते जाना चाहिए। इसमें महाबन्ध, महामुद्रा द्वारा प्राण को ऊर्ध्वगामी बनाना तथा शक्तिचालनी मुद्रा द्वारा कुण्डलिनी को हिलाना और ऊपर ले जाने की क्रिया सम्मिलित है। हठयोग ग्रंथों में वर्णित विभिन्न मुद्राओं और कुम्भक से कुण्डलिनी का उत्थान होता है। कुण्डलिनी के उत्थान से विभिन्न अनुभव जैसे दिव्य दर्शन, आनंद और सिद्धियाँ प्राप्त होती हैं। साधक का जब प्राण वायु में पूर्ण नियंत्रण होता है तो कुण्डलिनी का क्रमिक उत्थान होना आरम्भ होता है (द्विवेदी, 2023, पृ.134)। इस चरण में साधक को विभिन्न शारीरिक (गर्मी, कंपन) तथा मानसिक अनुभव (प्रकाश दर्शन) हो सकते हैं।

चरण 3- षट्चक्रों का भेदन

उपरोक्त वर्णित क्रियाओं के निरंतर अभ्यास पर संयम रखने से जब कुण्डलिनी अपना कुंडल खोल ऊपर की ओर सीधी होती है तो सुषुम्ना नाड़ी के मध्य में स्थित वज्रा नाड़ी के मध्यभाग में चित्रिणी नाड़ी (ब्रह्म नाड़ी) मेरु के मध्यांतर में स्थित कमलों को भेदती हुई ऊर्ध्वगामी होती है (वेदान्तकेशरी, 2003, पृ. 109)। चक्र भेदन पर तीन ग्रंथियाँ (ब्रह्म, विष्णु, रुद्र) खुलने से चेतना का पूर्ण विस्तार होता है। यहाँ तक कुण्डलिनी साधना का तृतीय चरण पूर्ण होता है। इस बिंदु तक पहुँचे के लिए संयम द्वारा विशिष्ट मुद्राओं, प्राणायाम, चक्र-ध्यान, मंत्र जाप में स्थिरता को बनाए रखना आवश्यक है, जिससे प्रत्येक चक्र पर प्राण को स्थिर कर भेदन किया जा सके। शिव संहिता में चक्र ध्यान की विधियों तथा ध्यान से प्राप्त होने वाले अनुभवों का वर्णन प्राप्त होता है (महेशानन्दजी, 1999, 5.87-129)। प्रत्येक चक्र के भेदन के साथ साधक को विशिष्ट आध्यात्मिक एवं मनोदैहिक अनुभव प्राप्त होते हैं। इन अनुभवों में भावनात्मक शुद्धि, मानसिक स्थिरता तथा दिव्य गंध, दिव्य ध्वनि, प्रकाश, आनन्द और ऊष्मा जैसे सूक्ष्म संवेदन शामिल हैं। हठयोग ग्रंथों के अनुसार ये अनुभव कुण्डलिनी शक्ति के क्रमिक उदय एवं ग्रन्थियों के भेदन का प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण माने जाते हैं।

चरण 4- सहस्रार स्थित शिव से महामिलन

कुण्डलिनी साधना की प्रक्रिया का अंतिम एवं परम लक्ष्य सहस्रार चक्र में स्थित शिव-तत्त्व (परम चैतन्य) से शक्ति का एक होना माना गया है। हठयोग परम्परा के अनुसार जब कुण्डलिनी शक्ति सुषुम्ना मार्ग से आरोहण करते हुए मूलाधार से आज्ञा चक्र तक के समस्त षट्चक्रों का भेदन कर सहस्रार कमल में प्रवेश करती है, तब शक्ति और शिव का मिलन होता है (द्विवेदी, 2023, पृ.134)। इस अवस्था को समाधि, राजयोग, अमृत-पान, निर्वाण तथा मोक्ष की अवस्था कहा गया है। षट्चक्रनिरूपण में वर्णित है कि चक्रभेदन के उपरान्त कुण्डलिनी सहस्रार में स्थित परम शिव से मिलकर साधक को परम आनन्द एवं अद्वैत चेतना का अनुभव कराती है। इसी प्रकार हठप्रदीपिका में कुण्डलिनी के सहस्रार तक पहुँचने पर अमृतधारा के प्रवाह तथा उच्चतम योगावस्था की प्राप्ति का उल्लेख मिलता है। इस अनुभूति में स्थिरता हेतु योगग्रंथों में खेचरी मुद्रा, शांभवी मुद्रा तथा नादानुसंधान (अन्तर्नाद श्रवण) जैसे साधनों का विशेष महत्व बताया गया है। साथ ही गुरु-निर्देश, संयम, वैराग्य एवं परम सत्ता के प्रति पूर्ण समर्पण को कुण्डलिनी साधना की सफलता के लिए अनिवार्य माना गया है। स्पष्ट है कि कुण्डलिनी जागरण कोई आकस्मिक घटना नहीं बल्कि एक दीर्घकालिक, वैज्ञानिक एवं अनुशासित प्रक्रिया है, जो साधक को आत्म-साक्षात्कार की ओर अग्रसर करती है।

कुण्डलिनी साधना में सावधानियाँ

कुण्डलिनी साधना हठयोग की एक अत्यंत सूक्ष्म एवं शक्तिशाली प्रक्रिया है, जिसके अभ्यास के लिए उचित सावधानियाँ अत्यावश्यक हैं। हठयोग ग्रंथों में निर्देशित है कि योग्य गुरु के मार्गदर्शन के बिना इस उच्च साधना का अभ्यास आरंभ नहीं करना चाहिए। साधना में गुरु कृपा से सफलता मिलती है, न वेद पाठ से न ज्ञान से और न ही वैराग्य से (द्विवेदी, 2023, पृ.137)। साधक को बिना गुरु के अभ्यास से प्राण-विक्षेप, मानसिक विकार या शारीरिक असंतुलन उत्पन्न हो सकता है (कुवल्यानंद, 1971, पृ.ix)। सबसे पहले साधक को षट्कर्मों (धौति, बस्ति, नेति, त्राटक, नौली, कपालभाति) द्वारा शरीर में त्रिदोष की साम्यावस्था एवं नाड़ियों की पूर्ण शुद्धि सुनिश्चित करनी चाहिए। प्राणायाम का अभ्यास धीरे-धीरे, क्रमिक एवं संतुलित रूप से करना चाहिए क्योंकि त्रुटिपूर्ण या अत्यधिक अभ्यास से विकार (जैसे सिरदर्द, श्वास संबंधी समस्या) उत्पन्न हो सकते हैं।

(दिगम्बरजी, 2008, 2.16)। सभी क्रिया विधियों का अभ्यास योग्य मार्गदर्शन में क्रमिक रूप से करना चाहिए। साधना के दौरान धैर्य, संयम, निरंतरता बनाए रखना चाहिए क्योंकि यह दीर्घकालिक प्रक्रिया है। भय, अहंकार, असंयम से बचना चाहिए क्योंकि ये मानसिक विकार साधना में बाधक बनते हैं। शरीर में किसी प्रकार की असहजता (गर्मी, कंपन, दबाव आदि) होने पर अभ्यास को तुरंत नियंत्रित कर गुरु से परामर्श लेना चाहिए। स्वामी सत्यानंद सरस्वती कुण्डलिनी योग में सिद्ध मुनियों के इस विचार को पुनः स्पष्ट करते हैं कि कुण्डलिनी जागरण कोई आकस्मिक घटना नहीं है बल्कि दीर्घकालिक, अनुशासित एवं सुरक्षित प्रक्रिया है, जिसमें तैयारी (शारीरिक-मानसिक शुद्धि) और सावधानियाँ अनिवार्य हैं।

इस प्रकार योग्य गुरु-मार्गदर्शन, शास्त्रीय क्रम, अनुशासन और संतुलन के साथ अभ्यास करने पर ही कुण्डलिनी साधना सुरक्षित एवं फलदायी सिद्ध होती है।

कुण्डलिनी साधना का महत्व

कुण्डलिनी साधना शारीरिक, मानसिक एवं आध्यात्मिक स्तर पर साधक के समग्र विकास में सहायक है। हठग्रंथों में वर्णित विभिन्न आसन, प्राणायाम, बंध एवं मुद्राओं के अभ्यास से रोग-नाश एवं शरीर दृढ़ता का वर्णन मिलता है। कुण्डलिनी साधना के अभ्यास से मिलने वाले शारीरिक लाभों में नाड़ी-शुद्धि, प्राण-संतुलन, शरीर की आंतरिक प्रणालियों का समन्वय, स्वास्थ्य एवं ऊर्जा वृद्धि, रोग-प्रतिरोधक क्षमता में वृद्धि है। मानसिक रूप से चित्त की एकाग्रता, मानसिक शांति, भावनात्मक संतुलन, तनाव, भय एवं अशांति में कमी आदि लाभ प्राप्त होते हैं। घेरंड संहिता के अनुसार यह साधना स्थिरता, धैर्य एवं आत्म-नियंत्रण प्रदान करती है। साधना से मिलने वाले आध्यात्मिक लाभों में आत्म-साक्षात्कार, चेतना-विस्तार, चक्र-भेदन, सहस्रार में शिव-शक्ति मिलन एवं मोक्ष की प्राप्ति है। हठयोग ग्रंथ कुण्डलिनी जागरण को शरीर, मन एवं आत्मा के सामंजस्य का परम साधन मानते हैं। समग्र रूप से हठयोग ग्रंथों में वर्णित कुण्डलिनी साधना न केवल शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य एवं मानसिक संतुलन प्रदान करती है अपितु मानव जीवन के परम लक्ष्य आत्म-साक्षात्कार एवं मोक्ष का मार्ग भी प्रशस्त करती है।

निष्कर्ष

प्रस्तुत शोध से स्पष्ट होता है कि भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली में कुण्डलिनी साधना हठयोग ग्रंथों में वर्णित एक सुव्यवस्थित, क्रमबद्ध एवं प्रभावी साधना पद्धति है। हठयोग में कुण्डलिनी को समस्त योग क्रियाओं का आधार बताया गया है, जो सर्पाकार रूप में मूलाधार में सुप्त रहती है और गुरु-कृपा तथा विशिष्ट क्रियाओं से जागृत होकर सुषुम्ना मार्ग से षट्चक्रों का भेदन करती हुई सहस्रार में शिव से मिलन करती है।

यह साधना शरीर, प्राण और चित्त के समन्वित शोधन पर आधारित है। साधना का प्रारंभिक आधार नाड़ी-शुद्धि बताया गया है क्योंकि अशुद्ध नाड़ियाँ प्राण-प्रवाह में बाधा उत्पन्न करती हैं। कुण्डलिनी जागरण, उत्थान, चक्र-भेदन एवं सहस्रार मिलन के चार चरण क्रमिक रूप से चेतना के उत्कर्ष को दर्शाते हैं, जिनसे राजयोग की प्राप्ति होती है। हठयोग ग्रंथों में सावधानियों पर विशेष बल दिया गया है। बिना योग्य गुरु के मार्गदर्शन, अपर्याप्त शुद्धि या असंतुलित अभ्यास से प्राण-विक्षेप, मानसिक विकार या शारीरिक असंतुलन हो सकता है। अतः साधना की सफलता के लिए गुरु-मार्गदर्शन, नाड़ी-शुद्धि, मिताहार, ब्रह्मचर्य, धैर्य एवं क्रमिक अभ्यास अनिवार्य हैं।

समकालीन संदर्भ में कुण्डलिनी साधना मानसिक तनाव, असंतुलित जीवनशैली और आंतरिक अशांति के समाधान में प्रासंगिक है। आधुनिक शोध प्राणायाम, ध्यान एवं योगाभ्यास के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य, तनाव न्यूनीकरण तथा भावनात्मक संतुलन पर सकारात्मक प्रभावों की पुष्टि करते हैं। यह शोध कुण्डलिनी साधना को समग्र स्वास्थ्य एवं चेतना-विकास की प्रभावी पद्धति के रूप में स्थापित करता है, जो भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा की प्रासंगिकता को सबके समक्ष प्रस्तुत करता है।

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that, within the Indian Knowledge System, Kundalini Sadhana is a systematic, sequential, and effective spiritual practice described in the classical Hatha Yoga texts. These texts identify Kundalini as the foundation of all yogic practices. It is believed to remain dormant in the Muladhara Chakra in a coiled, serpentine form and, through the grace of a competent Guru and the disciplined practice of specific yogic techniques, ascends through the Sushumna Nadi, piercing the six chakras before ultimately uniting with Shiva in the Sahasrara Chakra.

Kundalini Sadhana is based on the integrated purification of the body, vital energy (prana), and mind. The initial prerequisite for this practice is the purification of the nadis, as impurities in the subtle energy channels obstruct the free flow of prana. The



four sequential stages of Kundalini Sadhana—awakening, ascent, chakra piercing, and union with the Sahasrara—represent the progressive evolution of consciousness, culminating in the attainment of Raja Yoga. The Hatha Yoga scriptures place considerable emphasis on the precautions associated with this practice. They caution that practising without the guidance of a qualified Guru, inadequate purification, or improper techniques may result in disturbances of pranic energy, psychological imbalance, or physical discomfort. Therefore, the successful practice of Kundalini Sadhana requires competent guidance, purification of the nadis, moderation in diet, observance of brahmacharya, patience, and gradual, disciplined practice.

In the contemporary context, Kundalini Sadhana is increasingly relevant as a means of addressing mental stress, unhealthy lifestyles, and inner psychological unrest. Modern scientific studies have also recognised the positive effects of yogic practices, including pranayama, meditation, and Hatha Yoga, on mental health, stress reduction, and emotional well-being. Thus, the present study establishes Kundalini Sadhana as an effective method for promoting holistic health and the progressive development of consciousness while highlighting the enduring relevance of the Indian Knowledge System in the modern world.

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भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब की महानता

BHARTIYA GYAN PARAMPARA ME GURU GRANTH SAHIB KI MAHANTA

Avtar Singh

Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Mata Sundri University Girls College, Mansa, Punjab, India

सारांश

सिख धर्म की आयु पाँच सौ वर्ष से अधिक नहीं है। यह विश्व के सबसे युवा धर्मों में से एक है। इस धर्म की उत्पत्ति पंजाब में हुई, लेकिन अब इसके अधिकांश अनुयायी पंजाब और विश्व भर में फैले हुए हैं। चाहे वे देश में रह रहे हों, राज्य में या किसी भी कारण से विदेश में, सिखों को दूर से ही उनके स्वरूप और पगड़ी से पहचाना जा सकता है। ये उनके धार्मिक प्रतीक हैं। जैसा कि उनके इतिहास से पता चलता है, सिखों के लिए उनकी धार्मिक पहचान और उनके प्रतीक बहुत महत्वपूर्ण हैं। यही उन्हें एकता और विशिष्टता प्रदान करते हैं। ये प्रतीक सिख जीवन शैली का अभिन्न अंग हैं। सिखों के श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी मध्यकाल का सबसे विशाल धार्मिक ग्रंथ है। यह 1430 पृष्ठों का ग्रंथ है, जिसे सिख धर्म में 'गुरु साहिब' का दर्जा प्राप्त है। ऐसा कोई अन्य ग्रंथ किसी अन्य भाषा में उपलब्ध नहीं है। इसका बहुत सम्मान और प्रतिष्ठा है। सिखों का धार्मिक ग्रंथ गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब है, जिसका भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में बहुत महत्व है। यह शोध पत्र गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब की महानता के महत्वपूर्ण पहलुओं पर प्रकाश डालता है।

Abstract

Sikhism is not more than five hundred years old, making it one of the youngest religions in the world. Although it originated in Punjab, most of its followers are now spread across Punjab and the rest of the world. Wherever Sikhs live — within the country, within the state, or abroad for any reason — they can be recognised from a distance by their appearance and turban, which are their religious symbols. As their history reveals, religious identity and these symbols are of great importance to Sikhs, giving them unity and distinctiveness, and forming an integral part of the Sikh way of life. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the religious scripture of the Sikhs, is the most voluminous religious text of the medieval period. Spanning 1430 pages, it holds the status of 'Guru Sahib' in Sikhism; no comparable text exists in any other language, and it commands immense respect and prestige. The Guru Granth Sahib holds great importance within the Indian knowledge tradition, and this research paper highlights significant aspects of its greatness.

Keywords: Guru Granth Sahib, Gurbani, Guru, Devotee, Humanity.

Introduction

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा एक विशाल परंपरा है जो मानव जीवन के आध्यात्मिक, नैतिक और सामाजिक पहलुओं की व्याख्या करती है। विभिन्न धार्मिक ग्रंथों ने इसमें योगदान दिया है। इनमें गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब का विशेष स्थान है, क्योंकि यह मानवता, सत्य और आध्यात्मिक उत्थान की प्रेरणा देता है। इस शोध पत्र में भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब की महानता के विभिन्न पहलुओं—इसके इतिहास, बाणीकारों, रागों, सामाजिक व नैतिक शिक्षाओं तथा समकालीन प्रासंगिकता—का विस्तृत विवेचन प्रस्तुत किया गया है।

Review of Literature

विद्वानों की खोज से पता चलता है कि गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के मूल सिद्धांतों—जैसे एकता, सहिष्णुता और आध्यात्मिकता—को स्पष्ट रूप से व्यक्त करता है। गुरु नानक देव जी की बाणी इस धर्मग्रंथ का केंद्रीय आधार हैं, जिनमें "एक सार" का सिद्धांत मानव एकता को प्रतिबिंबित करता है।

कई विद्वानों ने इस ग्रंथ की विशेषता इसकी समावेशिता में निहित बताई है। इसमें सिख गुरुओं के वाणी के साथ-साथ विभिन्न भक्तों और संतों के भजन भी शामिल हैं, जो भारतीय संस्कृति की विविधता और धार्मिक सहयोग को दर्शाते हैं। यह विशेषता इसे केवल एक धार्मिक ग्रंथ ही नहीं, बल्कि एक सर्वमान्य आध्यात्मिक दस्तावेज बनाती है।

कुछ अध्ययन नैतिक मूल्यों पर केंद्रित हैं। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब सत्य, विनम्रता, सेवा और परिश्रम को प्रोत्साहित करता है। ये मूल्य व्यक्ति को संतुलित और नैतिक जीवन जीने में मदद करते हैं, जो भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के केंद्र में हैं। दूसरी ओर, कई विद्वान इस बात पर भी जोर देते हैं कि यह ग्रंथ सामाजिक असमानताओं का विरोध करता है। यह जातिवाद, अंधविश्वास और भेदभाव को नकारते हुए समानता और मानवाधिकारों की वकालत करता है। इस प्रकार, यह ग्रंथ न केवल आध्यात्मिक है, बल्कि सामाजिक सुधार का साधन भी है। इसके अलावा, कुछ अध्ययनों में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब

के संगीतमय पहलू पर भी प्रकाश डाला गया है। रागों में लिखे गए श्लोक मानव मन पर गहरा प्रभाव छोड़ते हैं और ध्यान और आध्यात्मिक शांति को बढ़ावा देते हैं।

Research Methodology

यह शोध कार्य की आधारशिला होती है। यह शोधकर्ता को समस्या की पहचान, विश्लेषण तथा निष्कर्ष निकालने की सही दिशा प्रदान करती है। इसके माध्यम से शोध कार्य व्यवस्थित, वैज्ञानिक और विश्वसनीय बनता है। इस शोध पत्र के विषय के अध्ययन के लिए धर्मशास्त्रीय (विश्लेषणात्मक एवं व्याख्यात्मक) विधि को उपयोग में लाया गया है।

Findings

इस अध्ययन में यह प्रयत्न करने की कोशिश की गई है कि गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का एक अद्वितीय और सार्वभौमिक ग्रंथ है। इसमें आध्यात्मिकता, नैतिकता, मानव समानता, सेवा, करुणा तथा सत्य के मूल्यों का समावेश है। यह ग्रंथ जाति, धर्म, भाषा और क्षेत्रीय भेदभाव से ऊपर उठकर मानवता की एकता का संदेश देता है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब में निहित शिक्षाएँ व्यक्ति के नैतिक विकास, सामाजिक सद्भाव और आध्यात्मिक उन्नति को प्रोत्साहित करती हैं। अध्ययन से यह भी ज्ञात होता है कि इसकी शिक्षाएँ आज के वैश्विक समाज में शांति, सहिष्णुता और मानवीय मूल्यों की स्थापना के लिए अत्यंत प्रासंगिक हैं।

Discussion

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा भारत की प्राचीन बौद्धिक, सांस्कृतिक और आध्यात्मिक धरोहर है, जो हजारों वर्षों से विकसित होती आ रही है। इसमें अलग-अलग ग्रंथों का महत्व रहा है। इसमें धर्म, दर्शन, विज्ञान, गणित, चिकित्सा, कला, साहित्य, संगीत, योग और नैतिक मूल्यों का समावेश होता है। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का मुख्य उद्देश्य मनुष्य के शारीरिक, मानसिक और आध्यात्मिक विकास को संतुलित करना है। इसी तरह भारत की धरती पर गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब की रचना हुई, जिसमें गुरुओं और भक्तों के पावन उपदेश दर्ज हैं। इस शोध पत्र में भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब की महानता के बारे में विस्तार से चर्चा की गई है।

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा विश्व की सबसे प्राचीन और समृद्ध ज्ञान परंपराओं में से एक मानी जाती है। यह परंपरा केवल धार्मिक विश्वासों तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि मानव जीवन के नैतिक, आध्यात्मिक, सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक विकास से भी जुड़ी हुई है। भारत की इस ज्ञानधारा ने सदियों से मानवता को सत्य, करुणा, समानता और भाईचारे का संदेश दिया है। इसी महान परंपरा में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब का विशेष स्थान है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब केवल सिख धर्म का पवित्र ग्रंथ ही नहीं, बल्कि मानवता के लिए सार्वभौमिक ज्ञान का स्रोत भी है। इसमें जीवन को सही दिशा देने वाले सिद्धांत, आध्यात्मिक चिंतन और सामाजिक समानता का संदेश मिलता है।

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब का इतिहास

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब सिख धर्म का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण और पवित्र धार्मिक ग्रंथ है। इसका इतिहास सिख धर्म के प्रारंभ और विकास के साथ गहराई से जुड़ा हुआ है। इस धर्मग्रंथ की नींव प्रथम सिख गुरु, गुरु नानक देव जी के उच्चारण की गई बाणी से रखी गई थी। गुरु नानक देव जी ने मानवता, एक ईश्वर, सत्य और नाम सिमरन का संदेश दिया। उनके बाद आए गुरुओं ने भी अपनी बाणी रची, जिन्हें सिख समुदाय में गाया और पढ़ा जाता था। गुरु नानक ने बाणी में सत्य का उपदेश दिया:

सच की बाणी नानक आखै सचु सुणाइसी सच की बेला॥

(भाई तेजा सिंह, 2009, पृ. 723)

गुरु नानक साहिब द्वारा अपनी यात्राओं के समय भक्तों की वाणी एकत्र की गई। भाई गुरदास जी अपनी रचनाओं में उल्लेख करते हैं कि गुरु नानक के पास एक किताब होती थी जिसमें वो बाणी अंकित करते थे। भाई गुरदास ने अपनी रचना वार पहली की पौड़ी संख्या 32 में बताया है:

आसा हथ किताब कछ कूजा बांग मुसला धारी ॥

(V. Singh, 2012, p. 26)

गुरु नानक देव की यात्राओं के दौरान जब सिद्धों या अन्य धर्मों के मुखियों से चर्चा होती थी, तब यह किताब उनके पास होती थी। भाई गुरदास जी अपनी पहली वार की पौड़ी संख्या 33 में कहते हैं:

पुछनि फोलि किताब नो हिन्दू वडा कि मुसलमानोई ॥

बाबा आखे हाजीआ सुभि अमला बाझहु दोनो रोई ॥

(V. Singh, 2012, p. 27)

इस तरह जैसे-जैसे सिख धर्म का विकास होता गया, बाकी गुरुओं ने गुरु नानक की विचारधारा को आगे बढ़ाया। यह वाणी पाँचवें गुरु, गुरु अर्जन देव जी के पास आई, जिन्होंने इसे महान खजाना बताते हुए यह शब्द उच्चारण किए:

पीऊ दादे का खोलि डिठा खजाना ॥ ता मैरे मनि भइआ निधाना ॥

(T. Singh, 2009, p. 186)

पाँचवें गुरु, गुरु अर्जन देव जी ने इस बानी का संकलन और इसे ग्रंथ के रूप में तैयार करने का ऐतिहासिक कार्य किया। आदि ग्रंथ का संपादन सन् 1604 ई. में पूरा हुआ। इसमें प्रथम पाँच गुरुओं की बानी के साथ-साथ भक्तों, सिखों और भाटों की बानी भी शामिल है। ग्रंथ को लिखने का मुख्य कार्य भाई गुरदास जी ने किया था। इसे सर्वप्रथम हरिमंदिर साहिब में स्थापित किया गया था। बाद में, दसवें गुरु, गुरु गोविंद सिंह जी ने भी इसमें गुरु तेग बहादुर जी के भजनों को शामिल किया। सन् 1708 में गुरु गोविंद सिंह जी ने गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब को सिखों का शाश्वत गुरु घोषित किया, जिसके बाद सिख धर्म में मानव गुरुओं की परंपरा समाप्त हो गई। आज गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब सिखों के लिए आध्यात्मिक प्रेरणा और जीवन का मार्गदर्शक है।

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब और इसके बाणीकार

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब में 6 सिख गुरुओं की बानी शामिल है। इसमें गुरुओं के अलावा 15 भक्तों, 11 भट्टों और कुछ अन्य सिख संगीतकारों की वाणी भी शामिल है। इस प्रकार गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब विभिन्न जातियों, धर्मों और क्षेत्रों के संतों के भजनों को एक साथ लाकर मानव एकता का महान संदेश देता है। इस ग्रंथ में केवल सिख गुरुओं की वाणी ही नहीं, बल्कि विभिन्न संतों, सूफियों और भक्त कवियों की वाणी भी शामिल है, जिसमें भक्ति आंदोलन की व्यापक भावना दिखाई देती है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब में दर्ज विचार जाति, धर्म, भाषा और क्षेत्रीय सीमाओं से ऊपर उठकर मानव एकता का संदेश देते हैं। बाणीकार निम्नलिखित हैं:

(क) 5 गुरु साहिबान: गुरु नानक देव जी, गुरु अंगद देव जी, गुरु अमरदास जी, गुरु रामदास जी, गुरु अर्जन देव जी (गुरु तेग बहादुर जी की बाणी गुरु गोविंद सिंह जी ने गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी में दर्ज करवाई थी)।

(ख) 15 भक्त: भक्त कबीर जी, नामदेव जी, रविदास जी, त्रिलोचन जी, फरीद जी, वेणी जी, धन्ना जी, जैदेव जी, भीखण जी, परमानंद जी, सैण जी, पीपा जी, सधना जी, रामानंद जी और सूरदास जी।

(ग) 11 भट्ट साहिबान: कलसहार, जालप, कीरत, भिखा, सल्ह, भल्ह, नल्ह, बल्ह, गयंद, मथुरा और हरिबंस जी।

(घ) तीन गुरुसिख: भाई सत्ता, भाई बलबंड और भाई सुंदर जी।

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब के राग

समस्त बाणी 30 रागों में दर्ज की गई थी। बाद में गुरु तेग बहादुर जी ने एक अन्य राग 'बैजावंती' में भी बाणी उच्चारण की, जो उनकी शेष बाणी के साथ दशम पातशाह जी ने गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी में दर्ज करवा दी। इस प्रकार मौजूदा श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी में 31 रागों में बाणी दर्ज है, जो इस प्रकार है: (1) सिरी रागु, (2) माझ, (3) गउड़ी, (4) आसा, (5) गुजरी, (6) देवगंधारी, (7) बिहागड़ा, (8) वडहंस, (9) सोरठि, (10) धनासरी, (11) जैतसरी, (12) टोडी, (13) बैरागी, (14) तिलंग, (15) सूही, (16) बिलावल, (17) गोंड, (18) रामकली, (19) नट नरायण, (20) माली गउड़ा, (21) मारू, (22) तुखारी, (23) केदारा, (24) भैरु, (25) बसंत, (26) सारंग, (27) मलार, (28) कानड़ा, (29) कल्याण, (30) प्रभाती, और

(31) जैजावन्ती। प्रोफेसर साहिब सिंह जी के अनुसार गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब (आदि बीड़) की समस्त बाणी की लिखाई भाई गुरदास जी ने लगभग डेढ़ वर्ष में कर ली थी।

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा और गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का मूल उद्देश्य आत्मज्ञान, नैतिक जीवन और लोक कल्याण रहा है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भी इन्हीं मूल्यों को आगे बढ़ाता है। इसमें आध्यात्मिकता के साथ-साथ व्यावहारिक जीवन के आदर्श भी मिलते हैं। यह ग्रंथ मनुष्य को सत्य, सेवा, विनम्रता और ईश्वर भक्ति का मार्ग दिखाता है। भारतीय दर्शन में "एकत्व" की भावना को अत्यंत महत्त्व दिया गया है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब में भी "एक ओंकार" का सिद्धांत इसी विचार को व्यक्त करता है। यह संदेश देता है कि ईश्वर एक है और सभी मनुष्य उसकी संतान हैं। इस प्रकार गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के सार्वभौमिक दृष्टिकोण को मजबूत करता है।

सामाजिक समानता का संदेश

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता इसकी मानवतावादी सोच है। इसमें जाति-पाति, ऊँच-नीच और भेदभाव का विरोध किया गया है। उस समय समाज में जातिगत विभाजन बहुत गहरा था, लेकिन गुरु साहिबानों ने सभी मनुष्यों को समान माना:

अवलि अलह नूर उपाइआ कुदरति के सभ बंदे ॥

एक नूर ते सभु जगु उपजिआ कउन भले को मंदे ॥

(T. Singh, 2010, p. 1349)

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब में यह शिक्षा दी गई है कि मनुष्य की पहचान उसके कर्मों से होती है, जन्म से नहीं। लंगर प्रथा और संगत की परंपरा भी इसी समानता के सिद्धांत को मजबूत करती है। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में "वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्" की भावना मिलती है, और गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब इस विचार को व्यावहारिक रूप देता है।

आध्यात्मिकता और नैतिकता

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब में आध्यात्मिकता को जीवन का आधार माना गया है। इसमें नाम सिमरन, सत्य और ईश्वर प्रेम पर बल दिया गया है। यह ग्रंथ मनुष्य को लोभ, अहंकार, क्रोध और मोह जैसी बुराइयों से दूर रहने की प्रेरणा देता है। इसमें सत्य के साथ जीवन जीने की शिक्षा दी गई है:

किव सचिआरा होईऐ किव कूड़े तुटै पालि ॥

(T. Singh, 2009, p. 1)

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में आत्मसंयम और सदाचार को महत्त्वपूर्ण माना गया है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भी मनुष्य को नैतिक जीवन जीने का संदेश देता है। इसमें कहा गया है कि केवल धार्मिक कर्मकांड से नहीं, बल्कि सच्चे आचरण और सेवा भावना से ईश्वर की प्राप्ति संभव है।

शिक्षा और ज्ञान का महत्त्व

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब ज्ञान को जीवन का प्रकाश मानता है। इसमें अज्ञानता को मनुष्य के पतन का कारण बताया गया है। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में गुरु का स्थान अत्यंत ऊँचा माना गया है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब में भी गुरु को वह शक्ति बताया गया है जो मनुष्य को अंधकार से प्रकाश की ओर ले जाती है। दूसरे गुरु, गुरु अंगद देव जी का फुरमान है:

जे सउ चंदा उगवहि सूरज चड़हि हजार ॥

एते चानण होदिआं गुर बिनु घोर अंधार ॥

(T. Singh, 2012, p. 463)

यह ग्रंथ केवल धार्मिक शिक्षा ही नहीं देता, बल्कि जीवन के व्यावहारिक ज्ञान को भी प्रस्तुत करता है। इसमें परिश्रम, ईमानदारी और सेवा को आदर्श जीवन के आवश्यक गुण बताया गया है। "कीरत करो, नाम जपो और वंड छको" का सिद्धांत समाज में नैतिकता और सहयोग की भावना को बढ़ाता है।

सार्वभौमिकता और मानवता

गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब की महानता इसकी सार्वभौमिक सोच में निहित है। इसमें किसी एक धर्म या समुदाय की श्रेष्ठता का प्रचार नहीं किया गया, बल्कि सम्पूर्ण मानवता को एक मानने का संदेश दिया गया है। गुरुबाणी की विशेषता यह है कि यह समस्त मानवता को एक सूत्र में पिरोने का संदेश प्रस्तुत करती है। श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी में दर्ज गुरुबाणी का संदेश सम्पूर्ण मानव जाति के कल्याण और उपकार के लिए है। यह सभी वर्गों के लिए समान रूप से उपयोगी उपदेश है। इस संबंध में श्री गुरु अर्जन देव जी का यह वचन है, जिसमें हिंदू, मुस्लिम और विभिन्न पृष्ठभूमियों के संतों की वाणी का समावेश इसकी उदारता को दर्शाता है। इसका संदेश सभी वर्गों के लिए है:

खत्री ब्राह्मण सूद वैश उपदेस चहु वरना कउ सांझा॥

(T. Singh, 2010, p. 747)

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा सदैव सहिष्णुता और समन्वय की पक्षधर रही है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब इसी परंपरा का जीवंत उदाहरण है। यह ग्रंथ धार्मिक सद्भाव, शांति और प्रेम की शिक्षा देता है, जो आज के समय में अत्यंत प्रासंगिक है।

वर्तमान समय में प्रासंगिकता

आज का समाज अनेक सामाजिक, धार्मिक और नैतिक समस्याओं का सामना कर रहा है। ऐसे समय में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब के संदेश मानवता के लिए मार्गदर्शक बन सकते हैं। यह ग्रंथ हमें प्रेम, सहिष्णुता, समानता और सेवा की प्रेरणा देता है:

गुरुबाणी इस जग में चानणु करमि वसे मनि आए॥

(T. Singh, 2009, p. 67)

आधुनिक जीवन में बढ़ती भौतिकता और तनाव के बीच गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब आत्मिक शांति का मार्ग दिखाता है। इसके उपदेश व्यक्ति को संतुलित जीवन जीने की प्रेरणा देते हैं। विश्व भर में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब के संदेशों का अध्ययन किया जा रहा है, क्योंकि इसमें मानव कल्याण की सार्वभौमिक भावना निहित है।

महान व्यक्तियों के गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब के बारे में विचार

डॉ. राधाकृष्णन की गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब के बारे में भावनाएँ

श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी के प्रति अपने विचार व्यक्त करते हुए भारत के प्रसिद्ध दार्शनिक डॉ. राधाकृष्णन ने कहा है कि श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब केवल पीरों, भगतों और गुरुओं की जीवनियाँ मात्र नहीं हैं। श्री गुरु अर्जन देव जी ने स्वयं कहा है कि "पोथी परमेश्वर का थान"—यह शब्द गुरु रूप में प्रतिष्ठित है और इसमें परमात्मा का निवास है। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब मानवीय मूल्यों का विशाल भंडार है। इसकी शिक्षाएँ मनुष्य को सत्य, प्रेम, करुणा और मानवता के मार्ग पर चलने की प्रेरणा देती हैं। यह ग्रंथ केवल किसी एक समुदाय के लिए नहीं, बल्कि समस्त मानव जाति के कल्याण के लिए मार्गदर्शक है। गुरुबाणी का संदेश सार्वभौमिक है और मानव जीवन को उच्च आदर्शों की ओर अग्रसर करता है।

डॉ. बी. आर. अंबेडकर के विचार

भारत के महान सपूत और दलितों के मसीहा डॉ. अंबेडकर ने 12 अप्रैल 1934 को सरदार बहादुर सुंदर सिंह मजीठिया सम्मेलन में गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी के प्रति अपनी गहरी श्रद्धा व्यक्त करते हुए कहा कि उन्हें विश्वास है कि सिख धर्म का अच्छा भविष्य है, क्योंकि सिख धर्म लोगों को स्वतंत्रता, समानता और भाईचारे का संदेश देता है। यह एक गुणकारी धर्म है। उनके अनुसार गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब एक गुणकारी, मार्गदर्शक और प्रेरणादायक ग्रंथ है, क्योंकि जो चीज एक व्यक्ति के लिए अच्छी है, वह शेष मानवता के लिए भी अच्छी होनी चाहिए। ऐसी मान्यताएँ धार्मिक और सामाजिक



असमानता तथा भेदभाव से बहुत दूर हैं। श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी एक जाति-पाति रहित, भेदभाव-मुक्त समाज की रचना का स्पष्ट संदेश प्रदान करते हैं। (Kuhati, 1936, p. 19)

स्वामी राम तीर्थ दंडी संन्यासी के विचार

स्वामी जी भारतीय संस्कृति के महान दार्शनिक तथा लेखक थे, जिन्होंने वेदों, पुराणों, स्मृतियों और उपनिषदों की गहन खोज करके बहुमूल्य पुस्तकें लिखीं। जब उन्होंने श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी का अध्ययन किया, तब उन्होंने अनुभव किया कि जीवन भर साधु-संतों की संगति, तपस्या और तीर्थ-भ्रमण करने के बावजूद उन्हें यह ज्ञात नहीं था कि जो कुछ गुरु घर में है, वह अन्यत्र कहीं नहीं मिल सकता। सिख धर्म के जीवन-दर्शन का अध्ययन करके उन्होंने एक प्रसिद्ध पुस्तक 'सर्वोत्तम आदि ग्रंथ श्री गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब' लिखी, जिसमें वे लिखते हैं कि गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब जी की गुरुबाणी महान कल्याणकारी वाणी है, क्योंकि इसका उपदेश किसी एक वर्ग के लिए नहीं, बल्कि संपूर्ण मानवता के लिए है। (Swami Ram Tirth Dandi Sannyasi, 1974, p. 40)

निष्कर्ष

उपरोक्त चर्चा से यह निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का अभिन्न और महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है। यह मानव जीवन को नैतिकता, आध्यात्मिकता और सामाजिक समानता की दिशा प्रदान करता है। हालांकि, आधुनिक समाज में इसके सिद्धांतों को लागू करने की संभावना के लिए गहन शोध की आवश्यकता है। निष्कर्ष रूप में कहा जा सकता है कि गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा की अमूल्य धरोहर है। यह केवल धार्मिक ग्रंथ नहीं, बल्कि मानव जीवन के लिए नैतिक, आध्यात्मिक और सामाजिक मार्गदर्शक है। इसमें निहित विचार मानवता, समानता, प्रेम और सेवा की भावना को मजबूत करते हैं। गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब भारतीय संस्कृति और ज्ञान परंपरा की उस महान विरासत का प्रतीक है, जिसने सदियों से समाज को प्रकाश और दिशा प्रदान की है। वर्तमान समय में भी इसकी शिक्षाएँ मानव समाज के लिए उतनी ही उपयोगी और प्रेरणादायक हैं जितनी अतीत में थीं।

Conclusion

The above discussion leads to the conclusion that Guru Granth Sahib is an integral and important part of the Indian knowledge tradition. It provides human life with direction in morality, spirituality, and social equality. However, applying its principles in modern society requires further in-depth research. In conclusion, Guru Granth Sahib is a priceless heritage of the Indian knowledge tradition. It is not merely a religious text but a moral, spiritual, and social guide for human life. The ideas embedded within it strengthen the spirit of humanity, equality, love, and service. Guru Granth Sahib symbolises the great legacy of Indian culture and the knowledge tradition that has provided society with light and direction for centuries. Even today, its teachings remain as useful and inspiring for human society as they were in the past.

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BHARTI GYAN PRAMPRAWA VICH NATIKTA, DARSHAN ATE MULL PRANALIA

Dr. Charanjeet Singh Dhiman

Assistant Professor, Department of Punjabi, Baba Farid Institutes, Faridkot, (Punjab)

ਸੰਖੇਪ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਭੌਤਿਕ, ਆਤਮਿਕ, ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮੂਹ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉੱਚ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਵੇਦਾਂ, ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਾੰਖਿਆ, ਯੋਗ, ਨਿਆਯ, ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ, ਮੀਮਾਂਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਵਰਗੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਕ ਮਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੱਚ, ਅਸਤਿਤਵ, ਕਰਮ, ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਮਨਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਫਰਜ਼ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਸੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦਇਆ, ਸੇਵਾ, ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਨਸੀਲਤਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਮਰਸਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। “ਵਸੁਧੈਵ ਕੁਟੁੰਬਕਮ” ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਧ ਰਹੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸੰਕਟਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ, ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਲਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

Abstract

Indian Knowledge Traditions offer a holistic understanding of human life by integrating material, spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions. This study examines the interrelationship between ethics, philosophy, and value systems within Indian traditions and highlights their relevance in contemporary society. In Indian thought, ethics is not merely a collection of rules but a pathway to righteous living and spiritual growth. The Vedas, Upanishads, and classical philosophical schools such as Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta explore fundamental questions concerning truth, existence, karma, dharma, and liberation (moksha). These traditions view dharma not only as a religious concept but also as a moral responsibility and social duty.

Indian value systems emphasize virtues such as truth (Satya), non-violence (Ahimsa), compassion (Karuna), service (Seva), cooperation, and tolerance. These values contribute to both individual development and social harmony. The principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) reflects a universal outlook that promotes global unity and mutual respect. The study argues that Indian ethical and philosophical ideas are deeply connected with practical life and provide guidance for responsible and balanced living. In an era marked by moral challenges and value crises, Indian Knowledge Traditions continue to offer meaningful insights for personal growth and social well-being.

Keywords: Ethics, Philosophy, Value Systems, Dharma, Ahimsa, Indian Knowledge Traditions.

ਜਾਣ-ਪਛਾਣ (Introduction)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਉੱਚ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਮੋੜਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਗਹਿਰੀ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਆਪਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੂੜ੍ਹੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜੁੜੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇੱਥੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਕੇਵਲ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਜੀਉਣਾ, ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਤਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਭਾਉਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਚਾਈ ਵੱਲ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ “ਧਰਮ” ਦੀ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਆਚਰਣ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਸਿਰਫ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ, ਬਲਕਿ ਇਹ ਨਿਆਂ, ਸਚਾਈ, ਦਯਾ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਸਮੇਟਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ “ਕਰਮ” ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਪੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ, ਸਹਿਨਸੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਚਰਿੱਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਮਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਮੁੱਲ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਦਿਨਚਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਯੋਗ ਹਨ।

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਭੌਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਤੇਜ਼ ਜੀਵਨ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ, ਉੱਥੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਹੋਰ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ, ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਥਪੂਰਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣ ਦੀ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ, ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਸਿਰਫ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਪੱਤਰ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ (Review of Literature)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵਿਸਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪੂਰੰਭਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਕਲਾਸਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਡਾ. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਦੀ ਕਿਤਾਬ Indian Philosophy ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ A. L. Basham ਦੀ The Wonder That Was India ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ, ਵੇਦਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਸਰੋਤ ਹੈ।

ਬੋਧ ਅਤੇ ਜੈਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ Walpola Rahula ਦੀ What the Buddha Taught ਅਤੇ Padmanabh S. Jaini ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਰੱਖਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਧਿਐਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ, ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਵਰਗੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਲਈ ਅਤਿ-ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ Amartya Sen ਨੇ ਨਿਆਂ, ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾਵਾਂ (Capabilities) ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲੀਆ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਖੋਜਾਂ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਸੰਦਰਭਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਵੇਂ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਪਰਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਿਆ, ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ, ਟਿਕਾਊ ਵਿਕਾਸ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਨੇਤ੍ਰਤਵ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਅਧਿਐਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਦਰਸਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਈ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਲ ਲਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ-ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਖਾਸ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਖੋਜ-ਲੇਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ, ਯੋਗ, ਬੋਧ ਅਤੇ ਜੈਨ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਰਚਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

Bimal Krishna Matilal ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਨੂੰ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ, ਜਦਕਿ Debashis Chatterjee ਅਤੇ R. Balasubramanian ਵਰਗੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗਿਕ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਈ ਖੋਜ-ਪੱਤਰਾਂ ਨੇ “ਵਸੁਧੈਵ ਕੁਟੁੰਬਕਮ”, “ਧਰਮ”, “ਅਹਿੰਸਾ” ਅਤੇ “ਲੋਕ-ਕਲਿਆਣ” ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਆਪਸੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਗੂੜ੍ਹੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਰੱਖਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚੁਰ ਮਾਤਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ, ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲੋਬਲ ਸੰਦਰਭਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਲਾਗੂਯੋਗਤਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੋਰ ਗਹਿਰੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਖੋਜ ਉਸ ਖਾਲੀ ਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੀ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

(Methodology)

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਣਾਤਮਕ (Qualitative) ਖੋਜ ਵਿਧੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਖੋਜ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਵਰਣਨਾਤਮਕ (Descriptive) ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣਾਤਮਕ (Analytical) ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

(Sources of Data)

ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਇਮਰੀ (Primary) ਅਤੇ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ (Secondary) ਦੋਹਾਂ ਕਿਸਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

ਪ੍ਰਾਇਮਰੀ ਸਰੋਤ:

- ਵੇਦ (ਰਿਗਵੇਦ, ਯਜੁਰਵੇਦ, ਸਾਮਵੇਦ, ਅਥਰਵਵੇਦ)
- ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ
- ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ
- ਧਰਮਪਦ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਧ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ
- ਆਚਾਰਾਂਗ ਸੂਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਜੈਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ

ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਰੋਤ:

- ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ
- ਖੋਜ-ਪੱਤਰ (Research Articles)
- ਸਮੀਖਿਆਸੂਦਾ (Peer-reviewed) ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਜਰਨਲ
- ਥੀਸਿਸ ਅਤੇ ਡਿਸਰਟੇਸ਼ਨ
- ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ (IKS) ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ

ਟੈਕਸਟ/ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਮੂਨਾ ਲੈਣਾ (Sampling of Texts/Documents)

ਅਧਿਐਨ ਲਈ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਪੂਰਕ ਨਮੂਨਾ-ਚੋਣ (Purposive Sampling) ਵਿਧੀ ਅਪਣਾਈ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਉਹੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਚੁਣੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹਨ। ਨਮੂਨਾ ਚੁਣਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਕਿਸਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਦੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਸਮਝ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ।

ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਮਾਪਦੰਡ (Inclusion Criteria)

ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹ ਸਰੋਤ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਜੋ:

- ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹਨ।
- ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਧਰਮ, ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।
- ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹਨ।
- ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, ਹਿੰਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹਨ।
- ਸਮੀਖਿਆਸੂਦਾ (Peer-reviewed) ਜਰਨਲਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਹਨ।

ਡਾਟਾ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਵਿਧੀ (Data Collection Method)

ਡਾਟਾ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਖੋਜ (Library Research) ਅਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ (Document Analysis) ਵਿਧੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ, ਖੋਜ-ਲੇਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਜਰਨਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਇਕੱਠੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ।

ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣਾਤਮਕ ਵਿਧੀ (Analytical Method)

ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਰਣਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਆਖਿਆਤਮਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ (Descriptive and Interpretative Analysis) ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਕੱਤਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਵਿਧੀ (Comparative Method) ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਾਨਤਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਥੀਮੈਟਿਕ ਕੋਡਿੰਗ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ (Thematic Coding Process)

ਡਾਟਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਥੀਮੈਟਿਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ (Thematic Analysis) ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਪੜਾਅ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਹਨ:

- ਡਾਟਾ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣ ਪਛਾਣ (Familiarization): ਚੁਣੇ ਗਏ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਾਰ-ਵਾਰ ਅਧਿਐਨ।
- ਪ੍ਰਾਰੰਭਿਕ ਕੋਡਿੰਗ (Initial Coding): ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਸੱਚ, ਸੇਵਾ, ਮੋਖ ਅਤੇ ਕਰੁਣਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਸੰਕਲਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ।
- ਥੀਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ (Theme Development): ਮਿਲਦੇ-ਜੁਲਦੇ ਕੋਡਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਥੀਮਾਂ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ।
- ਥੀਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ (Review of Themes): ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਥੀਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤੀ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ।
- ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਰਿਪੋਰਟਿੰਗ (Interpretation and Reporting): ਥੀਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਾਰੀ।

ਖੋਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ (Limitations of the Study)

ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਫੀਲਡਵਰਕ, ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਜਾਂ ਇੰਟਰਵਿਊ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹਨ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, ਅਪਣਾਈ ਗਈ ਖੋਜ ਵਿਧੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਹਿਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਵਸਥਿਤ ਸਮਝ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਉਚਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ (Need of the Study)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਤੱਤ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ, ਗਲੋਬਲਾਈਜ਼ੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਤੇਜ਼ ਜੀਵਨ-ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸੰਕਟ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵੇਖਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਦੀ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋਰ ਵੱਧ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ—ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ, ਬੁੱਧ ਅਤੇ ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ—ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਮੁੱਲ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਸਮਾਨਤਾ, ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣਕ ਸੰਕਟ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਇੱਕ ਪੁਲ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਚਰਿੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਚਾਈ ਲਈ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗਿਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਵੀ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ (Objectives of the Study)

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ—ਆਸਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਸਤਿਕ—ਦੀ ਸੰਰਚਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਦੂਜਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਮੁੱਖ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਤੀਜਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਜੈਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਵਰਗੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਚੌਥਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਰ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਤੁਲਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ, ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਗੂਯੋਗਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਕਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੈ।

ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ, ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ—ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣਕ ਸੰਕਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਸਮਾਨਤਾ—ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਦਾਇਰਾ (Scope of the Study)

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣਾਤਮਕ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧਕਾਲੀਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ—ਵੇਦ, ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ, ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ, ਬੁੱਧ ਅਤੇ ਜੈਨ ਸਾਹਿਤ—'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਦਾ ਦਾਇਰਾ ਆਸਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਵਿਭਿੰਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ—ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਰੁਣਾ—ਤੱਕ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਹੈ।

ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ, ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਸਾਰੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਵਿਸਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਚੁਣੇ ਹੋਏ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਪੱਖਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਦਾਇਰਾ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਤੁਲਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਹੈ।

ਰਿਸਰਚ ਡਿਜ਼ਾਇਨ (Research Design)

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਰਿਸਰਚ ਡਿਜ਼ਾਇਨ ਵਰਣਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣਾਤਮਕ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ (historical) ਅਤੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ (philosophical) ਪਹੁੰਚ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਥੀਮੈਟਿਕ ਵਰਗੀਕਰਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਂਖਿਆਕੀ ਸਾਧਨ ਵਰਤੇ ਗਏ (Statistical Tools Used in the Study)

ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਖੋਜ ਗੁਣਾਤਮਕ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਤੀ ਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਸਾਂਖਿਆਕੀ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਵਰਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ:

1. Content Analysis, 2. Thematic Categorization, 3. Comparative Analysis

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾ (Conceptualization of Indian knowledge principles)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ "ਦਰਸ਼ਨ" ਦੀ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਹੈ। ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਅਸਤਿਤਵ, ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ, ਕਰਤਵਜ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਲਕਸ਼ (ਮੋਖ) ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ, ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਚਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਚਾਈ ਵੱਲ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ "ਦਰਸ਼ਨ" ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਕਸਰਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਸਗੋਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਸਤਿਤਵ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਹੈ। Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਕੇਵਲ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਬਲਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮ-ਸਾਕਸ਼ਾਤਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923, p. 24)। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਡੂੰਘੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ M. Hiriyanna ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਲੱਭਣਾ ਹੈ, ਨਾ ਕਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਨਾ (Hiriyanna, 1932, p. 18)। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਗਿਆਨ, ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦੇ।

ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਦੋ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ—ਆਸਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ। ਇਹ ਵੰਡ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣ ਜਾਂ ਨਾ ਮੰਨਣ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ, ਨਾ ਕਿ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਈਸ਼ਵਰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ 'ਤੇ।

ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ (Orthodox Systems)

ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਉਹ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਸਰੋਤ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਛੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ—ਨਿਆਯ, ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ, ਸਾਂਖਿਆ, ਯੋਗ, ਮੀਮਾਂਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ।

ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਰੋਤ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਅਤੇ Charles A. Moore ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਆਸਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan & Moore, 1957, p. 35)।

- ਨਿਆਯ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕ ਦੇ ਮਾਧਿਅਮ ਨਾਲ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੇ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਸਾਂਖਿਆ ਪੁਰੁਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਦਵੈਤ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਯੋਗ ਆਚਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਮੀਮਾਂਸਾ ਕਰਤਵਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਮੰਨਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮ ਦੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਦਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਨਿਆਯ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ

Bimal Krishna Matilal ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਿਆਯ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨਾਲ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗਲਤ ਗਿਆਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਹੈ (Matilal, 1998, p. 42)।

ਸਾਂਖਿਆ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ

Gerald James Larson ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਾਂਖਿਆ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਪੁਰੁਸ਼ (ਚੇਤਨਾ) ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ (ਪਦਾਰਥ) ਦੇ ਭੇਦ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ (Larson, 1979, p. 76)। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਚਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਯੋਗ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ

Georg Feuerstein ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਯੋਗ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਕਸਰਤ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਹੈ (Feuerstein, 2001, p. 112)। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਯੋਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਯਮ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਯਮ ਹਨ।

ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਮੋਖ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ-ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ (Heterodox Systems)

ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦੇ, ਪਰ ਇਹ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ

ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੁੱਖ, ਕਰੁਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

Walpola Rahula ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਕਰੁਣਾ, ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਹੈ (Rahula, 1974, p. 45)। ਬੁੱਧ ਨੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਕਦਮ ਮੰਨਿਆ।

ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ

ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਸਤਿਅ ਅਤੇ ਅਪਰਿਗ੍ਰਹ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ।

Padmanabh S. Jaini ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ। ਜੈਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਜੀਵ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ (Jaini, 1979, p. 84)।

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਭੌਤਿਕਵਾਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਅ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਰੋਤ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ।

Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਅ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਸੱਚਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਦਾਂ, ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ (Chattopadhyaya, 1959, p. 92)। ਇਹ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕਵਾਦੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੀ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਭਿੰਨਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਸੋਚ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾ (Conceptualization of Moral Philosophy)

ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ (Ethics) ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਾਖਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਆਚਰਣ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਮੁੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ—ਸਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤ, ਚੰਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਦਾ, ਕਰਤਵਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਰਤਵਜ਼—ਦੀ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹ ਮਾਪਦੰਡ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਦੀ ਮੁਲਾਂਕਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪੱਛਮੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਕਸਰ ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਹੋਰ ਵੱਧ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਗਹਿਰੀ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾ ਹੈ।

William K. Frankena ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਉਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੇ ਮਾਪਦੰਡਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਕੰਮ ਸਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਗਲਤ (Frankena, 1973, p. 3)।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। M. Hiriyanna ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ (Hiriyanna, 1932, p. 289)।



ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ A. L. Basham ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਕਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ (Basham, 1954, p. 317)। Amartya Sen ਦੀ ਵਲੀਲ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਨਿਆਂ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹਨ (Sen, 2009, p. 22)।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ, ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਲਾਭਕਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਬਲਕਿ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਚਾਈ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਵੀ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਧਰਮ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Religion-centered ethics)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਆਧਾਰ ‘ਧਰਮ’ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਇਸਦੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਪਛਾਣ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਬਹੁ-ਪੱਖੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਹ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ।

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਉ

ਹ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਸਲ ਸਵਰੂਪ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1927, Vol. II, p. 32)।

ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਅਰਥ

1. ਕਰਤਵਜ (Duty)

ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਅਰਥ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਹੈ। ਹਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਨੀ ਉਸਦਾ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ। Bhagavad Gita ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:

"ਸ਼੍ਰੇਯਾਨ ਸਵਧਰਮੇ ਵਿਗੁਣਃ ਪਰਧਰਮਾਤ ਸਵਨੁਸ਼ਠਿਤਾਤ"

(ਗੀਤਾ 3.35)

ਅਰਥਾਤ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵਧੀਆ ਹੈ।

2. ਨਿਆਂ (Justice)

ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਪੱਖ ਨਿਆਂ ਹੈ। M. Hiriyanna ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ (Hiriyanna, 1932, p. 58)। ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਪੱਖਤਾ, ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਸਹੀ ਆਚਰਣ (Right Conduct)

ਧਰਮ ਸੱਚਾਈ, ਦਇਆ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਵਰਗੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। A. L. Basham ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ, ਨਾ ਕਿ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਨਾਲ (Basham, 1954, p. 241)।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕਸੁਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਅਰਥ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਧਰਮ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਪੱਧਰਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਇੱਕ ਐਸਾ ਸਮਗ੍ਰ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਪੱਖ—ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ—ਨੂੰ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਥਪੂਰਨ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Vedic and Upanishadic Ethics)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੇਦਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਕਾਲ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਪੜਾਅ ਹਨ। ਵੇਦਿਕ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡਕ ਕ੍ਰਮ (Cosmic Order) ਸੀ, ਜਦਕਿ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਕਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਗਈ।

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Vedic Ethics)

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ‘ਰਿਤ’ (Ṛta) ਹੈ।

ਰਿਤ (Ṛta): ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡਕ ਕ੍ਰਮ

ਰਿਗਵੇਦ ਵਿੱਚ ‘ਰਿਤ’ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ ਨਿਯਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਦਰਸਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਉਹ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸੂਰਜ, ਚੰਦਰਮਾ, ਰੁੱਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਯਮਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। A. L. Basham ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਰਿਤ ਵੇਦਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਇਸ ਕੌਸਮਿਕ ਕ੍ਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਸੀ (Basham, 1954, p. 235)।

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੁੱਲ

ਸਤ੍ਯ (Truth)

ਰਿਗਵੇਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੱਚ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਰਿਤ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ।

ਯਜ਼੍ਞ (Sacrifice and Duty)

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਯਜ਼੍ਞ ਕੇਵਲ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਸੀ। M. Hiriyanna ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਯਜ਼੍ਞ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ, ਸਮਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਸੀ (Hiriyanna, 1932, p. 44)।

ਕਰਤਵਜ (Duty)

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ। ਸਮਾਜਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੌਸਮਿਕ ਕ੍ਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ।

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਕਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਕੇਵਲ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਭਲਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੇ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਵੀ ਸੀ।

ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Upanishadic Ethics)

ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਕਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਹਟ ਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵੱਲ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਆਤਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮ ਦੀ ਏਕਤਾ (Unity of Atman and Brahman)



ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਤਮਾ (Ātman) ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ (Brahman) ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਹਨ।
ਛਾਂਦੋਗਯ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਾਕ ਹੈ:

“ਤੱਤ ਤ੍ਵਮ ਅਸਿ” (Tat Tvam Asi)

ਅਰਥਾਤ “ਤੂੰ ਉਹੀ ਹੈਂ।”

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰੇ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਏਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਜਨਮ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923, p. 172)।

ਸਤਿਅ ਅਤੇ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ (Truth and Non-Violence)

ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੱਚ ਅਤੇ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਤੈਤੀਰੀਯ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਹੈ:

“ਸਤਯੰ ਵਦ, ਧਰਮੰ ਚਰ”

(ਸੱਚ ਬੋਲੋ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਆਚਰਨ ਕਰੋ।)

ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ (Self-Discipline)

ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ ਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਬੂ ਪਾਉਣ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। S. Radhakrishnan ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923, p. 181)।

ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ

ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ। ਵੇਦਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਆਧਾਰ ਹਨ। ਵੇਦਿਕ ਕਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਰਿਤ, ਸਤਿਯ, ਯਜੁਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਤਵਿਯ ਸਨ, ਜਦਕਿ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ ਕਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ, ਸਤਿਯ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਮਿਲੀ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ Radhakrishnan ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਰਸਤਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1927, Vol. II, p. 41)।

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Karma theory and ethics)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ “ਕਰਮ” ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਕਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਇਹ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਕਿਰਿਆ ਵਿਅਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂਦੀ; ਹਰ ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਅਨਿਵਾਰ ਤੌਰ ‘ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਫਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਚੇਤ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਆਧਾਰ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਰ ਵਿਚਾਰ, ਬਚਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਦੇ ਨਿਯਮ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਅਧੀਨ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਕਰਮ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਫਲ ਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ (Radhakrishnan, 1923, Vol. I, p. 273)।

ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ (Meaning of Karma)

“ਕਰਮ” ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਧਾਤੂ ਕ੍ਰਿ ਤੋਂ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ “ਕਰਨਾ” ਜਾਂ “ਕਿਰਿਆ ਕਰਨਾ”। ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਅਰਥ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਕਿਰਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮੂਹ ਹੈ। Bhagavad Gita ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ (Bhagavad Gita 4.17)।

M. Hiriyanna ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਇਹ ਸਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੈ (Hiriyanna, 1932, p. 152)।

ਕਰਮ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ (Types of Karma)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਤਿੰਨ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ:

1. ਸੰਚਿਤ ਕਰਮ (Sanchita Karma)

ਸੰਚਿਤ ਕਰਮ ਉਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਜਨਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਫਲ ਅਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਿਆ।

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸੰਚਿਤ ਕਰਮ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਕੱਠ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923, p. 278)।

2. ਪ੍ਰਾਰਬਧ ਕਰਮ (Prarabdha Karma)

ਪ੍ਰਾਰਬਧ ਕਰਮ ਉਹ ਕਰਮ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਫਲ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਜਨਮ ਸਥਿਤੀ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਜੀਵਨਕ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

C. D. Sharma ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰਬਧ ਕਰਮ ਉਹ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸੰਚਿਤ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਪੱਕੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ (Sharma, 1962, p. 289)।

3. ਆਗਾਮੀ ਕਰਮ (Agami Karma)

ਆਗਾਮੀ ਕਰਮ ਉਹ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਵੇਗਾ।

ਇਹ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸਦੇ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਕਰਮ ਭਲਕੇ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰਨਗੇ।

ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ (Ethical Implications)

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਉੱਤੇ ਡੂੰਘਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਹੈ।

1. ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ (Sense of Responsibility)

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਖੁਦ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੈ। ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ।

Bhagavad Gita ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:

“ਯਥਾ ਕਰਮ ਤਥਾ ਫਲ”



ਅਰਥਾਤ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਰਮ ਹੋਣਗੇ, ਤਿਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਫਲ ਮਿਲੇਗਾ।

2. ਆਤਮ-ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ (Self-Control)

ਜਦੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਸਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ (Moral Discernment)

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਫਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵੱਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ, ਸਚੇਤ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Ethics in Jain Philosophy)

ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਆਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ। ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਰਮ ਆਤਮਾ ਉੱਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਭੌਤਿਕ ਬੰਧਨ ਵਾਂਗ ਚਿਪਕ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Padmanabh S. Jaini ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੈਨ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਆਚਰਣ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਆਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੈ (Jaini, 1979, p. 105)।

ਪੰਜ ਮਹਾਵਰਤ (Five Great Vows)

ਜੈਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਪੰਜ ਮਹਾਵਰਤ ਹਨ।

ਅਹਿੰਸਾ (Ahimsa)

ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਜੀਵ ਨੂੰ ਮਨ, ਬਚਨ ਜਾਂ ਕਰਮ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹਾਨੀ ਨਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣਾ।

ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਹੈ।

ਸਤਯ (Satya)

ਸੱਚ ਬੋਲਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣਾ।

ਅਸਤੇਯ (Asteya)

ਬਿਨਾਂ ਅਨੁਮਤੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੀ ਵਸਤੂ ਨਾ ਲੈਣਾ।

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਰਯ (Brahmacharya)

ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਬੂ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣਾ।

ਅਪਰਿਗ੍ਰਹ (Aparigraha)

ਵਸਤੂਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਅਤਿ-ਮੋਹ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਣਾ।

Padmanabh S. Jaini ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਪੰਜ ਮਹਾਵਰਤ ਜੈਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਰੀੜ੍ਹ ਦੀ ਹੱਡੀ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਲਈ ਅਤਿ-ਆਵਸ਼ਯਕ ਹਨ (Jaini, 1979, p. 170)।

ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ (Principle of Non-Violence)

ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਜੈਨ ਆਗਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:

“ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਪਰਮੋ ਧਰਮਃ”

ਅਰਥਾਤ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਹੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚਾ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ।

ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ (Non-violence in Thoughts)

ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਘ੍ਰਿਣਾ, ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਜਾਂ ਬੁਰਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਾ ਰੱਖਣਾ।

ਬਚਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ (Non-violence in Speech)

ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਕੋੜੇ, ਅਪਮਾਨਜਨਕ ਜਾਂ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ।

ਕਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ (Non-violence in Action)

ਕਿਸੇ ਜੀਵ ਨੂੰ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਹਾਨੀ ਨਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣਾ।

Padmanabh S. Jaini ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੈਨ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਹਰ ਜੀਵ ਲਈ ਸਮਾਨ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ (Jaini, 1979, p. 111)।

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ, ਆਤਮ-ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ। Padmanabh Jaini ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੈਨ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਅਪਰਿਗ੍ਰਹ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੈ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਜੀਵਨ ਲਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ (Jaini, 1979, p. 289)।

ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Ethics in Buddhist Philosophy)

ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Ethics) ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਦੁੱਖ (Dukkha) ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਿਵਾਉਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਵਾਣ (Nirvana) ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ। Gautama Buddha ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਮੂਲ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਦੁੱਖ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਿਵਾਰਣ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ-ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ। ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨ, ਬਚਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਹੈ।

Walpole Rahula ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਚਰਿੱਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾ ਸਕੇ (Rahula, 1974, p. 46)। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਕਰੁਣਾ (Karuṇā), ਮੈਤ੍ਰੀ (Mettā) ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿਆ (Prajñā) ਹਨ।

ਚਾਰ ਆਰਯ ਸੱਚ (Four Noble Truths)

ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਚਾਰ ਆਰਯ ਸੱਚਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ।

1. ਦੁੱਖ (Dukkha)



ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੁੱਖ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ। ਜਨਮ, ਬੁਢਾਪਾ, ਬਿਮਾਰੀ, ਮੌਤ, ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਹਨ।

2. ਦੁੱਖ ਸਮੁਦਾਯ (Cause of Suffering)

ਦੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ (ਤਨ੍ਹਾ), ਲਾਲਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਦੁੱਖ ਨਿਰੋਧ (Cessation of Suffering)

ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ ਦੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ।

4. ਦੁੱਖ ਨਿਰੋਧ ਰਾਮਿਨੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਦਾ (Path to End Suffering)

ਦੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਨਿਵਾਰਣ ਲਈ ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ।

Walpola Rahula ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਚਾਰ ਆਰਯ ਸੱਚ ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਹਨ (Rahula, 1974, p. 16)।

ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ (Eightfold Path)

ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਨੈਤਿਕ, ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦਾ ਸਮਗ੍ਰ ਮਾਰਗ ਹੈ।

1. ਸਹੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ (Right View)

ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ, ਕਰਮ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਚਾਰ ਆਰਯ ਸੱਚਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝਣਾ।

Rahula ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਹੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ (Rahula, 1974, p. 49)।

2. ਸਹੀ ਸੰਕਲਪ (Right Intention)

ਦਇਆ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਤਿਆਗ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ।

ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਚਰਿੱਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਸਹੀ ਵਾਕ (Right Speech)

ਝੂਠ, ਚੁਗਲੀ, ਕਠੋਰ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰਰਥਕ ਬਚਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਣਾ।

Dhammapada ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੱਚਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਿੱਠਾ ਬਚਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਰਿੱਤਰ ਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹੈ।

4. ਸਹੀ ਕਰਮ (Right Action)

ਹਿੰਸਾ, ਚੋਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਰਹਿਣਾ।

ਇਹ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

5. ਸਹੀ ਆਜੀਵਿਕਾ (Right Livelihood)

ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੀਵਨ-ਯਾਪਨ ਕਰਨਾ।

ਬੁੱਧ ਨੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਣ ਦੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜੋ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

6. ਸਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਯਾਸ (Right Effort)

ਬੁਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ।

ਇਹ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਯਤਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਹੈ।

7. ਸਹੀ ਸਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ (Right Mindfulness)

ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ, ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਚੇਤ ਰਹਿਣਾ।

Nyanaponika Thera ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਚੇਤਤਾ (Mindfulness) ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਅੰਗ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ ਕਰਨ ਯੋਗ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ (Nyanaponika, 1962, p. 7)।

8. ਸਹੀ ਸਮਾਧੀ (Right Concentration)

ਧਿਆਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕਾਗਰ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ। ਇਹ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਿਆ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੈ।

ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ

ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਤਿੰਨ ਮੁੱਖ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ:

1. ਸੀਲ (Moral Conduct)

- ਸਹੀ ਵਾਕ
- ਸਹੀ ਕਰਮ
- ਸਹੀ ਆਜੀਵਿਕਾ

2. ਸਮਾਧੀ (Mental Discipline)

- ਸਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਯਾਸ
- ਸਹੀ ਸਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ
- ਸਹੀ ਸਮਾਧੀ

3. ਪ੍ਰਗਿਆ (Wisdom)

- ਸਹੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ
- ਸਹੀ ਸੰਕਲਪ

Rahula ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਸਮਨਵਯ ਹੈ (Rahula, 1974, p. 50)।

ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ (Middle Path)

ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਰ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ (Majjhima Patipada) ਹੈ।

ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ



ਬੁੱਧ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਭਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਰਸ਼ ਕੱਢਿਆ ਕਿ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਅਤਿਅਧਿਕ ਭੋਗ-ਵਿਲਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਠੋਰ ਤਪੱਸਿਆ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਹੀ ਮਾਰਗ ਦੱਸਿਆ।

Walpola Rahula ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਅਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ (Rahula, 1974, p. 17)।

ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ

1. ਸੰਤੁਲਨ (Balance)

ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

2. ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ (Tolerance)

ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਤਿਵਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਸਹੀ ਨਿਰਣੇ (Right Judgement)

ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਉੱਠ ਕੇ ਸਹੀ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

4. ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ (Mental Peace)

ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਤਣਾਅ, ਲਾਲਚ ਅਤੇ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਰੁਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਤ੍ਰੀ (Compassion and Loving-Kindness)

ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਰ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਪੱਖ ਕਰੁਣਾ (Compassion) ਅਤੇ ਮੈਤ੍ਰੀ (Loving-Kindness) ਹੈ।

ਬੁੱਧ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹਰ ਜੀਵ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਾਨੁਭੂਤੀ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਵਿਆਪੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾਵਾਦੀ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਦੁੱਖ, ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਿਰਵਾਣ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ, ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ, ਕਰੁਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਤ੍ਰੀ ਇਸ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਆਧਾਰ ਹਨ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ Walpola Rahula ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਕੋਈ ਅੰਧ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਜੀਵਨ-ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਚੇਤ, ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਕਰੁਣਾਮਈ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ (Rahula, 1974, p. 51)। ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਬੁੱਧ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ, ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Morality in the Bhagavad Gita)

ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਆਧਾਰ “ਕਰਮਯੋਗ” ਹੈ—ਅਰਥਾਤ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਚਾਈ ਵੱਲ ਵਧਣਾ। ਗੀਤਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਤਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੇੜਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ, ਬਲਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕੇਵਲ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸੰਕਟਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਹੱਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੀਤਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਕੁਰੂਕਸ਼ੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਯੁੱਧ-ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਰਜੁਨ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਦੁਵਿਧਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੈ, ਜਿੱਥੇ Arjuna ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਉਲਝ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। Krishna ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਮ, ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੀਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਤਵਜ, ਆਤਮ-ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਸਿਖਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavadgita, 1948, p. 18)।

ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਕਰਮ (Nishkama Karma)

ਗੀਤਾ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਕਰਮ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਤਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਭਾਏ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਫਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਅਸਕਤ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਗੀਤਾ (2.47) ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:

“ਕਰਮਣਯੋਵਾਧਿਕਾਰਸਤੇ ਮਾ ਫਲੇਸ਼ੁ ਕਦਾਚਨ”

ਅਰਥਾਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੈ, ਫਲ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ।

Bal Gangadhar Tilak ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੀਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰਮਯੋਗ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਮਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਹਿਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ (Tilak, Gita Rahasya, 1915, p. 112)।

ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ

- ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਲਾਲਚ ਅਤੇ ਸਵਾਰਥ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਅਸਫਲਤਾ ਦੇ ਡਰ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਕਰਤਵਜ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਮਰਪਣ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ (Dharma and Duty)

ਗੀਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਤੱਤ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਕੇਵਲ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਤਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੀਤਾ (3.35) ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:

“ਸ੍ਰੇਯਾਨ ਸਵਧਰਮੇ ਵਿਗੁਣਃ ਪਰਧਰਮਾਤ ਸਵਨੁਸ਼ਠਿਤਾਤ”

ਅਰਥਾਤ ਆਪਣਾ ਧਰਮ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਅਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਵੇ, ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਉੱਤਮ ਹੈ।

M. Hiriyanna ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੀਤਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ (Hiriyanna, Essentials of Indian Philosophy, 1932, p. 170)।

ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ



- ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਨੈਤਿਕ ਫ਼ੈਸਲੇ ਲੈਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਨਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ (Value Systems)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਮੁੱਲ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

A. L. Basham ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਸੱਚ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ (Basham, The Wonder That Was India, 1954, p. 317)

ਮੁੱਖ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁੱਲ (Key Indian Values)

1. ਸਤਿਅ (Truth)

ਸੱਚਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਾਕ ਹੈ:

“ਸਤਿਯਮੇਵ ਜਯਤੇ”

ਅਰਥਾਤ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

2. ਅਹਿੰਸਾ (Non-Violence)

ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬੋਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਅਪਣਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਦਇਆ (Compassion)

ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਨਾ।

4. ਕਰੁਣਾ (Mercy)

ਸਭ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਹਾਨੁਭੂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਰੂਪ।

5. ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ (Tolerance)

ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ, ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਦਰ ਕਰਨਾ।

Amartya Sen ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਭਿੰਨਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਹੈ (Sen, The Argumentative Indian, 2005, p. 36)

ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ (Social Values)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

1. ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਇਕਤਾ (Family Unity)

ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਮੂਲ ਇਕਾਈ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

2. ਸਹਿਯੋਗ (Cooperation)

ਸਮੂਹਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਸੇਵਾ (Service)

ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਸੇਵਾ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

“ਸੇਵਾ” ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਵੱਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Ethics in Orthodox Philosophies)

ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ, ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਆਪਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ।

ਨਿਆਯ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Nyāya Philosophy and Ethics)

ਨਿਆਯ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਸਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ।

Bimal Krishna Matilal ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਿਆਯ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੀ ਸਹੀ ਆਚਰਣ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਹੈ (Matilal, The Character of Logic in India, 1998, p. 41)

ਮੁੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ

ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ → ਦੁੱਖ

ਸਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ → ਸਹੀ ਆਚਰਣ

ਸਹੀ ਆਚਰਣ → ਮੁਕਤੀ

ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Vaiśeṣika Philosophy and Ethics)

Kanada ਦੇ ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਰਮ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਆਧਾਰ ਹਨ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰ

ਧਰਮ → ਸੁਖ ਅਤੇ ਉੱਚ ਅਵਸਥਾ

ਅਧਰਮ → ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਬੰਧਨ

C. D. Sharma ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ (Sharma, 1962, p. 183)

ਸਾਂਖਿਆ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Sāṃkhya Philosophy and Ethics)

ਸਾਂਖਿਆ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ।



Gerald James Larson ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਭੇਦ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੀ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਹੈ (Larson, Classical Samkhya, 1979, p. 75)।

ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ

ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ → ਬੰਧਨ

ਵਿਵੇਕ → ਗਿਆਨ

ਗਿਆਨ → ਮੁਕਤੀ

ਯੋਗ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Yoga Philosophy and Ethics)

Patanjali ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਯਮ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਯਮ ਹਨ।

ਯਮ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਅਸਤੇਯ, ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਰਯ, ਅਪਰਿਗ੍ਰਹ, ਨਿਯਮ, ਸੰਚ, ਸੰਤੋਸ਼, ਤਪ, ਸਵਾਧਿਆਯ, ਈਸ਼ਵਰ, ਪ੍ਰਣਿਧਾਨ

Georg Feuerstein ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਯਮ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਯਮ ਯੋਗ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਹਨ (Feuerstein, The Yoga Tradition, 2001, p. 244)।

ਮੀਮਾਂਸਾ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Mīmāṃsā Philosophy and Ethics)

ਮੀਮਾਂਸਾ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਤਵ੍ਯ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਦਿਕ ਆਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰ

ਧਰਮ = ਕਰਤਵ੍ਯ

ਵੇਦਿਕ ਆਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ

ਨਿਸ਼ਠਾਪੂਰਵਕ ਕਰਮ

Jaimini ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਉਹ ਕਰਮ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਿਤ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Vedānta Philosophy and Ethics)

ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ।

Adi Shankaracharya ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਅਵਿਦਿਆ ਹੀ ਬੰਧਨ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਹੈ।

ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼

ਅਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼

ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ

ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਦਇਆ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਤਿਆਗ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਆਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸੁੱਧਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨਾਲ ਏਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਗੀ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923, Vol. II, p. 524)।

ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ, ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ। ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਕਰਮ, ਧਰਮ, ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਸੇਵਾ, ਆਤਮ-ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਗਿਆਨ ਵਰਗੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ, ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉੱਚ ਜੀਵਨ ਵੱਲ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ Criticism of Charvaka philosophy and ethics

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਆਸਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮਾਨਤਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਵਾਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਚਾਰਵਾਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ (empirical experience) ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਇਕਮਾਤਰ ਸਰੋਤ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਅਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ ਜਾਂ ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਿਆ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰ Main ideas

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ:

- ਭੋਗਵਾਦ Materialism: ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਅ ਸੁਖ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ।
- ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਅ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਤਾ The primacy of sensory experience: ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਉਹੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।
- ਪਰਲੋਕ ਦਾ ਇਨਕਾਰ Denial of the afterlife: ਆਤਮਾ, ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਸੁਖ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਮਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ।

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ

(Criticism of Charvaka Philosophy and Ethics)

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ (ਲੋਕਾਯਤ) ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਭੌਤਿਕਵਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕਵਾਦੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕਤਾ, ਆਤਮਾ, ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ, ਕਰਮਫਲ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਚਾਰਵਾਕਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਅਨੁਭਵ (Perception) ਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਇੱਕੋ-ਇੱਕ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗ ਸਰੋਤ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ, ਉਸਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਆਧਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਿੱਖੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ।

Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸਨੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ (Chattopadhyaya, Lokayata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism, 1959, p. 17)।

1. ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਬਣਾਵਟ ਹੈ (Morality is a Human Construct)

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਕੋਈ ਦੈਵੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਜਾਂ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਨੈਤਿਕ ਨਿਯਮ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ ਹਨ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰ

- ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮਾਪਦੰਡ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।
- ਸਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਥਾਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬਦਲਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।



- ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਈਸ਼ਵਰੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਨਹੀਂ।
- ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸਮਾਜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮਾਪਦੰਡ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ

- ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ

ਜੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਬਣਾਵਟ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਸਰਵਵਿਆਪੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਾਪੇਖਵਾਦ (Moral Relativism) ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

2. ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਇਨਕਾਰ (Denial of Dharma and Karma Theory)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਚਾਰਵਾਕਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ:

- ਧਰਮ ਕੋਈ ਦੈਵੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ।
- ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਰਤਿਆ।
- ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਯੋਗਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਸਲ ਲਾਭ ਨਹੀਂ।
- ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਅਕਸਰ ਅੰਧਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ

- ਕਰਮਫਲ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਸਬੂਤ ਨਹੀਂ।
- ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਦਿਸ਼ ਫਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
- ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਲਾਂਕਣ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ

- ਅੰਧਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਡਰ-ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ।
- ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ

- ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਆਧਾਰ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

3. ਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ (Criticism of Spirituality)

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਆਤਮਾ, ਪਰਲੋਕ, ਸਵਰਗ, ਨਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰ

- ਮਨੁੱਖ ਭੌਤਿਕ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮੂਹ ਹੈ।
- ਆਤਮਾ ਨਾਮ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਸੱਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ।
- ਚੇਤਨਾ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਉਤਪਾਦ ਹੈ।
- ਮੌਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਸਤਿਤਵ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ

- ਹਰ ਦਾਅਵੇ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਯਥਾਰਥਵਾਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਖਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਲ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ

- ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਅਨੁਭਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਣਦੇਖਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਦੀ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਭੌਤਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

4. ਮੋਖ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਨ (Rejection of Moksha)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਮੋਖ ਨੂੰ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਪਰਮ ਲਕਸ਼ ਮੰਨਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਕਲਪਨਾਤਮਕ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰ

- ਜਦੋਂ ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਤਾਂ ਮੋਖ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ।
- ਮੋਖ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਹੈ।
- ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਇਸ ਲੋਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਖ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ।

ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ

- ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਭੌਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਕਲਿਆਣ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।



- ਕਲਪਨਾਤਮਕ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।
- ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ
 - ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਉੱਚ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।
 - ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਭੌਤਿਕ ਸੁਖਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਖ਼ਤਰਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

5. ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ (Challenge to Traditional Indian Ethics)

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਆਧਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ	ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ
ਧਰਮ	ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਬਣਾਵਟ
ਕਰਮ	ਅਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਤ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ
ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ	ਕਲਪਨਾ
ਆਤਮਾ	ਅਸਵੀਕਾਰ
ਮੋਖ	ਅਵਾਸਤਵਿਕ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ
ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡ	ਨਿਰਰਥਕ

ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਪੱਖ

ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ → ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਕਰਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ → ਅਵਿਸ਼ ਫਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਸਬੂਤ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਮੋਖ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ → ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਲਕਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ → ਹਰ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਕ ਦੀ ਕਸੌਟੀ 'ਤੇ ਪਰਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ → ਰਸਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਪਯੋਗਤਾ 'ਤੇ ਸਵਾਲ।

ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਮੁਲਾਂਕਣ (Critical Evaluation)

- ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਪੱਖ (Positive Aspects)
- ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ।
- ਅੰਧਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ।
- ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ।
- ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕਟਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਆਵਾਜ਼।
- ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਸੋਚ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ।

ਨਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਪੱਖ (Limitations)

- ਭੋਗਵਾਦ (Hedonism) ਵੱਲ ਝੁਕਾਅ।
- ਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਅਣਦੇਖੀ।
- ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ।
- ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਲਈ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਆਧਾਰ।
- ਉੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮੀ।

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕਵਾਦੀ ਧਾਰਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ, ਆਤਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ-ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ, ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਦਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਕ, ਅਨੁਭਵ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਸੋਚ ਦੀ ਕਸੌਟੀ 'ਤੇ ਪਰਖਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ (Limitations of Charvaka Philosophy)

(ਕ) ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਮ-ਫਲ, ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜਾਂ ਭਵਿੱਖੀ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ, ਤਾਂ ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923; Hiriyanna, 1932)।

“The Carvaka rejects the doctrine of karma and future life and confines human concern to the present world.” (Radhakrishnan, 1923, Vol. I, p. 279)

(ਖ) ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਲਈ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਆਧਾਰ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਢਾਂਚਾ ਪੇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ (Chatterjee & Datta, 2016)।

“Lokayata philosophy lacks an adequate moral foundation for social obligations because it does not accept the doctrines of duty and karma.” (Chatterjee & Datta, 2016, p. 58)

(ਗ) ਭੋਗਵਾਦ (Hedonism) ਉੱਤੇ ਅਤਿਅਧਿਕ ਜ਼ੋਰ

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਸਰ ਭੋਗਵਾਦੀ (hedonistic) ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਦਰਸਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਕਥਨ ਹੈ:

“याकज्जीवेत् सुखं जीवेत् ऋणं कृत्वा धृतं पिबेत् ।

भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतः ॥”



(ਜਦ ਤੱਕ ਜੀਵੇ, ਸੁਖ ਨਾਲ ਜੀਵੇ, ਕਰਜ਼ਾ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਘਿਉ ਪੀਓ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਸ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੁੜ ਆਉਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ।)

ਇਸ ਕਥਨ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਕਈ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਨੂੰ ਭੋਗਵਾਦੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਖੋਜਕਾਰ Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (1959) ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਚਾਰਵਾਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਭੋਗਵਾਦੀ ਕਹਿ ਦੇਣਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਤਿ-ਸਰਲੀਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਹੈ।

“The popular description of the Carvakas as crude sensualists is often exaggerated.” (Chattopadhyaya, 1959, p. 23)

(ਘ) ਆਤਮਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਦੀ ਅਣਦੇਖੀ

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਆਤਮਾ, ਪਰਲੋਕ, ਮੋਖ ਅਤੇ ਆਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਭੌਤਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਤ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਆਲੋਚਕਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਗਹਿਰੇ ਅਸਤਿਤਵਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਤੋਸ਼ਜਨਕ ਜਵਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ (Hiriyanna, 1932; Radhakrishnan, 1923)।

“The materialism of the Carvakas leaves no room for spiritual values and higher aspirations of human life.” (Hiriyanna, 1932, p. 72)

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਤਰਕਵਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਧਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ, ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡ ਅਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਆਧਾਰ ਮੰਨਿਆ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਕਰਮ, ਧਰਮ, ਪੁਨਰਜਨਮ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਏਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਨਤੀ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਆਧਾਰ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਤੁਲਨਾ (Comparison of Indian and Western Ethics) — ਹਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਸਹਿਤ

ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Ethics) ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਾਖਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਆਚਰਣ, ਕਰਤਵਜ਼, ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਫ਼ਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਉੱਚ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਿਊਣ ਲਈ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ-ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ, ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਅੰਤਰ ਹਨ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉਤਕਰਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਤਰਕ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923; MacIntyre, 2007)।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Indian Ethics)

(ਕ) ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਆਧਾਰ “ਧਰਮ” ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਕੇਵਲ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਕਰਤਵਜ਼, ਨਿਆਂ, ਸਦਾਚਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਅਰਜੁਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਵਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ (Bhagavad Gita 3.35)।

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹਰ ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਫਲ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਕਰਮ ਹੀ ਉਸਦੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ (Radhakrishnan, 1923)।

“A man becomes good by good action and bad by bad action.” — Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4.4.5

(ਖ) ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਨਤੀ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਸੱਚ (Satya), ਅਹਿੰਸਾ (Ahimsa), ਦਇਆ (Karuna), ਸੇਵਾ (Seva) ਅਤੇ ਤਿਆਗ (Tyaga) ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮ-ਸ਼ੁੱਧੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮ-ਸਾਕਸ਼ਾਤਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ (Hiriyanna, 1932)।

“Truth alone triumphs.” — Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.6

(ਗ) ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦਾ। “ਵਸੁਧੈਵ ਕੁਟੁੰਬਕਮ” ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਪੂਰੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੇਖਦੀ ਹੈ (Mahopanishad 6.71-73)।

“The whole world is one family.” — Mahopanishad 6.71

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ “ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ” ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਹੈ।

(ਘ) ਮੋਖ ਦਾ ਆਦਰਸ਼

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮੋਖ ਜਾਂ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਹੈ। ਮੋਖ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਜਨਮ-ਮਰਨ ਦੇ ਚੱਕਰ ਅਤੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ (Dasgupta, 1922)।

□ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Western Ethics)

(ਕ) ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ

ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਰਕ (Reason) ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਖ਼ਾਸ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ Immanuel Kant ਨੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ।

“Reason is the source of moral law.” (Kant, 1785/1993)

(ਖ) ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ

ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ, ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਉਦਾਰਵਾਦੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਫ਼ੈਸਲੇ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹੈ (Rawls, 1971)।

(ਗ) ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ

ਪੱਛਮੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦਾ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਆਂ, ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਅੰਗ ਹਨ (Rawls, 1971)।

3. ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ

(i) ਯੂਟਿਲਿਟੇਰੀਅਨਿਜ਼ਮ (Utilitarianism)

Jeremy Bentham ਅਤੇ John Stuart Mill ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਮੂਲ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ:

“Greatest happiness of the greatest number.” (Bentham, 1789)

ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਵਾਂ:



- ਨਤੀਜਾ-ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ
- ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਸੁਖ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਾਥਮਿਕਤਾ
- ਲਾਭ ਅਤੇ ਹਾਨੀ ਦਾ ਮੁਲਾਂਕਣ

(ii) ਡਿਓਂਟੋਲੋਜੀ (Deontology)

Immanuel Kant ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਕਰਤਵਜ਼ ਹੈ, ਨਾ ਕਿ ਨਤੀਜੇ।

“Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.” (Kant, 1785)

ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਵਾਂ:

- ਕਰਤਵਜ਼ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ
- ਸਰਵਵਿਆਪੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਨਿਯਮ
- ਨੈਤਿਕ ਇਰਾਦੇ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ

(iii) ਵਰਚੂ ਐਥਿਕਸ (Virtue Ethics)

Aristotle ਨੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਦਗੁਣਾਂ (Virtues) ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ।

“Virtue is a habit of choosing the mean.” (Nicomachean Ethics)

ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਵਾਂ:

- ਚਰਿੱਤਰ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ
- ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਜੀਵਨ
- ਨੈਤਿਕ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ

4. ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਾਨਤਾਵਾਂ

- ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਹਤਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।
- ਦੋਵੇਂ ਸੱਚਾਈ, ਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਦਾਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।
- ਦੋਵੇਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।
- ਦੋਵੇਂ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਮੰਨਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।
- ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ (MacIntyre, 2007; Sen, 2009)।

5. ਮੁੱਖ ਅੰਤਰ (ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਸਾਰਣੀ)

ਮੁੱਖ ਅੰਤਰ (ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਸਾਰਣੀ) Key Differences (Comparison Table)

ਪੱਖ	ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ	ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ
ਆਧਾਰ	ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ	ਤਰਕ, ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧੀ
ਮੁੱਖ ਲਕਸ਼	ਮੋਖ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਮੁਕਤੀ	ਸੁਖ, ਭਲਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ
ਪਹੁੰਚ	ਸਮੂਹ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ	ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕਸੰਗਤ
ਕੇਂਦਰ	ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ	ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ
ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ	ਕਰਤਵਜ਼ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ	ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ
ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ	ਕਰਮ ਦੇ ਫਲ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ	ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ
ਅੰਤਿਮ ਉਦੇਸ਼	ਆਤਮ-ਸਾਕਸ਼ਾਤਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ	ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ

ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ (Critical Analysis)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਥਪੂਰਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਅਤੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਹਨ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ, ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਤਰਕ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ, ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ (Radhakrishnan, 1923; Rawls, 1971)।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇੱਕ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਇਕਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸੱਤਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੇਖਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੱਚ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦਇਆ, ਸੇਵਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ, ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤਿਅਧਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਰੂੜੀਵਾਦੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ (Hiriyanna, 1932)।

ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ, ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ, ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ, ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਅਤਿਅਧਿਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਵਾਦ (Individualism) ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਏਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ (MacIntyre, 2007)।

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਤਰਕਸੰਗਤ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ-ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਲਾਭਕਾਰੀ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ (Sen, 2009)।

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ (Ethics and Value Systems in the Modern Context)

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ, ਗਲੋਬਲਾਈਜ਼ੇਸ਼ਨ, ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰੀਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਡਿਜ਼ੀਟਲ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਕਾਸਾਂ ਨੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਵਿਧਾਜਨਕ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸੰਕਟ, ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਤਨ, ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਸਮਾਨਤਾਵਾਂ ਵੀ ਵਧੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ—ਸੱਚ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦਇਆ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ, ਸੇਵਾ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ—ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2011)।

ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪੱਖ (Social Dimensions)

ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਏਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਹੈ। ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਸੀ ਭਰੋਸਾ, ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

**ਮੁੱਖ ਪੱਖ:****1. ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਏਕਤਾ**

ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ, ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ (Durkheim, 1912)।

2. ਭਰੋਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ

ਸੱਚਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਵਧਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ।

3. ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਮੂਲ ਇਕਾਈ ਮੰਨਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਤਿਕਾਰ, ਸੇਵਾ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

4. ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਾਂਝ

ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਵਿਭਿੰਨਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਆਦਰ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਟਕਰਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

“Social cohesion depends upon shared moral values.” (Durkheim, 1912)

ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪੱਖ

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਵਧ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਕਾਰਪੋਰੇਟ ਘਪਲਿਆਂ, ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਭੋਗਵਾਦੀ ਰੁਝਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਪਾਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਵਧਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਪੱਖ:**1. ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ**

ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਵਪਾਰਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗਤਾ ਵਧਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ (Amartya Sen, 2009)।

2. ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ

ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਧੋਖਾਧੜੀ, ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਅਤੇ ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

3. ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ

ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਸਿਰਫ ਲਾਭ ਕਮਾਉਣ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਨਾ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

4. ਟਿਕਾਊ ਵਿਕਾਸ

ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਭਵਿੱਖੀ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਿਆਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਪੱਖ

ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਲਈ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਇੱਕ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ, ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਦੁਰੁਪਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਭਰੋਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਮੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਣ ਬਣ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਮੁੱਖ ਪੱਖ:**1. ਨੈਤਿਕ ਨੇਤ੍ਰਤਵ**

ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹ ਨੇਤਾ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਨ (Gandhi, 1927)।

2. ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ

ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਰਦਰਸ਼ਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

3. ਨਿਆਂਪੂਰਕ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ

ਨੈਤਿਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਵਰਗ ਲਈ ਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਨ ਮੌਕੇ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

4. ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਭਰੋਸਾ

ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਨ-ਭਰੋਸੇ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਹੈ।

ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ

ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲਵਾਯੂ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ, ਪ੍ਰਦੂਸ਼ਣ, ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਟਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਹਨ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਜਨੀਯ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅਟੁੱਟ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਮੰਨਦੀ ਹੈ (A.L. Basham, 1954)।

ਮੁੱਖ ਪੱਖ:**1. ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ**

ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਤਾ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ।

2. ਸਸਤੇਨਬਲ ਡਿਵੈਲਪਮੈਂਟ

ਵਿਕਾਸ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰੇ ਪਰ ਭਵਿੱਖੀ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਨਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਏ।

3. ਸਾਦਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਯਮ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤਿ-ਉਪਭੋਗਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਸੰਯਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਦਗੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

4. ਵਿਸ਼ਵਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ

ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਸਿਰਫ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਹੈ।

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਈ ਗੁਣਾ ਵੱਧ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਏਕਤਾ, ਆਰਥਿਕ ਨਿਆਂ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਪਾਰਦਰਸ਼ਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣਕ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਕੇਵਲ ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੀ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੇ ਸੱਚ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦਇਆ, ਸੇਵਾ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਉਤਨੇ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਹਨ ਜਿੰਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਸਮਨਵਯ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਨਤੀਜੇ

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਇੱਕ-ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਗ੍ਰ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ—ਨਿਆਯ, ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ, ਸਾਂਖਿਆ, ਯੋਗ, ਮੀਮਾਂਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ—ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਗਿਆਨ, ਕਰਤਵਜ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ—ਬੁੱਧ, ਜੈਨ ਅਤੇ ਚਾਰਵਾਕ—ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਪਰ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗਿਕ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਅਧਿਐਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ‘ਧਰਮ’ ਅਤੇ ‘ਕਰਮ’ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜੈਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਵਰਗੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਹਨ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਤਣਾਅ-ਰਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵੱਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ—ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਦਯਾ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ—ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਏਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ, ਅਧਿਐਨ ਇਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਰਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਚਰਚਾ

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਨਾ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਗਿਆਨ, ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਹੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਆਚਰਣ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਿਆਯ ਅਤੇ ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਤੱਤਵਾਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜਦਕਿ ਸਾਂਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ, ਜੈਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜੈਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਪਰਿਗ੍ਰਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੈ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਵੱਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜਦਕਿ ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਮਾਰਗ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਚੇਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹਨ।

ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਵੀ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਧਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਤਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ, ਇਸਦੀ ਭੇਗਵਾਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਤਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਲਾਭਕਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕਸੰਗਤ ਨਿਰਣਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਰਸਬੰਧ

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਅਤੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਚਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਆਸਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ

ਆਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ—ਖ਼ਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਜੈਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ—ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਭਾਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਚਰਚਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਰਕਸੰਗਤਤਾ ਜੋੜਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਸਹੀ ਆਚਰਣ ਵੱਲ ਵਧਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ

ਆਜ ਦੇ ਗਲੋਬਲ ਅਤੇ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀਕਲ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ—ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦਯਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ—ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਟਕਰਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹਨ। ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣਕ ਸੰਕਟ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪਤਨ ਦੇ ਦੌਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਮੁੱਲ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਮਿਲਾਪ

ਚਰਚਾ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਤਰਕਸੰਗਤ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਯੋਗੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ

ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ, ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਮੰਨਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਸਮਗ੍ਰ ਅਤੇ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਮਾਡਲ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ, ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਮੁੱਲ—ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਤ੍ਯ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਦਯਾ—ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਹਨ।

ਨਿਸ਼ਕਰਸ਼

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ (Ethics) ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਆਧਾਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਿਰਫ ਸਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਣੇ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ—ਵੇਦਿਕ, ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦਿਕ, ਜੈਨ, ਬੁੱਧ, ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ, ਨਿਆਯ, ਵੈਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਿਕ, ਸਾਂਖਿਆ, ਯੋਗ, ਮੀਮਾਂਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ—ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਉਤਕਰਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਖ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਅਤਿ-ਆਵਸ਼ਯਕ ਮੰਨਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਭ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ, ਸੱਚ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦਇਆ, ਆਤਮ-ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਤੰਭਾਂ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਵੀਕਾਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ ਦਾ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਜੈਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧਮ ਮਾਰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਵੱਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਭਗਵਦ ਗੀਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਕਰਮ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਫਲ ਦੀ ਆਸਕਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕਰਤਵਜ



ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ, ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਧਾਰਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਤਰਕ, ਅਨੁਭਵ ਅਤੇ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਹੋਇਆ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਤੁਲਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਨਤੀ, ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਉੱਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਤਰਕ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦੋਵੇਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਨੈਤਿਕ, ਸੁਚਾਰੂ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਥਪੂਰਨ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ, ਗਲੋਬਲਾਈਜ਼ੇਸ਼ਨ, ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣਕ ਸੰਕਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਵੱਧ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਉੱਥੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਚੰਗਾ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉੱਚ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਤ ਲਈ ਸਮਰਪਿਤ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਧਰਮ, ਕਰਮ, ਅਹਿੰਸਾ, ਕਰੁਣਾ, ਸੱਚ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਉਤਨੇ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਹਨ ਜਿੰਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਨ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਸਮਗ੍ਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ-ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਟਿਲ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਲ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਸਾਥ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Conclusion

Indian Knowledge Tradition presents ethics as a comprehensive system that guides human conduct, personal development, social harmony, and spiritual growth. Ethics in the Indian context is not merely concerned with distinguishing right from wrong; it is closely connected with the pursuit of truth, duty, self-discipline, and ultimate liberation (Moksha). Various philosophical traditions such as the Vedic and Upanishadic schools, Jainism, Buddhism, the Bhagavad Gita, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta emphasize moral living as an essential means of achieving both individual and collective well-being.

The concepts of Dharma and Karma form the foundation of Indian ethical thought. Dharma provides moral guidance and social responsibility, while the Karma theory emphasizes accountability by linking actions with their consequences. Jain philosophy highlights non-violence, truthfulness, self-control, and non-possessiveness, whereas Buddhist ethics promotes compassion, the Middle Path, and the Noble Eightfold Path as practical means to overcome suffering. The Bhagavad Gita introduces the principle of Nishkama Karma (selfless action), teaching individuals to perform their duties without attachment to the results.

At the same time, Charvaka philosophy offers a critical perspective by questioning traditional beliefs related to Dharma, Karma, rebirth, and Moksha. By emphasizing reason, direct experience, and intellectual freedom, it contributed significantly to the development of critical thinking within Indian philosophy. Although its materialistic outlook has been criticized for lacking a strong basis for long-term moral responsibility and spiritual development, its role in encouraging rational inquiry remains important.

A comparison between Indian and Western ethics reveals both similarities and differences. Indian ethics is primarily duty-oriented, spiritually grounded, and focused on collective welfare and self-realization, whereas Western ethics generally emphasizes reason, individual rights, justice, and social institutions. Despite these differences, both traditions seek to promote moral behavior, human welfare, and a just social order.

In the modern world, characterized by globalization, technological advancement, environmental challenges, and social complexities, ethical values have become more important than ever. Principles such as truth, non-violence, compassion, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and service continue to provide valuable guidance in social, economic, political, and environmental spheres. These values help build trust, promote sustainable development, strengthen democratic institutions, and encourage responsible citizenship.

In conclusion, the ethical teachings of the Indian Knowledge Tradition offer a holistic framework for human life by integrating moral conduct, social responsibility, and spiritual development. The enduring relevance of values such as Dharma, Karma, Ahimsa, Truth, Compassion, and Selfless Service demonstrates their significance in addressing contemporary challenges and fostering a more harmonious, ethical, and sustainable world.

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भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के संदर्भ में चित्रसूत्र (विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण): एक अध्ययन

Aaditya Saini¹, Prof. Dr. Nirupama Singh²

¹ Student of Department of Visual Arts, Central University of Himachal Pradesh

² Department of Visual Arts, Central University of Himachal Pradesh

सारांश

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा अत्यंत समृद्ध और बहुआयामी रही है, जिसमें जीवन, प्रकृति और आध्यात्मिकता से जुड़े अनेक आयामों का समावेश मिलता है। इस परंपरा में दर्शन, साहित्य, विज्ञान, संगीत, नाट्य और ललित कलाओं को विशेष महत्व दिया गया है। भारतीय चिंतन में कला को केवल मनोरंजन का साधन नहीं माना गया, बल्कि इसे मानव की भावनाओं, आध्यात्मिक अनुभूति और सांस्कृतिक चेतना की अभिव्यक्ति का माध्यम समझा गया है। इसी कारण भारतीय परंपरा में चित्रकला को भी एक महत्वपूर्ण स्थान प्राप्त है, जिसका उल्लेख अनेक प्राचीन ग्रंथों में देखने को मिलता है। भारतीय चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों और उसके सैद्धांतिक आधारों को समझने के लिए विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण में वर्णित चित्रसूत्र अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण माना जाता है। यह ग्रंथ भारतीय चित्रकला से संबंधित विचारों, नियमों और सौंदर्यशास्त्रीय दृष्टिकोण को व्यवस्थित रूप से प्रस्तुत करता है। इसमें चित्रकला की उत्पत्ति, चित्रों के प्रकार, रंगों के प्रयोग, रचना-विधान, अनुपात, भाव-अभिव्यक्ति तथा कलाकार की योग्यता जैसे विभिन्न पक्षों का विस्तृत वर्णन मिलता है। इससे यह स्पष्ट होता है कि प्राचीन भारतीय समाज में कला को धर्म, दर्शन और सामाजिक जीवन से गहराई से जोड़ा गया था। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में चित्रकला को केवल दृश्य प्रस्तुति तक सीमित नहीं माना गया है, बल्कि इसे ज्ञान, संवेदना और आध्यात्मिक अनुभूति के समन्वित रूप के रूप में देखा गया है। चित्रसूत्र में वर्णित सिद्धांत यह संकेत देते हैं कि चित्रकला का उद्देश्य मात्र आकृतियों का निर्माण करना नहीं है, बल्कि उसमें निहित भाव, संतुलन, लय और सौंदर्य के माध्यम से जीवन की गहरी अनुभूतियों को व्यक्त करना भी है। इस दृष्टि से यह ग्रंथ भारतीय कला-दर्शन और सौंदर्यशास्त्र को समझने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाता है। प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र का उद्देश्य भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के संदर्भ में विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण के चित्रसूत्र का अध्ययन करना है। इसके माध्यम से यह समझने का प्रयास किया गया है कि प्राचीन भारतीय ग्रंथों में चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों को किस प्रकार व्यवस्थित रूप से प्रस्तुत किया गया है और भारतीय कला परंपरा के विकास में उनका क्या महत्व रहा है। यह अध्ययन न केवल भारतीय चित्रकला के सैद्धांतिक आधारों को स्पष्ट करता है, बल्कि भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला के महत्व तथा उसके दार्शनिक आयामों को भी समझने में सहायक सिद्ध होता है।

मुख्य शब्द - भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा, चित्रसूत्र, विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण, षडंग सिद्धांत।

Abstract

The Indian knowledge tradition has been extremely rich and multidimensional, encompassing numerous aspects related to life, nature, and spirituality. This tradition accords special importance to philosophy, literature, science, music, drama, and the fine arts. Indian thought does not regard art merely as a means of entertainment, but as a medium for expressing human emotions, spiritual experience, and cultural consciousness. For this reason, painting too occupies an important place in the Indian tradition, and its mention is found in numerous ancient texts. To understand the principles and theoretical foundations of Indian painting, the Chitrasutra described in the Vishnudharmottara Purana is considered extremely important. This text systematically presents the ideas, rules, and aesthetic perspectives related to Indian painting. It provides a detailed account of various aspects such as the origin of painting, types of images, the use of colours, composition, proportion, expression of emotion, and the qualifications of an artist. This makes it clear that in ancient Indian society, art was deeply connected with religion, philosophy, and social life. In the Indian knowledge tradition, painting is not viewed merely as visual representation, but as an integrated form of knowledge, sensitivity, and spiritual experience. The principles described in the Chitrasutra indicate that the purpose of painting is not merely to create forms, but also to express the deeper experiences of life through the emotion, balance, rhythm, and beauty embedded within it. From this perspective, this text plays an important role in understanding Indian art-philosophy and aesthetics. The purpose of the present research paper is to study the Chitrasutra of the Vishnudharmottara Purana in the context of the Indian knowledge tradition. Through this, an attempt has been made to understand how the principles of painting were systematically presented in ancient Indian texts and what significance they held in the development of the Indian art tradition. This study not only clarifies the theoretical foundations of Indian painting but also helps in understanding the importance of art and its philosophical dimensions within the Indian knowledge tradition.

Keywords - Indian Knowledge Tradition, Chitrasutra, Vishnudharmottara Purana, Shadanga Siddhanta (Six-Limb Theory)

परिचय

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा विश्व की सबसे प्राचीन और समृद्ध परंपराओं में से एक मानी जाती है। इस परंपरा में जीवन के विविध आयाम—दर्शन, साहित्य, विज्ञान, संगीत, नाट्य तथा ललित कलाओं—का समन्वित और संतुलित विकास दिखाई देता है। भारतीय चिंतन में कला को केवल सौंदर्य के प्रदर्शन तक सीमित नहीं माना गया, बल्कि इसे मानव की आंतरिक अनुभूतियों, आध्यात्मिक चेतना और सांस्कृतिक अभिव्यक्ति का

सशक्त माध्यम समझा गया है। इसी कारण भारतीय परंपरा में कला और ज्ञान का संबंध अत्यंत गहरा और परस्पर पूरक रहा है। (Agrawala, 1965)

भारतीय कला के सिद्धांतों और उसके शास्त्रीय आधार का उल्लेख अनेक प्राचीन ग्रंथों में मिलता है, जैसे नाट्यशास्त्र, शिल्पशास्त्र तथा विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण। इन ग्रंथों में विशेष रूप से विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण का तृतीय खंड अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है, जिसमें चित्रकला, संगीत और नृत्य से संबंधित विस्तृत विवरण मिलता है। इसी खंड में वर्णित चित्रसूत्र भारतीय चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों को समझने का एक महत्वपूर्ण शास्त्रीय आधार प्रदान करता है। चित्रसूत्र में चित्रकला के विभिन्न आयामों—जैसे आकृतियों का निर्माण, अनुपात, भावाभिव्यक्ति, रंगों का प्रयोग तथा चित्रकार के गुण—का व्यवस्थित और वैज्ञानिक वर्णन मिलता है।

चित्रसूत्र केवल चित्र बनाने की तकनीक तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि यह कला के दार्शनिक और सांस्कृतिक पक्ष को भी उजागर करता है। इसमें यह स्पष्ट किया गया है कि एक श्रेष्ठ चित्रकार को प्रकृति, मानव भावनाओं और समाज की विविध परिस्थितियों का सूक्ष्म अवलोकन करना चाहिए। इस प्रकार चित्रसूत्र कला को समाज और जीवन से जोड़ने का कार्य करता है।

समाज में चित्रसूत्र का महत्व अनेक स्तरों पर देखा जा सकता है। यह ग्रंथ कलाकारों को केवल तकनीकी ज्ञान ही नहीं देता, बल्कि उन्हें सौंदर्यबोध, संतुलन और भावाभिव्यक्ति की गहरी समझ भी प्रदान करता है। इसके सिद्धांतों ने भारतीय चित्रकला की विभिन्न परंपराओं—जैसे अजंता की भित्ति चित्रकला, राजस्थानी चित्रकला और पहाड़ी चित्रकला—के विकास में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है। इसके अतिरिक्त चित्रसूत्र भारतीय समाज की सांस्कृतिक धारणाओं, धार्मिक प्रतीकों और सौंदर्य दृष्टि को भी प्रतिबिंबित करता है।

इस प्रकार चित्रसूत्र न केवल भारतीय चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों का आधार प्रस्तुत करता है, बल्कि यह भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला के महत्व, उसकी सामाजिक भूमिका और उसके सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों को भी स्पष्ट करता है। इसलिए चित्रसूत्र का अध्ययन भारतीय कला इतिहास और भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा को समझने के लिए अत्यंत आवश्यक माना जाता है। (Kramrich, 1982)

साहित्य अवलोकन

भारतीय चित्रकला और उसके सिद्धांतों के अध्ययन के लिए अनेक विद्वानों ने महत्वपूर्ण शोध कार्य किए हैं। विशेष रूप से विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण के चित्रसूत्र तथा भारतीय कला परंपरा को समझने के लिए कई प्रमुख ग्रंथ उपलब्ध हैं, जिनमें चित्रकला के सिद्धांत, सौंदर्यशास्त्र और सांस्कृतिक संदर्भों का विस्तृत अध्ययन किया गया है।

स्टेला क्रामरिच द्वारा अनुवादित विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण (भाग 3) चित्रसूत्र के अध्ययन के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण स्रोत माना जाता है। इस ग्रंथ में चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों, विशेष रूप से षडंग सिद्धांत, चित्र निर्माण की विधियों तथा कलाकार की भूमिका का विस्तृत वर्णन मिलता है। (Kramrich, 1982)

कपिला वात्स्यायन ने अपनी पुस्तक **द स्कवायर एंड द सर्किल ऑफ द इंडियन आर्ट** में भारतीय कला की दार्शनिक और सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि को के विषय में बताया है। उनके अनुसार भारतीय कला केवल सौंदर्य की अभिव्यक्ति नहीं, बल्कि भारतीय समाज, धर्म और दर्शन से गहराई से जुड़ी हुई है। (Vatsyayan, 1997)

इसी प्रकार **वी. एस. अग्रवाल** की पुस्तक **भारतीय कला** में इतिहास और उसके विकास को समझने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण मानी जाती है। इसमें प्राचीन से आधुनिक काल तक भारतीय कला की विभिन्न परंपराओं और उनके सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक संदर्भों के विषय में बताया गया है। (Agwal, 1965)

पर्सि ब्राउन की पुस्तक **भारतीय चित्रकला** की विभिन्न शैलियों—जैसे अजंता, मुगल, राजस्थानी और पहाड़ी चित्रकला—का विस्तृत अध्ययन प्रस्तुत करती है। इस पुस्तक में भारतीय चित्रकला की तकनीक के विषय में वर्णन मिलता है। (Brown, 1990)

इन सभी यह स्पष्ट होता है कि भारतीय चित्रकला केवल कलात्मक अभिव्यक्ति नहीं है बल्कि यह भारतीय समाज, संस्कृति और आध्यात्मिक परंपराओं से गहराई से जुड़ी हुई है। इनके आधार पर यह कहा जा सकता है कि विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण का चित्रसूत्र भारतीय चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों को समझने का एक महत्वपूर्ण स्रोत है और भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला के सांस्कृतिक महत्व को स्पष्ट करता है।

शोध पद्धति

प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र मुख्य रूप से गुणात्मक तथा विश्लेषणात्मक प्रक्रिया के आधार पर पूरी की गई है। इस अध्ययन में भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के संदर्भ में विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण के चित्रसूत्र में वर्णित चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों का अध्ययन और विश्लेषण किया गया है।

इस शोध में प्रमुख रूप से द्वितीयक स्रोतों का उपयोग किया गया है। इसके अंतर्गत विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण के चित्रसूत्र से संबंधित मूल ग्रंथों, कला इतिहास से जुड़ी पुस्तकों तथा अन्य प्रामाणिक अकादमिक स्रोतों का अध्ययन किया गया है। इन स्रोतों के माध्यम से चित्रसूत्र में वर्णित षडंग सिद्धांत, चित्रकला की तकनीक, सौंदर्यशास्त्र और भारतीय चित्रकला पर इसके प्रभाव का विश्लेषण किया गया है।

इसके अतिरिक्त ऐतिहासिक तथ्यों का भी प्रयोग किया गया है, जिसके अंतर्गत भारतीय चित्रकला की विभिन्न परंपराओं—जैसे अजंता की भित्ति चित्रकला, राजस्थानी और पहाड़ी लघु चित्रकला—के उदाहरणों के माध्यम से चित्रसूत्र के सिद्धांतों की प्रासंगिकता को समझने का प्रयास किया गया है।

परिणाम

प्रस्तुत अध्ययन में भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के संदर्भ में विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण के चित्रसूत्र का विश्लेषण करने पर निम्न प्रमुख परिणाम प्राप्त होते हैं—

अध्ययन से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि भारतीय परंपरा में कला को केवल सौंदर्य या मनोरंजन का साधन नहीं माना गया, बल्कि इसे ज्ञान, साधना और आध्यात्मिक अनुभव का माध्यम समझा गया है।

विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण में वर्णित चित्रसूत्र में चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों, तकनीकों का व्यवस्थित वर्णन मिलता है, जो भारतीय चित्रकला के विकास और अध्ययन के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण स्रोत है।

षडंग सिद्धांत चित्र निर्माण की सबसे पहली सीढ़ी हैं।

रूपभेद, प्रमाण, भाव, लावण्य योजना, सादृश्य और वर्णिकाभंग जैसे सिद्धांत चित्रकला में रूप, अनुपात, भाव और रंगों के संतुलन के विषय में जानकारी प्राप्त होती है। ये सिद्धांत कलाकार को एक संतुलित और प्रभावी चित्र रचना के लिए सही ढंग और सही रास्ता प्रदान करते हैं।

भारतीय चित्रकला की विभिन्न परंपराओं में चित्रसूत्र के सिद्धांतों का प्रभाव देखा जा सकता है। अजंता की भित्ति चित्रकला, राजस्थानी और पहाड़ी लघु चित्रकला में आकृतियों के अनुपात, भावाभिव्यक्ति और रंग संयोजन में इन सिद्धांतों की झलक मिलती है।

चित्रकला के माध्यम से समाज के धार्मिक विश्वास, सांस्कृतिक परंपराएँ और जीवन शैली का चित्रण किया जाता है। इस प्रकार चित्रसूत्र न केवल कला के तकनीकी पक्ष को स्पष्ट करता है, बल्कि समाज और संस्कृति के साथ उसके संबंध को भी दर्शाता है।

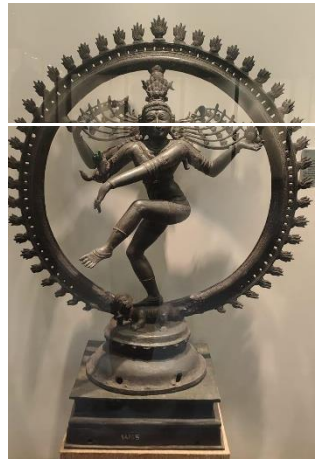
भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा और कला

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला को केवल सजावट के रूप में नहीं, बल्कि ज्ञान, साधना और आध्यात्मिक अनुभव के महत्वपूर्ण रूप में देखा गया है। प्राचीन भारतीय ग्रंथों—जैसे वेद, उपनिषद, पुराण और विभिन्न शास्त्रों—में कला के विविध रूपों का उल्लेख मिलता है। भारतीय चिंतन के अनुसार कला मनुष्य के आंतरिक भावों को व्यक्त करने का माध्यम है, जो व्यक्ति को आत्मिक शांति और उच्चतर चेतना की ओर ले जाती है। इसी कारण भारतीय संस्कृति में कला को धर्म, दर्शन और आध्यात्मिकता से गहराई से जोड़ा गया है (Vatsyayan, 1997)।

जब कलाकार किसी चित्र, मूर्ति या संगीत की रचना करता है, तो वह केवल बाहरी रूप को नहीं बनाता, बल्कि उसमें भाव, अर्थ और आध्यात्मिक अनुभव को साथ में जोड़कर चित्रित करता है।



उदाहरण के लिए, अजंता की भित्ति चित्रकला में बौद्ध कथाओं और बुद्ध के जीवन के विभिन्न दृश्यों को जिस भाव और सौंदर्य के ढंग से चित्रित किया गया है, वह केवल चित्रण कौशल ही नहीं बल्कि कलाकार की गहरी आध्यात्मिक चिंतन को भी प्रस्तुत किया गया है।



इसी प्रकार भारतीय मंदिर वास्तुकला और मूर्तिकला में भी कला और आध्यात्मिकता का गहरा संबंध दिई देता है। मंदिरों की मूर्तियों और भित्ति चित्रों में देवताओं, नृत्य मुद्राओं और पौराणिक कथाओं का चित्रण केवल सजावट के लिए नहीं होता, बल्कि यह धार्मिक आस्था और सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों की अभिव्यक्ति भी होता है। (Kramrisch, 1976)

उदाहरण के लिए, चोल काल की नटराज की कांस्य मूर्ति केवल एक कलात्मक प्रतिमा नहीं है, बल्कि यह शिव के सृष्टि और संहार के दार्शनिक सिद्धांत का प्रतीक भी मानी जाती है।

इस दृष्टि से देखा जाए तो भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला केवल एक रचनात्मक गतिविधि नहीं, बल्कि मानव जीवन को संवेदनशील, सौंदर्यपूर्ण और आध्यात्मिक रूप से समृद्ध बनाने का माध्यम है। इसी कारण भारतीय संस्कृति में कला को ज्ञान और साधना की एक महत्वपूर्ण विधा के रूप में प्रतिष्ठा प्राप्त हुई है। जिन सभी मूर्ति और मंदिरों को पुराणों में वर्णित सूत्रों अर्थात् विष्णुधामोत्तर पुराण में वर्णित चित्र के सूत्र पर आधारित बनाया गया है सभी मूर्तियों को उनकी विभिन्न विशेषताओं के साथ उन्हें बनाया जाता है जिनका वर्णन हमारे पुराणों में दिया गया है।

इस दृष्टि से देखा जाए तो भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला केवल एक रचनात्मक गतिविधि नहीं, बल्कि मानव जीवन को संवेदनशील, सौंदर्यपूर्ण और आध्यात्मिक रूप से समृद्ध बनाने का माध्यम है। इसी कारण भारतीय संस्कृति में **कला को ज्ञान और साधना की एक महत्वपूर्ण विधा** के रूप में प्रतिष्ठा प्राप्त हुई है।

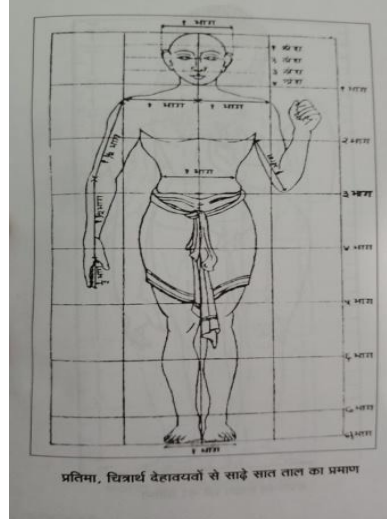
चित्रसूत्र में चित्रकला के सिद्धांत (षडंग सिद्धांत)

विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण के तृतीय खंड में वर्णित चित्रसूत्र भारतीय चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों का एक महत्वपूर्ण और व्यवस्थित शास्त्रीय स्रोत है। इसमें चित्रकला के स्वरूप, उसकी तकनीक, सौंदर्यबोध और कलाकार की भूमिका का विस्तृत वर्णन मिलता है। चित्रसूत्र में चित्रकला के जिन मूलभूत सिद्धांतों का उल्लेख किया गया है, उन्हें **“षडंग”** कहा जाता है। ये छह अंग

चित्रकला की रचना के आधार माने जाते हैं और एक कलाकार को यह समझने में सहायता करते हैं कि एक प्रभावी और सौंदर्यपूर्ण चित्र किस प्रकार निर्मित किया जाना चाहिए। (Kramrich, 1982)

रूपभेदः प्रमाणानि भावलावण्ययोजनम्।

सादृश्यं वर्णिकाभंग इति चित्रं षडंगकम्॥ (Shrikrishana(Jugnu))



रूपभेद

रूपभेद का अर्थ है विभिन्न आकृतियों और रूपों की पहचान तथा उनका सही चित्रण। कलाकार को प्रकृति, मनुष्य, पशु-पक्षी और अन्य वस्तुओं के रूपों की विशेषताओं को समझना आवश्यक होता है। उदाहरण के लिए, यदि कलाकार किसी मनुष्य और किसी देवता की आकृति का चित्रण करता है, तो दोनों के रूप, मुद्रा और भावों में अंतर होना चाहिए। इसी प्रकार अजंता की भित्ति चित्रों में राजाओं, साधुओं और सामान्य लोगों की आकृतियों को उनके सामाजिक और भावनात्मक स्वरूप के अनुसार अलग-अलग रूप में चित्रित किया गया है। (Kramrich, 1982)

प्रमाण

प्रमाण का संबंध आकृतियों के सही अनुपात और माप से है। चित्रकला में शरीर के अंगों का संतुलित अनुपात चित्र को यथार्थपूर्ण और आकर्षक बनाता है। उदाहरण के लिए, भारतीय शिल्प और चित्र परंपरा में मानव शरीर के माप के लिए विशिष्ट नियम बनाए गए थे, जिनके आधार पर कलाकार आकृतियों को संतुलित रूप में प्रस्तुत करता था। मंदिरों की मूर्तिकला और चित्रों में इन अनुपातों का विशेष ध्यान रखा जाता था, जिससे आकृतियों में संतुलन और सौंदर्य बना रहे। (Kramrich, 1982)



भाव

भाव का अर्थ है चित्र में भावनाओं को प्रदर्शित करना। केवल आकृति बनाना पर्याप्त नहीं होता, बल्कि उसमें भावनात्मक गहराई भी होनी चाहिए। उदाहरण के लिए, बौद्ध चित्रों में बुद्ध की शांत और करुणामय मुद्रा दर्शक के मन में शांति और श्रद्धा की अनुभूति उत्पन्न करती है। इसी प्रकार कृष्ण-लीला से संबंधित चित्रों में आनंद, प्रेम और भक्ति के भावों को प्रमुखता से दर्शाया जाता है। (Kramrich, 1982)

लावण्य योजना

लावण्य योजना का अर्थ है चित्र में सौंदर्य और आकर्षण की समुचित व्यवस्था करना। इसमें आकृतियों की मुद्रा, रेखाओं की लय, रंगों का संतुलन और संपूर्ण रचना की सामंजस्यपूर्ण योजना शामिल होती है। उदाहरण के लिए, राजस्थानी और पहाड़ी लघु चित्रों में कलाकारों ने आकृतियों की कोमलता, सजावटी रेखाओं और रंगों की सुंदर व्यवस्था के माध्यम से चित्रों में विशेष लावण्य उत्पन्न किया है। (Kramrich, 1982)

सादृश्य

सादृश्य का अर्थ है चित्र का वास्तविक वस्तु या व्यक्ति से साम्य होना। इसका उद्देश्य यह है कि चित्र में दर्शाई गई आकृति अपने मूल स्वरूप के समान प्रतीत हो। उदाहरण के लिए, यदि किसी राजा का चित्र बनाया जाता है, तो उसमें उसकी पहचान, व्यक्तित्व और विशेषताओं का सही प्रतिबिंब होना चाहिए। भारतीय लघु चित्रकला में शासकों और ऐतिहासिक व्यक्तियों के चित्रों में यह सादृश्य स्पष्ट रूप से दिखाई देता है। (Kramrich, 1982)

वर्णिकाभंग

वर्णिकाभंग का संबंध रंगों के उचित प्रयोग और संयोजन से है। इसमें यह बताया गया है कि रंगों का चयन और उनका संतुलित उपयोग चित्र की प्रभावशीलता को बढ़ाता है। भारतीय चित्रकला में प्राकृतिक रंगों का प्रयोग किया जाता था, जैसे खनिज, पौधों और पत्थरों से प्राप्त रंग। अजंता के चित्रों में रंगों का संयोजन और उनका सामंजस्य इस सिद्धांत का उत्कृष्ट उदाहरण है। (Kramrich, 1982)

इन छह सिद्धांतों के माध्यम से चित्रसूत्र यह स्पष्ट करता है कि एक उत्कृष्ट चित्र केवल तकनीकी कौशल का परिणाम नहीं होता, बल्कि उसमें रूप, अनुपात, भाव, सौंदर्य और रंगों का संतुलित समन्वय होना आवश्यक है। यही कारण है कि षडंग सिद्धांत को भारतीय चित्रकला की आधारशिला माना जाता है और यह आज भी भारतीय कला अध्ययन में अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण माने जाते हैं।

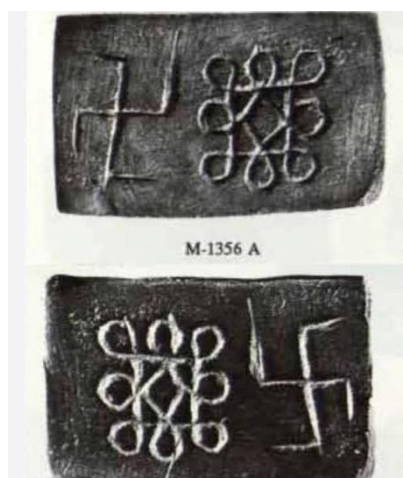
भारतीय चित्रकला का सामाजिक परिप्रेक्ष्य

भारतीय चित्रकला केवल सौंदर्य और कलात्मक अभिव्यक्ति का माध्यम ही नहीं रही है, बल्कि यह भारतीय समाज, संस्कृति और जीवन मूल्यों का महत्वपूर्ण दर्पण भी रही है। विभिन्न कालों में निर्मित चित्रों में उस समय के सामाजिक जीवन, धार्मिक विश्वासों, परंपराओं और सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों का स्पष्ट प्रतिबिंब दिखाई देता है।

भारतीय चित्रकला का समाज से गहरा संबंध रहा है और यह विभिन्न कालों के सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक तथा धार्मिक जीवन को प्रतिबिंबित करती है। प्राचीन काल की अजंता भित्ति चित्रों में बौद्ध कथाओं के साथ-साथ उस समय के वस्त्र, आभूषण और जीवन शैली का चित्रण मिलता है। मध्यकालीन राजस्थानी और पहाड़ी लघु चित्रकला में राजदरबार, उत्सव, प्रेम और लोक जीवन के दृश्य दिखाई देते हैं। आधुनिक काल में कलाकारों ने सामाजिक यथार्थ, ग्रामीण जीवन और मानवीय भावनाओं को अपने चित्रों का विषय बनाया। इस प्रकार भारतीय चित्रकला केवल सौंदर्य की अभिव्यक्ति नहीं, बल्कि समाज और संस्कृति का महत्वपूर्ण दर्पण भी है। (grwal)

मंगलकारी चित्र

भारत की विभिन्न परंपराओं में चित्र को सत्य, शिव और सुंदर मन गया है, इन्हीं गुणों के कारण चित्र में रुचि उत्पन्न होती है, कुछ ऐसे चित्र भारतीय परंपरा में बनाए जाते हैं जो किसी भी कार्य के मंगल से पहले दीवारों और जमीन पर उकेरे जाते हैं, इन चित्रों में स्वस्तिक, ॐ, अष्टदल कमल आदि के स्वरूप को देखा जा सकता है, इन सभी चित्रों के साक्ष्य हमें अपनी प्राचीन विकसित भारतीय सिंधु घाटी सभ्यता से प्राप्त हुए हैं।



चित्र संख्या 4 व 5 में स्वस्तिक चित्र को प्रदर्शित किया गया है जो राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय नई दिल्ली में संग्रहित है और हड़प्पा सभ्यता से प्राप्त हुए हैं। इन चिन्हों के अपने मायने और गहरे अर्थ होते हैं जिनमें चार पुरुषार्थ, भक्ति, अतः कारण और मुक्ति के विषय में जानकारी मिलती है।

कला क्षेत्र में चित्रकार राजा रवि वर्मा के विशेष योगदान को देखते हुए कहा जा सकता है कि उन्होंने ऐसे समय में भारत में धर्म की प्रचारित की जिस समय केवल ईश्वर की अमूर्त प्रतिमाएं हमें मंदिर में दर्शन स्वरूप हेतु स्थापित थी, उन्होंने ही ईश्वर की मानवीय छवि को सभी के समक्ष प्रस्तुत किया जिन चित्रों को कलाकार ने चित्र सूत्र और पुराणों में उनके वर्णन के आधार पर उनका चित्रण किया। आधुनिक काल में भारतीय चित्रकला ने सामाजिक विषयों को और अधिक व्यापक रूप में प्रस्तुत किया। आधुनिक कलाकारों ने समाज में होने वाले परिवर्तन, संघर्ष और मानवीय संवेदनाओं को अपने चित्रों का विषय बनाया। राजा रवि वर्मा ने भारतीय पौराणिक कथाओं को यथार्थवादी शैली में चित्रित करके समाज में कला की लोकप्रियता को बढ़ाया, जबकि नंदलाल बोस और अमृता शेरगिल जैसे कलाकारों ने भारतीय जनजीवन, ग्रामीण परिवेश और सामाजिक यथार्थ को अपने चित्रों में अभिव्यक्त किया (Agrawala, 1965)।

इस प्रकार भारतीय चित्रकला का सामाजिक परिप्रेक्ष्य यह दर्शाता है कि कला समाज से गहराई से जुड़ी हुई है। यह केवल कलाकार की कल्पना का परिणाम नहीं होती, बल्कि समाज के अनुभवों, मान्यताओं और जीवन मूल्यों का प्रतिबिंब भी होती है। भारतीय चित्रकला के अध्ययन से हमें विभिन्न कालों के सामाजिक जीवन, सांस्कृतिक परंपराओं और मानवीय संवेदनाओं को समझने में महत्वपूर्ण सहायता मिलती है।

निष्कर्ष

उपरोक्त तथ्यों के आधार पर यह स्पष्ट होता है कि विष्णुधर्मोत्तर पुराण में वर्णित चित्रसूत्र भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में चित्रकला के सिद्धांतों को व्यवस्थित रूप से प्रस्तुत करने वाला एक महत्वपूर्ण ग्रंथ है। इसमें चित्रकला के मूलभूत तत्वों—जैसे रूप, अनुपात, भाव, सौंदर्य और रंगों के संतुलन—को षडंग सिद्धांत के माध्यम से समझाया गया है। ये सिद्धांत केवल चित्र बनाने की तकनीक ही नहीं बताते, बल्कि कला के सौंदर्यशास्त्र, अभिव्यक्ति और उसके दार्शनिक पक्ष को भी स्पष्ट करते हैं। इससे यह ज्ञात होता है कि भारतीय परंपरा में कला को एक गहन बौद्धिक और आध्यात्मिक प्रक्रिया के रूप में देखा गया है। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला को ज्ञान, साधना और सांस्कृतिक अभिव्यक्ति का महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम माना गया है। चित्रसूत्र के सिद्धांतों ने भारतीय चित्रकला की विभिन्न परंपराओं—जैसे अजंता की भित्ति चित्रकला, राजस्थानी और पहाड़ी लघु चित्रकला—को एक सैद्धांतिक आधार प्रदान किया है। इन परंपराओं में कलाकारों ने न केवल सौंदर्य और कौशल का प्रदर्शन किया, बल्कि समाज, संस्कृति और धार्मिक विश्वासों को भी अपने चित्रों में अभिव्यक्त किया।

कला मानव सभ्यता के विकास में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है। यह केवल सौंदर्य की अभिव्यक्ति नहीं है, बल्कि समाज के नैतिक मूल्यों, सांस्कृतिक परंपराओं और मानवीय संवेदनाओं को व्यक्त करने का प्रभावी माध्यम भी है। कला के माध्यम से व्यक्ति अपने विचारों, भावनाओं और अनुभवों को अभिव्यक्त करता है, जिससे समाज में संवेदनशीलता, सौंदर्यबोध और सामूहिक चेतना का विकास होता है।



एक सभ्य समाज की कल्पना में कला का विशेष योगदान होता है, क्योंकि यह मनुष्य को मानवीय मूल्यों—जैसे प्रेम, करुणा, सहिष्णुता और सौहार्द—की ओर प्रेरित करती है। भारतीय परंपरा में चित्रकला, संगीत, नृत्य और मूर्तिकला जैसे कला रूप समाज में सांस्कृतिक एकता और आध्यात्मिक चेतना को विकसित करने का कार्य करते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए, मंदिरों की भित्ति चित्रकला और लोक चित्रकला में धार्मिक कथाओं, सामाजिक जीवन और नैतिक आदर्शों का चित्रण किया जाता है, जो समाज को नैतिक दिशा प्रदान करता है। कला समाज को उसकी सांस्कृतिक पहचान से भी जोड़ती है। विभिन्न कालों की चित्रकला में उस समय के सामाजिक जीवन, रीति-रिवाज, उत्सव और परंपराओं का चित्रण मिलता है, जिससे समाज अपनी सांस्कृतिक विरासत को समझ और संरक्षित कर सकता है। इस प्रकार कला न केवल समाज के सांस्कृतिक विकास में योगदान देती है, बल्कि एक संवेदनशील, जागरूक और सभ्य समाज के निर्माण में भी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है।

अतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि चित्रसूत्र केवल चित्रकला के तकनीकी नियमों का संग्रह नहीं है, बल्कि यह भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में कला, समाज और संस्कृति के गहरे संबंध को भी स्पष्ट करता है। यह ग्रंथ भारतीय कला की सैद्धांतिक नींव को समझने के साथ-साथ यह भी दर्शाता है कि कला किस प्रकार समाज की सांस्कृतिक चेतना और आध्यात्मिक मूल्यों को अभिव्यक्त करने का महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम रही है।

Conclusion

Based on the above facts, it becomes clear that the Chitrastotra described in the Vishnudharmottara Purana is an important text that systematically presents the principles of painting within the Indian knowledge tradition. It explains the fundamental elements of painting, such as form, proportion, emotion, beauty, and the balance of colours, through the Shadanga (six-limb) theory. These principles do not merely describe painting techniques; they also clarify the aesthetics, expression, and philosophical dimension of art. This reveals that in the Indian tradition, art has been regarded as a profound intellectual and spiritual process.

In the Indian knowledge tradition, art has been considered an important medium of knowledge, spiritual practice, and cultural expression. The principles of the Chitrastotra have provided a theoretical foundation for various traditions of Indian painting, such as the mural paintings of Ajanta and the Rajasthani and Pahari miniature painting traditions. In these traditions, artists not only displayed beauty and skill but also expressed society, culture, and religious beliefs in their paintings.

Art plays an important role in the development of human civilisation. It is not merely an expression of beauty but also an effective medium for conveying society's moral values, cultural traditions, and human sensibilities. Through art, a person expresses their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, which fosters sensitivity, aesthetic awareness, and collective consciousness in society. Art makes a special contribution to the vision of a civilised society, as it inspires human beings towards human values such as love, compassion, tolerance, and harmony. In the Indian tradition, art forms such as painting, music, dance, and sculpture work to develop cultural unity and spiritual consciousness in society. For example, temple murals and folk paintings depict religious narratives, social life, and moral ideals, thereby providing society with moral direction.

Art also connects society with its cultural identity. The paintings of different periods depict the social life, customs, festivals, and traditions of that time, enabling society to understand and preserve its cultural heritage. In this way, art contributes not only to the cultural development of society but also plays an important role in building a sensitive, aware, and civilised society. It can therefore be said that the Chitrastotra is not merely a collection of technical rules of painting; it also clarifies the deep relationship between art, society, and culture within the Indian knowledge tradition. This text helps in understanding the theoretical foundation of Indian art while also showing how art has been an important medium for expressing the cultural consciousness and spiritual values of society.

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सिरमौर जनपद की पारंपरिक लोक-गायन शैलियों की अवधारणा

SIRMAUR JANPAD KI PARAMPARIK LOK-GAYAN KI AVDHARANA

Dr. Vinod Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Music Instrumental, Government College Sangrah, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

सारांश

सिरमौर जनपद, हिमाचल प्रदेश का एक समृद्ध सांस्कृतिक क्षेत्र है, जहाँ की पारंपरिक लोकगायन शैलियाँ जनजीवन, प्रकृति, आस्था और सामाजिक संबंधों का सजीव प्रतिबिंब प्रस्तुत करती हैं। इस अध्ययन का उद्देश्य सिरमौर की प्रमुख लोकगायन परंपराओं की अवधारणा, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं नैतिक महत्व तथा उनके संरक्षण की आवश्यकता का विश्लेषण करना है। यहाँ प्रचलित लोकगायन शैलियों में साधु, संस्कार गीत, सियारण, सेवा गायन, सीस गायन प्रमुख हैं जो विभिन्न अवसरों जैसे पर्व-त्योहार, विवाह, कृषि कार्य और धार्मिक अनुष्ठानों पर गाए जाते हैं। इन लोकगीतों की विशेषता उनकी मौखिक परंपरा, सरल भाषा, लयात्मकता और सामूहिक प्रस्तुति है। यह अध्ययन निष्कर्ष रूप में बताता है कि सिरमौर की लोकगायन शैलियाँ केवल मनोरंजन का साधन नहीं हैं, बल्कि वे क्षेत्र की सांस्कृतिक पहचान, ऐतिहासिक स्मृति और सामुदायिक मूल्यों की धरोहर हैं, जिनका संरक्षण सांस्कृतिक विविधता के लिए अनिवार्य है।

Abstract

Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh is a culturally rich region where traditional folk singing styles vividly reflect the life, nature, faith, and social relationships of the people. The objective of this study is to analyze the concept of the major folk singing traditions of Sirmaur, their social, cultural, and moral significance, and the need for their preservation. The prominent folk singing styles practiced in the region include Sadhu, Sanskar Geet, Siyaran, Seva Gayan, and Sees Gayan. These are sung on various occasions such as festivals, weddings, agricultural activities, and religious ceremonies. The uniqueness of these folk songs lies in their oral tradition, simple language, melodious nature, and collective performance. This study clearly shows that the folk singing traditions of Sirmaur are not merely a source of entertainment; rather, they represent the cultural identity, historical memory, and community values of the region. Therefore, preserving these traditions is essential for maintaining cultural diversity.

Keywords: Tradition, Folk Singing Styles, Sadhu, Sanskar Geet, Siyaran, Seva Gayan, Sees Gayan.

भूमिका

हिमाचल प्रदेश का सिरमौर जनपद अपनी समृद्ध लोक-सांस्कृतिक परंपराओं के लिए प्रसिद्ध है। यहाँ का लोक-संगीत प्राकृतिक परिवेश, धार्मिक आस्था और सामुदायिक जीवन का दर्पण है। लोक-गीतों का उद्भव मानव जीवन, पर्यावरण और सामाजिक परिस्थितियों के परस्पर संबंध से होता है। सिरमौर में लोक-गायन शैलियाँ जीवन के हर पहलू—जन्म से मृत्यु तक—से जुड़ी हुई हैं। यहाँ के लोक-गीत सरल भाषा, लयात्मकता और सामूहिक प्रस्तुति के कारण समाज में गहराई से रचे-बसे हैं। इनका उद्देश्य केवल मनोरंजन नहीं बल्कि सांस्कृतिक संरक्षण और नैतिक शिक्षा भी है।

संक्षिप्त नैतिक परिचय

सिरमौर की लोक-गायन परंपरा नैतिक मूल्यों की संरक्षक रही है। इन गीतों में सत्य, करुणा और सहानुभूति परिवार और समाज के प्रति उत्तरदायित्व, धार्मिक आस्था और लोक-देवताओं के प्रति श्रद्धा जैसे तत्व समाहित हैं। ये गीत व्यक्ति को सामाजिक अनुशासन और नैतिक जीवन की दिशा प्रदान करते हैं।

उद्देश्य

इस अध्ययन के मुख्य उद्देश्य हैं—

- सिरमौर की लोक-गायन शैलियों का विश्लेषण करना !
- इनके सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक महत्व को समझना !
- नैतिक मूल्यों के संरक्षण में इनकी भूमिका का अध्ययन !

- आधुनिक संदर्भ में इनकी प्रासंगिकता का मूल्यांकन !

कार्यविधि

इस शोध में गुणात्मक पद्धति अपनाई गई है।

साहित्य समीक्षा: लोक-साहित्य और शोध-पत्रों का अध्ययन

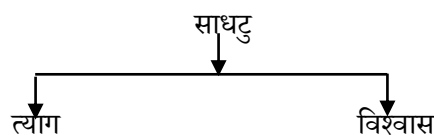
ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में लोक-गायन परंपराओं का अवलोकन

साक्षात्कार: स्थानीय कलाकारों एवं बुजुर्गों से संवाद

लोक-गायन शैलियों की अवधारणा

लोक गायन शैलियाँ किसी क्षेत्र की पारंपरिक संगीत अभिव्यक्तियाँ होती हैं, जिनमें वहाँ के लोगों के जीवन, संस्कृति और भावनाओं का चित्रण मिलता है। ये शैलियाँ सरल, स्वाभाविक और लोकभाषा पर आधारित होती हैं। इनमें विवाह, त्योहार, कृषि और ऋतु से जुड़े गीत प्रमुख होते हैं। लोक गायन शैलियाँ मौखिक परंपरा के माध्यम से पीढ़ी-दर-पीढ़ी आगे बढ़ती हैं। इनमें स्थानीय वाद्ययंत्र, लय और ताल का विशेष महत्व होता है। ये न केवल मनोरंजन करती हैं, बल्कि समाज की सांस्कृतिक धरोहर और परंपराओं को सुरक्षित रखने में भी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती हैं।

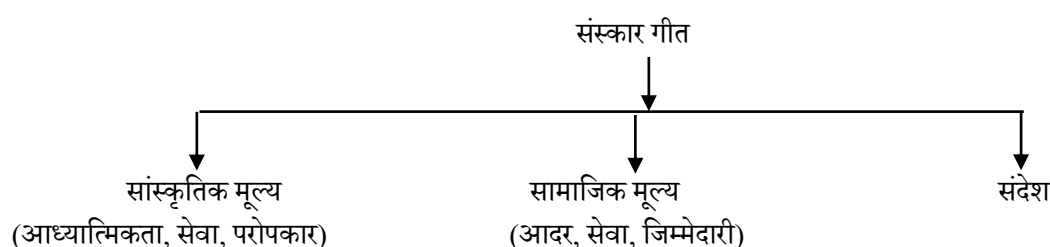
1. साधु: साधु गीत के मध्य एक नारी के रूप में बोलते हैं कि जिसका अर्थ है कि माई (घट की वृद्ध महिला) के घर पर जल का अभाव है जिसके बिना खाना खाना सम्भव नहीं है। अन्तिम दो पंक्तियों में कहा गया है कि प्रभु हमारी फसलों पर खूब पानी बरसाएंगे और हमारे दुःख दरिद्रता को दूर करेंगे।



त्याग : साधु गायक अपने सुख सुविधाओं का त्याग कर जन कल्याण के लिए साधु वेश धारण कर साधारण जीवन तब तक जीता है जब तक वह अपने कार्य में सफल न हो जाए। वह शारीरिक कष्ट सहकर एक समय ही भोजन करते हैं और साधु की तरह जीवन जीता है। रात-रात भर घर-घर जाकर गायन वादन व नृत्य करते हुए घूमते रहते हैं।

विश्वास : साधु गायक-वादक दल को यह विश्वास है कि ईश्वर उनकी मनोकामना जरूर पूरी करेंगे इस विश्वास से वह तब तक घर नहीं जाते जब तक ईश्वर की कृपा उन पर बरस न जाए। यहां की खेतीबाड़ी भगवान भरोसे होने के कारण केवल ईश्वर के प्रति उनका विश्वास ही उन्हें बचाए हुए है। यही कारण है जब भी यहां के स्थानीय लोग यह साधु वेश धारण करते हैं तो बारिश का होना निश्चित ही है।

2. संस्कार गीत: मानव के व्यवहारिक जीवन के संस्कारों का विशेष महत्व है। संस्कार संस्कृति से जुड़ा है और संस्कृति हमारे जीवन से अर्थात् हमारे जीवन के क्रियाकलापों व व्यवहारों से ही संस्कार उपजते एवं पल्लवित होते हैं। विद्वानों ने आर्य संस्कृति के सोलह संस्कारों को मान्यता दी है।

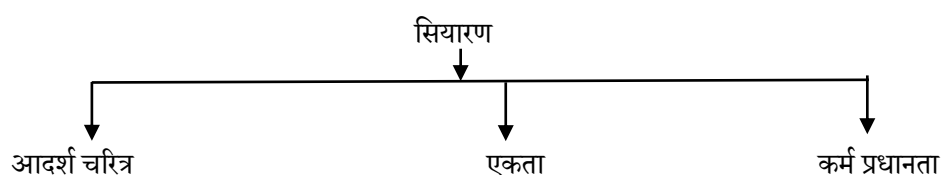


संस्कृति : संस्कार गीतों में हमारी लोक संस्कृति की छलक देखी जा सकती है। विवाह संस्कार गीतों में बटणा, फेरे और मामा स्वागत इत्यादि गीत हमारी संस्कृति के परिचायक हैं। अलग-अलग संस्कार गीत हमारी संस्कृति के मुंह बोलते स्वर हैं जो प्रत्येक विवाह, दशुटन आदि अवसरों पर गूंजकर सम्पूर्ण समाज को एकता एवं अखण्डता के सूत्र में पिरोते हैं।

सामाजिक मूल्य : संस्कार गीतों में आदर, सेवा व जिम्मेदारी का भाव दिखाई देता है पारिवारिक रिश्तों में मिठास लाने में सहायक ये गीत हमें लोक व्यवहार व लोकाचार का सही ढंग बतलाते हैं।

संदेश : संस्कार गीतों में सामाजिक व सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों के साथ-साथ एक संदेश भी है जो जीवन सत्य को बतलाते हुए सही मार्गदर्शन में सहायक है। एशा फेरा फेरियो जी जेशा शिव पार्वती ने फेरा है। इस गीत में संदेश दिया है कि विवाहिक संबंध शिव-पार्वती के समान होने चाहिए जिसमें प्रेम, समर्पण, त्याग और विश्वास जैसे गुण विद्यमान हों।

3. सियारण: सिरमौर जनपद में माता सीता को आदर्श नारी के रूप में गाया जाता है। अर्थात् सियारण लोक गायन शैली माता सीता को समर्पित है। माता सीता की कर्मप्रधानता, त्याग और स्वामी भक्ति की भावना सदैव भारतीय नारी के लिए आदर्श रही है। यह एक महिला प्रधान गायन शैली है। अर्थात् महिलाओं के व्यक्तित्व व कृतित्व का आभास इस गीत शैली से लगाना अत्यंत सरल है। सिरमौर जनपद के कर्म प्रधान जीवन में महिलाओं का विशेष योगदान है। वे अपने जीवन से समाज को धार्मिक, नैतिक व शैक्षणिक योग्यता का पाठ पढ़ाती हैं। यह गीत शैली परंपरानुसार प्रातःकाल गायी जाती है। एक आदर्श नारी के प्रातःकाल उठकर जो कर्तव्य होते हैं, वे सभी इस गीत के माध्यम से दर्शाया गया है।

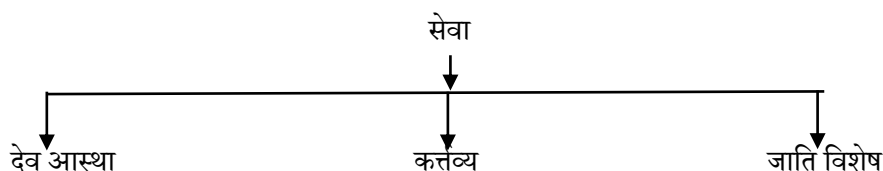


आदर्श चरित्र : माँ सीया (सीता) को भारतीय समाज ने आदर्श नारी के रूप में स्वीकार किया है। सियारण गायन शैली माँ सीता के जीवन पर आधारित है। यह गीत हमें एक नारी के आदर्श जीवन को प्रस्तुत करता है। नारी वह आदर्श है जो अपने परिवार के मान सम्मान के लिए अपना सर्वस्व न्योछावर करती है। आदर्श नारी प्रेम, त्याग व ममता की मूर्त होती है जो कि पूर्ण रूप से माँ, बेटी व पत्नी का फर्ज निभाती है।

कर्म प्रधानता : यह एक कर्म प्रधान गीत है जिसके द्वारा नारी के महत्वपूर्ण कार्यों को बताया गया है। नारी को सुबह उठकर गोमूत्र के छीटे सभी दिशाओं में तर्पण कर पूरे घर को पवित्र करना चाहिए, स्वच्छ पानी लाना चाहिए और देवी-देवते का आशीर्वाद लेना चाहिए। यही कारण है कि आज भी सिरमौरी नारी का यह महत्वपूर्ण कार्य प्रत्येक घर में देखा जा सकता है। यही सिरमौरी लोक गायन शैलियों की विशिष्टता है कि ये जीवन के विशिष्ट संस्कार सिखाकर आदर्श जीवन की संकल्पना पूर्ण करती हैं।

एकता का प्रयाय : यह गायन शैली गाते समय सभी ग्रामीण एक समूह में जुड़कर हाथों से हाथ पकड़कर गोल घेरा बनाकर नाचते हैं। सभी एक साथ कदम से कदम मिलाकर एकता का संदेश देते हैं।

4. सेवा गायन: सेवा गायन शैली ईश्वर के प्रति निष्ठा, समर्पण, सेवाभाव और आस्था का प्रतिरूप है। यह महाभारतकाल से आज तक दिवाली पर्व पर इसे गाने की परंपरा आज भी विद्यमान है। जिसका श्रेय गिरिपार क्षेत्र के लोक गायक मनसा राम, भजन सिंह इत्यादि को जाता है जिन्होंने आज भी इस परंपरा को जिंदा रखा है।

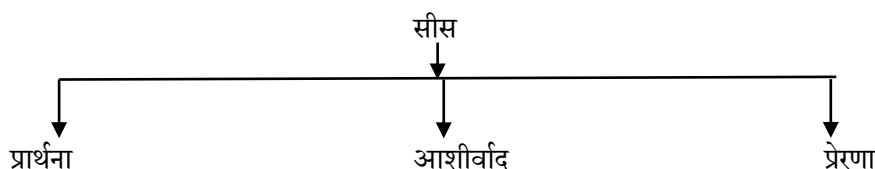


देव आस्था : सेवा गायन शैली देव आस्था का प्रतीक है। यह अपने कुल देवता के प्रति सम्मान एवं सपर्मणयुक्त अनिबद्ध गायन है। जिसे यहां के स्थानीय लोग दिवाली के अवसर पर सुबह के समय पारम्परिक परिधान चोलणा पहनकर सेवा गायन करते हैं। लोक गायको के गायन में अपने ईष्ट के प्रति प्रेम, सेवाभाव एवं समर्पण स्वतः ही दिखाई देता है।

कर्तव्य : सेवा गायन का विषय कर्तव्य परायण है एक भाट (ब्राह्मण) का देव सेवा सम्बन्धी कैसा आचरण होना चाहिए? गायक कहता है कि भाट (ब्राह्मण) सुबह जल्दी उठ कर सेवा गायन के समय अपने ईष्ट देव के लिए सभी पूजा सामग्री एकत्रित कर पूर्ण श्रद्धा व भाव से सेवा, पूजा करता है।

जाति विशेष : सेवा गायन एक जाति विशेष गायन है जिसे सैंकड़ों सालों से यहां के अनुसूचित जाति के विशेष जाति द्वारा सुरक्षित रखा गया है। वे निस्वार्थ भाव से देव सेवा गायन करते हैं और अपनी संस्कृति को संजोए रखने के लिए हर सम्भव प्रयास करते रहते हैं।

5.सीस गायन: सिरमौर जनपद के गिरिपार क्षेत्र में अनेक लोक प्रचलित परंपराओं का निर्वहन किया जाता है। जिनकी शोभा यहां की लोक गायन शैलियां बढ़ाती है। सीस गायन शैली इनमें से एक है। यह एक 'मंगल गीत' है जिसका गायन यहां के अनुसूचित जाति के लोग किया करते हैं। दिवाली के दूसरे दिन वे लोग सुरज की पहली किरण के साथ अपने पारंपरिक पोशाक पहने ठाकुरों (उच्च कूल) के घर-घर जा कर सीस गीत के माध्यम से आशीर्वाद देते हैं।



प्रार्थना : सीस गायक इस गायन विधा के माध्यम से ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करते हुए कहते हैं कि हे परमेश्वर! इस परिवार में सभी खुश रहे, धन धान्य से परिपूर्ण भण्डार हो और कृषि व्यापार में तरक्की हो, गायक ईश्वर को दाता और नारायण के नाम से संबोधित करता है और गांव के प्रत्येक घर में जाकर सबके लिए प्रार्थना करता है।

प्रार्थना के बोल

“कुशलो चेथी नोराईणिय सोबे भोइचे ही भाई”

अर्थात् परिवार के भाई-भतीजे सभी कुशल रहे।

आशीर्वाद : ‘सीस’ का शाब्दिक अर्थ आशीर्वाद है। गायक अपने गीत के माध्यम से आशीर्वाद देते हुए कहता है कि

कोलो रे ही पोडी भेने चैथी भाणजा तेरे कोदमो दी कोलो

चाला चेयी जीमी दा चोऊवालदे होलो रे।

अर्थात् गायक अपने भाणजे को आशीर्वाद देते हुए कहता है कि आपके रास्तों में कभी कठिनाईयां न आये और खेतों में चार-चार जोड़ी बैल हल जोतते रहे।

प्रेरणा : यह गायन शैली हमें अपने कर्म के प्रति सजग रहने और आगे बढ़ने की प्रेरणा देता है। यह गीत हमें बतलाता है कि ईश्वर ने हमें जितना दिया भरपूर दिया है उसी से सन्तुष्ट होकर अपने पारिवारिक जिम्मेदारियों को निष्ठा से निभाना चाहिए। तभी हम अच्छे पिता, पुत्र व भाई बन सकते हैं।

आधुनिक संदर्भ में लोक-गायन शैलियों की प्रासंगिकता

आधुनिकता के प्रभाव के बावजूद लोक-गायन की प्रासंगिकता बनी हुई है। आज—सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों और उत्सवों में इनका प्रदर्शनसोशल मीडिया और डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म पर प्रसारविद्यालयों और विश्वविद्यालयों में अध्ययनहालाँकि, आधुनिक संगीत और पाश्चात्य प्रभाव के कारण पारंपरिक संगीत की लोकप्रियता में कमी आई है। फिर भी ये शैलियाँ सांस्कृतिक पहचान और सामाजिक एकता का महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम हैं।

नैतिक मूल्यों की गिरावट

आधुनिक समाज में निम्न कारणों से नैतिक मूल्यों में गिरावट देखी जा रही है—पश्चिमी संस्कृति का प्रभावपारंपरिक जीवनशैली से दूरीसंयुक्त परिवार प्रणाली का विघटनलोक-संस्कृति के प्रति उदासीनताइसका प्रभाव लोक-गायन पर भी पड़ा है, जिससे कई परंपराएँ लुप्त होने के कगार पर हैं।

निष्कर्ष

सिरमौर जनपद की पारंपरिक लोकगायन शैलियाँ इस क्षेत्र की सांस्कृतिक विरासत, सामाजिक जीवन और लोकमानस का जीवंत प्रतिबिंब हैं। ये शैलियाँ केवल मनोरंजन का माध्यम नहीं हैं, बल्कि समाज के इतिहास, रीति-रिवाजों, धार्मिक आस्थाओं, नैतिक मूल्यों तथा सामुदायिक एकता को पीढ़ी-दर-पीढ़ी संजोकर रखने का सशक्त माध्यम भी हैं। जन्म, विवाह, पर्व-त्योहार, कृषि कार्य तथा देवी-देवताओं से जुड़े विभिन्न अवसरों पर गाए जाने वाले लोकगीत स्थानीय जीवन की संवेदनाओं, प्रकृति के प्रति अनुराग और सामाजिक समरसता को अभिव्यक्त करते हैं। इन लोकगायन परंपराओं में स्थानीय बोली, लोकभाषा, संगीतात्मकता तथा सामूहिक सहभागिता का अद्भुत समन्वय दिखाई देता है।

वर्तमान समय में आधुनिकीकरण, शहरीकरण, पाश्चात्य संस्कृति के प्रभाव तथा नई पीढ़ी की घटती रुचि के कारण ये लोकगायन परंपराएँ विलुप्ति के संकट का सामना कर रही हैं। अतः इनके संरक्षण, संवर्धन एवं प्रलेखन की अत्यंत आवश्यकता है। शैक्षणिक संस्थानों, सांस्कृतिक संगठनों तथा सरकारी प्रयासों के माध्यम से इन लोक परंपराओं को प्रोत्साहित किया जाना चाहिए, ताकि आने वाली पीढ़ियाँ अपनी सांस्कृतिक जड़ों से जुड़ी रहें। निष्कर्षतः, सिरमौर जनपद की पारंपरिक लोकगायन शैलियाँ भारतीय लोक संस्कृति की अमूल्य धरोहर हैं, जिनका संरक्षण सांस्कृतिक अस्मिता, सामाजिक समरसता तथा सांस्कृतिक निरंतरता के लिए अत्यंत आवश्यक है।

Conclusion

The traditional folk singing styles of Sirmaur district are a vivid reflection of the region's rich cultural heritage, social life, and collective consciousness. These singing traditions are not merely a source of entertainment; they also serve as a powerful medium for preserving the history, customs, religious beliefs, moral values, and communal harmony of society from one generation to the next. Folk songs performed during occasions such as birth ceremonies, marriages, festivals, agricultural activities, and religious rituals express the emotions of the local people, their close relationship with nature, and the spirit of social cohesion. These traditions are distinguished by their use of local dialects, melodious musical expressions, and collective participation, which together highlight the uniqueness of Sirmaur's cultural identity.

In the present era, however, rapid modernization, urbanization, the growing influence of Western culture, and the declining interest of younger generations have placed these folk singing traditions at risk of extinction. Therefore, there is an urgent need for their preservation, promotion, and systematic documentation. Educational institutions, cultural organizations, researchers, and government agencies should work together to safeguard and revitalize these traditions so that future generations remain connected to their cultural roots. In conclusion, the traditional folk singing styles of Sirmaur district constitute an invaluable treasure of India's folk heritage, and their preservation is essential for maintaining cultural identity, social harmony, and the continuity of the region's rich cultural traditions.

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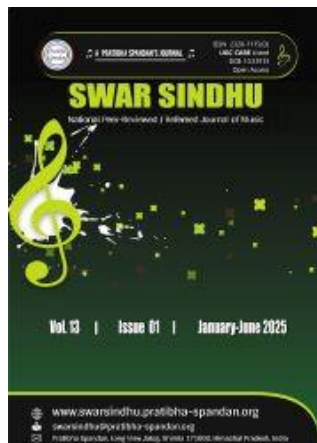
ABOUT PRATIBHA SPANDAN

Established in 2012 in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, Pratibha Spandan is a multi-faceted society dedicated to holistic social transformation by bridging the gap between privilege and need. For over a decade, the organization has championed a wide array of initiatives, ranging from grassroots education, healthcare, and women's empowerment to environmental conservation and animal welfare. By uniquely integrating traditional culture and fine arts with modern innovation and IT skills, Pratibha Spandan acts as a vital catalyst for progress, aiming to build an equitable, sustainable, and empowered future for all sections of society.



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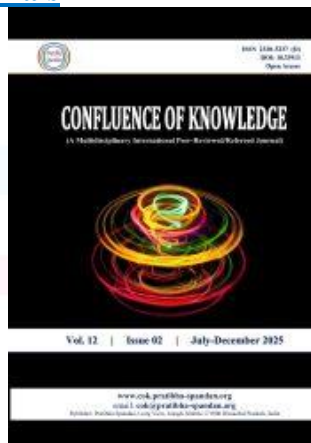
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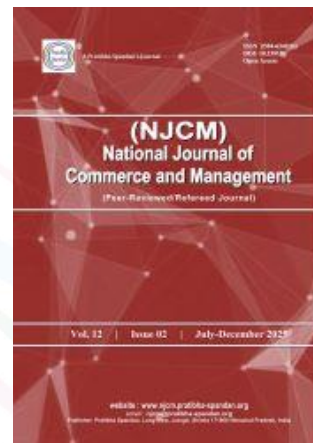
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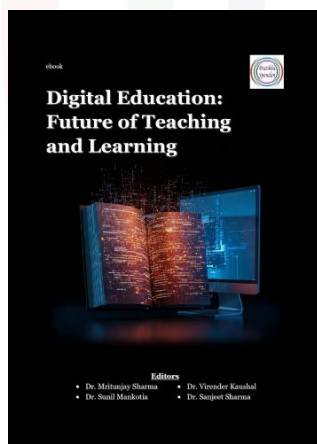
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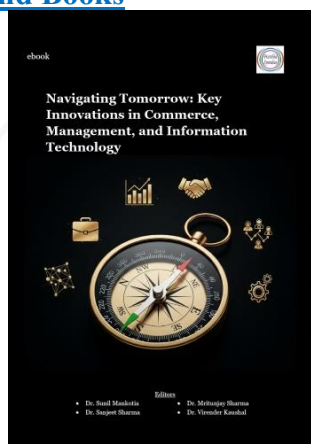
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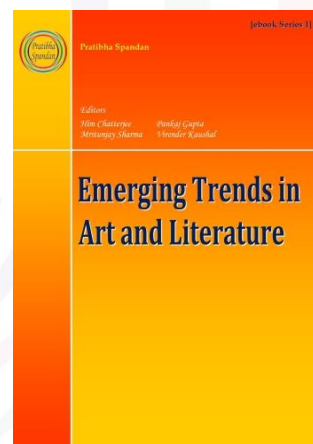
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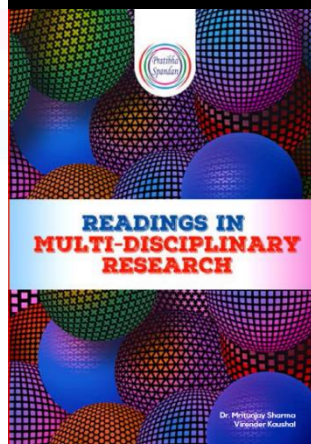
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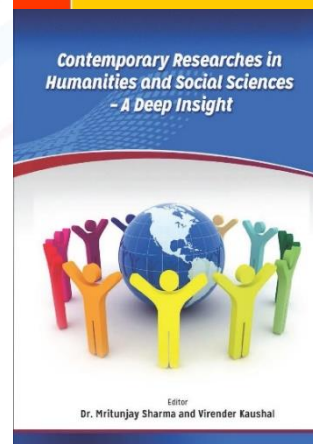
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Virender Kaushal



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Dr. Mritunjay Sharma and Virender Kaushal

Pratibha Spandan, Long View, Jutogh, Shimla 171008, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Ph: 9816089500, 9418410611. email: pspublications2015@gmail.com

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