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# THE CONTEXT

INTERNATIONAL, PEER-REVIEWED & INDEXED JOURNAL OF ENGLISH

*SPECIAL ISSUE ON*

## REIMAGINING INDIAN LITERATURE: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

**VOLUME 13 ISSUE 1**

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# FULL RESEARCH ARTICLES

# Exploring the Intersection of Gender and Ecology in Indian Women's Writing

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the intersection of gender and ecology in Indian women's literature through an ecofeminist lens. Focusing on Kamala Markandeya (*Nectar in a Sieve*), Mahasweta Devi (*Aranyer Adhikar*), and Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things*), it explores how these authors depict the linked oppression of women and environmental degradation in local socio-cultural contexts. Drawing on theories by Carolyn Merchant, Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, and Sherry Ortner, the study contrasts Indian ecofeminism's focus on grassroots activism with Western philosophical approaches. The analysis highlights women's agency, resilience, and resistance, showing that social and ecological justice are inseparable. By connecting literary narrative with ecofeminist thought, the paper emphasizes Indian women's literature as a space for critique, awareness, and imagination, envisioning sustainable human–nature relationships and alternative modes of living where women challenge both patriarchal and environmental exploitation.

*Keywords:* *Ecofeminism, Indian women writers, Gender and ecology, Environmental justice, Grassroots activism*

**I. Introduction :**

Literature has been a repository of the story of life since the beginning of civilization. It encompasses almost all spheres of existence, ranging from personal, social, and psychological experiences to cultural, political, and spiritual dimensions, thereby providing deep insights into the human condition that transcend the boundaries of time and space. Moreover, literature has repeatedly proven to be a powerful force in shaping human thought, behaviour, and culture. As civilization progressed, it transformed into a medium through which diverse perspectives, particularly those of marginalized groups, could be voiced. Within this framework, ecofeminism offers a critical lens to study literature, highlighting the interconnections between women's experiences and ecological concerns. The philosophy of ecofeminism emphasizes the

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close link between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature. Through various genres, literature serves as a vehicle for these "green voices," critiquing dominant norms while envisioning more sustainable futures (Shiva & Mies, 1993; Merchant, 1980).

Ecofeminism emerged as an interdisciplinary framework in the late 1970s. The term was first coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in her seminal work *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (*Feminism or Death*), where she argued that both women and nature are subjected to patriarchal exploitation. Her work set the momentum for a body of theory that has since been enriched by many contributions. Sherry Ortner, in her influential article *Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?* (1974), identified the cultural nexus between women and nature—a symbolic association that ecofeminists have extended to show how such linkages justify systemic exploitation and environmental harm. Over time, ecofeminism has evolved in diverse directions, shaped by the theoretical contributions of Ynestra King, Carolyn Merchant, Janis Birkeland, Susan Griffin, and Val Plumwood, among others. Despite these variations, the philosophy rests on certain core principles: the necessity of fundamental social transformation; respect for nature and all forms of life; rejection of anthropocentric worldviews; replacement of power-based hierarchies with relationship-based ethics; and resistance to patriarchal dualisms that divide culture from nature, male from female, and reason from emotion.

Western ecofeminism is often associated with issues such as climate change, pollution, and the dumping of toxic wastes, whereas ecofeminism in India has historically taken the form of active, grassroots movements, predominantly led by women, aimed at protecting local natural resources, especially forests. Among such movements, the Chipko Movement stands out as the first major ecofeminist struggle in India. Beginning in the early 1970s in the Uttarakhand region, it arose as resistance to large-scale commercial logging. Rural women, who depended on forests for their survival, led the movement by hugging trees ('Chipko' in Hindi means 'to embrace') to prevent them from being felled. This act of resistance symbolized the intersection of gender, ecology, and social justice, demonstrating women's agency in opposing both environmental exploitation and patriarchal control over natural resources. The Chipko Movement not only inspired similar campaigns such as Appiko, Jangal Bachao, and Narmada Bachao Andolan, but also laid the foundation for the ecofeminist principle of linking women's oppression with ecological degradation.

In this context, Vandana Shiva remains the most renowned ecofeminist voice from India. Her major works—including *Ecofeminism* (with Maria Mies, 1993), *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1993), *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (1988), and *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (1997)—have been foundational in shaping ecofeminist thought globally. Shiva explains the intimate women–nature relationship in India through the concept of the "feminine principle." As she observes,

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"Women in India are an intimate part of nature, both in imagination and practice. At one level nature is symbolized as the embodiment of the feminine principle and at another, she is nurtured by the feminine to produce life and provide sustenance" (*Staying Alive*, p.39).

Shiva's articulation of the feminine principle not only grounds Indian ecofeminism in cultural and ecological realities but also provides a framework to understand how women's lives and landscapes are intertwined in the Indian context. While her activism and theoretical contributions highlight grassroots struggles, Indian women writers have echoed and expanded these concerns through literature. In their poetry, fiction, and essays, they depict the exploitation of both women and nature, while simultaneously envisioning alternative modes of coexistence rooted in care, sustainability, and resistance. Writers such as Kamala Markandaya, Kamala Das, Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, and Bama reflect the intertwined struggles of women and the environment within local social, cultural, and ecological contexts. Their works not only expose patriarchal exploitation but also highlight women's resilience, raising "green voices" to challenge both social and environmental injustices.

This paper explores the intersection of gender and ecology in Indian women's writing, arguing that authors such as Kamala Markandaya, Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, and others employ literature as a powerful site of ecofeminist expression, where women's lived experiences and ecological struggles converge to critique patriarchal domination and envision sustainable futures.

## II. Theoretical Framework: Ecofeminism and Literature

Ecofeminism, as both theory and activism, offers a lens to examine the links between gender and ecology, emphasizing that women's subordination and environmental exploitation are interconnected. In *The Death of Nature* (1980), Carolyn Merchant showed how scientific rationality enabled domination over women and nature. Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, in *Ecofeminism* (1993), highlighted the disproportionate impact of capitalist and colonial systems on women and ecological systems, particularly in the Global South.

While Western ecofeminism focuses on symbolic and philosophical associations, Indian ecofeminism is rooted in lived realities and grassroots activism. The Chipko Movement, along with campaigns like Appiko, Jangal Bachao, and Narmada Bachao Andolan, illustrates this principle, linking women's oppression with environmental degradation. Shiva's "feminine principle" underscores women's vital role in sustaining ecological balance (Staying Alive 39).

Literature complements this perspective. Indian women writers frequently depict forests, rivers, agriculture, and rural life, highlighting both ecological and social struggles. Authors such as Kamala Markandeya (*Nectar in a Sieve*), Mahasweta Devi

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(*Aranyer Adhikar*), Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things*), Kamala Das, and Bama foreground women's agency, envisioning sustainable human–nature relationships. Their works demonstrate how literature can merge ecofeminist theory, activism, and creative expression to critique injustice and imagine equitable, sustainable futures.

### III. Textual Analysis of Select Indian Women Writers

#### I. Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*:

Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is a seminal text portraying the intersection of women's lives and ecological realities in rural India. The novel follows Rukmani, a woman from a small South Indian village, whose life is disrupted by capitalist interventions and industrial expansion. The arrival of tannery factories and modern farming practices damages both the ecosystem and traditional ways of life, causing crop failures, water pollution, and displacement.

Rukmani's voice reflects women's dependence on land and seasons: "Change I had known before, and it had been gradual. Now the changes came too fast. The tannery came, roads were cut through the land, and the old familiar ways were vanishing" (Markandaya 29). She also bears the brunt of environmental collapse: "We ate what we could find. Roots, leaves, sometimes even the grass by the wayside. Hunger is a cruel companion" (Markandaya 87).

Despite adversity, Rukmani embodies resilience. Her reflections on leaving the village illustrate women's deep attachment to the land: "The hut—its inhabitant—recedes behind us and yet in front of us…Our beloved green fields fall away to a blur" (Markandaya 144). Markandeya critiques patriarchal and capitalist structures, bridging personal narrative with broader ecofeminist concerns.

#### II. Mahasweta Devi – *Aranyer Adhikar* (1977)

Mahasweta Devi's *Aranyer Adhikar* focuses on tribal women whose lives are deeply intertwined with the forests they inhabit. Written during a time when large-scale deforestation and development projects threatened tribal communities, Devi's narrative portrays women as active resistors against environmental and social exploitation. Her characters engage directly with the forest, not merely as a backdrop but as a living, sustaining entity that shapes cultural and economic life. As Devi writes, *"The forest is not merely trees and animals; it is our mother's breast that feeds us"* (Devi 47).

Through her portrayal of women who defend both their communities and the natural environment, Devi embodies core ecofeminist principles. Her narrative emphasizes agency, resilience, and resistance, showing that ecological and social justice are inseparable. Birsa Munda's followers, including women, are depicted as custodians of the forest: *"Without the forest we cannot live, without us the forest cannot live"* (Devi 113). By intertwining the struggles of women with environmental issues, Devi critiques the

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systemic forces—patriarchal, governmental, and capitalist—that threaten both human and non-human life. Her work positions the forest as a space of empowerment, where women can challenge oppression and assert control over their lives and ecological surroundings.

**III. Arundhati Roy – *The God of Small Things* (1997)**

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* interlaces human relationships with the ecology of Kerala's backwaters, rivers, and plantations. Through the lens of the twin protagonists, Estha and Rahel, Roy highlights how environmental degradation, social hierarchies, and gender oppression intersect. Women, particularly Ammu, face compounded vulnerabilities due to patriarchal norms and ecological instability, including flooding and the destruction of local landscapes.

Roy's descriptions often fuse human emotion with ecological imagery: *"The river shrank. Black crows gorgeously gorged on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. The countryside turned an immodest green"* (Roy 201). This imagery highlights the intimate connection between nature's vitality and human survival. Ammu's struggles, similarly, are tied to her environment: *"She lived in the river's shadow, trapped in its currents as surely as in the currents of history and caste"* (Roy 145).

Roy's narrative critiques social and environmental injustices simultaneously, illustrating the ecofeminist principle that ecological exploitation disproportionately affects marginalized women. Her vivid imagery of rivers and plantations underscores nature's fragility and its intimate connection with human life. Beyond critique, Roy's work also imagines possibilities for resistance and alternative ways of living, as seen in the twins' relationship with the "small things" that survive amidst destruction: *"Things can change in a day. Love laws can be broken. And what survives are the small things"* (Roy 321). Here, resistance lies in valuing what is fragile and overlooked—women, rivers, forests—against systemic domination.

**IV. Comparative Discussion**

A close reading of Kamala Markandaya, Mahasweta Devi, and Arundhati Roy reveals how Indian women's literature powerfully integrates ecofeminist concerns by grounding them in local socio-cultural and ecological realities. While each writer explores different regions, communities, and struggles, their works collectively highlight the inseparability of women's oppression and environmental degradation.

Markandeya's *Nectar in a Sieve* portrays the rural agrarian woman's life, showing how the intrusion of industrialization and capitalist forces erodes both ecological balance and familial stability. Women like Rukmani stand as witnesses and victims of this disruption, yet they also embody resilience in the face of ecological decline.

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Mahasweta Devi, in *Aranyer Adhikar*, shifts focus to tribal women whose lives are intimately tied to the forests. Her narrative underscores women's active resistance against both patriarchal exploitation and the systemic forces—governmental, capitalist, and colonial—that threaten their land and livelihoods. The forest becomes not just a backdrop but a living presence, a site of survival and empowerment.

Roy's *The God of Small Things* presents a more complex interweaving of ecological and social realities. By situating her characters within Kerala's fragile backwaters and plantations, Roy critiques how patriarchal norms, caste hierarchies, and environmental destruction converge. Ammu's struggles, alongside the ecological fragility of the river, reveal how women and nature alike become sites of exploitation under social and economic pressures.

Together, these texts illustrate a distinctly Indian ecofeminist perspective. Unlike Western ecofeminism, which often emphasizes symbolic or philosophical connections between women and nature, these writers ground their narratives in lived realities— agrarian survival, tribal resistance, and ecological fragility. Their works reveal that women are not passive victims but active agents of resistance, resilience, and alternative ecological consciousness.

## V. **Conclusion**

The works of Kamala Markandaya, Mahasweta Devi, and Arundhati Roy collectively illustrate the profound intersection of gender and ecology in Indian literature. By situating women's experiences within specific ecological contexts—rural farms, tribal forests, and Kerala's backwaters—these writers reveal how environmental degradation and social oppression are mutually reinforcing.

Ecofeminism provides a critical lens to understand these texts, highlighting that the exploitation of nature and the subjugation of women are part of the same hierarchical structures. Through their narratives, these authors foreground women's resilience, agency, and capacity for resistance, emphasizing that women are not passive victims but active participants in the struggle for ecological and social justice.

Indian women's literature extends ecofeminist thought beyond symbolic associations into lived realities. The novels demonstrate that cultural, economic, and ecological oppression are intertwined, and they imagine alternative ways of living that prioritize care, sustainability, and equity. By giving voice to women in their ecological contexts, these texts affirm literature's role as a medium for critique, awareness, and transformative possibilities.

The ecofeminist insights embedded in Markandeya, Devi, and Roy highlight the enduring relevance of Indian women's literature in understanding the complex relationships between gender, society, and the environment. Their works not only

document oppression but also inspire pathways toward ecological consciousness, social justice, and gender equity, establishing a literary space where theory, activism, and creative expression converge.

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**2**

# The Simplicity and Depth Analysis in Ruskin Bond's "The Blue Umbrella"

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## Abstract

Ruskin Bond's *The Blue Umbrella* is a small story told with great warmth, showing how something very simple can hold deep meaning. The tale follows Binya, a young girl from a quiet Himalayan village, who one day trades her leopard's claw pendant for a bright blue umbrella owned by some tourists. The umbrella is not just an object for her; it becomes her treasure and pride. The villagers admire it, and even Ram Bharosa, the old shopkeeper, cannot stop thinking about it. His desire for the umbrella slowly grows into jealousy, and this brings out the human weakness of envy in an otherwise gentle setting. The story may appear simple, with its small village, ordinary people, and a child's possession, but beneath this simplicity lies a depth that touches the heart. The umbrella becomes a symbol of beauty, longing, and finally kindness. In the end, we can remind that true happiness comes not from holding on to things but from letting go with love. The true richness lies not in possessions but in compassion, forgiveness, and the quiet dignity of rural life. At its core is the blue umbrella, a seemingly ordinary object that acquires complex meanings—as a marker of beauty, a catalyst of envy, and ultimately, a vehicle of transformation. This article argues that the text's effectiveness lies not in narrative complexity but in its restraint: the silences, pauses, and small gestures open interpretive spaces for readers to engage with psychological nuance and ethical tension.

*Keywords:- Simple Narrative style, Indianness, Human nature, Child psychology.*

Ruskin Bond is a prolific Indian author of British descent, born on May 19, 1934, in Kasauli, British India. Known for his short stories, essays, and novels, many set in the Indian Himalayas, Bond has written over 500 books, many for children. His debut novel, The Room on the Roof, published in 1956, won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. Bond's significant literary contributions have been recognized with numerous awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award (1992), the Padma Shri (1999), and the Padma Bhushan (2014). Ruskin Bond has an Anglo-Indian origin. His father was a Britisher and his mother was Indian. He was born in India and make it as his home forever.

Ruskin Bond was born on May 19, 1934, in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, to British parents Edith Dorothy and Aubrey Alexander Bond. His father worked with the Royal Air Force, and Bond spent his early years moving across hill stations like Jamnagar and Dehradun. This constant movement and connection with nature deeply influenced his future writings. Tragically, Bond's father passed away when Ruskin was just ten years old, a loss that profoundly impacted him. Following this, he was sent to the UK for his education at Bishop Cotton School in Shimla.

After completing his schooling in the UK, Ruskin Bond returned to India in 1955. Instead of seeking opportunities abroad, he decided to settle in India. His return to Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, where he made a permanent home in a hill station, marked a turning point in his life. This picturesque region provided the backdrop for many of his stories. The tranquility and charm of rural India became a central theme in his works.

Ruskin Bond's literary journey began early. His first novel, *The Room on the Roof*, written when he was just 17 years old, won the prestigious John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1957. This success propelled him into the literary spotlight. Over the years, he continued to draw inspiration from the natural beauty surrounding him and his childhood experiences. Bond's writing often reflects themes of loneliness, friendship, and his deep connection to India, which helped him gain a devoted readership.

Major influences include Charles Dickens and Rudyard Kipling, whose works he admired for their attention to detail and vivid descriptions. Today, Bond continues to write from his hillside home in Mussoorie, producing works that resonate with both young readers and adults alike. He has received numerous awards for his contributions to literature, including the Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Shri, and Padma Bhushan, cementing his place as a literary icon in India.

This is Binya's story. Binya is a small mountain girl of ten years old. She lived with her twelve years old brother Bijju and her mother. She lost her father when she was just two years old. Binya had a great time with her two cows—Neelu and Gori. She roamed through the woods, hill and mountains. She went distant with her cows that's why cows also love to roam with Binya. Binya's full name is Binyadevi and Vijay is more commonly known as Bijju. The loss of her father didn't affect the family much as "they had three tiny terraced fields on the side of the mountain, and they grew potatoes, onions, ginger, beans, mustard and maize." Which is enough for them to live throughout the year.

One day when she was roaming with her cows, she caught the sight of the picknickers, they were basically holidaymaker, people from the plain land. Her eyes were caught on a blue umbrella which was lying beside them. Somehow, she managed to get that blue umbrella by exchanging her lucky charm, the pendant holding a tiger's claw.

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Now from here the story actually begins, the journey of Binya with her blue umbrella. From now on Binya has the complete possession over the umbrella. The umbrella has become the matter of discussion in the village, as it is the most beautiful umbrella in the village. The people were getting more curious and also started to feel jealous about her. Because according to them she didn't deserve to hold that umbrella. Ram Bhorosa, the shop keeper, the schoolmaster's wife, the priest of the temple all are in want to have that umbrella. Binya and Bijju were busy with that umbrella and they remained it open whenever it was possible, because they thought that it was much beautiful when it was open.

Days were passing like this and old Ram Bhorosa still wanted that Umbrella by hook or by crook. All the efforts of him were in vain. Because it was not just a simple materialistic possession for Binya, it was more than that for her. On this way the umbrella became a matter of pride in their village. Time rolled on and the rain came, many of the villagers predicted that the fancy umbrella won't survive the rain. But to amaze everyone it has survived and Binya and Bijju had become the proud owner of such a beautiful umbrella. During the rain, the school remained close so Bijju helped his mother in the field and everywhere there was lush greenery. Ram Bhorosa offered Bijju to work on his shop but Bijju knew that it might be the trick for him. So, Ram Bhorosa hired a boy from the adjacent village to help him in his shop, whose name was Rajaram.

One day, Rajaram proposed to give Ram Bhorosa the desired umbrella instead of that umbrella he wanted three rupees. After much bargain Ram Bhorosa assured him to give three rupees only after he handed over the umbrella to him. So Rajaram was in search of chance to steal the Umbrella from Binya as it was hard to steal it from her because she hardly left the umbrella alone. But one day while Binya was busy in collecting the porcupine quills, Rajaram stole the umbrella and fled but somehow Binya got the hints and chased after him and informed Bijju also. After much toil and moil, they rescued the umbrella from Rajaram and he confessed that he was sent by Ram Bhorosa. When the matter spread among the villagers, they refused to buy anything from Ram Bhorosa. From now on Ram Bhorosa faced the real trouble, there were hardly any visitor in his shop and he was numbed and regretted for his deed.

Many days past and winter came, one day when Binya and Bijju were passing his shop, Binya stopped and peeped over his shop and found that Ram Bhorosa was lying on his cot. She went inside the shop and wanted to buy toffee, and put her coins. She was the only customer within two months and strategically while leaving his shop Binya left her umbrella there. And when he noticed that Binya had left her umbrella in his shop he ran after them and told Binya that she had left her umbrella inside the shop. Binya smiled and replied he could have the umbrella; she gave it to him. Now, Ram Bhorosa was changed to a completely new man, and when in the winter a bear jumped

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to his shop and somehow its claw broken and fallen inside the shop, he kept it and make a silver pendant for Binya. He placed it around her neck and said it suited her the best. Binya was so happy to have it and returned home with a great mood. After that whenever Bijju and Binya went to Ram Bhorosa's shop he put some extra milk and sweet to the tea as they like to have some extra. Thus, the story ends with a positive note.

By the term 'novella' we understand, a prose piece which is shorter than a novel but longer than a short story in length. *M. H. Abrams* in his book *A Handbook of Literary Terms* (9th Edition, 2011, p 283), describes the term 'novella' as "*…the status of middle length between the tautness of the short story and the expansiveness of the novel is sometimes indicated by the name novelette or novella*".

*The Blue Umbrella*, a novella by Ruskin Bond, is a masterwork of elegant storytelling that blends a subtle moral lesson, profound significance, and simplicity of style. The story, which takes place in a small town in the foothills of the Himalayas, centers on Binya, a young girl who trades her leopard-claw pendant for a blue umbrella. What starts out as a child's simple story quickly develops into a meaningful one about human desire, envy, generosity, and forgiveness.

With its detailed descriptions of village scenery, customs, and characters, the story gives readers an insight into Indian rural life. By using these components in order to establish the narrative in reality, Ruskin Bond highlights the story's magical and supernatural features. The story is both intriguing and accessible since it blends ordinary life with a hint of magic, enabling readers to view their own world through a creative prism.

The work is readable by younger audiences thanks to its unique and fascinating narrative. Youngsters can relate to Binya's innocence, her bond with the umbrella, and her knowledge of kindness. The novella's basic, uncomplicated language is designed to mesmerize young readers while exposing them to key life lessons like compassion, generosity, and the negative effects of greed.

To make the scene and characters come to life, Ruskin Bond use eye-catching pictures. The blue umbrella itself represents the wonder of the universe, beauty, and purity of infancy. The story is brought to life by the descriptions of the mountain village, the surrounding environment, and the interactions between the individuals, which blur the boundaries between imagination and reality. The umbrella's enchantment and the characters' moral development both have a subtle but present element of magic.

The story's significant moment occurs when Binya, who had been distraught about losing her umbrella at first, shows generosity and kindness by giving it to Ram Bharosa. The character of Ram Bharosa changes as a result of this kind deed. Binya's act of giving touches him, and it serves as a reminder of the value of generosity in life.

The conclusion of the story is that sharing and taking care of others brings more satisfaction than materialistic wealth.

Important aspects of the narrative are Binya's innocence, her capacity for forgiveness, and her ability to move past financial loss. The blue umbrella, which at first appears to be a sign of pride and possession, ultimately comes to represent Binya's development as a person and the innocence of childhood. Readers learn from the story the significance of keeping a childish outlook on life as they become older, the value of innocence, and the delight of small pleasures.

The story challenges readers to consider how they relate to material belongings and how they might put other people's welfare ahead of their own. An example of emotional development and self-awareness is shown by Binya's transition from a girl who treasures the umbrella to one who freely gives it away. Bond is renowned for his straightforward, unassuming writing. Readers of all ages can easily immerse themselves in his universe because to his concise and vivid descriptions. "*It was a blue umbrella, big enough for her when she held it over her head, and small enough to fold up and carry about,*" is how the umbrella is introduced in a charmingly straightforward manner. Such wording maintains a light and approachable tone while capturing the umbrella's beauty without exaggeration.

Bond's talent for simple things is even evident in the environment. Natural lines of paint are used to illustrate the villages, fields, and mountains: *"The umbrella was like a flower, a great blue flower that had sprung up on the dry brown hillside."* Even though the words are simple, a single image can turn an everyday object into something amazing. There is emotional depth beneath this childlike storyline. The blue umbrella turns into a representation of temptation and longing. Shopkeeper Ram Bharosa gets frustrated out of jealousy: *"Ram Bharosa envied Binya."* He wished he had such an umbrella. Bond reveals a common flaw in humanity here: a temptation to envy what others have, even when one's own needs are satisfied.

The story goes on to examine how envy affects mental stability. Ram Bharosa loses his respect and dignity in the village as a result of his dishonorable attempt to get the umbrella. He is portrayed by Bond as human—weak, flawed, and able to learn—rather than as wicked.

*The Blue Umbrella* is fundamentally a morality story. Bond teaches that envy only serves to increase unhappiness and that worldly belongings will never bring us true happiness. When Binya chooses to give Ram Bharosa her umbrella, it marks a moral turning point: *"Binya had given him the umbrella, and with it, she had given away a great deal of happiness."*

This deed of kindness conveys several moral lessons, including compassion, forgiveness, and detachment. By giving the umbrella away, Binya chooses kindness

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above possession after realizing that it has caused more trouble than joy. By her kind deed, she restores Ram Bharosa's dignity rather than punishing him for his jealously.  The moral beauty of letting go is also demonstrated in the story. Sharing with others rather than holding onto them is the path to true pleasure.  Bond's moral philosophy is neither dogmatic nor harsh. Instead of preaching, he lets simple deeds speak louder than words. The story's morality grows naturally from the decisions and feelings of the characters, making it both tender and profound.

Ruskin Bond carefully integrates moral knowledge, emotional depth, and style simplicity in The Blue Umbrella. The moral of the narrative is that kindness lifts and envy degrades. It demonstrates how even the tiniest deed of kindness, like a young child giving away her umbrella, may teach a universal moral lesson. Bond demonstrates that morality in fiction doesn't have to be expressed through sermons or dramatic conflicts; it can be subtly conveyed through a straightforward tale set in a tiny town, where an umbrella represents the highest ideals of humanity: selflessness, forgiveness, and compassion.

This article aims to investigate how Ruskin Bond and his work *The Blue Umbrella* came to write about everyday men, children, and youth. He is a millennial writer as well. His popularity among readers of all stripes is the only reason for this. It is therefore easy to find Bond readers ranging in age from 10 to 70. The reader is drawn in by the main theme of Indianness, the straightforward narrative style, and his storytelling technique. Readers readily immerse themselves in his stories and become part of the plot themselves because many of them are based on true experiences of real people in the real world.

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# Oppression and Resistance: A Social Justice Perspective on Aravind Adiga's Select Novel

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## Abstract

The paper examines the themes of social justice in Aravind Adiga's novel, *The White Tiger*. Adiga analyzes social inequalities such as class conflict, systemic injustice and a lack of certainty among people. The novel deals with oppression and resistance in the context of class and power in contemporary Indian society. In *The White Tiger*, Adiga explores the life of the protagonist, Balram Halwai, a servant to a wealthy man. He portrays how the oppressive system in the society corrupts Balram. The novel highlights the influence of social norms and the personal struggles of the individual. The social justice themes in *The White Tiger* are social inequality, the struggle of the oppressed, and a call for change. In *The White Tiger*, oppression is shown through the division between rich and poor. It portrays the lifestyle of the rich and how they exploit the lives of poor people. Through the powerful narrative of the protagonist Balram Halwai in *The White Tiger*, Adiga explores the themes of inequality, class struggle, corruption, and exploitation, highlighting the modernization of Indian society.

*Keywords: Social Justice, Social Inequalities, Social Norms and Personal Struggles.*

Social justice is generally defined as the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources, and obligations in society to all people, regardless of race or ethnicity, age, gender, ability status, sexual orientation and religious or spiritual background (Van den Bos 2003). In "A Theory of Justice," Rawls states that "…principles of social justice provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society, and they define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation" (4).

Literature for Social Justice refers to literary pieces that aim to analyze and address social inequalities, injustices, and discrimination. Such literature often seeks to

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promote change in societal attitudes and structures. Hrastic et al., states that "….literature captures the essence of human experiences, both good and bad. It holds the capability of empowering voices dissenting against injustices, and articulates the dreams of a better world." "Literature has long been a force for social justice, offering a platform for the oppressed and a mirror to society's injustices" (Subramaniam).

Indian English literature is vast and captures the intricacy of Indian society that is closely connected and deals with the issues of social justice such as caste, class, and discrimination. The writers of Indian English literature focus on these contemporary societal issues and challenges in the Indian social context. This paper highlights the role of social justice themes in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. The works of Adiga address the problems in this particular context and reveal the plight of oppressed voices. His works bring tremendous changes to society.

The novel is set against the background of a modernizing nation, which explores the division between the wealthy people and the marginalized poor. It reveals the inequalities in the country that underpin the socio-political system.

"Class differences are the other important dimension of social justice that Indian English literature brings to light. Novelists, such as Vikram Seth and Aravind Adiga, highlight the very economic inequalities that trouble our society. With *The White Tiger*, Adiga reveals the vast gulf between the rich and the poor, revealing how the class divide breeds violence and corruption" (Nagaraj, 14).

Aravind Adiga is an Indian writer and journalist. His first novel, *The White Tiger*, won the Man Booker Prize in 2008. His second novel is *Last Man in Tower*. His other works are *Between the Assassinations*, *Selection Day*, and *Amnesty*. Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* deals with analytical insights into the socio-economic and moral intricacies of contemporary Indian society. Through the powerful narrative of the protagonist Balram Halwai in *The White Tiger*, Adiga explores the themes of inequality, class struggle, corruption, and exploitation, highlighting the modernization of Indian society. The novel portrays the systemic oppression faced by individual struggling for upliftment and survival in his life. Dr. Satendra Kumar in his review on *The White Tiger*, comments that Adiga's Kittur resembles R.K. Narayan's 'Malgudi', Hardy's 'Wessex' and the cavalcade of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales.*

Adiga makes the readers think of the impact of social justice in modern India through his characters by morally comprising the facts, exploring the ethical conflict, and by the act of resistance. Pawan Baral states, "The essence of social justice lies in the common good and fairness as it manifests in society. It speaks of general welfare by providing equal opportunity for goods and services for a good living for everybody, preserving individuals' economic rights in ownership, work, and income. It denies discrimination of any kind" (104).

The novel deals with oppression and resistance in the context of class and power in contemporary Indian society. The social justice themes in *The White Tiger* are social inequality, the struggle of the oppressed, and a call for change. In *The White Tiger*, oppression is shown through the division between rich and poor. It portrays the lifestyle of the rich and how they exploit the lives of poor people. Balram's representation of "Rooster Coop" reveals that the oppressed are forced to accept their servitude. "The greatest thing to come out of this country in its ten thousand years of history is the Rooster Coop" (TWT 173). "The trustworthiness of servants is the basis of the entire Indian economy" (TWT 175).

The systemic forces sustain disparity and subjugate poor people. The power imbalance, caste-based discrimination, and exploitation of servants in the social and economic structure are also clearly portrayed through the relationship between Balram and his employer, Ashok. "We were like two separate cities - inside and outside the dark egg" (TWT 138). The protagonist Balram emphasizes the fewer opportunities for poor people and refers to himself as a "half-baked Indian" (TWT 10). "In the old days, there were one thousand castes and destinies in India. These days, there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies" (TWT 64). According to Alison Graham-Bertolini, *The White Tiger* is an "ethical critique of the extreme power imbalances in Indian society" (12).

The novel also emphasizes the corruption in India, which continues the suffering of the poor. Balram's employer, Mr. Ashok, exposes the conspiracy between wealth and power by bribing politicians to uphold his family's commercial interests. "The Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, all at the same time" (TWT 9). Madhavi Nikam in "Face to Face with Reality: Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*" points out that "very small treatment is given to the poor in this country. Human beings in this country are treated merely as animals without heart and soul. The novel has its share of resentment at the unfairness and prejudice meted out to the poor based on caste and class discrimination in globalized India" (86-90). Adiga critiques that the wealthy people are exploiting the poor people by the way of corruption, and it imbeds social injustice in the society. "Balram is not accepting everything as other servants do. Some time he opposed also when he gets the opportunity he works against wrongdoing even done by his master. His particular revolt was to fight against poverty and corruption" (Prajapati, 28).

Balram's transformation symbolizes resistance against the oppressive structure. He kills his employer, Ashok, and steals his money to start his new career, which shows his innermost rebellious nature against societal oppression. It also raises questions about ethics, liberation, and morality. "I think the Rooster Coop needs people like me to break out of it" (TWT 320). He justifies his action by saying, "I am tomorrow" (TWT 6). It reveals that his act of murder is a concern for his escape from his consistent

situation. His life reveals how the oppressed people face struggles for freedom. As resistance, in *The White Tiger*, Balram uses violence. Sarika says that "Balram's battle represents the struggle of the downtrodden class for emancipation from social, economic, and cultural restrictions forcefully imposed on them by the ruling class. Balram's resistance and the act of subverting the system are significant for the rise of the sbalterns" (245).

The novel exemplifies how class and caste make the oppressed people a marginalized group. It portrays the clear viewpoint of Balram. From his perspective, Adiga shows the struggles and sufferings of the oppressed group and how they are forced to make compromises to manage their lives. The need for transformation can be to create an unbiased society.

Literature for Social Justice acts as a mirror and a catalyst. It reflects societal inequalities and discrimination in society which motivates the readers to work towards an unbiased future. Literary pieces play a significant role in fighting against injustice and standing for justice. Literature not only documents the struggles of oppressed people but also inspires and provokes changes in society.

Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* explores class inequality from different viewpoints. *The White Tiger* exposes the struggles of the working poor people and how a wealthy class suppresses them. An outburst and transformation of an individual in the novel represents a group. Resistance against subjugation and escaping from it in *The White Tiger* leads to the murder of Ashok by his driver Balram. The novel highlights the rapid modernization, social justice of the exploitation of the poor, and the resistance.

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**Abbreviations**

TWT – The White Tiger

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# Culture, Nature and Love: Interpreting the Kurinci Landscape from the Translation *The Akam Four Hundred* by Dhakshinamurthy

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**Abstract**

**Abstract**

This study explores the cultural and emotional dimensions of the Kurinci landscape people as depicted in the Sangam classic work *Akananuru*. Situated in the mountainous regions, the Kurinci people lived in harmony with their natural environment. Despite the challenges of hilly terrains, they upheld noble cultural values, expressed devotion through the worship of deities, and celebrated festivals that reinforced their communal bonds. The poems vividly portray the intense love between hero and heroine, symbolizing the deep emotional ties and ideals of union admired within the Kurinci tradition. By examining their lifestyle, rituals, and the interconnection between nature and human relationships, this study highlights how the Kurinci landscape served not only as a physical setting but also as a cultural and emotional space shaping the identity of its people.

*Keywords: Kurinci Landscape, Sangam people, Cultural Traditions, Love*

*Akananuru* is a classical Tamil poetic work in Sangam Literature. It is otherwise known as Netuntokai, an anthology of long poems. *Akananuru* is one of the eight collections called *Ettuttokai*. This anthology contains 400 love poems and one invocatory song on Lord Shiva. *Akananuru* was compiled by Uruttiracanman, the son of Madurai Uppurikudi Kilan, under the patronage of Pandiyan king Ukkiraperuvaluti.

Kurinci poems of *Akananuru* are distinguished with numbers ending with 2 and 8. *Akananuru* vividly portrays the culture and lifestyle of Kurinci Thinai, which refers to the mountainous region. It is a vast geographical area surrounded by high mountains.

The numbers ending with 2 and 8 such as 2, 12, 22 and 8, 18, 28 belong to the Kurinci division. Kurinci division possesses 80 poems according to the serial number.

Yazh is the musical instrument used by the mountain people, which spreads sweet music that frenzy the wildlife. Every actions and lifestyle of the Sangam people was closely intertwined with their surroundings. In the Kurinci region, Millet cultivation is the major occupation. Women are expected to wake up early and go to their Millet fields. They make noise to scare away the parrots from the millet fields. Accompanied by their friends, these women shout at the parrots and protect their crops. They use tools called Talalai and Tattai to shoo away the birds (188). The millet field is also the place where women meet their hero. In *Akananuru*, men are described as majestic and chief of the mountains. The hero usually arrives in a decorated chariot, adorned with ornaments made of beautiful gems, resembling a prince. Men adorn their chests with fragrant sandalwood paste.

They always carry a beautiful bow in their left hand for hunting animals (38). Men used to speak to women with humble words, as if making a request. It is common for the hero to ask the girls if they have seen any wild animals that have escaped from his hunting. The girls do not answer the young man and shyly hide behind each other (48). After he leaves, the girls mock him and his actions. In the poem of Tankkal Mutakkorranar, the friend reveals the love of heroine to her mother saying, "He rushed to us asking: / Which way did the cruel beast that you feared, go?" (48)

Women enjoy their time in the flowery hillside, swinging on swings that are hung near the millet field. They also play dice (108). When there is a shout announcing the arrival of a tiger, the people, foresters and men from village abandon their activities and come armed with bows and arrows to protect their livestock. The villagers show great bravery, unafraid to kill the tiger in order to safeguard their domestic animals (52). Since the climate in Kurinci land is very cold, working men sleep on the beds made from the skins of stripped tigers, which provide warmth and protect them from the cold related illness.

In this region there exists tribal community of hunters known as Kanavar, Vettuvars, Kuravan and Kurathi. The primary occupations of the mountain people include hunting, extracting honey, harvesting millet and tubers. They worship Lord Murugan also known as Seyyon, who is revered as the main deity by the inhabitants of the hilly areas. The Palani hills in Tamil Nadu are considered as one of the sacred abodes of Lord Murugan. The people live in close proximity to the wild nature, and the villages in the mountainous places are referred to as Sirukudi. They primarily consume millet, paddy and bamboo rice as their staple food.

The people of hilly area collects the honeycombs and squeeze them to make fermented liquor. They purify the juice of ripe mangoes during the summer season, add honey

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and sticky jackfruit to it, and preserve it in long Bamboo pipes, resulting in fermented liquor. In some towns, liquor is in high demand, and in *Akananuru*, it is compared to 'liquor flows like a rain' (122). At night, men rarely sleep as they indulge in the enjoyment of liquor, though it was not a festive seasons, causing the busy streets and market places to fall silent.

Hunters drink flavoured toddy with their spouses. The women adorn their hair with sandal paste, and spread their hair with fingers allowing them to dry in the gentle wind as they sing melodious Kurinci songs, captivating the elephants that forgets to eat the grain and move forward (102). Such was the singing of the ancient Tamil women of the mountains which mesmerises all living species. In the poem of Maturai Centan Kuttanar, the heroine says to her friend when the hero stands by the fence as,

Listening to the song,
A young belligerent tusker
Slumbers fast standing,
Closing its eyes that are moist and sleep-defying,
Neither eating the grain
Nor lifting its foot. (102)

Men hunt elephants with arrows to obtain meat for their meals, and they use sandal wood as fuel for cooking and mix it with millet. They share the meal and consume the fermented liquor made from Jack fruit. During festive days, the Kurava men dance with their women and entertain their relatives and village (232). Additionally, all the rivers and lakes are flooded, reaching their brims and crashing against the rocks. In the Pazhi tradition, people offer prayers to spirits by performing sword dances (142). They worship the spirits to protect them and their children from harm.

**Love of Hero and Heroine**

The central theme of Kurinci poems is 'the secret meeting and union of lovers in the poem of Madurai Pantavanikan Ilantevanar, the heroine says to her hero during their secret meeting at night as,

When everybody sleeps and when the clouds pour
Heavy rain with rhythmic thunderclaps,
And return home to rest
On the bed covered by a tiger-skin
Finding no place in the forest to lay his head! (58)

The heroine's friend assists her, in meeting the lover in the midnight. She ensures that the mother is asleep and wakes the beloved up to meet the hero, who awaits her near the dark mountains (68). The lady encounters various obstacles while attempting to meet her lover at night. She should cautious not to let her anklets make any sounds

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while walking, she must evade the gaze of the household guard and she waits for the domestic dogs to remain silent, she also waits for the moon to set behind the hills, allowing darkness to envelop the surroundings (122). Though they were happy to see with birds, they also hated those birds, if it was an obstacle for their love.

At midnight women fear the presence of roaming sprits and the hooting of owls. The house rooster cries loudly, which might wake the people. After overcoming all these obstacles, women meet their hero who was waiting in the darkness where rain pours and thunder claps with bright lightning (162). The poet Paranar says, men adorn the heroine who comes in the night after facing several risks and admire her beauty, saying, "She is not a mortal / But a Celestial damsel indeed" (198).

Though the mother of heroine suspects her walking at night, her companion saves her by suggesting that she might be confused with dreams of female deities who take the form of women in house wearing bright flowers and walk in the night. The companion supports her friend, saying that she was also afraid of the thunder and the hooting of owls and that nobody can escape from a formidable father in the house who is as mighty as Lord Murugan (158). As the mountain place is dangerous at night with showers of rain, thunder and lightning, the heroine asks him to visit during the day time (92).

The midnight is pitch dark, and hero may not be aware of the presence of snakes on his way. In the darkness, the only source of light is through the gem spat out by snakes when thunder strikes them. The poet Maturai Palaciriyar Narramanar says this as,

And where light is provided by the gem
Spat out by a snake, that had lost its strength
Owing to the clapping of the thunderbolt. (92)

The heroine escapes from her house to meet her hero because she distresses on his absence, and her beauty degrades gradually. The mother worries about her actions and plays rituals to rebound her beauty.

The poems describes that when the hero stops coming to meet the heroine, her longing for him increases. She longs to embrace him and wait for the midnight, but her love sickness grows and swells, dwarfing even the sea (128). Always thinking about him, her body become slim and her bright colour changes to pallor. On seeing the poor and weak condition of the woman, the villagers used to gossip whereas the mother is not aware of the relationship between her daughter and the hero. She thinks that her daughter is growing sick due to an evil spirit, and she feels sad about the loss of her daughter's beauty. The mother discusses the changes with the oracular women (98). They oracle that it was caused due to the anger of Lord Murugan and advices her to perform the Veriyattam ritual for her daughter in their house and to appease the Lord.

In the poem of Veripatiya Kamakkanniyar, the heroine says to her friend when the hero awaits,

For this scene was set; garlands were displayed;
Songs were sung in the house of foisom reverberatingly;
Sacrifice was offered; millet soaked in blood was strewn.
It was at that hour, came out lover -- so coveted by us --
His chest smelling fragrant. (22)

This ritual is commonly conducted in the houses of the people in Kurinci land. Thus, mother prepares a pavilion and invites the Murugan Temple priest, Velan, who performs the Veriyattam ritual. He spread Kazhangu beans on freshly laid sand in the front yard of the house and assures that the affliction of daughter is due to the anger of the Lord. The mother gets ready for the sacred ritual with many dishes and offers them to Lord Murugan. The priest Velan wears a garland made with white Palmyra blades and Kadampu flowers and prays to Murugan. He sacrifices a young lamb striking its throat and smears the blood on the forehead of the heroine. Here, the elements of nature are used for the culture of human in Kurinci landscape. Killing a goat as a sacrifice is considered to bring a relief for women from her disease. They soak millet in the blood and offer it to Lord Murugan. (22)

The priest performs a frenzy dance for Murugan to the musical sounds. He sings the glory of the Kadampu tree and Murugan while swaying his body (138). At the end of his praising, people believes that the woman will be cured from all sickness. But the woman alone knows that she is not affected by any evil spirits rather the embrace of her lover will cure her illness. If the women are not healed by these rituals, the villagers will spread gossip and blame her, attributing her sickness to sexual love. *Akananuru* says that the gossip from the village people is louder than the streets during Ulli festival (368). This festival is widely celebrated in the Konku region of Tamil Nadu, where men wear tinkling bell around their waist and dance in the streets.

Thus, the culture of ancient Tamil people of Kurinci is rich in practising their traditions and worshipping their deities. They bring joy and entertainment to others and find contentment with what they have. Every moment of their lives is deeply intertwined with nature. They live harmoniously without divisions and follow the noble practice of sharing. Truthfulness is exemplified in the friendship between the heroine and her companion. The companion takes numerous risks to ensure the happiness of her friend and eagerly waits to see her friend wedded to the one she loves. Women adorn themselves with fragrant flowers in their hair, symbolizing their beauty and to attract men.

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# Demythologising Sita: Humanism And Historical Materialism in S. L. Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda*

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## Abstract

The Indian epic tradition has historically elevated figures like Rama and Sita to divine ideals, embedding them deeply within cultural and religious consciousness. Contemporary retellings, however, increasingly challenge this sacralization, foregrounding human agency and socio-political contexts. S. L. Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* (2017) exemplifies such an intervention, reimagining Rama and Sita as historically contingent humans rather than divine archetypes. This paper examines Bhyrappa's strategy of demythologization through the lenses of humanism and historical materialism, arguing that the novel transforms the Ramayana into a historically plausible narrative shaped by power structures, psychological conflict, and ideological critique.

*Keywords*: Demythology, Humanism, Historical Materialism

## Introduction

The *Ramayana* occupies a central place in South Asian cultural memory, long revered as a narrative of divine justice, ideal kingship, and moral clarity. Canonical tellings—most notably Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Tulsidas's *Ramcharitmanas*—depict Rama as *Maryada Purushottama*, the perfect man and divine incarnation of Vishnu, and Sita as the embodiment of feminine chastity, sacrifice, and forbearance (Gold 325; Lutgendorf 18). These texts have historically shaped cultural norms and ethical ideals, functioning, as Sheldon Pollock notes, as "normative texts that encode models of conduct for rulers and subjects alike" (Pollock, *Ramayana and Political Imagination* 270).

Yet, as Paula Richman reminds us, retellings of the *Ramayana* are "as much about the present as the past," reflecting the shifting social and political anxieties of their times (Richman 4). Scholars like A. K. Ramanujan have emphasized that "there is no single Ramayana, but many Ramayanas" (Ramanujan 46), each shaped by language, region, ideology, and historical context. This plurality suggests that myth is not a static inheritance but a dynamic discourse, open to reinterpretation and contestation.

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Among modern retellings, S. L. Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* (2017) stands out for its radical demythologization: it systematically removes supernatural elements and reframes Rama and Sita not as divine figures but as historically plausible, psychologically complex humans. Bhyrappa's stated aim, as expressed in his author's note, was not merely to retell the story but to understand "why a king would exile his beloved queen and what historical forces might have compelled such choices" (*Uttarakanda*, Author's Note). This approach echoes Wendy Doniger's observation that "myths become most meaningful when seen not as timeless truths but as narratives conditioned by historical and cultural contingencies" (Doniger xviii).

Bhyrappa's demythologizing method aligns closely with Roland Barthes's notion that to demythologize is to expose "myth as a type of speech"—a cultural language that naturalizes ideological values and conceals their constructed, historical character (Barthes 129, 143). Barthes argues that "myth transforms history into nature" (140), and the act of demythologization is thus a critical effort to reveal the human, historical, and ideological processes that myths obscure.

Further, Bhyrappa's narrative strategy resonates with Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, where multiple voices and perspectives coexist, preventing the dominance of a single authoritative moral voice (Bakhtin 278). By allowing characters like Sita, Rama, and even secondary figures to articulate doubt, dissent, and self-critique, *Uttarakanda* avoids a monologic narrative and instead creates a dialogic space for ethical complexity.

This approach is situated within a broader tradition of critical retellings of Indian epics. Works such as Anand Neelakantan's *Asura: Tale of the Vanquished* (2012), which retells the *Ramayana* from Ravana's perspective, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019), which foregrounds Sita's voice, similarly challenge canonical versions by highlighting subaltern, feminist, and counter-hegemonic perspectives (Neelakantan 7; Divakaruni xi). As Uma Chakravarti observes, such retellings "uncover the silences and exclusions embedded within patriarchal traditions" (Chakravarti 102).

At the same time, Bhyrappa's project is distinct in its explicit commitment to historical materialism. Drawing on Marxist literary theory, Bhyrappa interprets epic events as products of material, political, and economic pressures rather than divine design. Terry Eagleton argues that literature "both reflects and refracts the material conditions of its production" (Eagleton 8), and Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* foregrounds these conditions by showing how royal duty, statecraft, and social hierarchy constrain personal choices.

This article therefore explores how Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* reimagines the *Ramayana* by integrating insights from humanism, historical materialism, and polyphony. It

argues that Bhyrappa's demythologization not only humanizes its protagonists but also exposes the ideological functions of myth, offering a narrative that is more ethically complex, historically grounded, and open to critical interrogation. In doing so, the novel participates in what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes as "reading against the grain" to reveal how dominant cultural texts are "constituted by exclusion and suppression" (Spivak 29).

## Demythologization and Beyond

Roland Barthes argues that myth functions ideologically by "transforming history into nature", thereby depoliticizing cultural constructs and presenting them as timeless truths (Barthes 129, 140). By naturalizing historically contingent values, myth masks the power relations and ideological interests embedded within narrative forms. As Barthes observes, "myth is a type of speech" whose ultimate function is "to inoculate the factual with significance and yet at the same time to empty it of history" (Barthes 142). To demythologize, then, is to restore this lost historicity—to reinsert the social, political, and economic conditions that produced these narratives, and to reveal the ideological work they perform.

Similarly, Rudolf Bultmann, in his seminal essay "New Testament and Mythology," posits that myths express profound existential truths—such as guilt, anxiety, and hope—but do so in terms of supernatural narratives that modern readers must reinterpret. Bultmann insists that sacred stories must be "stripped from their mythical world picture" to preserve their relevance in contemporary understanding, famously stating, "What matters is not the myth itself but what it intends to say" (Bultmann 3, 5). For Bultmann, the process of demythologization is not about dismissal but transformation: making existential meaning accessible by disentangling it from miraculous cosmologies.

In literary studies, this process of demythologization has evolved into a broader critical practice encompassing several interrelated strategies. Similarly, de-supernaturalization involves replacing divine interventions with historically or psychologically plausible explanations, thereby revealing myth as a human cultural artifact rather than a sacred narrative beyond critique (Barthes 140). As Wendy Doniger points out, "myths reveal their greatest power when read as products of cultural contingency, not as carriers of timeless certainty" (Doniger xviii).

Likewise, humanization foregrounds the agency, doubt, and moral ambiguity of characters previously treated as divine or flawless. As A. K. Ramanujan emphasizes in his study of epic retellings, humanizing mythic heroes allows readers to "see the gap between ideals and the lived experience" (Ramanujan 47).

Further, Polyphony, as theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin, creates narrative plurality by introducing multiple, sometimes conflicting voices, preventing the narrative from

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collapsing into a single, authoritative perspective (Bakhtin 278). This pluralism allows marginalized or dissenting voices to surface, resisting the closure imposed by canonical forms. Additionally, Ideological critique examines how myths reinforce social hierarchies and power relations. Uma Chakravarti, for example, highlights how classical epics often naturalize patriarchy by framing women's suffering as noble sacrifice (Chakravarti 102). Similarly, Louis Althusser's concept of the "ideological state apparatus" helps us understand how cultural texts operate to reproduce dominant social orders (Althusser 98).

Terry Eagleton extends this critical approach by asserting that literary texts must be read in relation to the socio-economic structures that shape them, as "literature both reflects and refracts the material conditions of its production" (Eagleton 8). In this sense, demythologization is not purely interpretive but historically materialist: it situates myth within the dialectic of power, economy, and ideology.

This theoretical synthesis—drawing from Barthes's structuralist critique, Bultmann's theological reinterpretation, Bakhtin's dialogic imagination, and Eagleton's Marxist analysis—provides a robust framework for understanding Bhyrappa's narrative choices in *Uttarakanda*. Rather than accepting the Ramayana as a divine revelation, Bhyrappa recasts it as a historically plausible narrative shaped by human motives, political necessity, and material constraints. In doing so, his retelling exemplifies how demythologization can transform sacred idealization into critical, historically grounded realism.

## Humanizing Sita: A Voice Beyond Silence

In canonical *Ramayana* narratives, Sita has often been framed primarily as an icon of chastity and passive endurance, whose silence itself is sanctified as the highest form of virtue (Gold 327). As Uma Chakravarti observes, the epic tradition "naturalizes the suffering of women, framing their submission as both noble and necessary for social stability" (Chakravarti 102). This narrative construction has historically silenced Sita's interiority, presenting her instead as a symbol rather than as a subject.

In *Uttarakanda*, S. L. Bhyrappa radically disrupts this paradigm by restoring Sita's voice, agency, and moral complexity. Rather than portraying her exile and suffering as cosmic tests of purity, Bhyrappa foregrounds the human costs of patriarchal ideology. In a moment of despair, Sita asks:

"For whose purity must I suffer? My own conscience knows my truth; why must the city's gossip dictate my fate?" (*Uttarakanda* 276).

This line exposes what Roland Barthes terms the "ideological naturalization of myth": the transformation of socially constructed gender norms into timeless truths (Barthes

140). By allowing Sita to question the legitimacy of these norms, Bhyrappa reframes her suffering not as redemptive but as evidence of systemic injustice.

This narrative strategy resonates strongly with feminist retellings of Indian epics. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*, for instance, rewrites the *Ramayana* entirely from Sita's perspective, reclaiming her voice from narrative marginalization (Divakaruni xi). As Divakaruni argues in her author's note, "when Sita tells her own story, she refuses to be merely an ideal; she becomes a woman of flesh and blood" (xi). Similarly, Bhyrappa's Sita is no longer a silent emblem of virtue but a fully realized character who feels anger, grief, and doubt.

This process aligns with what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes as the critical need to "retrieve the subaltern voice from narrative erasure" (Spivak 29). By giving Sita retrospective reflection and critical agency, Bhyrappa transforms her from a passive figure into an active narrator of her own trauma. Moreover, Bhyrappa's Sita directly critiques the aestheticization of female suffering in epic poetry. Confronting Valmiki—who in the narrative seeks to record her story—she asks: "What use is poetry that turns pain into glory?" (*Uttarakanda* 276).

This metafictional moment functions as a meta-demythologization, drawing attention to the ideological work performed by literature itself. As Barthes writes, myth is not confined to content; it operates through narrative form and artistic representation, turning violence and suffering into naturalized virtue (Barthes 129). Sita's critique thus exposes the paradox of traditional epic: it simultaneously immortalizes and effaces women's pain.

Further, Bhyrappa refrains from supernatural explanations of Sita's endurance. Unlike canonical versions, where her survival in the forest or trial by fire is justified through divine protection, *Uttarakanda* portrays Sita's resilience as grounded in human will and moral conviction. As she reflects, "I have no god to rescue me; only my own truth to sustain me" (*Uttarakanda* 278). This aligns with Wendy Doniger's argument that demythologized narratives "recover the historical woman from the idealized goddess" (Doniger xviii).

By framing Sita's suffering as a consequence of patriarchal ideology rather than divine will, Bhyrappa's narrative engages with what Louis Althusser terms the "ideological state apparatus"—the cultural and religious institutions that reproduce social hierarchies through narrative and ritual (Althusser 98). In this reading, Sita's exile is not merely the product of Rama's personal failure but of a society structured to privilege collective reputation over individual justice.

Finally, Bhyrappa's Sita embodies what Meenakshi Mukherjee calls the modern epic's "shift from heroic idealization to moral ambiguity" (Mukherjee 56). Rather than being an untouchable paragon, Sita becomes a tragic figure whose suffering highlights the

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cost of ideological conformity. Through these strategies—restoring voice, rejecting divine causality, and critiquing narrative form—Bhyrappa demythologizes Sita, revealing her not as a timeless ideal but as a historically situated woman shaped by social constraint, personal resolve, and the tragic weight of patriarchal expectation.

**Rewriting the Supernatural: Materialist Logic**

A central strategy in S. L. Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* is the reinterpretation of traditionally miraculous or divine events as historically plausible, materially grounded actions shaped by human ingenuity and socio-political necessity. This process of de-super naturalization aligns directly with what Roland Barthes describes as the critical task of demythologization: to reveal that "what seems natural is in fact historical," and that myth operates by "removing history from discourse" (Barthes 140, 143). By historicizing the miraculous, Bhyrappa not only challenges the sacred aura of the epic but also re-centers human agency as the driver of cultural achievement.

One striking example is Bhyrappa's retelling of the construction of the bridge to Lanka. In Valmiki's *Ramayana*, this feat is attributed to divine intervention, with Vanaras and the god Hanuman enabling the miraculous crossing of the sea. Bhyrappa, however, depicts this event through a materialist lens, as a human engineering triumph: "Rafts of timber bound with iron, laborers sweating under the sun, and the slow conquest of sea by human resolve" (*Uttarakanda* 198).

This narrative shift resonates with Terry Eagleton's assertion that literature "both reflects and refracts" the economic and social conditions of its context (Eagleton 8). By describing the bridge as the product of coordinated labor, technological innovation, and collective will, Bhyrappa demystifies divine intervention, celebrating instead the capacity of human societies to overcome material obstacles through cooperation and reason.

Similarly, the figure of Hanuman is reimagined not as a supernatural deity immune to death, but as a charismatic leader of a forest tribe—extraordinary in courage and loyalty, but ultimately human. This recasting aligns with Louis Althusser's concept of the "ideological state apparatus," where cultural narratives of divine heroes serve to reinforce hierarchical structures by naturalizing authority and submission (Althusser 98). Bhyrappa's portrayal suggests that what traditional epics frame as destiny may instead be the outcome of political alliances and social hierarchies.

By historicizing epic events, Bhyrappa invites readers to reconsider the ideological purpose of myth. Roland Barthes argues that myth "transforms history into nature" by masking the socio-economic and political forces that produce cultural narratives (Barthes 140). In *Uttarakanda*, Bhyrappa reverses this transformation, revealing that what appears as sacred inevitability often emerges from contingent historical

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pressures—be it the need to maintain royal legitimacy, the logistical demands of warfare, or the imperatives of economic power.

Further, this materialist reimagining aligns with Wendy Doniger's insight that myth is most compelling when it is understood as shaped by "historical contingency rather than timeless design" (Doniger xviii). Bhyrappa's refusal to attribute events to cosmic will forces the narrative into a register of moral and political realism, where human decisions—often tragic and morally ambiguous—replace the comfort of divine determinism.

One of the most powerful consequences of this approach is its ethical resonance. In Valmiki's epic, the exile of Sita and the war against Lanka unfold as part of a cosmic drama ordained by dharma. In *Uttarakanda*, these same events are recast as the product of contested human choices, marked by fear, ambition, and the weight of public expectation. Rama, reflecting on Sita's exile, confesses: "I have fulfilled my duty as a king, yet my heart whispers of betrayal. Can dharma demand that love be sacrificed to suspicion?" (*Uttarakanda* 214).

Through demythologization, *Uttarakanda* reframes epic grandeur as the product of human ambition, fear, and ingenuity. This shift does not diminish the moral and cultural power of the narrative; rather, it grounds it in historical reality, making its lessons more ethically and politically relevant for modern readers. As Barthes reminds us, the purpose of critique is not to destroy myth but to expose "the process by which it transforms history into nature" (Barthes 140)—and in doing so, to recover the human cost, complexity, and agency that mythic closure conceals.

### Moral Ambiguity and Ethical Plurality

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Comparatively, in Anand Neelakantan's *Asura: Tale of the Vanquished*, the war between Rama and Ravana is depicted as a struggle driven by political rivalry and cultural difference rather than cosmic justice (Neelakantan 7). This reinterpretation similarly reveals how epics can be read as contestations of power rather than expressions of divine will.

Through demythologization, *Uttarakanda* reframes epic grandeur as the product of human ambition, fear, and ingenuity. This shift does not diminish the moral and cultural power of the narrative; rather, it grounds it in historical reality, making its lessons more ethically and politically relevant for modern readers. As Barthes reminds us, the purpose of critique is not to destroy myth but to expose "the process by which it transforms history into nature" (Barthes 140)—and in doing so, to recover the human cost, complexity, and agency that mythic closure conceals.

**Contemporary Relevance: Myth as Ideology**

S. L. Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* does more than reinterpret an ancient epic; it offers a profound critique of how myth functions within contemporary society to uphold

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social hierarchies and political authority. As Roland Barthes argues, myth is "a type of speech chosen by history" that naturalizes cultural constructs into timeless truths, thereby "depoliticizing" what are in fact deeply political and historical narratives (Barthes 142–43). By demythologizing Rama and Sita, Bhyrappa's novel directly challenges these ideological functions of myth.

In a society where epic figures continue to be invoked to justify social and political ideologies—from caste hierarchies to patriarchal norms—Bhyrappa's humanization of these characters becomes a form of resistance. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak observes, the task of critical theory is not merely to reject dominant narratives but to show "how an idea is constituted, what silences it carries within it" (Spivak 30). *Uttarakanda* exemplifies this approach by making visible the gendered and political silences embedded in the canonical *Ramayana*.

Feminist scholars like Uma Chakravarti and Meenakshi Mukherjee have argued that epics have historically functioned to "naturalize women's subordination by framing suffering as noble sacrifice" (Chakravarti 102; Mukherjee 56). By giving Sita narrative agency and explicit critique of her treatment, Bhyrappa's novel disrupts this ideological closure. Sita's question, "What use is poetry that turns pain into glory?" (*Uttarakanda* 276), directly exposes how literature itself can aestheticize and thus legitimize systemic injustice—a critique that resonates with Barthes's claim that myth "empties suffering of history and turns it into an image" (Barthes 129).

Furthermore, Bhyrappa's focus on historical materialism aligns with postcolonial efforts to recover the socio-economic forces behind cultural narratives. As Sheldon Pollock argues, classical Sanskrit texts often functioned as "instruments of political imagination," helping to naturalize elite dominance in South Asian polities (Pollock 262). Bhyrappa's portrayal of Rama's decisions as driven by political pressure and economic interests rather than cosmic destiny highlights precisely these historically specific forces.

Importantly, *Uttarakanda* does not demonize Rama; instead, it shows the tragic limitations imposed by social structures and ideology. This aligns with Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, which values narratives that "allow competing voices to exist without forcing resolution into monologic certainty" (Bakhtin 278). In this sense, Bhyrappa's novel invites readers to reflect critically not only on myth itself but on the processes by which societies construct and reproduce mythic authority.

Such an approach is especially relevant in contemporary India, where cultural and religious myths continue to shape political discourse and social norms. As Wendy Doniger suggests, retellings that demythologize sacred narratives "help us remember that myths are products of human choices and historical moments, not divine

mandates" (Doniger xviii). In this light, *Uttarakanda* serves as both a reinterpretation of the past and an ethical intervention into the present.

**Conclusion**

S. L. Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* stands as a landmark in the modern retelling of the *Ramayana*, not because it offers new plot twists, but because it fundamentally reorients the interpretive frame through which we understand epic myth. Drawing on critical frameworks of demythologization (Barthes; Bultmann), historical materialism (Eagleton; Althusser), and narrative polyphony (Bakhtin), Bhyrappa transforms Rama and Sita from divine archetypes into historically situated, psychologically complex individuals whose choices reveal the human cost of political power and ideological conformity.

By removing supernatural causality, the novel shifts focus from cosmic inevitability to human agency, revealing how myth functions as an ideological structure that naturalizes patriarchal and hierarchical norms. This approach resonates with feminist and subaltern critiques that seek to recover silenced voices and highlight the tragic consequences of social orthodoxy (Chakravarti; Mukherjee; Spivak).

Yet Bhyrappa's work is not purely deconstructive. Rather, as Spivak reminds us, the aim of critique is not to destroy but "to show how an idea is constituted" and thus open it to ethical reflection (Spivak 30). *Uttarakanda* invites readers to see the *Ramayana* not as immutable scripture but as a living text whose meanings must be re-examined in light of human suffering, historical context, and moral complexity.

Ultimately, Bhyrappa's demythologization reclaims the epic for modern readers—not by diminishing its cultural significance, but by revealing the historical and ideological forces it encodes. In doing so, *Uttarakanda* reaffirms the power of retelling not only to challenge inherited certitudes, but also to illuminate the human struggles that myths too often conceal beneath divine narrative.

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**6**

# Digital Diaries: Blogs and the Reimagining of Literary Expression

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**Abstract**

The digital revolution has changed not only the ways in which we communicate but also the core of literature. Blogs—the most prominent example of digital literature—have changed the way stories are written, disseminated, and read in the current context. Blogs are distinct from traditional literature that is only available in print form; they provide immediacy or quickness, interactivity, and democratic authorship, meaning that anyone who has access to the internet can write. This article highlights the complexities of blogs in digital literature and the ways they combine private narration and public authenticity, when readers can join in the creation of texts, and how the very definition of literature is changing. It offers an examination of the role of blogs and their multimodal status—their incorporation of images, hyperlinks, and videos, thus creating hypertextual and participatory literature—and what this means for a new type of literary aesthetic. It will identify how reading habits and how we think about authors and readers are also changing with blogs, giving rise to new hybrid literacies. The paper concludes with a reading of several literary blogs and their thematic and genre variety, arguing that blogs reveal new hybrid forms that exist somewhere between creative and connective, complicating the idea of literary culture in the digital age.

*Keywords*: *Digital literature, blogs, literary expression, new media, online storytelling, hyper textuality.*

**Introduction**

**1.1 Background of Digital Literature**

Digital literature refers to works of literature that have been generated and consumed via digital platforms, thus changing the conventions of reading and writing practices. Digital literature offers a more interactive, hypertextual, and accessible experience that

allows readers to engage with the narrative in a more three-dimensional manner, especially in the wake of the internet and digital devices, assimilating literature from a static page to an interactive screen and allowing the reader to not only consume the work but take part in the work's production.

## 1.2 The Emergence of Blogs in Digital Literature

One of the forms of digital literature that has emerged as perhaps the most significant and democratic platform for literary expression is the blog. A blog, or "weblog," provides a more personal and interactive space for writers to post content to a worldwide audience immediately. The literary form of the blog has created a more conversational, immediate, and participatory form of literature. It seeks to erase the distinction between author and reader, creating communities around similar ideas, genres, and ways of storytelling.

## 1.3 Purpose and Scope of the Paper

This paper investigates the functions of blogs in reconceptualizing literary expressivity in the context of digital literature. It attends to the various ways blogs serve to democratize authorship, inspire creativity, and amplify a variety of voices often excluded from traditional publishing. The paper also examines the characteristics of blogs—interactivity, hyper textuality, and personalization—that make them essential for new media literature. In light of this analysis, this study emphasizes the importance of blogs as a form of literature that acknowledges a cultural and technological shift in contemporary society.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Digital Literature: A Theoretical Background

Digital literature consists of creative texts that are created, produced, and consumed in digital spaces. Unlike traditional print, digital literature often features hypertext, multimedia, and interactive qualities that offer readers access to non-linear narratives. In discussing the implications of digital literature, scholars like N. Katherine Hayles note that literature produced in a digital form destabilizes boundaries associated with literary forms by fusing technology and creativity to facilitate a participatory reading experience. This is due in large part to the explosion of web-based platforms that allow writers to share their work with the world instantly.

### 2.2 Blogging as a Literary Practice

Blogs have transformed from simple online diaries to interactive forms of literature. Writers are able to publish different text forms such as poetry, fiction and essays, and more personal narratives without the need for editorial gatekeeping. Unlike print literature, blogs offer writers and readers immediacy and feedback in the form of comments, likes, and shares, which create an interactive dialogue between authors and

their audience. Rettberg (2014) argues, blogs are a key form of digital literature, combining personal voice, narrative experimentation, and interactivity. Blogs create access to literature, a form of reading, and authorial voice that is democratic, bodily, and meaningful.

## 2.3 The Impact of Technology on Reading and Writing Practices

Digital and technological platforms have changed how we consume literature. Readers now engage in editing short, visually engaging text that has the potential to be accessed anytime. Links, video, and images in blogs create multimodal readings where the reader is engaged with the text, and interest remains high. This as a result has shifted readers to a participatory culture where readers consume text, and then comment, share, and visually co-create narrative together. Author studies indicate that authors blogging provide continuous engagement due to the modal form, because of the updates to the content, and therefore build a community around the author's work belonging to the text.

## 2.4 Prior Research Within Blogging and Literacy, Literature, and Writing Communities

Research has shown that blogs serve an important role in democratizing literature as barriers that remain in traditional publishing become non-existent. For example, blogs allow people to connect, write (including marginalized voices) and disseminate and share what they want too openly. Prior research has investigated how blogging builds aspects of creative-writing facilities manufacturing a communities of practice as an author, reader, and community.

## 3. Thematic Analysis

The emergence of digital literature has shifted how stories are created, shared, and experienced. Blogs have become an important medium for personal expression and literary exploration. Institutional literature often requires a formal publishing paradigm, whereas blogs provide an open and accessible structure for people to express their voice. This section continues an exploration of themes that articulate the literary and cultural value of blogs in the digital age.

## 3.1 Personal Narratives and Autobiographical Writing

The return to personal storytelling has become one of the preeminent themes in blogging. Blogs often serve as a digital diary as a means of sharing stories, feelings, and thoughts with a global audience. Unlike personal journals, blogs are public, therefore these narratives are interactive, making the blog a collective artifact of culture. Bloggers often adopt an informal, conversational tone, which can produce a feeling of intimacy and authenticity as they share from their lived experience. This direction confesses an engagement with the confessional mode of literature, wherein

subjective truths about the self-become art. This semiotic engagement might be exemplified by lifestyle and mental health blogs, which strategically mingle lived experience with narrative craft to offer spaces for powerful self-expression.

### 3.2 Democratization of Literature

Blogs create potential for writer-citizens to dismantle the gatekeeping systems that have traditionally existed in the publishing landscape by making it possible for anyone with internet access to become author.

### 3.3 Interactivity and Reader Engagement

A defining characteristic of digital literature is its interactive nature. Unlike traditional print texts, blogs invite readers to comment, share, and engage in dialogue with the writer. This interactivity transforms literature from a static artifact into a dynamic process, shaped by continuous feedback and conversation. Features such as hyperlinks, embedded media, and social sharing options enhance the reading experience by connecting texts across multiple platforms. For instance, a travel blog may include links to maps, videos, and related articles, creating a hypertextual narrative structure. This interactivity not only changes how stories are told but also how meaning is constructed, as readers actively participate in shaping the text.

### 3.4 Cultural Representation and Diversity

Blogs serve as platforms for cultural representation and identity construction, allowing marginalized voices to be heard. Writers from diverse linguistic, ethnic, and social backgrounds use blogs to express their realities and challenge dominant narratives. Regional blogs written in vernacular languages have gained popularity, contributing to the preservation and evolution of local cultures in a digital context. Additionally, blogs enable global cultural exchange, where readers from different countries engage with diverse perspectives. This plurality of voices reflects the democratic and decentralized nature of digital literature, making blogs essential for fostering cross-cultural understanding.

### 3.5 Literary Aesthetics in Blogging

Although blogs are often associated with informal writing, many bloggers experiment with literary aesthetics, blending traditional and modern techniques. The integration of multimedia elements such as images, videos, audio clips, and hyperlinks introduces a multimodal dimension to storytelling. This fusion of text and visuals creates a hybrid genre, where poetry may be accompanied by photographs or narratives enhanced with background music. Furthermore, the fragmented structure of blogs, often organized into posts and tags, resonates with the postmodern narrative style, which embraces discontinuity and multiplicity. As a result, blogs are not merely platforms for information sharing but sites of creative literary innovation.

### 3.6 Temporal Fluidity and Serialization

Another key feature of blogs is their temporal fluidity. Unlike traditional books that present a complete text at once, blogs evolve over time through serialized posts. This process allows writers to develop stories gradually, engage readers in ongoing conversations, and adapt narratives based on audience response. Serialization, a practice once popular in Victorian literature, finds new life in the digital age through blogging. The real-time aspect of blogs—where readers consume content as it is produced creates a sense of immediacy and community that distinguishes blogs from static literary forms.

### 3.7 Commercialization and Professionalization of Blogging

Initially rooted in personal expression, blogging has also become a professional activity. Literary blogs, book review sites, and creative writing platforms have created opportunities for monetization and brand collaborations. Some bloggers transition into published authors, using blogs as a launching pad for literary careers. This professionalization raises questions about the boundary between art and commerce in digital literature. While monetization provides sustainability, it can also influence the authenticity of creative expression. Nevertheless, blogging continues to serve as a vital space for both artistic experimentation and professional growth.

### 4. Comparative Analysis

The rise of blogs as a mode of literary expression can best be understood when placed in conversation with other digital and traditional literary forms. Blogs occupy a distinctive position in the digital literary ecosystem, combining immediacy, accessibility, and interactivity in ways that differentiate them from e-books, social media literature, and even newer formats such as podcasts and vlogs. This comparative lens helps clarify the unique role blogs play in reimagining literature in the digital age.

### 4.1 Blogs vs. E-books

E-books represent a digitized extension of the printed book. They maintain the formality and stability of traditional literary works, often undergoing editorial review and professional publishing processes. In contrast, blogs thrive on flexibility and immediacy. A blog post can be drafted, published, and shared with a global audience within minutes, allowing writers to respond to real-time events and cultural shifts. Unlike e-books, blogs also invite reader interaction through comments and feedback, creating a participatory environment rather than a one-way transmission of knowledge. Thus, while e-books preserve the permanence of literary works, blogs emphasize dynamism and dialogue.

### 4.2 Blogs vs. Social Media Literature

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Platforms such as Twitter (X), Instagram, and Facebook have popularized micro-literature—short poems, quotes, and stories delivered in fragmentary bursts. These forms are celebrated for their brevity and shareability, but they often sacrifice depth and narrative development. Blogs, however, occupy a middle ground: they allow for expansive storytelling, reflective essays, and serialized narratives while remaining accessible to a broad audience. Compared to the fast-paced, ephemeral nature of social media content, blogs offer sustained engagement and a more structured exploration of ideas. They bridge immediacy and intellectual depth, giving writers the space to experiment while maintaining readability.

### 4.3 Blogs vs. Podcasts and Vlogs

Podcasts and vlogs represent the multimedia turn in digital expression, privileging oral storytelling and audiovisual engagement. While they are effective in capturing tone, voice, and personality, they lack the textual richness and interpretive flexibility of written blogs. Blogs permit readers to pause, re-read, and engage at their own pace, fostering deeper analysis and contemplation. Moreover, blogs often incorporate multimedia elements—images, hyperlinks, embedded videos—that enhance rather than replace the written word. This hybridity situates blogs at the crossroads between text and multimedia, combining the strengths of traditional literary writing with the immediacy of digital media.

### 4.4 Blogs as Hybrid Spaces

Ultimately, blogs cannot be confined to a single category of digital expression. They borrow from the permanence of books, the accessibility of social media, and the interactivity of multimedia platforms. This hybrid quality enables blogs to serve as experimental literary laboratories, where boundaries between author and reader, professional and amateur, fiction and non-fiction, are constantly blurred. In this sense, blogs are not merely an alternative to other digital forms but a convergent space where multiple traditions of storytelling meet and evolve.

Blogs distinguish themselves through their adaptability, interactivity, and narrative depth. By comparing them with adjacent digital forms, it becomes clear that blogs are uniquely positioned to reimagine literary expression—simultaneously preserving the reflective qualities of traditional literature while embracing the participatory, dynamic ethos of the digital age.

### 5. Findings and Discussion

The study of blogs as a form of digital literature highlights several significant findings that reshape our understanding of literary expression in the age of new media. First, blogs democratize the act of writing. Unlike traditional publishing that demands access to literary networks, financial investment, and institutional recognition, blogs

enable any individual with internet connectivity to share ideas, narratives, and reflections with a global audience. This inclusivity fosters diverse voices, often representing marginalized communities that have historically been silenced in mainstream literature.

Second, the interactivity of blogs introduces a dialogic form of authorship. Readers are not passive consumers but active participants who can comment, share, and even co-create meaning. This challenges the conventional author–reader hierarchy, shifting literature from a monologic to a collaborative practice.

Third, blogs offer immediacy and relevance. Literary reflections, personal diaries, and creative experiments can be published in real time, capturing the pulse of social, political, and cultural events as they unfold. This temporal proximity differentiates blogs from the slower cycles of print literature.

Finally, the convergence of text with multimedia—images, hyperlinks, audio, and video—expands the aesthetic scope of literature. Such multimodality redefines what counts as a "text" and pushes the boundaries of literary studies into interdisciplinary territories that include digital humanities, communication, and cultural studies.

In sum, blogs embody both continuity and disruption: they extend the personal and reflective nature of diaries into the digital age while simultaneously transforming literature into a participatory, multimodal, and democratized field.

## 6. Conclusion

The exploration of blogs as a new form of literature reveals how digital platforms have redefined the practices of writing, reading, and interpretation. By bridging personal reflection with public engagement, blogs act as a unique hybrid genre that combines elements of diary, journalism, and creative writing. Unlike traditional literature, which often emphasizes permanence and institutional recognition, blogs thrive on immediacy, accessibility, and interactivity.

This study shows that blogs democratize literary space by giving voice to individuals across diverse backgrounds, creating a participatory environment where meaning is co-constructed by both authors and readers. Moreover, the incorporation of multimedia elements expands the scope of narrative expression beyond written words, encouraging interdisciplinary connections and new aesthetic possibilities.

While questions of literary value, permanence, and academic recognition continue to surround digital writing, it is evident that blogs have carved out a distinct position within contemporary literature. They reflect the changing dynamics of communication in the digital era, ensuring that literature remains a living, evolving, and inclusive practice.

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# Drowned in Silence: Environmental and Social Corruption in *The God of Small Things*

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## Abstract

The paper will be an ecocritical analysis of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things,* arguing that the environmental setting of the novel with main focus upon Pampa, Meenachal River and the Ayemenam landscape is an active agent. Through a view with postcolonial and ecocritical framework this report shows the interconnectedness between the relation of ecology degradation and social injustice. With lens on the river, Ayemenam garden and also with the parallelism in oppression of environment and the character Velutha portrayed aa from the marginalized community, this paper reveals the heath and activeness of the nature has been linked with the social and moral heath of the living beings. The paper concludes small things in the novel will be leading to the big things and how it all contributes to the shared ruin in certain aspects.

***Keywords:*** *Ecocritical Framework, Interconnection,  Nature, Society, Narrative*

Ecocriticism is a field of literary study that emerged in the 1990s, but it has roots in the environmental movement of the 1960s, with works like Rachel Carson's Silent Spring. This interdisciplinary field combines insights from science, social studies, and art to examine the complex relationship between literature and the environment. In essence, it's a way to analyse texts by looking at how nature is shown and whether they address environmental concerns, either directly or indirectly.

A core part of ecocritical analysis involves a few key steps. First, it looks closely at how nature is portrayed in a story, questioning if it's romanticized, villainized, or presented realistically. For example, it might consider whether a forest is a place of danger or comfort. Second, it identifies and explores clear environmental issues, such as pollution or deforestation, that might be subtly included in the story. Finally, it examines the connection between people and nature in the literature, seeing if it's one of control, care, mutual dependence, or conflict. A central idea in this analysis is challenging anthropocentrism, the belief that humans are the most important beings. Eco critics often support biocentrism or deep ecology, which recognizes the inherent value of all living things. A novel that critiques a human-centered social structure and

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its related harm to the environment serves as a strong argument against such human-focused views.

## Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice

Ecofeminism, a part of ecocriticism, explores how the mistreatment of women and the destruction of nature are connected, suggesting that male-dominated systems lead to environmental damage. This idea compares controlling women to controlling nature, which is often seen as feminine and something men can own. Ammu's suffering, being outcast for breaking traditional rules, can be seen through this view, as her oppression is part of a system run by men that also tries to dominate the natural world.

Likewise, Environmental Justice and Social Ecology are key to understanding the book's main point. These areas of study look at how environmental problems mostly harm people who are already disadvantaged and link environmental issues to social divisions and unfairness. This is a vital connection to the novel's focus on the caste system and Velutha's tragic fate. The book shows how environmental harm, like the polluted river, isn't just an ecological issue but a social and moral one tied to race, class, and gender. It clearly illustrates how the most defenceless people, like the "Untouchable" Velutha, suffer the most from environmental decay while also being oppressed by the very social structures that cause it.

## Postcolonial Ecocritical Lens

To fully understand Roy's complex story, it is key to use a postcolonial ecocritical viewpoint. This approach looks at how the lasting effects of British rule and the current pressures of global capitalism harm local environments and societies. Roy's own political and environmental work, like her non-fiction book The Greater Common Good, provides crucial context. This work directly criticizes government-led development projects for their destructive impact on nature and poor people.

The God of Small Things is an extension of these concerns, a narrative that maps a place—Ayemenem—while highlighting its unique features often ignored by earlier authors. The novel's depiction of ecological exploitation, like the polluted river, is connected to large-scale, development-focused historical views supported by global organizations. Roy's critique is not of development itself, but of a rigid, human-centered system that allows for the exploitation of both nature and the poor for the benefit of the wealthy. The novel's environmental themes are therefore not just a backdrop; they are a direct commentary on the ongoing forms of exploitation in the postcolonial era, showing how global economic forces and internal social classes combine to cause shared destruction.

## The River as a Living Text: A Symbol of Freedom and Ruin

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The Meenachal river also called pampa is one character in the novel. It reflects the currents of emotional narrative with parrels to the characters' lives.

## Freedom, Purity and Forbidden love

The river is a powerful symbol of life, purity, and freedom in the novel's beginning. For the twins, Estha and Rahel, it's a source of happiness and an escape from their family's oppressive life and rigid social rules. They spend hours playing in its waters, finding a safe place away from their society's strict "Love Laws" and traditions. This freedom also applies to the novel's most important relationship. The river is the main location for the forbidden love story between Ammu, an upper-caste woman, and Velutha, an "Untouchable." Their secret meetings on its banks symbolize a love that goes against the strict caste system, a relationship that tries to defy society's "Big Things" for the "Small Things" of passion and connection. The novel highlights this link, describing Velutha as having a deep "river-sense" and a spirit that mirrors the river's own "reckless spirit," suggesting a shared, rebellious energy.

## The Change of River: Shift from Life Giving Agent to Polluted Drain

Just like the characters' lives become corrupted, so does the river. The novel shows how the once-clean Meenachal River becomes choked with pollution, turning into a "slow, sludging green ribbon" carrying "fetid garbage. "This pollution is directly caused by human arrogance and "development." The river smells of sewage and pesticides from government loans and is filled with factory waste and waste from people. This destruction, a result of modern life and too many people, poisons the river and its wildlife. This fictional account mirrors the real-life pollution of the Pampa River. Studies show that the Pampa is polluted by huge amounts of human waste and detergents, especially during the Sabarimala pilgrimage. The river's pollution is a sign that society has lost its balance, just like the family. The "Big Things" of human progress and religious tradition, rather than the "Small Things" of ecological harmony, are shown to be the source of this ruin.

## Symbolic shift from sanctuary to death and entrapment

The river's physical decay mirrors a deep symbolic change, as it goes from a place of freedom to one of danger, violence, and death. The same river that once offered escape now becomes a site of fear and control, where police use it to harm factory workers. The sad drowning of Sophie Mol in the river marks the definite end of the twins' innocent childhood, as their once-happy safe space becomes a place of deep sadness and loss. The river becomes a "site of danger and violence" that ultimately "takes the 'gift' of Sophie Mol's life." The river's changes reflect the characters' lives, acting as a quiet witness to their unfolding tragedies. The river's wild and unpredictable flow is like the emotional struggle experienced by Ammu, Velutha, and the twins, showing how their lives are shaped by powerful societal forces they can't control. This double

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meaning powerfully expresses the novel's main idea: a society that ignores the purity of its natural world and the importance of individual lives is fated to share in a common, devastating ruin.

### The Ayemenam Landscape: A Microcosm of Social Decay

Going beyond the river, the whole Ayemenem landscape serves as a strong small-scale example of the social and moral breakdown throughout the novel. The physical spaces of the Ipe family—the house, the garden—are more than just places; they are symbolic extensions of the characters' inner struggles and the societal collapse around them.

### Garden: A Reflection of Family Disintegration

The Ayemenem house and its garden are a key part of the novel, and their neglected and decaying state reflects the breakdown of the family itself. Once carefully cared for by Mammachi, the garden becomes "unpruned" and filled with weeds after her death. This physical state of the garden mirrors the unfulfilled and untamed lives of its residents, especially the bitterness and unreturned love that define characters like Baby Kochamma. The family's inability to keep the garden in order reflects their deeper inability to manage their relationships and lives, a symbolic failure that matches the societal breakdown caused by the strict "Love Laws" and caste system. Just as the exotic plants are replaced by wild weeds, the families carefully built social image falls apart, revealing a moral decay at its core.

### Climate: Heat, Humidity, and Emotional Turmoil

Kerala's climate is not a passive element; it is an active force that reflects and increases the emotional struggle of the characters. Kerala's climate is known for high temperatures, humidity, and powerful monsoon rains, with pre-monsoon thunderstorms happening often. The novel uses this environment to mirror the stifled feelings and tense atmosphere of the Ipe family. The suffocating heat and humidity of the pre-monsoon season symbolize the emotional repression and unspoken tensions that build inside the house, while the sudden, violent thunderstorms and monsoons reflect the explosive nature of the family's conflicts and the "unnatural" passions that are brutally suppressed by social rules. The setting, therefore, does more than just provide a sense of place; it acts as a physical representation of the characters' inner states, a backdrop that connects with their deep sense of isolation and emotional distress.

### Parallelism Between Human and Nature

This is the main point of the report, showing that the novel creates a direct and deep link between the oppression of marginalized people and the exploitation of nature. The "Love Laws" and other "societal rules" that stop characters from living freely are the same human-centered forces that justify the destruction of the environment.

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## Velutha: Nature's Human Embodiment

Velutha is the "God of Small Things," a figure who represents a completely different relationship with the natural world—one that doesn't take from it. Unlike the powerful, privileged classes who view nature as a resource to be used, Velutha lives in deep harmony with his surroundings. The novel provides many examples of this connection, such as his ability to make intricate objects from natural materials and how Ammu sees him as rising from the river, a physical symbol of the natural world of "water, mud, trees, and fish." Velutha's character embodies a worldview that finds value in every living thing, regardless of its social or economic use. His habit of sweeping away his footprints symbolizes his belief in leaving a minimal, non-destructive mark on the environment, a sharp contrast to the destructive "Big Things" of industry and development. He is a living example of a philosophy that values living together over using things, a worldview that is brutally punished by the dominant society.

## Parallel Oppression: Caste, Prejudice, and Ecological Degradation

The novel makes a clear, step-by-step connection between hurting nature and hurting people who are marginalized. The same powerful, controlling forces, represented by Baby Kochamma and the "Big Things," are shown to be responsible for the planned oppression of lower castes and the planned destruction of nature. The "Untouchable" Velutha is a symbol for being a lower class, a term that can be used for both people with no rights and the exploited environment. Velutha's destruction and the river's destruction are presented as two sides of the same issue, both victims of the dominant, exploitative class.

The sad fate of Velutha and the pollution of the river are the direct results of this shared oppression, revealing a society built on prejudice and a lack of care for both humans and nature. This deep connection suggests that human prejudice, as shown in the caste system, is a direct cause of ecological damage. By seeing the "Untouchable" and the environment as worthless, the privileged class gives itself permission to use and destroy both without punishment. The novel uses the environmental crisis to criticize a modern form of colonialism. The river's pollution is linked to foreign loans and global money, like World Bank projects for pesticides. The saltwater dam and the polluted river aren't just local problems; they are the visible results of a global economic system that values "development" and profit over the environment and people's well-being. This is a type of neocolonialism where powerful nations and their institutions, under the pretence of "aid," continue to exploit the natural resources and people of less developed countries. The environmental damage, therefore, comes from both internal social hierarchies and external economic pressures, showing a complicated, connected web of exploitation.

The idea of "Small Things" is a new and powerful philosophical and political statement. The novel elevates this idea beyond a simple theme of how small events can have big consequences. It suggests that the "small things" of nature—the insects, the weeds, the river's subtle flow—are exactly what the dominant society ignores, just as it ignores the "small" lives of the poor and the "Untouchables." By making Velutha the "God of Small Things," Roy is not just highlighting a character; she is proposing a new ethical system for valuing life, both human and non-human, that goes against the current social order.

**Conclusion**

In "The God of Small Things," the novel provides a strong ecocritical analysis of the deep connection between social and environmental well-being. The story's setting isn't just a passive background; it's an active part that mirrors and affects the characters' lives. The sad decline of the natural world—shown by the polluted river and the decaying garden—directly reflects the family's breakdown and the strict social rules that control their lives. The novel's tragic end, marked by the deaths of Ammu and Velutha and the family's permanent split, is presented as a direct result of this shared social and ecological decay. It serves as a strong warning that a society built on prejudice, rigid hierarchies, and the exploitation of nature is ultimately fated to a shared ruin.

The novel's most lasting contribution to postcolonial ecocriticism is its revelation of the fundamental link between a healthy environment and social fairness. By drawing a powerful parallel between the oppression of Velutha and the destruction of the river, Roy argues that ignoring the "small things" in nature and society leads to a disastrous breakdown of both. The novel encourages a re-evaluation of what we value, urging readers to recognize the deep dignity of all life, both human and non-human, and to challenge the destructive human-centered forces of caste, capitalism, and prejudice that threaten to consume everything in their path.

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# Sea, Fate, and Resilience: A Cross-Cultural Reading of *Chemmeen* and *Riders to the Sea*

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**Abstract**

This paper undertakes a comparative study of *Chemmeen* (1956), a Malayalam novel by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, and *Riders to the Sea* (1904), an Irish one-act play by J.M. Synge. Though the works come from two different cultures, languages, and literary forms, they share deep connections through their focus on the sea and its influence on human life. Both show the sea as a source of food, work, and hope, but also as a force that takes away lives and leaves behind endless sorrow. *Chemmeen* tells the story of a South Indian fishing village where love, faith, and superstition decide the fate of the characters. The belief that a fisherman's wife must remain pure for his safe return adds a strong moral and cultural frame to the novel. On the other hand, *Riders to the Sea* shows an Irish mother who loses all her sons to the sea, making the play a powerful image of destiny and suffering. The choice of these two texts is important because they allow a meaningful comparison between Indian and Irish traditions. The paper compares ideas such as women's role in enduring loss, the theme of fate, the role of community belief, and the symbol of the sea. In bringing them together, the study shows that human struggles with nature, survival, and belief systems are universal, crossing borders of culture and geography.

*Keywords*: *Women Identity, Nature and Human Struggle, Culture*

**Introduction:**

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, a renowned Malayalam novelist, is best known for Chemmeen which shows the conflict between love, social customs, and the power of the sea. He received the Jnanpith Award in 1984 for Kayar, the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958 for Chemmeen, and the Padma Bhushan in 1984. John Millington Synge, a key figure of the Irish Literary Revival, is famous for his portrayal of peasant life and use of folklore. His play Riders to the Sea tells the story of Maurya, an old mother who loses all her sons to the sea, reflecting the force of fate. Chemmeen, on the other hand, narrates the doomed love of Karuthamma and Pareekutty. This paper

aims to compare the two works, showing how the sea shapes human life and destiny in different cultural settings.

**Literary Review**

### 1. Romance, Realism, and Myth in *Chemmeen*

A. S. Arthi (2019) examines how *Chemmeen* weaves together romance, realism, and myth to highlight the emotional depth. The study emphasizes the novel's distinctive attention to ordinary coastal communities rather than elite figures. It interprets the narrative through themes of love, taboo, folklore, and humanitarian concern.

- ### 2. Myth, Belief, and Chastity in *Chemmeen*

Patel (2023) investigates how myths surrounding women's chastity, particularly the belief that a fisherman's wife's chastity guarantees his safe return to land. These ideas are firmly rooted in the novel's cultural framework. Reinforced by patriarchal structures, these myths shape the community's moral codes and social expectations.

- ### 3. Postcolonial eco feminist reading of *Chemmeen*

B. Santhi Sree & Dr. N. Usha (2020) intertwined postcolonial ecofeminist perspective on *Chemmeen* explores the interconnected relationship between women and the natural environment. It suggests that traditional practices, taboos, and the sacred regard for the sea once preserved harmony between community life, ecology, and women's roles. However, the growing influence of material aspirations, patriarchal authority, and class inequalities disrupts this equilibrium, undermining both women's agency and environmental balance.

- ### 4. Universal Appeal & Suffering in *Riders to the Sea*

Md. Waliullah (2023) study discusses the play's universal themes—suffering, superstition, and death. Argues that these give it a timeless emotional resonance. The play, though rooted in Irish rural life, speaks to a wider human experience of loss and survival.

### 5. Cultural Identity & Symbolism in *Riders to the Sea*

Waziri & Najimuddin (2023). Discuss the Irish Literary Revival, where Synge's use of stylized peasant dialect and his authentic depiction of life on the Aran Islands played a vital role in shaping Irish cultural identity. It is regarded as a work that blends modern sensibilities with the structure of classical tragedy, making it a cornerstone of the Irish literary renaissance.

**Methodology**

The methodology is designed to highlight similarities and differences without reducing one text to the framework of the other.

Textual analysis of both works is carried out, focusing on narrative technique, setting, symbolism, and characterization. *Chemmeen* is studied as a novel that interweaves myth, morality, and community life. *Riders to the Sea*, a one-act play, is analyzed as a play that discusses tragedy in a single act. This ensures that both texts are understood within their own literary forms.

The study applies a thematic comparison, especially on motifs. Some are: the sea as provider and destroyer, the role of fate and superstition, and predominantly the endurance of women. This stage highlights the universality of human struggles against natural forces, despite cultural and geographical distance.

A socio-cultural lens is employed. In *Chemmeen*, the beliefs surrounding chastity and community codes are examined as part of Kerala's cultural reality, while in *Riders to the Sea*, the portrayal of repeated loss is studied in the context of Irish rural identity and the revival of national literature.

Finally, the methodology uses secondary sources such as critical essays, journal articles, and reviews to support interpretations. This approach combines detailed textual analysis with critical analysis, providing a well-supported academic foundation for the study.

**Discussion**

The comparative analysis of *Chemmeen* and *Riders to the Sea* shows how two distinct cultural works share common human fears about survival, faith, and fate. Both use the sea as a key metaphor and an unpredictable force that supports communities but can also destroy them without warning. As Synge states in *Riders to the Sea*,

> "In the big world, the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children,   but in this place, it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old"  (Synge, 1904, p. 23).

This highlights the harshness of island life, where death comes prematurely and parents outlive their children. The quote emphasizes reversal of generational roles, fatalism, and the sea's relentless destruction. Emphasizes human helplessness against natural forces. An important theme that resonates with Pillai's depiction of the sea as a punishing deity when taboos are broken in *Chemmeen.*

Karuthamma's dilemma in *Chemmeen* is built on the cultural belief that "if a fisherman's wife is unfaithful, the sea will claim his life" (Pillai, 1956 P. 50). The novel's narrative uses this superstition not merely as folklore but as a governing social law. "You are a fallen woman. So, they have declared I am unfit to go to sea" (Pillai, 1956 p. 179). words that control women's bodies and choices. Similarly, Maurya's acceptance in *Riders to the Sea.* "They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can

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do to me" (Synge, 1904, p. 34) illustrates a tragic reconciliation with destiny, where endurance is the only available resistance.

These parallels highlight the main aim of this paper. Both works, though rooted in Indian and Irish traditions, reveal a universal pattern of fatalism and resilience. Waliullah (2020) observes that Synge's play gains "universal appeal through its themes of death and suffering." Arthi (2019) points out that Pillai's novel weaves myth, romance, and realism to portray the struggles of ordinary people. Taken together, these views show how literature crosses cultural boundaries. It captures the shared human experiences of loss, endurance, and hope.

Characterization also shows meaningful similarities. Karuthamma in *Chemmeen* symbolizes the conflict between personal desire and community expectation. Her love for Paree Kutty cannot survive in a society that insists on fidelity as a matter of cosmic law. Similarly, Maurya in *Riders to the Sea* embodies endurance in the face of repeated loss. When she declares, "They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me" (Synge, 1904, p. 34), she accepts fate not out of weakness but from a strength born of suffering.

In *Riders to the Sea*, a man is expected to work regardless of the hardships he faces.

MAURYA

"Isn't it hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old women, and she holding him from the sea?" (Synge, 1904, p. 25)

CATHLEEN

"It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she says it over?" (Synge, 1904, p. 26)

BARTLEY

*Talking the halter*.

"I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony 'll run behind me. The blessings of God on you.

*He goes out"*. (Synge, 1904, p. 26)

These exchanges underscore the tension between Maurya's maternal instincts and Bartley's determination, highlighting the themes of fate and the sea's dominance over their lives. This constructed ideology explains why Bartley goes to sea to support his family. Maurya has already lost her husband and four sons to the sea, yet tradition leaves no space for disobedience. In *Chemmeen*, the restrictions are different. Women are denied the freedom to make their own choices, both before and after marriage.

"In a solitary moment Karuthamma's mind wandered. She loved Pareekutty. There would be no place for another man in her heart. She wished she could forget him, their

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relationship for just one moment. For she was born a fisherwoman. And she would have to die as a fisherman's wife. That was how it should be, she knew. So shouldn't she have to forget Pareekutty?" (Pillai, 1956 p. 73).

Karuthamma marries Palani because of her father's decision, burying her love for Pareekutty under the weight of class consciousness and social pressure. Eventually, she dies alongside her true beloved. In both contexts, women are left voiceless. Bartley ignores his mother's pleas and chooses the sea despite her warnings. Likewise, Karuthamma has no control over her life or body. Even though her parents knew about her love for Pareekutty, they forced her into marriage with Palani

". . . . Hence no one had heard about the shattering of that love" (Pillai,1956` p. 215).

Another important point of comparison is the role of women as carriers of resilience. Karuthamma and Maurya serve as pivotal female characters who carry the emotional burden of their communities' survival while confronting the tragic destiny imposed by the sea. Though rooted in distinct cultural landscapes. In South Indian fishing villages and Irish rural life, both women symbolize endurance, self-sacrifice, and the weight of collective beliefs. Critics like Arthi (2019) argue that *Chemmeen* presents women as "bearers of morality and communal honor," while Waliullah (2020) notes that Synge portrays Maurya as the "symbol of universal motherhood and grief."

Both Karuthamma and Maurya reveal how women in fishing communities bear the emotional and cultural burdens left by men lost to the sea. "Two days later, the dead bodies of a man and a woman locked in an embrace came to rest on the sands. Karuthamma and Pareekutty" (Pillai, 1956 p. 238) and in *Riders to the Sea,*

NORA

"They are carrying a thing among them and there's a water dripping out of it and leaving a track by a big stone". (Synge, 1904, p. 40)

CATHLEEN

*"In a whisper to the women who have come in.*

Is it Bartley it is?" (Synge, 1904, p. 41)

ONE OF THE WOMEN

"It is surely; God rest his soul.

*Two younger women come in and*

*Pull out the table. Then men carry*

*In the body of Bartley, laid on a*

*Plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table."* (Synge, 1904, p. 41)

By comparing these texts thematically and through their characters, the study shows that while rooted in Kerala's superstitions and Ireland's fatalism, both works articulate a universal narrative of survival, faith, and endurance. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is not only to contrast two literatures but also to demonstrate how human struggles with nature and destiny unite cultures across oceans. Thus, the discussion shows that although *Chemmeen* and *Riders to the Sea* are rooted in distinct local cultures, they address enduring issues of survival, gender roles, and fate, effectively achieving the objectives of this study.

**Results**

The comparative analysis of *Chemmeen* and *Riders to the Sea* reveals striking similarities in their treatment of the sea as both a life-giving and life-destroying force. In *Chemmeen*, the sea sustains the fishing community. But becomes a symbol of punishment when moral and cultural codes are violated. In *Riders to the Sea*, the sea relentlessly claims the lives of men, leaving women to endure repeated loss. Despite differences in geography and tradition, both texts portray the sea as an uncontrollable and powerful source of destiny, shaping human existence.

The results also show that women emerge as the central figures of endurance in both works. Karuthamma in *Chemmeen* embodies the struggle between love, duty, and community belief, while Maurya in *Riders to the Sea* personifies resignation and acceptance of fate. This shared focus on female resilience suggests a universal pattern of women bearing the emotional and cultural weight of survival.

Furthermore, the study finds that superstition and faith strongly influence sea community life. In Kerala, chastity myths govern personal choices, while in Ireland, fatalism and oral tradition govern collective memory. Together, the works confirm that literature, across cultures, often returns to common concerns: faith, suffering, and human strength in the face of natural forces.

**Conclusion**

This comparative study of Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's *Chemmeen* and J.M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* reveals how two works from vastly different cultural landscapes converge on a shared vision of human struggle against destiny. Both texts portray the sea not simply as nature but as a moral and spiritual force that decides human fate. Through Karuthamma's conflict between love and duty, and Maurya's resignation to endless loss, the narratives foreground women as the silent yet enduring bearers of communal survival. While *Chemmeen* reflects the binding power of myth and superstition in Kerala's fishing culture, *Riders to the Sea* captures the fatalism of Irish rural life. Together, they affirm that literature transcends boundaries, uniting cultures through universal themes of suffering, resilience, and faith. The paper thus

demonstrates that beyond regional differences, both works echo the timeless truth of human endurance in the face of nature's power.

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**9**

# Reimagining Oral Traditions: Folklore and Myth in Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama*

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## Abstract

Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama: A Story of the Sundarban* (2021) represents a recreation of folklore into a modern literary and visual form. A graphic verse adaptation of the Bon Bibi legend, performed for generations by jatra companies and deeply embedded in the oral traditions of the Sundarbans, *Jungle Nama* preserves the genuineness of folklore while reimagining it for contemporary readers. Written in metrical verse and accompanied by illustrations, Ghosh's text captures the rhythm and cultural spirit of oral storytelling while addressing urgent ecological concerns. By blending myth, oral traditions, and regional knowledge systems with new modes of storytelling, Ghosh situates *Jungle Nama* as an ecologically conscious fable that emphasizes the fragile balance between humans, animals, and the Sundarbans habitat. He highlights the cultural practices and everyday realities of Sundarbans communities while also drawing attention to issues of climate change, environmental degradation, and the destructive nature of human greed. In retelling folklore for a global audience, Ghosh demonstrates that traditional stories are not static but adaptable to new crises, making them vital tools for cultural resilience. Eventually, *Jungle Nama* affirms the continuing relevance of myth and oral narrative in shaping ecological awareness and ethical values.

*Keywords: folklore, fable, limits, boundaries, greed, climate crisis*

## Introduction

In *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016), Amitav Ghosh urges writers and artists to confront the climate crisis as a central moral responsibility. He laments that, unlike earlier traditions, contemporary literature rarely engages directly with ecological catastrophe. He argues that literature must transcend aesthetic concerns to testify, guide, and respond meaningfully to humanity's shared environmental challenges. (166–172)

Within this ethical and intellectual framework, *Jungle Nama: A Story of the Sundarban* (2021) assumes particular significance. Ghosh's first work in verse, accompanied by graphic illustrations, is based on the legend of Bon Bibi, a guardian spirit central to the folklore of the Sundarbans. By drawing from oral traditions and cultural memory, Ghosh not only retells a local tale but also offers a moral compass for ecological consciousness. As Sneha Biswas observes, Ghosh uses the ethical power of folktales to awaken environmental awareness among the people of the region.

This paper argues that *Jungle Nama* is both a preservation of cultural heritage and an innovative mode of ecological storytelling. It bridges myth, folklore, and oral tradition with contemporary concerns, offering a powerful reflection on survival in the present age.

The term folklore, coined by W. J. Thoms in 1846, literally means "the learning of the people" (Burne 1) and encompasses traditional beliefs, customs, stories, songs, and sayings that articulate the worldview of a community. It reflects early conceptions of both the animate and inanimate worlds of nature, human behaviour, and human-made objects, while also addressing humanity's relationship with the spiritual realm through beliefs about witchcraft, charms, omens, disease, and death. Folklore includes myths, legends, folktales, ballads, songs, proverbs, riddles, and nursery rhymes, and serves as an expression of early human psychology across fields such as history, poetry, philosophy, religion, science, and medicine. (Burne 1–2)

The scientific study of folklore has introduced the concept of "survivals," recognizing the persistence of cultural practices across time and establishing folklore as an observable phenomenon in the evolution of human thought. By examining stories and customs in their specific cultural and environmental contexts, folklore reveals how shared ideas shape communities and their surroundings, offering insights into the origins of religion, ethics, philosophy, science, and art. Animal folklore, in particular, highlights the interconnectedness of life and captures community anxieties, ecological knowledge, and rural preoccupations, while also encoding larger philosophical insights about humanity's relationship with nature. (Burne 3–4)

In *Indian Folklore Volume 1*, edited by Pattanayak and Claus, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty emphasizes the enduring and adaptive nature of folklore. It is noted that folklore expresses ethical beliefs and offers metaphors for how people understand life, acting as a repository of history in cultures without written records by linking past to present. While rooted in tradition, folklore evolves and responds to contemporary concerns, addressing not only spiritual and narrative aspects but also practical, political, social, and material issues. It often serves as a symbol of cultural identity, sustaining communities through shared values and stories. Doniger highlights that folklore is a form of education: "folklore is the way that people have always educated themselves

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and their children… the vivid charm of the folk tradition serves often to sugar-coat the pills of philosophy and utilitarianism" (Pattanayak). Thus, folklore persists as a vital, living tradition, balancing continuity with change across generations.

Folk literature, encompassing myths, legends, epics, fables, and folktales, is transmitted orally across generations, and rooted in collective cultural memory rather than individual authorship. These narratives endure because they entertain while embodying cultural ethos and universal truths that guide communities. Their appeal transcends geography, addressing human needs to explain nature, express fears and hopes, and impose order on uncertainty. With simple narrative style, relatable characters, repetition, and mystical elements, they amuse while transmitting moral and ethical values. As Oza notes, folk literature sustains cultural continuity and imagination, reflecting the timeless interplay of tradition and lived experience. (Oza 2020)

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica "folk literature, also called folklore or oral tradition is the lore (traditional knowledge and beliefs) of cultures having no written language. It is transmitted by word of mouth and consists, as does write literature, of both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs, riddles, and the like" (Thompson). Every cultural group has uniquely shaped and preserved its folk literature, and over time, themes from folk songs, oral tales, and legends have been adapted by writers to create wider social impact. (Thompson)

As noted in *Literature & Folklore*, the term "folk" carries diverse meanings, from "natural" and "native" to "traditional," "rural," or even "from the heart." What begins as heartfelt expressions of native people becomes folklore, but its scope is much broader. Folklore embodies culture, social conventions, customs, and collective behaviour. It is not merely storytelling but a living carrier of life, encapsulating ethical values, spiritual dimensions, and the shared experiences of communities. (Literature & Folklore)

India, as a diverse nation, possesses a rich heritage of folklore and literature, with each culture contributing its unique knowledge system. Folk literature, also known as folklore or oral tradition, reflects the language, culture, and collective imagination of society. It represents the traditional knowledge and beliefs of communities across various geographical regions, religious and social groups, and tribes, many of whom lacked written languages. Transmitted orally, it survives in the form of poems, songs, prose and verse narratives, rituals, riddles, and proverbs. Folk heroes are often revered in villages, and most folktales have been preserved in vernacular languages, exerting a deep influence over popular imagination. (Oza 2020). India has a specific place in the history of world folklore. Its narratives have influenced folkloristic theory globally. Max Müller's studies on Indian myths and Theodor Benfey's translation of the

*Panchatantra* shaped the idea of the Indian origin of the fairy tale. The subcontinent possesses one of the oldest narrative traditions in the world, preserved in the *Rigveda*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, and the *Upanishads*, which are often regarded as encyclopaedias of Indian religion and mythology. Other classics such as Narayan Pandit's *Hitopadesha*, Gunadhya's *Brihatkatha*, Somdeva's *Kathasaritsagar*, Sihdasa's *Vetal Panchavimsati*, as well as the *Sukhasaptati* and *Jataka* tales further enrich this legacy. (Oza 2014)

The influence of Indian folklore extends beyond the subcontinent. Many writers from all over the world have drawn inspiration from these traditions. Rudyard Kipling's two *Jungle Books* echoes Indian folktale motifs, while his *Just So Stories, Rewards and Fairies* and *Puck of Pook's Hill* reflect folklore-inspired narratives with Indian themes. Helen Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* also adapts elements of Indian storytelling. A. K. Ramanujan made major contributions by interpreting folklore from an Indian perspective through works such as *Where Mirrors are Windows* (1989), *Three Hundred Ramayanas* (1991), *Where Mirrors Are Windows: Toward an Anthology of Reflections* (1989), *The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* (1967) and *Oral Tales from Twenty Indian Languages* (1991). (Oza 2014)

Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* is a modern fable rooted in the legend of Bon Bibi, the forest deity revered in the Sundarbans. For the inhabitants of this vast mangrove delta, the Bon Bibi tale is not merely folklore but a living cultural tradition, deeply tied to their relationship with land, rivers, and forests. Passed down orally and performed through *jatra*, the legend continues to shape the collective imagination and ecological practices of the region.

In *Jungle Nama*, Ghosh reimagines this story to highlight the delicate balance between humans and nature. The narrative centres on Dhona, a wealthy merchant blinded by greed who ventures into the forest seeking riches. His exploitation leads him into the domain of Dokkhin Rai, the tiger spirit and guardian of the Sundarbans. To escape, Dhona offers his own nephew, Dukhey, as a sacrifice. Yet the boy is saved by Bon Bibi, the deity of justice and compassion who protects all beings, regardless of caste, creed, or faith. The fable has a timeless moral hidden beneath its surface. It warns against unchecked greed and underscores the principle of coexistence, where survival depends on respecting the rights of other beings and the sanctity of the forest. The tiger, embodying both fragility and power, symbolizes the ecosystem itself. By safeguarding him, Bon Bibi also safeguards the harmony of the Sundarbans. Ghosh's retelling transforms folklore into an ecological fable for our times. The story becomes not only a cultural preservation but also a reflection on the global climate crisis. It asserts that human survival is inseparable from the survival of other species and habitats. By invoking values of restraint, justice, and balance, *Jungle Nama* reminds readers that coexistence with nature is essential for a sustainable future.

Amitav Ghosh draws inspiration from Bengali poetic traditions in *Jungle Nama*, adopting a verse form deeply rooted in oral storytelling practices. The narrative is written in poyar, a popular Bengali meter often called the "meter of wonder" (Ghosh 53). Traditionally, poyar consists of rhyming couplets of fourteen syllables per line, but Ghosh adapts it to twelve syllables, creating a rhythm that resonates with contemporary readers while still honouring its folkloric origins. This choice is significant because the legend of Bon Bibi itself has long been recited in poyar, linking Ghosh's retelling to centuries of oral tradition in the Sundarbans.

Throughout the narrative, the power of dwipodi poyar is explicitly foregrounded. Dukhey's mother advises him to invoke Bon Bibi in this specific form if seized by Dokkhin Rai:

Be sure to cast your call in dwipodi poyar,
it'll give your voice wings, it's the meter of wonder;
its cadence will strengthen your words; they'll gain in power;
it'll work its magic by tying your thoughts together. (Ghosh 23–24)

In this context, poetic form itself becomes more than style. It functions as ritual. The poyar is believed to carry spiritual efficacy, binding words with rhythm and granting them power to reach the deity. In this manner, the meter is both a vehicle for storytelling and a performative act of faith embedded in folklore.

As Sengupta observes, dwipodi poyar emerges as a kind of protagonist, enabling Dukhey's rescue. Folklore thus operates through both content and form: the tale conveys balance and respect for nature, while the meter preserves the performative magic of oral tradition. Ghosh himself notes, "in the Indian tradition, stories have always been told in verse….and another aspect of premodern Indian literature… books, stories were not meant to be read by individuals…. it was meant to be read aloud, it was meant to be sung, it was meant to be chanted" (Ghosh 57). Verse, enriched by rhythm and sound, transforms storytelling into a collective cultural experience.

*Jungle Nama* is primarily a story about limits and boundaries, limits placed upon human greed, boundaries set by nature, and boundaries upheld by spiritual belief. The very form of writing, restricted to a strict metrical structure, mirrors the moral lesson of the fable. Even the antagonist, Dokkhin Rai, comes to recognize the discipline of verse:

'I've learnt restraint, with the magic of meter. With word count and rhyme, I will master my needs, my desires I shall check, and repent for my misdeeds' (Ghosh 57)

Folklore works on several levels here. It conveys the ethical warning that unchecked greed disturbs the fragile balance of coexistence, while the measured and rhythmic

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form itself becomes symbolic of the restraint demanded by nature. Just as the tiger spirit learns to "metrify," human beings too must regulate desire and acknowledge ecological boundaries.

*Jungle Nama* thus reinforces with Wendy Doniger's observation that folklore educates through metaphor, presenting ethical truths in memorable and performative ways. By reimagining the Sundarbans legend in verse, Ghosh creates not only a retelling of myth but also a parable of climate crisis and a collective call to live within limits.

Amitav Ghosh begins *Jungle Nama* by evoking the mythical terrain of the Sundarbans, a dense mangrove forest filled with mystery and danger. In the opening narration, he recalls the local belief that the jungle was once the domain of Dokkhin Rai, a demon king who often assumed the form of a tiger to prey upon vulnerable villagers. Terrified by his tyranny, the people prayed for deliverance, and their pleas were answered by Bon Bibi and her brother, Shah Jongoli, who journeyed from distant Arabia to protect them. Together, they defeated Dokkhin Rai and confined him to a portion of the forest, laying down the terms of coexistence. Ghosh captures this moment of restoration with poetic precision:

She [Bon Bibi] create a dispensation,
that brought peace to the beings of the Sundarban;
every creature had a place, every want was met,
all needs were balanced, like the lines of a couplet. (Ghosh 6)

This verse highlights the essence of folklore as a cultural code of ethics. The legend of Bon Bibi is not only a story of good triumphing over evil but also a narrative that establishes a moral and ecological order in the Sundarbans. According to tradition, every woodcutter, honey collector, and fisherman invokes Bon Bibi's blessing before entering the forest, acknowledging her as the guardian of safety and balance. Such rituals reinforce the recognition that survival in the Sundarbans depends on respecting the limits of nature. The story contains moral and practical lessons, as is the case with most folklore. Similar to most folklore, the narrative has moral and practical wisdom. It warns against unrestrained greed while promoting harmony and restraint. In this way, the Bon Bibi legend retold by Ghosh functions as a living tradition that continues to shape cultural practices and ecological awareness. Unlike sectarian deities, Bon Bibi is invoked across caste, religion, and community. Her blessings remind all who depend on the forest that survival requires humility before the power of nature.

This folktale's fundamental message is one of warning against excessive greed. As Ghosh retells, those who cross "the invisible boundary" without reverence for Bon Bibi or regard for the forest's limits invite destruction (29). The jungle itself becomes a moral agent, teaching lessons to those who exploit it. This is characteristic of folklore, where the natural world such as animals, spirits, rivers, or forests often assumes a

didactic role, teaching communities how to live within limits. In the context of the Sundarbans, the revolt of the landscape against human excess becomes both a mythic narrative and an ecological truth.

Thus, the fable of Bon Bibi is not only a tale of divine protection but also a cultural code that regulates human interaction with nature. By enshrining the values of restraint, coexistence, and respect, this folklore offers a model of ecological wisdom that, as Ghosh argues, holds profound significance for the contemporary world facing climate crisis. Ghosh concludes *Jungle Nama* with a moral lesson that resonates deeply with the didactic function of folklore. The fable teaches that the secret to a happy life lies in contentment, not in unchecked desire:

All you need do, is be content with what you've got;
to be always craving more, is a demon's lot.
A world of endless appetite is a world possessed,
is what your munshi's learned, by way of this quest. (Ghosh 70)

The warning is clear: greed leads only to destruction, while restraint and balance foster harmony. As Annu Jalais observes, "the inhabitants of the Sundarbans could be called environmental determinists, so strong is their belief that the environment affects them" (8). This worldview is encoded in the Bon Bibi legend, which teaches that humans and tigers are co-inhabitants of the forest. Both belong to the landscape, and survival depends upon respecting boundaries. (Jalais 8–9) By retelling this story in verse, Ghosh reanimates an oral tradition that reaffirms folklore's enduring role as a cultural mechanism for transmitting ecological wisdom and ethical restraint.

## Conclusion

Folklore, as a living cultural form, continues to address contemporary social and ecological challenges. In *Jungle Nama*, Amitav Ghosh reimagines the legend of Bon Bibi not only as a tale of the past but as a tradition that speaks to present environmental crises. Written in verse, it revives oral storytelling while urging ecological awareness. As Ghosh notes in *The Great Derangement*, "recognition is famously a passage from ignorance to knowledge" (5). *Jungle Nama* embodies such recognition, showing that folklore remains dynamic, a cultural archive of wisdom and a moral guide for sustainable living.

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**10**

# Unsung Heroines' Struggles and Strength in Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*

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## Abstract

The traditional narrative has long celebrated Rama as the epitome of virtue, honoured for his unwavering righteousness, compelling personality, and unparalleled valor and Sita is revered for her ethereal beauty, unblemished chastity, and selfless sacrifice. In the process of glorifying these central figures, the narratives of lesser-known women, who also endure immense suffering and exhibit quiet strength, are often marginalized or erased. Divakaruni's retelling seeks to reclaim these silenced voices, casting light on the pain and inner lives of minor female characters who are frequently left in the shadows. This paper aims to explore how power dynamics, emotional struggles, and silent defiance shape the experiences of women whose stories remain largely untold in mainstream retellings. This research paper seeks to explore the redefined identities of these women, focusing particularly on the themes of resistance, power, and sacrifice as portrayed through the minor female characters. The defiance of Ahalya and Mandodari is examined as a form of resistance against the moral and social judgments imposed upon them. The strength of Sunaina and Kaikeyi are analyzed to understand the nuanced portrayal of feminine power. Furthermore, the quiet yet profound sacrifices of Urmila and Kausalya are studied to shed light on the emotional depth and spiritual resilience of women. By reinterpreting these characters, Divakaruni challenges conventional portrayals and allows the untold stories of these women to emerge with dignity, empathy, and complexity.

*Keywords*: *Power dynamics, Emotional struggles, Profound sacrifices, Feminine power.*

*The Ramayana* is one of the most revered epics in Indian literature, attributed to the sage Valmiki. It narrates the life and journey of Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, who embarks on an arduous quest to rescue his wife, Sita, after she is abducted by the demon king Ravana. More than a tale of heroism, *The Ramayana* explores profound themes such as duty, loyalty, righteousness, and the moral struggles faced by its characters. The great epic offers insights into human values, relationships, and the

eternal conflict between good and evil. The epic has been retold and reinterpreted across centuries and cultures, each version adding new dimensions to its timeless appeal and philosophical depth.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a prominent contemporary Indian-American writer known for her evocative storytelling and strong focus on women's experiences, identity, and cultural displacement. Born in India and later settling in the United States, Divakaruni brings a unique diasporic perspective to her narratives, blending Indian traditions with Western contexts. Her writing often centers around female protagonists who navigate complex personal and societal challenges. Among her most acclaimed works are *The Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of My Heart*, and *The Palace of Illusions*, each of which reimagines myth and folklore through a feminist perspective. Divakaruni uses Sita to justify the pains and sufferings of the unsung heroines of Ramayana. Shah (2018) contends that "Divakaruni's reimagining of Sita's character is a crucial feminist act, positioning her not as a passive object of divine destiny but as a woman who takes control of her journey" (p. 132).

Sharma in her research article writes,

> "In *The Forest of Enchantments*, Divakaruni offers a powerful retelling of *The Ramayana* from Sita's perspective, giving voice to a character long overshadowed by patriarchal interpretations. Mythological retellings serve as a bridge between ancient narratives and contemporary audiences, allowing these timeless stories to remain relevant across generations." (p. 1091)

This paper travels into the diverse and significant elements of the *Ramayana* as reimagined by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her novel *The Forest of Enchantments*. While the narrative primarily centers on Sita and her virtues, Divakaruni goes beyond the conventional portrayal to shine a spotlight on the lesser-known yet pivotal female figures in the epic. Characters such as Urmila, Sunaina, Mandodari, Kaikeyi, Kausalya, and Agalya are brought to the forefront, each representing unique dimensions of womanhood ranging from silent endurance to formidable strength. The quiet yet profound sacrifice of Urmila and Kosalai underscores the emotional labor and unacknowledged devotion of women who remain in the background of grand tales. The nuanced power dynamics embodied by Sunaina and Kaikeyi challenge traditional binaries of virtue and vice, offering a more complex understanding of maternal influence and political agency. Meanwhile, the resistance expressed by Agalika and Mandodari reflects subtle forms of dissent and moral courage, even within oppressive frameworks. Through these layered portrayals, Divakaruni reclaims space for the marginalized voices of the *Ramayana*, redefining heroism and highlighting the multifaceted roles women play in shaping both personal and collective destinies. Agarwal notes in her research article, " In this novel, Divakaruni does more than retell

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an ancient myth; she reinterprets it, using the narrative to challenge longstanding patriarchal constructions and offer a fresh, feminist perspective."

Urmila, the wife of Lakshmana and sister of Sita, emerges in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* as a powerful symbol of silent sacrifice and unacknowledged devotion. Urmila's story gains new depth and emotional resonance in Divakaruni's retelling. Just like Sita, Urmila too experienced love at first sight with even greater eagerness and enthusiasm. Her desire to marry Lakshmana was filled with joy and hope for a shared life of companionship. When Rama is exiled to the forest, he initially decides to face the hardship alone, unwilling to expose Sita to the dangers of forest life. Sita, steadfast in her love, insists on accompanying him, and Lakshmana, ever loyal, chooses to follow his brother as well. Yet, in a deeply painful decision, Lakshmana refuses to take Urmila with him. He believed that the forest was no place for Urmila's delicate presence and feared her company might distract him from his duty to protect Rama and Sita.

Unlike Sita, who at least had the solace of being with her husband during exile, Urmila is left behind in the palace, condemned to a life of solitude, longing, and emotional abandonment. "What was the use, I thought to myself, of living on when I'd been rejected by the one man, I had adored with all my heart since the day I met him?" (*Forest of Enchantments* 281). Overwhelmed by sorrow and feeling invisible in her husband's choices, Urmila turns to divine intervention. She prays fervently to Yama, the god of death, asking him to end her life, as she struggles to come to terms with her seeming irrelevance. Moved by her devotion and silent strength, Yama, with the help of his sister Nidra (the goddess of sleep), grants her a unique boon fourteen years of deep, undisturbed sleep. Through this mystical sleep, Urmila sleeps not only for herself but also on behalf of Lakshmana, enabling him to remain awake throughout the exile to guard his brother and sister-in-law without rest. In doing so, Urmila becomes a silent warrior a woman who bears the burden of separation, loneliness, and emotional neglect, yet transforms her suffering into strength and support. Urmila's sacrifice is profound. She gives up her youth, her marital companionship, and the vibrant years of her life not for glory or recognition but out of pure, unwavering love.

Kaushalya, the first and principal wife of King Dasharatha, is portrayed as a woman of quiet strength, unspoken sacrifices, and unwavering dignity. Born a princess of the powerful kingdom of Kosala, Kaushalya entered into her marriage not merely as a bride but as a political offering. Her dowry was no ordinary treasure it was half of her father's kingdom, with the assurance that the entire region would come under Dasharatha's control after her father's death. Thus, her marriage was as much a transaction of power as it was a personal union. Despite the apparent grandeur of her position as the chief queen of Ayodhya, Kaushalya's personal life was marked by emotional deprivation. While she received respect from Dasharatha as his first wife,

she never experienced the love and affection she longed for. The situation was further compounded by the birth of her first child a girl whom Dasharatha, driven by patriarchal obsession for a male heir, handed over to a friend, denying Kaushalya the joy and rights of motherhood. Her grief was silently endured. Dasharatha, though respectful toward Kaushalya, was a man consumed by desire. His nights were often spent with concubines, and his affection grew distant. When Kaushalya failed to give him a male heir, he married Kaikeyi, bold, beautiful, and intellectually engaging qualities that captivated the king and drew him increasingly toward her. Yet, Kaikeyi too could not conceive, prompting Dasharatha to marry Sumitra, the gentle and noble princess of Kashi. Eventually, Dasharatha performed a sacred yagna, and the divine offering produced from the ritual was distributed among the queens. It was through this divine intervention that Kaushalya gave birth to Rama, Kaikeyi to Bharata, and Sumitra to the twins Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

Even after becoming the mother of Rama, Dasharatha's most beloved son Kaushalya's personal sacrifices did not cease. Dasharatha, overwhelmed by his love for Rama, kept the child close to him, often within his own chambers, depriving Kaushalya of the maternal closeness and joy she had long yearned for. Yet she accepted everything with remarkable composure and grace. She did not voice her pain, nor did she seek to challenge the unfairness of her circumstances. Divakaruni's retelling brings Kaushalya into sharp focus as a woman who suffers not through dramatic rebellion but through dignified silence. Ram worries, "Her mother heart was always hungry, but she had one solace: he slept in her bed. She'd force herself to stay awake at night just to watch the marvel of him breathe."( *Forest of Enchantments* 69). She embodies the silent endurance of many women who are revered in name but ignored in spirit. Kaushalya's story reminds us that not all strength is loud, and not all sacrifices are visible some are carried deep within, with grace that history too often forgets.

The notion of female power is defined through the lives of women who operate both in the public and private spheres, often unacknowledged by the world around them. Two striking examples of such power dynamics are found in the characters of Sunaina, the mother of Sita, and Kaikeyi, the second wife of King Dasharatha. Both women, though vastly different in temperament and background, exercise their authority and agency in subtle yet influential ways.

Sunaina, the queen of Mithila and consort of King Janaka, is depicted as a woman of quiet intellect and profound foresight. Unlike traditional portrayals that cast her as a passive royal figure, Divakaruni presents her as a thoughtful strategist who supports her husband from behind the screens. With a calm disposition and a sharp mind, Sunaina plays a silent yet crucial role in the governance of Mithila. Her influence is most powerfully seen in her nurturing of Sita not just as a daughter, but as a future queen and leader. Sensing the trials that destiny may have in future of Sita, Sunaina

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discreetly arranges for her to receive martial arts training from a tribal woman, all without King Janaka's knowledge. This secret empowerment reflects Sunaina's understanding that true strength in a woman must be cultivated not only through tradition and beauty but through skill, wisdom, and independence.

In contrast, Kaikeyi, the second and most influential wife of Dasharatha, represents a more assertive and visible form of power. Unlike Sunaina's quiet intellect, Kaikeyi's strength is bold and confrontational. A woman of extraordinary courage, she is admired not just for her beauty but for her skills and valor. She once rode beside Dasharatha as his charioteer on the battlefield, a rare and daring feat that earned his deep respect and admiration. Her martial courage, coupled with her keen political sense, enabled her to maintain a strong influence in the court despite Dasharatha having hundreds of other consorts. Divakaruni writes, "To make matters worse Kaikeyi had been trained in the art of warfare. The next time there was a battle, she insisted on driving Ghasarath's chariot. She performed superbly, and Dhasarath won the battle- which further strengthened her hold over him." (*Forest of Enchantments*, 68).It was not her physical allure but her fearless disposition and intellect that won her the king's unwavering regard. Kaikeyi's most defining moment comes when she exercises the boons granted to her by Dasharatha. When the time comes, she demands the exile of Rama and the coronation of her own son Bharata. Though her actions result in immense personal and familial tragedy, including the death of Dasharatha and the sorrow of Rama's departure, her choices also reveal the complexities of female power.

Together, Sunaina and Kaikeyi present two contrasting yet equally compelling portraits of feminine power—one rooted in silent wisdom and nurturing foresight, the other in assertive intelligence and bold action. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* reclaims the voices of mythological women who have long been silenced or misrepresented, particularly those who exhibited extraordinary resistance in the face of injustice, betrayal, and emotional turmoil. Among them, Ahalya and Mandodari stand out as compelling figures whose strength lies not in open defiance, but in their quiet endurance and moral clarity amidst deep personal trials.

Agalya, the wife of sage Gautama, is celebrated in Divakaruni's narrative as a symbol of chastity, dignity, and inner resilience. Her beauty attracts the attention of Indra, the king of the Devas, who becomes obsessed with possessing her. Despite his repeated attempts, Agalya remains steadfast in her devotion and virtue, resisting all advances with unwavering resolve. Frustrated by her loyalty, Indra resorts to deceit using his divine powers to disguise himself as her husband. In this illusion, he violates her, committing a grievous act of deception. When sage Gautama discovers the truth, he reacts with rage and curses Indra to bear a thousand eyes across his body as punishment for his lust. Tragically, Gautama also curses Agalya, turning her into stone, without seeking to understand the violation she endured.

Years pass, and Agalya remains trapped in her stony silence until Rama, during his forest journey, steps upon the stone and releases her from the curse. Restored to her human form, Agalya chooses not to leave Gautama. Instead, she returns to his household, performs all her wifely duties, and upholds her responsibilities but she refuses to speak to him ever again. Her silent resistance becomes her most powerful statement. By withholding speech, she asserts her agency and reclaims her dignity, refusing to forget the unjust blame placed upon her. Agalya's story is a poignant reflection on how women resist through endurance, memory, and quiet defiance even within the constraints of tradition.

Mandodari, the queen of Lanka and wife of Ravana, represents another facet of feminine resistance. Unlike other queens who are bound by royal decorum, Mandodari's moral compass remains firm even in the midst of her husband's growing tyranny. When Ravana abducts Sita and imprisons her in the Ashoka Vana after she refuses to enter the royal palace, Mandodari is deeply disturbed. She sees through the layers of lust and pride in Ravana's actions and repeatedly warns him of the consequences. Her resistance is not dramatic but grounded in reason, compassion, and foresight. Mandodari even begins to suspect that Sita may be the very child she had once abandoned a fear that intensifies her inner turmoil and guilt. She mourns the moral decay of her husband and tries, in vain, to bring him back to the path of righteousness. Her resistance is marked by emotional intelligence and ethical courage. She stands firm in her beliefs, even when her voice is dismissed in a kingdom ruled by arrogance and male pride.

Agalya and Mandodari embody resistance in two unique forms one through silent protest and emotional withdrawal, and the other through moral persuasion and ethical confrontation. Divakaruni's portrayal of these women gives voice to the often-overlooked forms of female resistance in mythology, offering readers a more nuanced understanding of courage not as an act of rebellion alone, but as the quiet endurance of injustice with dignity and grace.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* reclaims the voices of the silenced women of the *Ramayana* and weaves their untold stories into a powerful feminist narrative. Gupta (2020) notes that "Through The Forest of Enchantments, Divakaruni succeeds in highlighting the complexities of gender roles in Indian mythology, offering a nuanced portrayal of Sita that resonates with modern feminist values" (p. 45). Through the portrayal of Urmila's silent sacrifice, Kaushalya's dignified endurance, Sunaina's subtle wisdom, Kaikeyi's complex power, Agalya's moral resilience, and Mandodari's ethical strength, Divakaruni challenges the traditional margins to which these women were confined. Each character becomes a representative of a broader truth: that womanhood in mythology is not defined solely by devotion and subservience but also by agency, intellect, and emotional strength.

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Sharma states, "By giving Sita her own voice, Divakaruni's novel subverts this male-centric gaze, allowing readers to experience the Ramayana through a deeply personal and female-centered perspective." (1091)

In celebrating these unsung heroines, Divakaruni not only reimagines the *Ramayana* but also draws attention to the everyday struggles of modern women. Their pain, courage, silence, and strength resonate across time, reflecting the lived realities of countless women who, like them, remain unheard. Sharma notes, "Retellings also play a crucial role in cultural evolution by adapting traditional narratives to align with contemporary social and political contexts." (1091). Ultimately, *The Forest of Enchantments* becomes more than a retelling it becomes a reclamation. It asserts that the story of the *Ramayana* is not just Rama's; it is also Urmila's, Kaushalya's, Kaikeyi's, Sunaina's, Agalya's, Mandodari's and through them, the story of every woman who has endured, resisted, and risen.

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**11**

# Exploring Moral Values and the Role of Animals in Children's Novels

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**Abstract**

This paper analyses the moral values exposed through animals in the Children's Classic novels of two Indian authors Ruskin Bond and Sudha Murthy. Both the writers have written stories on animals. Children enjoy reading books of these authors and find it interesting and enjoyable Both the authors teach children moral behavior and values of life through their animal stories. Ruskin Bond though, British by Parentage was born and bred in India. He is an Indian writer in English. Sudha Murthy is an Indian born writer in English. Both these authors through their writings have helped children acquire good moral behavior. The books chosen for analyses are Ruskin Bond's "Grandfather's Private Zoo" and Sudha Murthy's "Gopi Diaries Series Coming Home". In grandfather's Private Zoo, Ruskin Bond brings together a collection of tales about his fictional grandfather and various wild animals he takes in as pets. There are funny as well as chaotic incidents happening in the zoo. The story tells us about the human – animal bond, the joy of nature, and the humourous side of childhood experiences and unconventional love. Sudha Murthy's story "Gopi Diaries – Coming Home" is about the arrival of a pet dog and how it adapts to the new surroundings and the bond it has with the members of the family. The pet dog is the narrator of the story. He describes his experience in the family.

*Keywords*: *Myth, kindness, compassion, companionship, mutual, zoo, Gopi, Intelligent.*

**Introduction:**

Indian myths and folklores are abundant in animal stories. Many of the stories teach moral lessons through animals, in these stories. Young children enjoy reading these books and learn moral lessons and try to mend themselves. "The Ramayana" and the

"Panchathantra" stories are the well-known classics in Indian Literature with animal characters.

Animal stories are a great attraction for young children. Children listen to and read these stories with great excitement and enthusiasm. These stories help children to inculcate moral behaviors and teach them to show kindness, brother hood and compassion for others. The moral lessons they learn through these animal characters help them to become good persons in society. Animal characters in children's literature provide a relatable and engaging framework for teaching moral values like honesty, kindness, and perseverance. Children often connect with animal characters more easily than human ones, making it simpler for them, to understand the stories moral messages. Animal characters are more appealing for a young child. Through animal characters children learn both positive and negative behaviours. Abstract concepts such as perseverance, loyalty and team work are learnt by children.

The primary reasons for animals being so beloved in children's literature is their psychological appeal. Animals are seen as non-threatening and comforting figures allowing children to form emotional connections with them easily. The emotional connection helps children to develop empathy and self-awareness and can learn to recognize and process their own feelings through the experiences of the animal characters. The psychological appeal of animal characters in children's literature is multi-faceted. They provide emotional comfort, stimulate imagination and offer a safe space for exploring complex themes, all of which contribute to children's emotional and cognitive development. Beyond their psychological appeal, animal characters in children's literature also offers significant educational value. Animal characters also play a crucial role in introducing ecological awareness and respect for nature. They also contribute to the development of language skills and literacy in young readers. Thus Animal characters in Children's literature offer a wealth of educational benefits, from teaching life lessons and values to promoting ecological awareness and developing language skills. By harnessing the educational potential of animal characters, writers and educators can create stories that not only entertain, but also inform and inspire young readers.

**Authors and selected works.**

Ruskin Bond (Born 19 May 1934) in Kasauli, Himalayas in British India is an Indian author and poet. His writings often centres on life in the hills, particularly in the Himalayas. His stories reflects themes of nature, childhood, love, loss and everyday life. He has written extensively for children crafting stories in lucid and simple prose. He is an Indian writer recognized for his extensive body of work in English and his significant contributions to Indian literature. Though a British of descent, he was born

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in India and has lived in the country for most of his life, making him an Indian author by choice and residency, a point he himself acknowledges.

His writings often focuses on Indian life, particularly the landscapes and people of the Himalayas region. He has won prestigious awards like the sahitya Akademi Award for his contributions to literature in English , set in India. Ruskin Bond's stories explore the human  - animal bond and teach moral lessons like kindness compassion and respect for nature. Some of his classics include "Grandfather's private zoo" " The Boy on the Hills", "My first Animal Stories" and "Animals on the Train". These stories contain fun, adventurous tales with strong themes of courage and life lessons.

Ruskin Bond's "Grandfather's Private Zoo" is a humorous and heartwarming story that celebrates the bond between humans and animals, emphasizing empathy and unconventional love. The story is about the grandfather's private collection of unusual pets. In explores the themes of childhood wonder the beauty of nature, and the acceptance of those who are different. The story creates a charming world where animals are treated with affection and mutual respect, leaving a lasting impression of the joy found in these unique relationships. The story brings out the deep affection and connection between the grandfather, the narrator and the diverse animals in their care. It also highlights the importance of empathy and understanding toward animals, showing them as individuals with feelings and personalities. The story captures the magic and joy of childhood, where a house filled with exotic animals becomes a special world of adventure and learning. The situational humor derived from animals' quirky behaviours to entertain the reader and offer subtle commentary on societal norms. It is also a tribute to the beauty and richness of Nature and wildlife, portraying the grandfather's zoo as a sanctuary for both animals and the narrator.

"The tiger approached the bars
and allowed Grandfather to put
both hands around his neck
Grandfather stroked the tiger's
forehead and tickled his ear,
and, whenever he growled,
smacked him across the
mouth, which was his old
way of keeping his quite".

The story highlights the value of embracing one's unique passions, and the relationships between the grandfather, the boy and the animals which are built on love and mutual companionship. It also encourages the readers to find happiness in the simple pleasures of life, such as companionship of animals and the beauty of the natural would.

Sudha Murthy was born in 1950 at shiggaon in north Karnataka she completed her master's degree in Engineering MTech in computer science and is the chairperson of Infosys Foundation. A prolific writer in English and Kannada, she has written nine novels, four technical books, three travelogues, one collection of short stories three collections of nonfiction pieces and two books for children. Her books have been translated into all the major Indian languages and have sold over three lakh copies around the country. She was the recipient of the R.K. Narayan's Award for Literature and the Padmashri in 2006. Sudha Murthy has written books for children. Her "Gopi Diaries" series and "The Bird with Golden Wings" are highly rated and are suitable for children aged 7-10 years. They promote values like companionship, love and responsibility. "Gopi Diaries – Coming Home" is about a dog named Gopi and his experiences with his human family, teaching valuable lessons on love, loyalty and friendship. Gopi is the honest, kind and emotionally intelligent Golden Retriever. As the narrator he shares his perspective on his human family and his journey of growing up. These stories were written by the author about her own pet dog from the time of his adoption and his adventures and the life he leads with his loving family. Gopi's innocent and observant eyes makes the readers see the warmth, love and simple value of his masters house hold. Gopi the protagonist and narrator is seen telling about his life story, from his point of view. We understand that he is an honest, affectionate and emotionally intelligent dog with a deep love for his family.

A human behavior that can be observed in the animal dog 'Gopi' is that he offers a unique and heartwarming look at the human around him, often finding their deep care for him.

"That's when I realized that
I was hungry.
very very hungry. I thought
of my mothers'  milk and
remembered her – her safe
arms and her love for me. I felt sad.

His loyalty is cherished by the Murthy family and that has inspired the author to write about her pet. Through the story simple values like empathy, discipline, honesty and sharing is reflected in the readers who also try to follow these moral values. The dog being, of a specific breed is cherished by all the members of the family and the pet himself becomes a family member bringing joy and love into their lives. Gopi's honesty and kindness is seen through his character. His thoughts and actions reflect his honest and kind nature. Gopi is emotionally intelligent as he possesses a surprising understanding of human emotions and behaviors', even if he doesn't always grasp the nuances of human thought. Gopi's strong bond with his human family is a central theme, showcasing pure unconditional love between a pet and his people. He is

curious and joyful when he experiences new things and his mischievous nature is shown through his adventures and interactions with the family.

The unique aspect of this series of stories is that, as the narrator and protagonist he tells his own story in a very adorable and authentic manner. He presents the events from a dog's perspective. Sudha Murthy through her series of stories brings out her real life experience with her pet golden retriever whom she considers as a member of her family. Through the story the author teaches children the important values like sharing empathy, and truthfulness in a very gentle manner. The Gopi stories are simple and relatable, making them enjoyable for both children and adults. The stories highlight the universal themes of love and family.

The author Sudha Murthy is Ajji (Grandmother) Dr. Narayana Murthy is Ajja (Grandfather) and their son Rohan who brought Gopi home is his father. Rohan brought home Gopi just before he left for London on a week's programme but his stay prolonged due to the pandemic and Sudha Murti had to take care of the little pup. Through the story the author tells us what it meant for a pup to leave his mother and adjust to a human home. By analyzing the works of the two authors we understand that both Ruskin Bond and Sudha Murthy are authors who can capture young minds by their narrative style and description. Their love for animals is seen in their works and through their works they teach young children morals and human values. The young and adult both equally enjoy reading the books of these authors.

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# Stark Realism in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

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## Abstract

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, set against the backdrop of the 1947 Partition of India, offers a profound exploration of human nature, communal tensions, and the stark realities of violence and trauma that accompany societal upheaval. This paper examines the themes of stark realism in Singh's narrative, analyzing how the author presents the grim realities of human existence in times of conflict, the fragility of social bonds, and the moral dilemmas faced by individuals amidst societal breakdown.

**Keywords: -** Stark Realism, communal tension, Survival Instinct, Displacement

*Freedom is for the educated people who fought for it. We were slaves of the English, now we will be slaves of the educated Indians—or the Pakistanis.*

## Introduction:

Khushwant Singh's literary contributions often reflect a deep understanding of the socio-political fabric of India, with Train to Pakistan standing out as one of his seminal works. Written in 1956, the novel is a poignant portrayal of the violence that erupted during the Partition, focusing on the fictional village of Mano Majra, where Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities lived harmoniously until external forces shattered their peace. This paper argues that Singh employs stark realism to illuminate the harsh realities of human existence, challenging idealistic notions of community and humanity in the face of adversity.

## The Setting of Mano Majra: A Microcosm of Society

Mano Majra serves as a microcosm reflecting the broader societal implications of Partition. Initially depicted as a place of communal harmony, the village becomes a battleground for the ideological and communal fractures that the Partition instigates. Singh's realistic representation of the village life and the abrupt transformation it undergoes underscores the fragility of social bonds. By presenting the daily lives of the villagers, Singh allows readers to witness the creeping dread and tension that builds as the political landscape shifts, ultimately resulting in violence and chaos.

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## Human Nature Under Duress

A central theme of stark realism in Train to Pakistan is the exploration of human nature when faced with dire circumstances. The characters in the novel, including the Sikh protagonist, Juggut Singh, and the Muslim character, Iqbal Singh, embody the complexities of moral choice in the context of impending disaster. Singh portrays their struggles as they navigate loyalty, love, and survival. Juggut's transformation from a local outlaw to a tragic hero reflects the inherent tension between individual agency and societal pressures. The novel does not shy away from depicting betrayal, fear, and brutality, showcasing how ordinary individuals can commit unspeakable acts in the face of communal hysteria.

## Violence and Trauma

Symbolically, the train in Train to Pakistan represents the displacement and violence of the Partition, serving as a corollary to the journey of the Indian subcontinent into chaos. The train's arrival signals not just the physical movement of people, but also the psychological trauma inflicted upon individuals and communities. Singh vividly describes the horrors experienced by the victims of violence, including mass killings and the sexual assault of women, to evoke a visceral reaction in readers. This portrayal acts as a stark reminder of the brutal realities of Partition, challenging the reader to confront the often-ignored scars left on the collective psyche.

## The Deterioration of Moral Values

As societal norms collapse, the text showcases how communal identities supersede individual moralities. The boundaries between right and wrong blur as characters grapple with their beliefs and fears. Singh's narrative compels readers to reflect on the ease with which humanity can descend into barbarism. The contrasting actions of Juggut and Iqbal—one choosing love and sacrifice, the other succumbing to the pressures of his community—underscore the varied responses to the trauma created by Partition. Through these characters, Singh highlights the loss of ethical frameworks that once governed human interactions.

## Conclusion: The Legacy of Stark Realism

In conclusion, Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan serves as a compelling testament to the stark realities of human existence during tumultuous periods of history. By weaving together themes of violence, betrayal, and moral ambiguity, Singh challenges readers to confront the complexities of human nature and the profound impacts of collective trauma. The novel remains relevant today, providing critical reflections on communal identity, the consequences of violence, and the enduring scars left by Partition. Singh's stark realism not only memorializes the past but also urges us to remain vigilant against the forces that threaten to dehumanize society.

Partition of India (1947) – Punjab Border Map

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# Impact of Modernization on Teaching

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**Abstract**

Modernization is a process of change in all aspects of society. It gives the development in our social, economic, and political systems. It also brings out a change in our thoughts, behaviour, and perception. Modernization has happened in various fields like communication, science & technology, literature, Education, arts etc. Modernization yields a transformed society so that the whole world becomes a global village. In this article, we discuss the changes that have occurred in teaching methodologies in the field of education, particularly, the learning difficulties faced by students, in acquiring basic knowledge in Mathematics and how the latest technologies help to overcome this problem.

*Keywords: Maths Teaching, Struggles, Visual Aids. Technologies-apps, ChatGPT, AI*

## 1. Introduction

Mathematics is often considered as the most intimidating subject among all other subjects. Creating an interest in the subject among the students is always a difficult task for teachers. It's a more challenging task if the student is not interested in Math. Math as a subject is applied in some form or other in our day-to-day life. Often, certain strategies or activities work as a charm when it comes to stimulating interest in a subject like Math. Conventional methods might not always work. They may sound dull, and the child might lose interest or focus in the subject.

For school-level mathematics, Practical Activities like manipulations, simple games, and puzzles make learning more concrete. In particular, building blocks may be helpful in understanding geometry, card games for probability, and measuring units for surface and volume concepts. These exercises make abstract ideas like

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differentiation, Integration, and two-dimensional and three-dimensional etc., make the students to understand the concept easily.

**Struggles**

Struggling students face challenges due to different learning styles, learning disabilities, and gaps in foundational knowledge. Mathematical language can be confusing, making it difficult to solve word problems and understand instructions.

Math anxiety can further affect engagement and progress. Without targeted help, these difficulties persist across grade levels. Identifying the root causes allows math teachers to apply intervention strategies that boost confidence and improve math skills effectively.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### A. Technological Methodology

We can use latest technology to make learning more engaging and participatory. Use instructional applications, online simulations, and graphing tools to teach mathematical concepts. Virtual platforms and gamified learning experiences can make the subject more attractive and accessible to students who are comfortable.

**Intervention Strategies**

Effective math intervention strategies focus on individualized support to help struggling students. A strong math program includes explicit instruction, regular assessments, and opportunities to build fluency through practice.

### i) Use of Visual Aids

Visual Aids are powerful tools that help struggling students better understand complex math concepts. Visual aids like number lines and graphic organizers simplify complex concepts, while real-world scenarios and educational apps make learning engaging. Tailored interventions help students overcome challenges and achieve long-term success by addressing their unique learning needs.

In addition, using graphic organizers can help guide students through multi-step math problems and build their problem-solving strategies. By incorporating visual aids into the math classroom, teachers can create an engaging learning environment that supports different learning styles and helps students build fluency in key concepts.

### ii) Apps

Educational apps can be a game-changer for struggling students, offering interactive and engaging ways to practice math concepts at their own pace. These apps provide targeted help by reinforcing key skills through visual representations, step-by-step problem solving, and adaptive learning paths.

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One highly effective tool is Magrid, an educational app designed to support students learning math through visual and interactive exercises. Magrid helps struggling math students build fluency and confidence without relying on traditional text-heavy approaches, making it ideal for students with different learning styles or learning disabilities.

By incorporating educational apps like Magrid into the math classroom, teachers can provide additional opportunities for practice, regular assessments, and personalized feedback. This digital approach complements traditional teaching methods, helping students gain a deep understanding of mathematical concepts in a fun and supportive way.

### B. Follow Different Methodology

Every student learns differently, which is why differentiated instruction is essential for helping struggling students succeed in math. Some students thrive with visual aids, while others benefit from hands-on activities or proper explanations. By well-planned methodologies, to different learning styles, math teachers can provide targeted help that meets each student's needs.

Math intervention strategies such as small groups, peer tutoring, and individualized learning plans allow teachers to support students' learning at their own pace. Educational apps and real-world scenarios also offer flexible ways to engage students with math concepts in ways that resonate with them.

Differentiated instructional methodologies not only improve student learning but also help a thorough understanding of mathematical ideas. Providing a variety of instructional approaches ensures that every student has the opportunity to develop skills and gain confidence in their math abilities.

### C. How Technology Has Evolved in Math Education

There was a time when learning math meant pencil, paper, and a lot of chalk. Today, that equation includes dynamic software, mobile apps, and real-time collaboration platforms. Over the years, technology has evolved from a classroom supplement to a strategic cornerstone of math education.

The tools got smarter, more intuitive, and better aligned with pedagogical goals. Technology in math education now means:

- Receiving instant feedback and adaptive assessments.

- Engaging in problem-solving through interactive scenarios.

- Collaborating beyond borders with cloud-based platforms.

- Visualizing abstract concepts through simulations.

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- Helping students to gain a clear understanding

Digital tools for math teaching are not only enhancing understanding but also making math more approachable, flexible, and inclusive.

### D. Key Technologies Enhancing Math Learning

From immersive 3D platforms to algebra systems that respond in real time, the toolbox for math educators is broader and more innovative than ever. Let's look at some of the most impactful digital learning tools reshaping classrooms today.

### i) AI and Adaptive Learning

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping math education by enabling more personalized and adaptive learning experiences. By analyzing individual performance, adaptive systems deliver tailored exercises, offer real-time hints, and adjust difficulty levels on the fly. Many platforms now include AI-driven features to support this responsiveness.

A clear example is Math Type Handwriting, a tool that uses artificial intelligence to convert handwritten expressions into clean, digital equations ready to be used in your documents. These innovations represent a step forward in simplifying the transition from analog input to digital output and supporting more intuitive interaction with mathematical content in digital learning environments.

### ii) Use of ChatGPT in Math Learning

Using ChatGPT in math learning can be a helpful tool to streamline preparation, concept clarification, gather resources, and help learning new strategies. It gives the explanations in simple form even for the most complicated topics. It also provides many ideas, examples from real life situations and areas which are similar to these concepts.

It also provides online resources and suggests relevant textbooks, videos, interactive methods or other materials for learning.

ChatGPT guides in creating assessment tools, such as quizzes or tests that accurately assess student's understanding of the math material. ChatGPT generates math problems for different situations for practice. Based on the difficulty level, type of problems and the number of questions needed, we can get more problems for practice.

Not only ChatGPT generate questions it gives a clear and concise explanations for all the mathematical concepts. It can provide alternative explanations or examples to different learning styles.

### iii) MathGPT

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Apart from ChatGPT, an important mathematical tool called MathGPT has evolved. MathGPT is an AI-powered math problem solver and tutor designed to help students understand and solve math problems step-by-step. It provides clear, concise, and easy-to-understand explanations for a wide range of math topics, from basic arithmetic to advanced calculus. MathGPT can:

- Solve math problems accurately.

- Explain the reasoning behind each step.

- Help students learn problem-solving methods.

- Create practice questions, video explanations, flashcards, and study guides.

In short, MathGPT is like a smart math tutor available anytime to assist with learning and homework.

Apart from MathGPT, there are many AI-based mathematical tools that exist to learn maths easy and quick. Few of them are:

- Studyx.ai

- Photomath

- Desmos

- GeoGebra

- Maplesoft

### 3. Result And Discussion

### i) Interactive and Applications Oriented

We can Explore more interactive math demonstrations or simulations available online and incorporate them. ChatGPT can help find suitable resources and even suggest how to integrate them effectively.

ChatGPT also provides real-world applications of the math concept. This can make the lesson more engaging and help students understand the practical relevance of what they're learning.

### ii) Time Management:

We can request tips on how to allocate time effectively during the lesson to cover all essential topics and allow for student engagement and questions.

### 4. Conclusion

Helping struggling students succeed in math requires patience, the right strategies, and ongoing support. Math teachers play a crucial role in guiding students through

their unique challenges by using targeted math interventions and encouraging a growth mindset.

By incorporating visual aids, differentiated instruction, and problem-solving strategies, educators can create a supportive math classroom that helps students develop skills, build confidence, and achieve lasting success in math.

Technology is no longer a guest in the classroom: it's become a core part of the educational experience. And in the world of mathematics, it's proving to be a powerful ally. From interactive whiteboards to adaptive AI systems, technology in math education is reshaping the way students learn and how teachers teach.

Fostering an interest in learning mathematics isn't an overnight task; it requires a multifaceted and consistent approach. By cultivating a positive attitude, leveraging technology, employing hands-on activities, encouraging collaboration, integrating math with other subjects, using storytelling, providing individualized learning opportunities, promoting curiosity, recognizing progress, and modelling enthusiasm, we can transform the way students perceive and engage with mathematics. The goal is to create an environment where math is seen not just as a subject, but as a fascinating, useful, and enjoyable part of life.

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**14**

# A Study on the Effectiveness of Advertising and The Power of Persuasive English

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**Abstract**

In the digital world, the increase of data analytics and advanced targeting technologies has transformed the advertising background; making personalized advertising a key strategy for attractive brand visibility and engaging target consumers. The practical evidence surrounding the effectiveness of personalized advertising is fragmented and mixed. While some studies indicate that personalized ads enhance consumer attitudes and increase brand engagement.

*Keywords: Advertising, Persuasive English, Target consumers.*

**Introduction:**

Today, advertising is in all places, on television, on social media, on posters, and in a different place. It doesn't just express us about products; it tries to make us need them. One of the main tools that advertisers use is persuasive language, which is a way of using words to encourage people to accept as true, feel, or act. Whether it's an attractive slogan or a short story, the right words can capture attention, shape, and stimulate action. By observing the use of language in advertising, we can better raise the value of its inspiration on our everyday choosing and feelings.

Persuasive language is the knowing use of language to inspire people's thoughts, feelings, and actions. Advertisers carefully choose words that can grab attention, induce deep emotions, and make their communication impressive. For example, a short slogan like "A diamond is forever" or "Because You're Worth It" can have a thoughtful impression in just a few words.

**Review of Literature**:

Al Khasawneh, M., & Shuhaiber, A. (2013). A comprehensive model of factors influencing consumer attitude towards and acceptance of SMS advertising: An empirical investigation in Jordan. *International Journal of Sales & Marketing Management Research and Development*, 3(2), 1–22.

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Breves, (2021). the mechanism responsible for the emergence of spatial presence, the explanations for the persuasive effects differ considerably in previous empirical studies, and even theory-focused articles disagree about the underlying psychological mechanisms.

**Objectives of the Study:**

1. To analyze the role of effective Advertising and The Power of Persuasive English

2. To find out the psychological impact of persuasive English on target customers.

3. To evaluate social concerns related to the use of persuasive English in advertisements.

**Research methodology:**

**Research Design:**

Descriptive and analytical research design will be used.

**Sampling design:**

A convenience sampling technique was used. Data was collected through a Google Form that was sent to participants via specify channels, e.g., email and social media.

**Sample Size:**

A total usable sample of 60 respondents was collected.

**Data Collection:**

**Primary Data:**

Questionnaires distributed to online business professionals, entrepreneurs and customers.

**Secondary Data:**

Review of academic journals, research articles and reports on language in international

business. Analysis of online business platforms (Amazon, Flipkart, etc.,) and their language policies.

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**Table 1**

| | 1. Advertising influences my purchasing decisions | 2. The persuasive English made the ad more appealing. | 3. The use of catchy slogans and taglines makes advertisements more memorable. | 4. I consider advertisements a reliable source of product information. | 5. Clear and simple English in ads improves my understanding of the product. | 6. Emotional and motivational words in ads affect my decision-making. | 7. Discounts and promotional offers in ads strongly impact my buying behavior. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | 3.97 | 3.67 | 4.27 | 4.13 | 4.33 | 3.83 | 4.20 |
| Median | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| Mode | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Std. Deviation | .920 | .914 | .634 | .769 | .601 | .642 | .840 |
| Range | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

**Interpretation:**

The Above table Indicates that the Mean Values of clear and Simple English in ads improves my understanding of the products are most commonly agreed with (4.33). they used of catchy slogans and taglines makes advertisements more memorable are commonly agreed with (4.27) and Median values of the score for all seven-advertising indicated as same, that most respondents agreed with the statements, and the mode values of discounts and promotional offers in ads strongly impact my buying

behaviours. has a higher number of Respondents with strongly agreed (5). Reminding all contains an equal despondence of (4), then a Standard Deviations values Indicates that responses were most consistent for clear and Simple English in ads Improves my understanding is (0.60).

| T - Test | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Questionnaire | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| 1. Advertising influences my purchasing decisions | Male | 36 | 3.83 | .910 | .152 |
| | Female | 24 | 4.17 | .917 | .187 |
| 2. The persuasive English made the ad more appealing. | Male | 36 | 3.83 | .845 | .141 |
| | Female | 24 | 3.42 | .974 | .199 |
| 3. The use of catchy slogans and taglines makes advertisements more memorable. | Male | 36 | 4.17 | .609 | .102 |
| | Female | 24 | 4.42 | .654 | .133 |
| 4. I consider advertisements a reliable source of product information. | Male | 36 | 4.17 | .507 | .085 |
| | Female | 24 | 4.08 | 1.060 | .216 |
| 5. Clear and simple English in ads improves my understanding of the product. | Male | 36 | 4.28 | .659 | .110 |
| | Female | 24 | 4.42 | .504 | .103 |
| 6. Emotional and motivational words in ads affect my decision-making. | Male | 36 | 3.78 | .540 | .090 |
| | Female | 24 | 3.92 | .776 | .158 |
| 7. Discounts and promotional offers in ads strongly impact my buying behavior. | Male | 36 | 4.22 | .722 | .120 |
| | Female | 24 | 4.17 | 1.007 | .206 |

**Interpretation:**

The above tables shows that Mean values of an advertising gender, that an advertising influences my purchases decisions are most liked agreed by a female (4.17), the persuasive English made the ads more appealing are most likely agreed by a male (3.83). Emotional and motivational words in ads affect my decision making are most likely agreed by an females (3.92), Discounts and Promotional offers in ads strongly impact my buying behaviour are disagreed by an male (4.17) and then an standard deviation contains on the use of catchy slogans and taglines make advertisements more memorable has females are more consistent in agreeing (0.507), Clear and Simple English improves understanding has an females are agreeing the most (0.507),

Emotional / Motivational words affecting decision are both of them shows an almost equal interact.

**Findings:**

➢ The use of persuasive English alone was found to be less effective compared to other advertising elements, indicating that language style by itself may not strongly impact appeal.

➢ Catchy slogans and taglines were rated highly, showing that memorable phrases make advertisements more effective and engaging for consumers.

➢ Consumers generally consider advertisements as a reliable source of product information, reflecting a level of trust in advertising content.

➢ Clear and simple English in advertisements received the highest agreement, highlighting that clarity significantly improves consumers understanding of products.

➢ Emotional and motivational words moderately influence decision-making, suggesting that emotional appeal has some impact but is not the strongest driver.

➢ Discounts and promotional offers were strongly recognized as an influential factor, with many respondents rating that such offers significantly impact their buying behaviour.

**Suggestions:**

➢ A Study of an effectiveness of advertising can making the combination of simplicity, emotional appeal and promotional offers.

➢ Also, a simple and clear English in advertising can make an each and every customer to understanding too quick.

➢ Persuasive English should also use to highlight a project strategically.

➢ Some kinds of persuasive English in advertisement can also create a deeper psychological impact on the pa about product on consumers.

**Conclusion:**

The study concludes that target customers play an important psychological role in English. It not only attracts attention and creates positive emotions, but also shapes the perception of the advertisement, strengthens purchase intention and improves message recall. However, excessive or exaggerated words can cause doubt and low trust.

Therefore, it is necessary to strike a balance between template persuasion and truth channels in persuasive advertising. When used ethically and valuably, English

becomes a powerful tool that can influence customer sentiment and trigger influential marketing effects.

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**15**

# Intersection of Morality and Ethos in Sudha Murthy's *Dollar Bahu*, *Mahashweta*, and *Three Thousand Stitches*

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**Abstract**

Murthy writes with deliberate simplicity, grounding her narratives in the moral universe of everyday Indians. Her works Dollar Bahu, Mahashweta, and Three Thousand Stitches reflect deep concern with honesty, compassion, duty, familial ties, and resilience in the face of social prejudice. They embody ethos not as a rigid tradition, but as a living moral compass shaped by experience, struggle, and reform. The paper investigates how morality and ethos intersect in Murthy's novels, analyzing characters who embody or violate values. Moreover, Sudha Murthy demonstrates and affirms the enduring relevance of the Indian ethos and reinterprets morality in ways that resonate with modern readers. Ultimately, her narratives serve as cultural bridges, helping Indian society reconcile tradition with modernity without abandoning its moral core.

*Keywords: Morality, Ethos, Social Prejudice.*

Indian English literature is profoundly shaped by themes of identity, cultural continuity, and moral choices. Influential writers like R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao delve into ethical dilemmas within traditional societies, and Sudha Murthy stands out, deliberately writing for everyday readers rather than catering to elite literary circles. Her narratives are defined by clarity, brevity, and a universal approach to moral experiences, making her work accessible and impactful. This paper delves into the study of Murthy's literary corpus through the lens of morality and ethos. Using three representative works, the paper examines how Murthy constructs characters who embody or deviate from ethical norms, how she critiques social prejudices, and how she translates Indian cultural values.

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In Dollar Bahu, Murthy presents two daughters-in-law: the "Dollar Bahu" (Jamuna), who lives abroad and sends wealth, and Vinuta, who embodies simplicity, familial duty, and compassion. The mother-in-law, Gouramma, initially esteems Jamuna because of what "dollar" signifies, neglecting Vinuta's emotional investments. The moral conflict revolves around how wealth can distort familial affection and respect. And the novel dramatizes the tension between globalization and Indian values. Gouramma is dazzled by her dollar-earning daughter-in-law, Jamuna, and initially favors her, equating material success with virtue. But she feels the sense of alienation in America forces her to realize that emotional warmth and familial bonds matter more than luxury. "You can earn a million dollars, but you can't buy trust or love." (Murthy pg. 30)

Murthy critiques consumerist morality while reaffirming ethos rooted in family, loyalty, and human connection. In classical Indian terms, wealth must always be balanced by righteousness. Mahashweta powerfully explores the impact of leukoderma, a condition that carries a heavy stigma in Indian society. The protagonist, Anupama, endures abandonment and rejection, suffering not only because of her skin condition but also as a consequence of deeply entrenched social prejudices.

Murthy emphasizes that what truly matters is character, not appearance. Compassion becomes a moral necessity. The Indian ethos includes empathy, and respect for human dignity. These are foregrounded as virtues more important than superficial standards of beauty. "A home must be affection and love so where was the place she could call home?" (Murthy 50).

Anupama, a woman living with vitiligo, finds herself ostracized not only by her community but also abandoned by her husband, who cannot accept her condition. The stigma associated with her appearance subjects her to relentless humiliation and judgment from society. Despite these overwhelming challenges, Anupama refuses to embrace victimhood. Instead, she channels her energy into pursuing higher education, determined to gain knowledge and skills that will lead her to professional independence and a brighter future. Her story is one of resilience and strength, demonstrating her unwavering spirit in the face of adversity. "It was not the white patches on her skin, but the blackness in people's hearts that hurt her most" (Murthy 87). Murthy foregrounds the moral culpability of society in a single, striking sentence: "It was not the white patches on her skin, but the blackness in people's hearts that hurt her most."

The contrast between the visible, medical "white patches" and the invisible, ethical "blackness" in others' hearts reverses conventional color symbolism and forces the reader to see who the real villains are. Murthy locates the deeper wound in social

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attitudes — gossip, rejection, and cruelty and thus transforms the personal tragedy into a social indictment.

Murthy powerfully illustrates Anupama's remarkable resilience, maintaining her dignity even in the face of humiliation. This moral strength is deeply rooted in Indian culture, where qualities like patience, forbearance, and inner fortitude are highly esteemed.

"Three Thousand Stitches" is more than just an autobiography; it serves as a powerful exploration of ethical principles. The book delves into the intersection of universal values such as compassion, honesty, and courage with distinctly Indian ideals like service, tolerance, women's empowerment, and simplicity. Rather than simply advocating for morality, Murthy vividly brings these principles to life through her personal experiences, expertly weaving together ethical concepts and cultural practices in a way that resonates deeply with readers. "One of life's goals is the ability to understand human nature and raise a fellow being from rock bottom to becoming a useful member of society. We all lose a few battles … but we can win the war. There's always hope." Murthy pictures clearly the major purpose in life is to truly understand people and help someone who has fallen to the very bottom recover dignity and a place in society. Everyone suffers but with perseverance and support we can still win in the long run because hope always exists.

The bedspread of three thousand stitches is used as metaphor: many small acts of kindness together restore dignity. In the lines above, Murthy compellingly illustrates that true greatness is not rooted in the accumulation of material wealth but in the deliberate alignment of our daily choices with profound ethical values. Her philosophy emphasizes that morality and ethics are not just lofty ideals confined to philosophical discourse; they serve as practical guides that enable individuals to lead lives characterized by balance, compassion, and a sense of social responsibility. Murthy posits that the genuine intersection of morality and ethics lies in the transformative act of translating these values into concrete actions. This process not only cultivates personal integrity but also fosters significant social change, allowing individuals to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader world.

Sudha Murthy effectively captures the themes of morality and ethics in her novels, creating narratives that are both socially instructive and emotionally impactful. In "Dollar Bahu," she critiques the allure of material wealth, illustrating how moral blindness can erode familial bonds. In "Mahashweta," she highlights the cruelty of social stigma, revealing that the lack of compassion can inflict deeper wounds than physical illness. "Three Thousand Stitches" expands this perspective to real-life experiences, demonstrating that ethics are not merely abstract concepts but are embodied in acts of empathy, resilience, and social reform.

Sudha Murthy explores the intersection of personal ethics and societal norms through her characters. The resolution of their struggles emphasizes the themes of hope, dignity, and transformation. By intertwining morality with ethics, Murthy crafts narratives that do more than just tell stories; they foster a culture of introspection, responsibility, and compassion.

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**16**

# Initiatives and Policy Directions of Government of India for Digital Literature in Higher Education: A Comprehensive Analysis

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**Abstract**

This paper analyses the trajectory of government initiatives and policy directions for digital literature in Indian Higher Education, with a focus on their alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The study establishes a dual-faceted definition of "digital literature"—encompassing both the digitization of traditional texts and the creation of new, interactive, and algorithmic literary forms. While the Indian government has launched a robust suite of initiatives, including SWAYAM, PM eVidya, and the National Digital Library of India (NDLI), the report finds that their impact is significantly curtailed by systemic challenges. Primary among these are the persistent digital divide, characterized by infrastructure gaps in connectivity and device access, and a lack of pedagogical readiness among faculty. Employing a mixed-methods analytical approach—synthesizing data from government reports, academic studies, and policy documents—this report outlines a roadmap for a more cohesive, equitable, and sustainable digital education ecosystem. The findings suggest that bridging the gap between policy vision and on-ground reality requires not only infrastructural investment but also a concerted effort to enhance digital literacy and foster a culture of innovative pedagogy.

### Introduction

*Background: The Digital Turn in Indian Higher Education*

The Indian higher education system is among the largest in the world, encompassing more than 40,000 institutions and over 1,000 universities ("Indian Higher Education System"). This immense scale presents both a massive opportunity and a significant challenge for digital transformation. While educational institutions have been steadily adopting digital methods for years, the COVID-19 pandemic served as a major, albeit reactive, catalyst for accelerated change ("Indian Higher Education System," "Impact of COVID-19," "SWAYAM PRABHA DTH"). The sudden and widespread shift to online learning was an essential measure to ensure educational continuity, and it highlighted the indispensable role of digital platforms in a crisis ("Impact of COVID-19"). This rapid migration, though ad-hoc, laid the groundwork for a more deliberate and systematic policy framework aimed at integrating technology into the very fabric of the Indian educational landscape ("Impact of COVID-19").

*Defining the Research Problem*

Despite the clear momentum towards digitalization, a critical analysis of the current state of affairs reveals a significant gap between the ambitious vision outlined in government policies and the complex, fragmented reality of their implementation ("Implementation Gap"). A simple enumeration of initiatives is insufficient to assess their true impact. A comprehensive understanding requires a critical examination of their efficacy and the on-ground issues that impede success. This report seeks to systematically analyze this landscape, moving beyond a "boom or bane" dichotomy ("Boom or Bane") to provide a nuanced understanding of how policy, technology, and human factors interact. The goal is to evaluate the extent to which government efforts have successfully fostered a robust ecosystem for digital literature, particularly within the humanities in higher education.

*Scope and Objectives*

This paper is structured to provide a comprehensive assessment of the digital literature landscape in Indian higher education. The research is guided by four primary objectives:

1. To establish a clear conceptual framework for "digital literature" by addressing the varying definitions presented in current academic discourse and policy documents.

2. To analyze key government initiatives and policy frameworks, such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, to determine their specific relevance and provisions for the promotion of digital literature.

3. To identify and critically examine the systemic on-ground challenges, including the digital divide, infrastructural deficits, and pedagogical hurdles, that hinder the successful implementation of these initiatives.

4. To propose actionable recommendations for policymakers and academic institutions to foster a more equitable, effective, and sustainable digital literature ecosystem in India.

**Literature Review**

*Defining "Digital Literature": From Digitization to Algorithmic Art*

The term "digital literature" is not a singular, universally accepted concept. The provided research material presents a clear duality in its definition that must be reconciled to establish a consistent framework for this analysis. A broad perspective defines digital literature as the preservation and distribution of traditional literary works in digital formats ("Digital Literature Definitions"). In this context, it encompasses "computerize literary text[s]" available on devices like laptops, tablets, and mobile phones ("Digital Literature Definitions"). This includes e-books, online literary blogs, PDF articles, and even film adaptations of literary texts, such as the adaptation of *Hamlet* as *Haider*, or animated versions of classics like *Gulliver's Travels* ("Digital Literature Definitions"). This view positions digitalization primarily as a means of preservation and a resource for researchers, making the task of writing and researching easier in the age of the internet ("Digital Literature Definitions"). The National Digital Library of India (NDLI) and e-Pathshala align with this definition, focusing on creating vast digital repositories to enhance access to existing knowledge ("Digital Education Statistics," "NDLI Repository").

A more specific and specialized definition, adopted by the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO), focuses on works where digital capabilities are used aesthetically and are integral to the work's literary essence ("Electronic Literature Organization"). These works cannot be easily printed because their crucial elements—such as interactivity, multimodality, or algorithmic text generation—are lost in a physical format ("Electronic Literature Organization"). This genre includes hypertext fiction, kinetic poetry, and computer-generated narratives ("Electronic Literature Organization"). These works often challenge traditional, linear narratives, allowing the reader to co-create the story by choosing paths through interconnected text fragments, or *lexias* ("Electronic Literature Organization"). This perspective posits that the literary aesthetics emerge directly from computation, and the work can only exist in the digital space for which it was developed ("Electronic Literature Organization").

The current landscape of government initiatives in India overwhelmingly aligns with the broader, first definition, prioritizing access to digitized content for a large population. This paper will operate with this as a primary working definition, while

also acknowledging the second, more avant-garde definition as a potential future direction for policy to truly harness the creative and innovative potential of digital technologies in the humanities.

*The Indian Digital Education Policy Landscape*

The foundational policy document guiding India's digital education strategy is the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 ("NEP 2020 Vision," "Indian Higher Education System," "NEP 2020 Structure"). The NEP 2020 envisions a comprehensive revision of the education structure to align with the goals of the 21st century ("NEP 2020 Vision"). It emphasizes a fundamental shift towards a learner-centric, technology-integrated, and outcome-based curriculum ("Indian Higher Education System," "NEP 2020 Structure"). Key provisions include the establishment of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to supervise digital content, infrastructure, and capacity-building, as well as the advocacy for blended learning models and the integration of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) like SWAYAM into mainstream education ("Indian Higher Education System," "NEP 2020 Vision").

**Government Initiatives for Digital Learning in Higher Education**

*Comprehensive Analysis of Key Platforms*

The government of India has launched a multi-pronged strategy to promote digital education, with several key initiatives specifically targeting the higher education sector.

- **PM eVidya:** Launched in May 2020, this program is a cornerstone of the government's digital education efforts, designed to unify all-digital, online, and on-air resources to ensure equitable access ("PM eVidya," "E-Abhyas"). While its primary focus is on providing educational content to over 25 crore school-going children, it has significant components for higher education ("PM eVidya"). PM eVidya includes online courses from the top 100 universities and platforms like IITPAL and E-Abhyas, which offer online coaching for competitive exams ("Digital Education Statistics," "E-Abhyas," "Equity in PM eVidya").

- **SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds):** A flagship MOOC platform initiated in 2017, SWAYAM is designed to achieve the three cardinal principles of education policy: access, equity, and quality ("Digital Education Statistics," "SWAYAM Principles"). It hosts a wide range of courses for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students ("Digital Education Statistics"). The platform offers flexible, low-cost learning opportunities and has become a vital tool for teacher skilling through programs like the Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) ("SWAYAM Principles," "ARPIT Programme"). As of early 2024, the platform had made over 11,772 courses available, attracting

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more than 1.21 million unique users and enabling over 295 universities to approve courses for credit transfer ("Digital Education Statistics").

- **SWAYAM PRABHA:** To address the digital divide and reach learners in areas with limited internet connectivity, SWAYAM PRABHA provides a group of 40 Direct-to-Home (DTH) channels that broadcast educational programs 24/7 ("SWAYAM PRABHA DTH," "Digital Education Statistics"). These channels serve as a critical backup and a primary source of educational content for a large portion of the population.

- **NDLI (National Digital Library of India):** NDLI is a comprehensive online repository of academic resources, which aims to alleviate dependence on physical textbooks and provide a vast collection of materials for research ("Digital Education Statistics," "NDLI Repository"). It is a project under the Ministry of Education's National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) and provides free access to metadata and full-text indexes from various national and international digital libraries ("NMEICT").

- **Table 1: Key Government Initiatives for Digital Education in India**

| Initiative | Launch Year | Parent Ministry /Agency | Target Audience | Key Features | Relevant Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PM eVidya** | May 2020 ("PM eVidya") | Ministry of Education ("Ministry of Education (PM eVidya)") | School, Higher Education ("PM eVidya," "Equity in PM eVidya") | Unifies online, on-air resources; includes online courses from 100 universities | Benefited over 25 crore school students ("PM eVidya") |
| **SWAYAM** | 2017 ("Digital Education Statistics") | Ministry of Education ("Ministry of | UG, PG, Faculty ("Digital Education Statistics," | MOOCs, credit transfer, teacher training | Over 11,772 courses; 1.21 million |

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| | | Education (SWAYAM)," "SWAYAM Credit Transfer") | "ARPIT Programme") | (ARPIT) ("Digital Education Statistics," "SWAYAM Credit Transfer") | unique users ("Digital Education Statistics") |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SWAYAM PRABHA** | 2017 ("Digital Education Statistics") | Ministry of Education ("SWAYAM PRABHA DTH," "Digital Education Statistics") | All learners with DTH access ("Digital Education Statistics") | 40 DTH channels broadcasting educational content 24/7 ("Digital Education Statistics") | Over 2.7 lakh registered users; 64.9 million views ("Digital Education Statistics") |
| **NDLI** | 2016 ("NDLI Repository," "NMEICT") | Ministry of Education ("NMEICT") | Researchers, students, general public ("NDLI Repository") | Online repository of academic resources; free access ("NMEICT") | Aims to alleviate dependence on physical textbooks ("NDLI Repository") |

### The Role of Technology in Modern Pedagogy

Government initiatives are pushing a fundamental shift in pedagogical approach from a traditional "knowledge-transfer model to a collaborative, active, self-directed, and engaging model" ("Boom or Bane"). This transformation is being enabled by the integration of new technologies that make learning more interactive, personalized, and engaging ("Impact of COVID-19," "Democratizing Access"). Educational platforms are adopting gamified learning and adaptive content to enhance student engagement ("Impact of COVID-19," "Next-Gen Technologies"). The inclusion of cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality

(VR) is beginning to provide students with immersive and experiential learning opportunities ("Indian Higher Education System," "Impact of COVID-19," "Next-Gen Technologies," "AI and VR"). The true transformative power of these initiatives extends beyond mere content delivery. The initial goal of platforms like SWAYAM and e-Pathshala was to democratize access to information and resources ("SWAYAM PRABHA DTH," "Democratizing Access").

## On-Ground Challenges and the Persistent Digital Divide

### *Infrastructure and Connectivity Gaps*

The most significant and widely cited barrier to the successful implementation of government initiatives is inadequate digital infrastructure ("Indian Higher Education System," "Infrastructure Challenges," "Rural Connectivity," "Affordability," "Device Disparity," "Digital Divide Survey," "Offline Solutions"). A national survey on the digital divide found that while 70% of higher education institutions had access to high-speed internet, a notable 40% still lacked online learning tools, indicating a substantial gap between basic access and functional use ("Digital Divide Survey").

Specific issues plaguing the system include:

- **Internet Connectivity:** Only 53.9% of schools have internet access, and in rural areas, this figure plummets to just 29% ("Rural Connectivity," "Offline Solutions"). Furthermore, a study found that 6.6% of institutions had no internet connectivity at all ("Indian Higher Education System"). The overall internet speed in India also ranks low, at 105th in the world ("Infrastructure Challenges").

- **Device Availability:** There is a significant lack of functional computers, with only 57.2% of schools having them ("Offline Solutions"). The digital divide is evident in the disparities in device access between urban and rural areas ("Rural Connectivity," "Device Disparity," "Digital Divide Survey"). The lack of affordable devices and data plans remains a major hurdle for many students ("Affordability").

- **Electricity:** Frequent power outages, particularly in rural areas, disrupt online learning, with a 2017-18 survey by the Ministry of Rural Development finding that over 36% of schools in India operate without electricity ("Affordability," "Vulnerable Groups").

- **Table 2: Challenges to Digital Adoption in Indian Higher Education**

| Challenge Category | Specific Barrier | Relevant Data Point |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

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| Infrastructure | Internet Connectivity | Only 49.2% of institutions report strong connectivity; 6.6% have none ("Indian Higher Education System") |
|---|---|---|
| Infrastructure | Device Access | Only 57.2% of schools have functional computers; 40% of institutions lack online learning tools ("Digital Divide Survey," "Offline Solutions") |
| Infrastructure | Electricity Issues | Over 36% of schools in India operate without electricity ("Vulnerable Groups") |
| Socioeconomic | Digital Divide | Only 29% of rural Indians have internet access compared to 64% in cities ("Rural Connectivity") |
| Socioeconomic | Affordability | The cost of high-speed internet is a challenge for 78.2% of economically marginalized students ("Cost Barriers") |
| Pedagogical | Teacher Training | A significant portion of teachers lack the digital literacy to use platforms effectively ("Affordability," "Teacher Training") |
| Pedagogical | Institutional Adoption | Learning Management Systems (LMS) are implemented in only 29.1% of institutions ("Indian Higher Education System") |

*Socioeconomic Disparities*

The digital divide is not merely a technical issue; it is a structural problem rooted in social and economic realities ("Affordability," "Vulnerable Groups," "Cost Barriers"). The research highlights that digital education initiatives disproportionately affect "socially and economically marginalized groups, including Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Class (OBC), females, and students in rural areas" ("Vulnerable Groups," "Cost Barriers"). The cost of devices and data plans remains a prohibitive barrier for low-income families, which exacerbates existing inequalities in access to quality education ("Affordability," "Cost Barriers").

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*Pedagogical and Human-Centric Challenges*

Even with a perfect digital infrastructure, the success of digital education initiatives ultimately hinges on the human element. A significant challenge is the lack of pedagogical readiness among faculty. A majority of teachers, particularly in rural areas, lack the necessary digital literacy and training to effectively integrate technology into their teaching methods ("Affordability," "Teacher Training"). The lack of technical knowledge among educators and students is a recurring theme ("Affordability," "Teacher Training"). The effectiveness of a government policy that provides platforms is severely limited by a lack of pedagogical training. A truly successful strategy must therefore prioritize faculty development as a non-negotiable component of policy implementation, rather than an afterthought.

**Recommendations and Policy Directions for a Cohesive Strategy**

*Bridging the Infrastructure Gap*

To foster a more equitable and sustainable digital education ecosystem, policymakers must address the fundamental infrastructure and connectivity issues. Given the persistent challenges of internet access and electricity, a greater focus on offline digital learning solutions is imperative ("Rural Connectivity," "Offline Solutions"). This includes implementing tablet-based ICT labs that can store content and function for extended periods without a constant internet connection or power supply ("Offline Solutions"). The government should also promote public-private partnerships to incentivize private sector involvement in building digital infrastructure in rural and remote areas where it is not commercially viable ("Infrastructure Challenges"). Accelerating initiatives like BharatNet is crucial to ensure that all communities have foundational access ("Next-Gen Technologies").

*Enhancing Pedagogical Capacity*

The long-term success of digital initiatives is dependent on the ability of educators to use these tools effectively. It is recommended that institutions make continuous professional development in digital pedagogy a mandatory requirement for all faculty. The government can leverage existing platforms like SWAYAM's Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) to provide structured, high-quality training ("Digital Education Statistics"). This training should move beyond technical skills and focus on how to create engaging, interactive, and adaptive learning experiences that align with the principles of the NEP 2020 ("Boom or Bane," "Student Empowerment").

*Fostering Inclusivity and Equity*

To ensure that no student is left behind, policy directions must prioritize inclusivity and equity. Acknowledging India's vast linguistic diversity, the government must

prioritize the creation of high-quality digital content in all local and regional languages ("Next-Gen Technologies," "Infrastructure Challenges"). Furthermore, a robust system of targeted support, including subsidies for devices and internet access, must be implemented for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds ("Cost Barriers"). The continued development of specialized content for students with disabilities is also essential to ensure a truly inclusive education system ("PM eVidya," "Equity in PM eVidya").

**Conclusion**

The Indian government's vision for digital education, as articulated in the National Education Policy 2020, is transformative and forward-looking. Through initiatives like SWAYAM, NDLI, and PM eVidya, the nation has made significant strides in creating a national digital infrastructure to democratize access to knowledge. However, the analysis demonstrates that the effectiveness of these platforms is significantly limited by a set of interconnected systemic challenges. The path forward requires a fundamental shift from a technology-first approach to an equity-first, human-centric one. Future policy directions must prioritize not just the creation of new digital platforms but the resolution of these foundational challenges. This analysis provides a critical roadmap to achieve that vision by focusing on equitable resource distribution, mandatory pedagogical training, and the localized development of educational content.

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**17**

# From Reading to Reflection: Exploring Emerging Adults' Responses to Caste Discrimination in Narrative Texts

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the cerebral, emotional, and cognitive responses of arising grown-ups to estate demarcation through eight named narrative textbooks from Indian literature. The narratives were acclimated from seminal workshop including Karukku (Bama, 1992), Joothan (Omprakash Valmiki, 1997), Samskara (U. R. Ananthamurthy, 1965), Growing Up Untouchable in India (Vasant Moon), Untouchable (Mulk Raj Anand, 1935), Coolie (Mulk Raj Anand, 1936), The Road (Mulk Raj Anand, 1961), and The Weave of Life (Sharankumar Limbale, 2003). Eighty actors, divided into 10 brigades, read assigned narratives and handed reflections and feedback. Using thematic qualitative analysis alongside quantitative measures of empathy and station, the study explores how exposure to estate- demarcation narratives fosters emotional engagement, empathy, and critical reflection. Results show significant emotional and cognitive responses, pressing the part of literature in ELT for social justice education.

*Keywords*: *cerebral, emotional, cognitive responses*

**Introduction**

Caste discrimination has remained one of the most settled social scales in India, impacting not only profitable and political openings but also everyday gests , social identity, and interpersonal relations. Despite legal protections and affirmative programs, estate- grounded prejudice continues to manifest in subtle and overt forms, from social rejection and microaggressions to structural inequalities ( practitioner, 2005; Jodhka, 2012). For arising grown-ups, generally defined as individualities progressed 18 – 25( Arnett, 2000), encounters with social injustice can significantly shape moral logic, empathy, identity development, and social mindfulness. This age group, frequently in advanced education or early professional life, is particularly open to interventions that provoke reflection on societal morals and injuries.

Literature, especially narrative fabrication predicated in social realities, offers a unique avenue for learners to engage with gests of marginalization in a safe and structured terrain. Stories depicting estate- grounded oppression give not only sapience into the lived gests of marginalized communities but also a vehicle for developing empathy, critical thinking, and moral reflection. In the environment of English Language Teaching( ELT), narratives can contemporaneously foster verbal capabilities similar as reading appreciation, vocabulary, and converse analysis — while promoting socio-artistic understanding and ethical logic( Kramsch, 1993; Lazar, 2007).

Integrating socially applicable narratives into ELT classrooms aligns with the broader educational thing of socially conscious pedagogy, where language literacy is not insulated from social realities but intertwined with ethical and affective development. By encountering the challenges and demotions faced by marginalized characters, learners can witness emotional engagement, cognitive conflict, and reflective thinking, which inclusively contribute to both particular growth and social mindfulness.

The present study aims to explore the responses of arising grown-ups to narratives depicting estate demarcation. Specifically, it investigates the emotional, cognitive, and attitudinal responses of actors after reading eight precisely named textbooks from classical and contemporary Indian literature, ranging from autobiographical accounts to fictional studies of social injustice. By assaying pre- and post-reading checks, reflective responses, and discussion reiterations, this exploration examines whether literature can serve as a catalyst for empathy, critical reflection, and social knowledge in ELT surrounds.

The study is guided by the premise that literature not only represents social realities but also shapes compendiums ' moral and emotional understanding. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing converse on the pedagogical integration of socially conscious textbooks in language tutoring, pressing the eventuality of narratives to foster both verbal proficiency and ethical mindfulness. Through this approach, arising grown-ups can develop a nuanced appreciation of estate demarcation and its contemporary counter accusations , eventually bridging language literacy with social justice education.

**Literature Review**

**Literature and Empathy in Narrative Reading**

multitudinous studies emphasize the part of narrative reading in developing empathy, emotional engagement, and moral logic among compendiums ( Pardeck, 1996; Mar, 2011). When compendiums encounter characters passing social rejection or demotion, they frequently vicariously witness those feelings, fostering affective understanding and ethical reflection. In the environment of estate- demarcation narratives, this emotional engagement allows arising grown-ups to fete the cerebral risk of

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marginalization, making abstract social inequalities palpable and tête-à-tête applicable. Narrative reading therefore functions as a binary pedagogical tool — enhancing language appreciation while contemporaneously cultivating empathy and moral perceptivity.

### Caste Discrimination in Indian Literature

Indian literature has long engaged with estate as a social and cerebral theme. Seminal workshop similar as Samskara( U. R. Ananthamurthy, 1965) and Joothan( Omprakash Valmiki, 1997) portray estate oppression both in extreme and everyday instantiations. These textbooks depict the rejection, demotion, and internalized trauma faced by marginalized communities, offering compendiums sapience into lived realities frequently ignored in mainstream converse. Contemporary autobiographies and novels like Bama's Karukku( 1992) and Sharankumar Limbale's The Weave of Life (2003) extend this disquisition to unsexed estate oppression and labor exploitation. Integrating similar textbooks in ELT settings allows learners to engage emotionally and cognitively, connecting erudite analysis with social knowledge.

### Psychological Impact of Narrative Engagement

Research highlights that exposure to narratives of social injustice can produce measurable cerebral and attitudinal goods. compendiums constantly report increased empathy, moral outrage, tone- reflection, and mindfulness of systemic inequalities after engaging with immorally and emotionally charged stories( Pardeck, 1996; Mar, 2011). Classroom interventions exercising narratives give openings for discussion, reflection, and critical analysis, bridging affective gests with cognitive processing. Through vicarious engagement with characters' suffering, arising grown-ups can fete social scales, question particular impulses, and develop a deeper commitment to social justice principles.

### Arising Grown-ups as a Target Group

Emerging majority, generally defined as periods 18 – 25, represents an experimental stage characterized by identity disquisition, heightened moral logic, and social knowledge( Arnett, 2000). individualities in this stage are particularly open to interventions that combine emotional engagement with critical reflection. Using estate- demarcation narratives with arising grown-ups leverages their experimental readiness, enabling them to internalize ethical dilemmas, empathize with marginalized characters, and reflect on societal morals. This makes them ideal actors for studies examining literature's impact on social mindfulness and affective literacy in ELT surrounds.

### Narrative- Grounded Pedagogy in ELT

Incorporating socially applicable narratives into ELT not only enhances reading appreciation and vocabulary accession but also fosters critical thinking, ethical logic, and empathy( Lazar, 2007; Pardeck, 1996). Stories depicting estate demarcation give discussion motifs, reflective jotting prompts, and openings for ethical debate, connecting language chops with socio-artistic understanding. Structured classroom interventions, including pre- and post-reading checks, reflective conversations, and peer relations, maximize both cognitive and affective engagement. similar pedagogy underscores the eventuality of literature to serve as a ground between language literacy and social justice education, making ELT a medium for both verbal and moral development.

## Theoretical Framework

### Social Identity Theory

Tajfel and Turner's( 1979) Social Identity Theory posits that individualities decide a sense of tone from group class, which shapes intergroup perception, geste , and bias. In the environment of estate, group class is strictly defined, and social scales mandate relations, access, and openings. By reading narratives similar as Samskara( The Untouchable's Death) and Joothan( The Feast of Leftovers), arising grown-ups can vicariously witness the lived reality of estate boundaries. These narratives reveal how group cooperation, or the lack thereof, enforces rejection and smirch. Actors' reflections demonstrate recognition of honor, mindfulness of systemic oppression, and sapience into the consequences of hierarchical social structures, making Social Identity Theory a vital lens for assaying responses to estate- demarcation narratives.

### Empathy Theory

Empathy proposition emphasizes the capacity to understand and partake the passions of others, which can be cultivated through narrative engagement( Pardeck, 1996). When actors encounter characters enduring demotion, rejection, or diurnal microaggressions similar as in Karukku( The Packet on a Stick) or The Weave of Life( Rama's Market Day) — they witness emotional resonance. This vicarious engagement allows arising grown-ups to feel torture, moral outrage, and compassion, thereby fostering moral logic and ethical reflection. Empathy proposition underpins the explanation for using narrative textbooks in ELT, demonstrating how affective responses can promote social mindfulness and reflective thinking.

### Bibliotherapy in ELT

Bibliotherapy involves using literature therapeutically to reuse feelings, defy gruelling gests , and develop managing strategies( Pardeck, 1996; Nicholas, 2012). In this study, estate- demarcation narratives serve as bibliotherapeutic textbooks, allowing actors to safely engage with social injustice, internalize moral dilemmas, and defy

uncomfortable societal trueness. Stories like Growing Up Untouchable( The Silent Scream) and Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable( Bakha's Day of Demotion) elicit violent emotional responses, which actors reflect upon inpost-reading checks and conversations. Bibliotherapy facilitates ethical logic, tone- reflection, and empathy development, integrating emotional and cognitive literacy in ELT classrooms.

### Emerging Adulthood Theory

Arnett's( 2000) proposition of arising majority ( periods 18 – 25) highlights an experimental stage characterized by identity disquisition, heightened moral logic, and perceptivity to social justice. individualities in this stage are particularly open to interventions that combine emotional engagement with critical reflection. Exposure to narratives depicting estate demarcation aligns with their experimental readiness, enabling actors to defy societal injuries, question morals, and engage in reflective moral converse. This makes arising grown-ups' ideal campaigners for narrative-grounded interventions in ELT that target both language development and social knowledge.

### Integrative Approach Emotion + Cognition

An integrative frame combining Social Identity Theory, Empathy Theory, and Bibliotherapy emphasizes the commerce of affective and cognitive disciplines. Emotional engagement with narratives( affective) stimulates reflection, discussion, and ethical logic( cognitive), promoting holistic literacy. For illustration, actors reading Joothan or The Weave of Life experience visceral demotion and wrathfulness, which also triggers reflective discussion on estate demarcation's continuity in contemporary society. This binary- sphere approach ensures that literature functions not only as a verbal tool but also as a medium for developing empathy, moral knowledge, and social responsibility in ELT surrounds.

### Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a classroom- grounded mixed- system exploration design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to probe arising grown-ups' responses to estate- demarcation narratives. The sample comprised 80 arising grown-ups( periods 18 – 25), signed from undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Actors were divided into 10 brigades of 8 members each, icing a manageable group size for cooperative reading and discussion.

The study's design was intended to capture both cognitive and affective responses. Quantitative measures included the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire( TEQ) and Likert- scale particulars assessing attitudinal mindfulness, while qualitative measures included post-reading reflections and structured discussion reiterations. The mixed-

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system approach allowed triangulation of findings, enhancing the validity of perceptivity regarding empathy, moral logic, and attitudinal change in response to estate- demarcation narratives.

**Narrative Selection**

Eight narratives were precisely chosen to represent different forms of estate demarcation, literal and contemporary surrounds, and different narrative styles. Each narrative was assigned to a platoon, icing that all actors engaged with emotionally and immorally complex textbooks

1. " The Packet on a Stick " – Karukku ( Bama, 1992)

2. " The Feast of Leftovers " – Joothan ( Omprakash Valmiki, 1997)

3. " The Untouchable's Death " – Samskara ( U. R. Ananthamurthy, 1965)

4. " The Silent Scream " – Growing Up Untouchable in India ( Vasant Moon)

5. " Bakha's Day of Humiliation " – Untouchable (Mulk Raj Anand, 1935)

6. " Munoo's city Trials " – Coolie (Mulk Raj Anand, 1936)

7. " The Laborers' Burden " – The Road (Mulk Raj Anand, 1961)

8. " Rama's Market Day " – The Weave of Life (Sharankumar Limbale, 2003)

The selection criteria included emotional intensity, artistic applicability, and pedagogical mileage, icing that each narrative could provoke strong affective responses and meaningful reflection on estate demarcation.

**Procedure**

The study followed a structured pre-reading → reading → discussion →post-reading reflection process over a single classroom session(

60 – 75 twinkles)

1. Pre-reading Survey Actors completed a birth check, which included

Toronto Empathy Questionnaire( TEQ) Short- form interpretation assessing affective empathy.

Likert- scale particulars assessing mindfulness and stations toward estate- grounded social injustice.

2. Reading Session Each platoon read their assigned narrative for 15 – 20 twinkles. brigades were instructed to concentrate on both the story content and their emotional responses.

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3. Discussion brigades engaged in 10- nanosecond guided conversations on emotional responses, social issues depicted, and contemporary applicability. conversations were held for qualitative analysis.

4. Post-reading Reflection Actors completed reflections responding to prompts similar as

- "How did the story make you feel? "

- "What social issues did you observe? "

- "How does this relate to contemporary society? "

Reflections were designed to capture depth of affective response, moral logic, and attitudinal mindfulness.

**Instruments & Ethics**

1. Instruments

- TEQ( Toronto Empathy Questionnaire, Short Form) Assessed emotional resonance and compassionate engagement.

- Likert- scale particulars Measured attitudinal mindfulness of estate demarcation, honor, and social inequality.

- Reflective Journals Captured qualitative responses, moral logic, and narrative-specific perceptivity.

2. Ethical Considerations

- Participants were briefed on the study's objectives, procedure, and voluntary participation.

- Obscurity checks and reflections were anonymized to cover sequestration.

- Emotional Support: Participants were informed about implicit emotional discomfort due to sensitive narrative content, with voluntary debriefing available post-session.

This methodology allowed comprehensive collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, furnishing robust perceptivity into how arising grown-ups emotionally, cognitively, and innocently respond to estate- demarcation narratives in an ELT environment.

## Analysis & Discussion

### Quantitative Findings

The pre- and post-reading checks, employing the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire( TEQ) frame and 5- point Likert- scale attitudinal particulars, revealed positive changes in both empathy situations and mindfulness of estate demarcation among the actors.

Empathy co-ordinates the mean empathy score of( Q1 – Q5) increased from 3.71(pre-reading) to 3.86(post-reading), reflecting a 4.0 enhancement in overall empathy. This shows that the narratives fostered stronger engagement and emotional resonance with the realities of marginalized communities.

Attitudinal Awareness: Attitudinal Awareness (Q6 – Q10) bettered from 3.75 to 3.91, showing a 4.3 increase. This growth suggests that reading estate- demarcation narratives stoned actors' recognition of systemic injustice and broadened their social knowledge.

Overall Scores Across all ten particulars, the mean score rose from 3.73( pre) to 3.89( post), demonstrating a harmonious 4.3 overall enhancement. The resemblant earnings in empathy and mindfulness confirm that narrative engagement worked as both an affective and cognitive pedagogical tool.

- Narrative Impact Qualitative reflections revealed that certain textbooks had particularly strong influence
- Joothan( The Feast of Leftovers) and The Weave of Life( Rama's Market Day) elicited the loftiest empathy, due to their pictorial descriptions of demotion and rejection.
- Samskara produced moderate empathy but urged violent moral logic, as actors grappled with ritual versus humanity.
- Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable, Coolie, and The Road encouraged reflection on profitable oppression and intersectional estate scales.
- These findings suggest that emotionally charged narratives embedded in social reality are most effective in enhancing both empathy and critical mindfulness.

### Qualitative Findings

Analysis of open- concluded reflections and discussion reiterations revealed five major thematic clusters

1. Demotion & Shame Actors reported visceral discomfort when reading about declination and rejection.

" I felt my stomach turn reading about the leftover feast how could anyone treat a child like that? "

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2. Moral Outrage wrathfulness at systemic injustice and estate practices was constantly expressed.

"The way Naranappa's body was left it's horrifying that people let rules stamp humanity."

3. tone- Reflection scholars came more conscious of honor and idle impulses.

"I noway considered how my diurnal relations might unconsciously count someone."

4. Compassion & Solidarity numerous expressed a new provocation to stand by marginalized voices.

"I want to bandy this with musketeers to insure we do n't tolerate similar demarcation."

5. Emotional Catharsis Gashes, shock, and moping feelings were reported, buttressing the part of affective engagement in literacy.

**Story-Specific responses**

- Samskara – " The Untouchable's Death " elicited shock at cadaver abandonment and reflection on moral dilemmas of chastity versus compassion.
- Joothan – " The Feast of Leftovers " Produced the strongest visceral empathy, with numerous reporting wrathfulness, nausea, and deep discomfort.
- Karukku – " The Packet on a Stick " stressed regularized estate scales through jubilee rejection, leading to empathy and questioning.
- The Weave of Life – " Rama's Market Day " Seen as relatable and realistic, stimulating mindfulness of microaggressions.
- Mulk Raj Anand Narratives( Untouchable, Coolie, The Road) Connected profitable oppression with estate injustice, italicizing literal durability.
- Growing Up Untouchable – " The Silent Scream " Everyday estate- grounded academy gests reverberated with scholars, enhancing affective empathy.

**Cross-Team & Demographic Comparisons**

- Urban vs. Rural Urban actors frequently responded analytically, while pastoral actors displayed stronger affective responses.
- Gender Differences womanish actors reported slightly advanced empathy scores, particularly for narratives portraying unsexed oppression.
- Team Dynamics Groups exposed to multiple narratives developed a more holistic understanding of estate demarcation, linking literal practices with present realities.

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**Bar Chart: Question-wise Pre vs Post Scores**

This chart compares mean scores for each question (Q1–Q10) before and after reading the caste discrimination narratives, with blue bars for Pre and green for Post responses.



Mean scores per question (Pre vs Post)

**Clustered Bar Chart: Constructs (Empathy, Awareness, Overall)**

This chart visualizes the change in mean scores for Empathy, Awareness, and Overall from Pre to Post, showing an upward shift in all constructs.
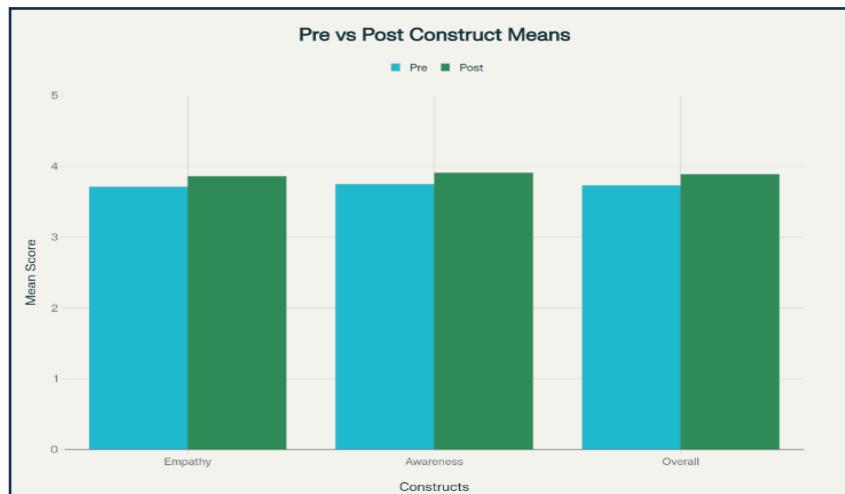


Mean Empathy, Awareness, Overall (Pre vs Post)

**Line Graph: Pre vs Post Trends (Q1–Q10)**

This line graph shows the trend of mean scores across all questions for both Pre and Post survey responses, visually highlighting areas of greatest change.

Trend of mean responses per question (Pre vs Post)

**Pie Chart:**
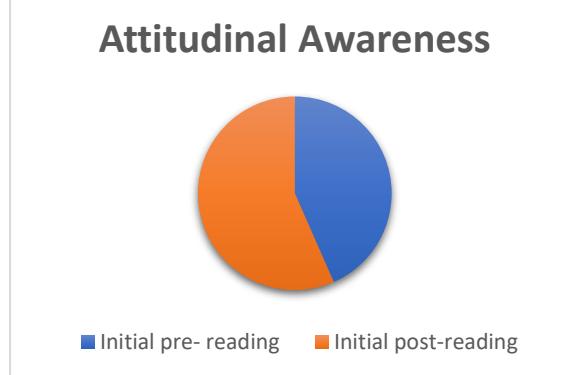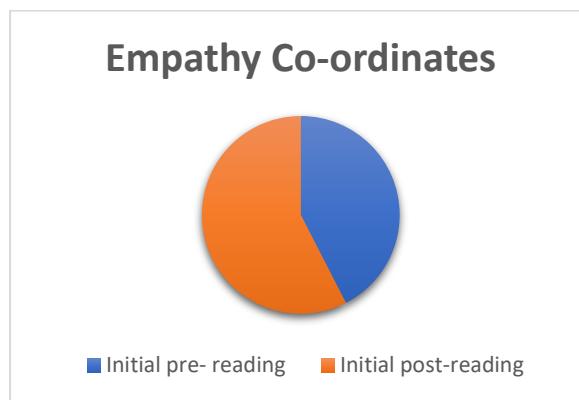




There is a clear increase in mean scores after the intervention, across most questions and constructs. Below is a detailed data analysis of pre vs post changes, including calculations and percentage increases for all questions, empathy, awareness, and overall scores.

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**Question-wise Mean Scores: Pre vs Post**

Calculation Example:

| Question | Pre Mean | Post Mean | Change | % Increase |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | 3.75 | 3.90 | +0.15 | 4.0% |
| Q2 | 3.83 | 3.82 | -0.01 | -0.3% |
| Q3 | 3.60 | 4.01 | +0.41 | 11.4% |
| Q4 | 3.65 | 3.70 | +0.05 | 1.4% |
| Q5 | 3.86 | 3.81 | -0.05 | -1.3% |
| Q6 | 3.76 | 4.19 | +0.43 | 11.4% |
| Q7 | 3.64 | 3.89 | +0.25 | 6.9% |
| Q8 | 3.42 | 3.65 | +0.23 | 6.7% |
| Q9 | 3.88 | 3.90 | +0.02 | 0.5% |
| Q10 | 3.93 | 4.04 | +0.11 | 2.8% |

$$\text{Percent Increase} = \frac{\text{Post Mean} - \text{Pre Mean}}{\text{Pre Mean}} \times 100$$

For Q3:

$$\frac{4.01 - 3.60}{3.60} \times 100 \approx 11.4\%$$

**Construct-wise (Empathy, Awareness, Overall)**

| Construct | Pre Mean | Post Mean | Change | % Increase |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Empathy | 3.71 | 3.86 | +0.15 | 4.0% |
| Awareness | 3.75 | 3.91 | +0.16 | 4.3% |
| Overall | 3.73 | 3.89 | +0.16 | 4.3% |

Calculation Example:
For Awareness:

$$\frac{3.91 - 3.75}{3.75} \times 100 \approx 4.3\%$$

**Key Insights**

- The largest increases are seen in Q3 (emotional discomfort) and Q6 (understanding impact of caste discrimination), both ~11% improvement.

- Empathy, awareness, and overall scores all rise by around 4% after the intervention.

- Agreement with "I recognize that social inequalities exist in contemporary society" (Q9) increased from 71% to 77% (about 8.5% relative increase in agreement rate).

**Deeper Analysis Psychological & Pedagogical Implications:**

**Psychological Implications:**

Affective Empathy Activation The narratives successfully touched off strong emotional responses in actors, including sadness, wrathfulness, and moral outrage.

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These affective responses are pivotal for social literacy, as they help learners internalize the emotional confines of estate demarcation. Actors reported feeling affected while reading, demonstrating the depth of engagement. similar emotional absorption enhances the liability of long- term attitudinal change.

Moral logic and Reflection Exposure to immorally complex scripts, particularly in stories like Samskara and Joothan, urged actors to reflect critically on social morals, duties, and justice. For case, dilemmas similar as cadaver abandonment or being forced to eat leavings challenged learners to suppose about right vs. culturally specified conduct, fostering advanced moral logic. numerous actors laboriously batted ethical issues during conversations, pressing the narratives' capacity to provoke cognitive conflict leading to moral growth.

Cognitive Conflict Recognition Reading about estate demarcation created pressure between actors' particular values and societal morals. numerous conceded that while they opposed demarcation in principle, they had preliminarily overlooked systemic injuries in everyday life.

**Pedagogical Implications for ELT:**

Enhanced Language Chops with Ethical Reflection Integrating estate- demarcation narratives in ELT not only advanced reading appreciation, vocabulary, and illuminative chops but also eased ethical and social reflection. scholars engaged with nuanced language describing oppression, hierarchical structures, and moral dilemmas, thereby enhancing verbal capability while connecting language literacy with socially applicable themes. Dialogic and Peer Learning Structured discussion sessions created a terrain for cooperative knowledge construction. Actors changed emotional responses, moral judgments, and critical reflections, which fostered peer literacy. The dialogic engagement enabled learners to articulate ethical logic, defend perspectives, and practice empathy in real- time social commerce, buttressing appreciation and moral sapience contemporaneously.

**Social Justice Education**

Safe battle of Sensitive Issues Literature handed a threat-free medium to explore estate demarcation. scholars could emotionally engage with marginalized gests without direct exposure to conflict or particular peril. This safe space encouraged honest reflection, questioning of morals, and acknowledgment of honor, which is frequently delicate in traditional classroom conversations. Internalization of Social Responsibility Repeated exposure to different narratives and scripts of demarcation urged actors to consider practical conduct in real life, similar as championing for inclusivity, standing against microaggressions, and feting structural injuries. The narratives acted as a catalyst for social knowledge, encouraging learners to integrate ethical responsibility into their particular and professional lives.

## Curricular Integration

Value of Socially Conscious Literature in ELT The findings explosively support including socially applicable narratives in ELT classes. Beyond language accession, these textbooks grease ethical education, critical thinking, and artistic mindfulness. By combining liar with discussion and reflection, ELT preceptors can develop well-rounded learners who are linguistically competent and socially responsible.

## Emotional Engagement & Retention

Affective literacy and Memory Retention The study set up that high emotional thrill — convinced by stories depicting extreme demotion, injustice, or moral conflict — identified with better retention of assignments on social justice and ethics. Actors constantly recalled specific narrative events weeks latterly, suggesting that emotionally engaging content enhances cognitive connection. Incorporating emotionally violent narratives is thus an effective pedagogical strategy for both affective and cognitive literacy issues.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that estate- demarcation narratives are important tools in ELT for promoting empathy, ethical reflection, and social mindfulness among arising grown-ups.

- Narratives with strong emotional and ethical content evoke lesser compassionate and cognitive responses.
- Structured reading and discussion enable scholars to link literature with real-world social issues.
- Demographic and artistic factors shape the nature of responses, emphasizing the need for different narrative exposure.

Overall, the study provides empirical substantiation for integrating social justice-acquainted literature in ELT, offering a replicable methodology for preceptors internationally. By combining reading, reflection, and discussion, literature becomes a ground between language literacy, cerebral development, and ethical knowledge, shaping socially apprehensive arising grown-ups.

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# Patriarchy, Ecology, and Indigenous Resilience:
# An Ecofeminist Study of Sheela Tomy's *Valli*

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## Abstract

This article looks into Sheela Tomy's *Valli* as an ecofeminist narrative rooted in the ecological and cultural landscapes of Wayanad in the Western Ghats. The novel shall be read as an ecofeminist discourse. It features how women's oppression and the exploitation of nature are inseparable under patriarchal-capitalist systems. It takes on theoretical insights from Francoise d'Eaubonne, Vandana Shiva, Carolyn Merchant, and Susan Griffin. The article explores the oral traditions, sacred hills, and sustainable life of indigenous women, who emerge as custodians of ecological knowledge and resilience against dispossession, ecological degradation, and gendered violence. The article further analyses the plight of some female characters subjected to domestic patriarchy, subjugation, and exploitation that reflects the commodification of nature. By parallelly addressing ecological violence with indigenous resilience, *Valli* acknowledges the material realities of women's labour, suffering, and agency, rather than doing the essentialist readings of ecofeminism.

*Keywords*: *Degradation, Dispossession, Resilience, Reciprocity, Subjugation*

## Introduction

Sheela Tomy's *Valli*, a polyphonic novel set in the Western Ghats, particularly in the tribal and agrarian landscape of Wayanad, is called 'Kalluvayal.' The novel portrays the interdependence of land, forest, rivers, and human communities. The narrative emerges from an indigenous consciousness, weaving together oral traditions, customs, rites, and rituals with the lived experiences of inhabitants of Kalluvayal facing the devastating consequences of ecological degradation, capitalist exploitation, and dispossession. *Valli* is not a mere ecological tale; it is an ecofeminist narrative.

This article reads *Valli* as an ecofeminist novel. Ecofeminism, a critical framework that relates the domination of women with the exploitation of nature, features the idea that the oppression of women and ecological destruction cannot be separated. It foregrounds indigenous women's ecological intimacy with land and forests. It exposes the gendered violence of ecological degradation and patriarchal domination. It emphasizes oral traditions and sacred ecologies as ecofeminist knowledge of resistance. It portrays love, kinship, and resilience as alternative ecological ethics rooted in women's practices. By examining these dimensions, the article locates *Valli* within ecofeminist discourse while also addressing counterarguments around essentialism and romanticization.

**Ecofeminism: Theoretical Framework**

The term 'ecofeminism' was first coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. She argued that the ecological crisis resulted from patriarchal domination over women and nature. By the 1980s, ecofeminism became a global movement with contributions from scholars and activists like Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, and Carolyn Merchant. Their work emphasized that environmental degradation disproportionately affects women, especially in rural and marginalized communities where women rely heavily on natural resources for survival. Writers such as Carolyn Merchant and Susan Griffin emphasized how patriarchal science and capitalism degraded both women and ecosystems. Thinkers like Vandana Shiva localized ecofeminism in the global south. Works like *Staying Alive* and *Earth Democracy* highlight how globalization and corporate control over natural resources threaten women's roles as traditional caretakers of the environment. Carolyn Merchant, in *The Death of Nature,* critiques the mechanistic worldview brought by the Scientific Revolution, which alienated humans from nature and promoted its exploitation. Susan Griffin, in her book *Woman and Nature*, delves into the symbolic relationship between women and nature, critiquing patriarchal systems that devalue both.

Ecofeminism explores the exploitation of women and the exploitation of nature that coexist. Women and nature, both reduced to resources under patriarchal-capitalist structures. It asserts women intertwined life, primordial, and relational knowledge of ecology as a basis for resilience and resistance. The novel parallels how the Jenmi landlords exploit women's bodies. Women are victimized under the patriarchy and capitalist notions. They are physically and sexually assaulted. For instance, the landlord Luca assaults the indigenous women labourers irrespective of their age. Not only the indigenous women but also the women of landlords face the plight. For instance, Annamkutty's suffering as the wife of Ivachan, and The novel brings out the notorious or annihilated acts of the landlords and settlers who exploit the Wayanad forests and lands. Ecofeminism argues that patriarchal systems see both women and land as *fertile, exploitable, and controllable* resources. Thus, *Valli* depicts ecofeminist

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insights by aligning gendered oppression with ecological destruction. And the novel portrays Indigenous women as custodians of ecological knowledge. In *Valli*, indigenous women are not mere agrarian laborers. They preserve and pass the indigenous knowledge and sacred rituals to their following progenies. Ecofeminist thinkers like Vandana Shiva argue that women are knowledge bearers of biodiversity and resist monocultural destruction. Tomy's novel shows that the survival of both ecology and culture depends upon women's agency and ecological knowledge.

### Women, Ecology, and Indigenous Intimacy

One of the most striking features of *Valli* is how it portrays women as integral to ecological cycles. In Wayanad's agrarian-tribal society, Indigenous women are the custodians of medicinal knowledge. Their life is intertwined with the ecology of Kalluvayal; they are the epitome of the nature itself, which bestows all the fortune without demanding anything in return. They are the nourishers of their children, and they have innumerable tolerance over family and community. This temperament of the indigenous women makes them a mirror of nature itself. Tomy discreetly portrays women's songs and stories as reservoirs of ecological memory. "I have never forgotten a lot of things that were supposed to be important. But Salomi's songs... I remember them even now! Do not take anything for granted. Each moment has its promise, and each living thing its destiny" (Tomy, 126). For instance, their folksongs and hymns reverberate with the river and the hills in Kalluvayal, and their work in the field is untiring like the incessant rain of Kalluvayal. They persist in dwelling there in spite of the recurring deluge. Nature at its utmost fury gives ordeal in the form of disaster. The indigenous women overcome all sorts of trials, including ecological disaster, loved ones' demise, and physical labor. Thus the novel *Valli* aligns with the idea of C.S. Holling that he introduced in his essay *"Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems,"* which talks about 'stability' returning quickly to equilibrium after a disturbance. And 'resilience' is the capacity of an ecosystem to absorb shocks and still persist without shifting into a qualitatively different state.

Ecofeminist theorists like Shiva argue that this embodied knowledge constitutes a "living economy of nature," distinct from capitalist exploitation. In *Valli*, women's ecological intimacy is not idealized but shown as essential to survival. Men who migrate to work in plantations are drawn into cash economies. It is the women who sustain households through subsistence labor. Thus, *Valli* affirms the ecofeminist insight that women, particularly indigenous women, are at the frontline of ecological survival because of their everyday intimacy with the environment.

### Ecological Violence

While *Valli* celebrates women's ecological roles, it also underscores the violence that threatens both women and nature. The arrival of commercial plantations, mining,

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extraction of woods, and establishment of resorts devastates the terrain of Wayanad. The innumerable longing for the materialistic needs made the landlords sell their fields to build resorts. "They did not want huts but palaces with swimming pools, car porches, gardens planted with artificial grass, humongous bedrooms with attached bathrooms, larger, higher, and shinier than their neighbours" (Tomy, 326). The effluent is mixed in the rivers and the lands. Endemic crops are replaced by cash crops like coffee and tea that diminish the biodiversity. And the indigenous medicinal plants are exploited. The resorts built for profit seeking attract the tourists who leave the precarious residue in the ecology of Kalluvayal, thus polluting the river and the groves, which are considered sacred. "We are walking through the burial ground …of the forest… Thommichan said softly, sadly." (Tomy, 382) These ecological assaults probably impact women. The indigenous are dispossessed from their land. Men left out of town to seek fortune. Then in turn waive the agriculture work and start to do construction work. Sexual violence, exploitation of women labourers in plantations, and their exclusion from land ownership all highlight the gendered nature of the ecological crisis. Tomy's narrative makes visible how patriarchy and capitalism collude to oppress both women and land.

## Oral Traditions and Ecofeminist Epistemologies

One of *Valli*'s most powerful contributions lies in its emphasis on oral traditions and sacred landscapes. Myth about Unniyachi, a courtesan who visited the Wayanad in the thirteenth century. She becomes a female deity who exists in the deep forest, addressed as the forest goddess. The shrine was in the middle of the deep forest. Its visual visitors were not worshippers, but archaeologists, historians. Stil, for the village, the shrine of Unniyachi, the abode of the goddess of waiting, of watching over, the slayer of evil customs, was a symbol" (Tomy, 292). In Kalluvayal everything is sacred, and the inhabitants have their own version of epics and folktales and preserve the sanctity of Kalluvayal by carrying the oral traditions to the descendants. "Kalluvayal's children grew up, fed on Salomi's stories and romping across Kuruvadweep. Far inside the elephant forest is the Chedettumkaavu. The deity is Chedettilamma, our own Seethadevi. My mother was so fond of Seethadevi. She was also left in the forest by my father" (Tomy, 124). These stories, often narrated by women, encode ecological ethics of restraint and reciprocity. The landscape is not just a resource, but it is the kin, ritual and way of life. From an ecofeminist perspective, these oral traditions and ritual practices represent alternative epistemology that challenges patriarchal, capitalist, and anthropocentric frameworks. Their ecological wisdom was taken to the next generation orally, and it is rooted in relationality and care. In *Valli*, women emerge as custodians of these traditions, thereby sustaining both cultural memory and ecological balance.

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Valli debunks the altercation that ecofeminism risks essentialism by romanticizing women as "closer to nature" than men. Does *Valli* comply with this idea? Yet, the author insists on women's ecological intimacy and neglects biological determinism. Women's roles are shaped by history, labor, and oppression, not innate essence. Men are also depicted as ecological actors, though women bear ecological burdens enormously. Thus, *Valli* connects more with materialist ecofeminism than cultural essentialism. Indigenous women face patriarchal restrictions even within their communities. By foregrounding these contradictions, Tomy avoids an uncritical romanticization of indigenous life.

### Anjilikkunnil: mansion of patriarchy

The mansion 'Anjilikkunnil' is a place of patriarchy. She is married to Ivachan, the landlord (Jenmi) of the mansion of 'Anjilikkunnil'. She is confined to the private sphere, where her identity is reduced to that of a submissive daughter-in-law and a wife. "Annamkutty crossed the threshold of the arrogant mansion with her auspicious right foot first, she was thrown from the haven of music and symphony to the cacophony of rebukes" (Tomy, 67). She is a pious being who has great love for music and songs, as she belongs to a musician family. Yet, here she restrains herself to the household works assigned by her mother-in-law. Ivachan, an arrogant landlord, replicates the same callousness of his mother, Theruthiyamma, and subjugates his wife. His interactions with Annamkutty are devoid of tenderness or companionship; instead, she becomes an object for reproduction, labour, and tolerance. "Annamkutty stopped her sewing, withdrew inside the house quietly, and lay down, pretending to be asleep" (Tomy, 57). Annamkutty has no autonomy over anything. Her presence means nothing at Anjilikkunnil. Anjilikkunnil does not spare the daughter as well. Isabella, daughter of Ivachan, suffers of patriarchy as well. Isabella chose to be a nun but later waives the nunnery and returned to her home, where she got ill-treated and confined to a room and she is withdrawn from the autonomy. Her father, Ivachan, and her elder brother, Luca are the strong-headed patriarchs. They berated Isabella for breaking the nun hood. "Devout Katrina fell in love with Jesus Christ and transformed into Isabella, the nun, but when she realized that the world within the convent was not hers, she took off her habit and returned home where other names awaited her-daivodashi, blasphemer, sinner" (Tomy,70). Isabella, a literate woman, wants to establish herself as a teacher for the indigenous children, and she worked for their upliftment. Her compassion for the tribal children cannot be tolerated by his malevolent brother Luca. She is tormented for doing service. Annamkutty, though she empathizes with Isabella, she cannot stand for herself and her daughter. Isabella, unlike Annamkutty, expressed her resilience through non-cooperation and service. She is not submissive; rather, she is resilient. These two women of Anjilikkunnil mirrors the traits of mother nature that resonates the idea of Susan Griffin, that delves

into the symbolic relationship between women and nature, critiquing patriarchal systems that devalue both. Here the women are undervalued and suppressed like the nature herself, Yet, they resist and re-establish just like the mother nature.

## Conclusion

Sheela Tomy's *Valli* is a powerful ecofeminist novel. It shows indigenous women as custodians of ecological knowledge. It exposes their vulnerability to patriarchal and capitalist violence. It highlights oral traditions, sacred landscapes, and practices of indigenous women as ecofeminist ways of resilience. The novel keeps women at the centre of ecological survival and resistance. It critiques the logic of domination and envisions an alternative ecological ethic grounded in care, reciprocity, and love.

Tracing *Valli* as an ecofeminist novel provides enrichment to both Indian eco-literary studies and global ecofeminist discourse. It documents that the struggles of women in Wayanad are inseparable from struggles for ecological survival worldwide. In an era of propagating climate crisis as a major worldwide issue, *Valli* discretely offers not only a critique of patriarchal-capitalist exploitation but also a vision of ecofeminist resilience rooted in indigenous knowledge and women's practices. Reading *Valli* alongside global ecofeminist texts reveals striking parallels. Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* brings out Native women's ecological rituals as sustaining balance. Mahasweta Devi's short stories assert both environmental exploitation and women's oppression. As such, *Valli* demonstrates that indigenous women's knowledge about sustainability is a form of ecological resistance. These indigenous people practiced sustainability when sustainability was not even discussed popularly. However, its rootedness in the Western Ghats makes it unique, articulating an ecofeminism that is both global in resonance and specific in cultural detail.

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# English as the Universal Language of Online Business: A Study

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## Abstract

English Language has emerged as a dominant in the global Commerce nowadays. So the role of English is huge in the online business which is also exploring Communication across cultural and Geographic Boundaries. A Dominance of English in Online Business can create more Opportunities for a greater market reach and for Brand Visibility. Significant advantages of businesses adopting English for a huge international Operation. English is nowadays used on the global level; it can easily connect people across borders for an online business**.**

*Keywords: English Language, Communication, Online Business*

## Introduction:

Online business dependent on buyers and sellers across geographical boundaries, it has become a major use of international trade. To achieve this, a common medium of communication is essential, and English has emerged as the global language of online commerce. It has become the language of choice for e-commerce, digital marketing, and international communications. International platforms such as Amazon and eBay, as well as social media and digital advertising networks, influenced widely to reach a global audience. Its widespread use makes certain transactions clear, builds customer trust and improves business visibility across limits.

## Review of Literature:

According to K.A. Sundari (2018), this article explains how English spread and became a universal language. It looks at the state of English as a second language in India right now. This article defines language, outlines the stages of learning English, and lists the variables influencing the acquisition of a second language. Additionally, it says that a language teacher must comprehend what a student is trying to say or convey.

Tietze and Dick (2013) The role of English constitutes the third facet of language frequently studied in business. Depending on their disciplinary socialization, international business scholars varyingly conceptualize English as a hegemonic force.

**Objectives of the study:**

- To analyse the role of English as the primary medium of communication in online business.

- To examine the challenges faced by non - English speaking businesses and customers in the online marketplace.

- To suggest strategies for balancing English dominance with inclusivity of local languages in online business.

**Research methodology:**

**Research Design:**

Descriptive and analytical research design will be used.

**Sampling design:**

A convenience sampling technique was used. Data was collected through a Google Form that was sent to participants via specify channels, e.g., email and social media.

**Sample Size:**

A total usable sample of 73 respondents was collected.

**Data Collection:**

**Primary Data:**

Questionnaires distributed to online business professionals, entrepreneurs and customers.

**Secondary Data:**

Review of academic journals, research articles and reports on language in international business. Analysis of online business platforms (Amazon, Flipkart, etc.,) and their language policies.

| | 1.English is the most commonly used language in online business. | 2. Most global e-commerce platforms prefer English as the default language | 3. English is essential for effective customer service on digital platforms. | 4. English helps businesses expand their reach to international customers. | 5. Businesses should include local languages alongside English on websites. | 6. English creates challenges for non-native speakers in online business. | 7. Knowledge of English provides a competitive advantage in digital trade. | 8. Lack of English proficiency limits success in online businesses. | 9. English will continue to dominate online business in the future. | 10. Businesses that adopt English have higher chances of global growth. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N Valid | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | 1.33 | 4.41 | 4.40 | 4.12 | 4.37 | 4.11 | 4.12 | 4.15 | 3.77 | 4.01 |
| Median | 1.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| Mode | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Std. Deviation | .473 | .573 | .661 | .686 | .613 | .614 | .763 | .720 | .936 | .890 |
| Range | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |

**Interpretation:**

The above table indicates that the mean values of most global e-commerce platforms prefer English as the default language are an most commonly agreed with (4.41), slightly on similar of English is essential for effective customer service on digital platforms also commonly agreed (4.40), and median value as all of others nine statements are most commonly agreed has an (4) from an English is the most commonly used language statement and then mode value of English is essential for effective customer services on digital platforms has an highest numbers of respondents with strongly agreed (5) and remaining of 8 rights statement has an agreed with (4) other than English is the most commonly used language statement has (1), then an standard deviation values indicates that responses were most consistent for English is most commonly used language in online business is (0.473).

| T - Test | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Questionnaire | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| 1.English is the most commonly used language in online business. | Male | 48 | 1.38 | .489 | .071 |
| | Female | 25 | 1.24 | .436 | .087 |
| 2. Most global e-commerce platforms prefer English as the default language | Male | 48 | 4.42 | .539 | .078 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.40 | .645 | .129 |
| 3. English is essential for effective customer service on digital platforms. | Male | 48 | 4.35 | .699 | .101 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.48 | .586 | .117 |
| 4. English helps businesses expand their reach to international customers. | Male | 48 | 4.06 | .755 | .109 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.24 | .523 | .105 |
| 5. Businesses should include local languages alongside English on websites. | Male | 48 | 4.35 | .601 | .087 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.40 | .645 | .129 |
| 6. English creates challenges for non-native speakers in online business. | Male | 48 | 4.13 | .606 | .087 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.08 | .640 | .128 |
| 7. Knowledge of English provides a competitive advantage in digital trade. | Male | 48 | 4.13 | .703 | .102 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.12 | .881 | .176 |
| 8. Lack of English proficiency limits success in online business. | Male | 48 | 4.13 | .672 | .097 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.20 | .816 | .163 |
| 9. English will continue to dominate online business in the future. | Male | 48 | 3.67 | .953 | .138 |
| | Female | 25 | 3.96 | .889 | .178 |
| 10. Businesses that adopt English have higher chances of global growth. | Male | 48 | 4.00 | .875 | .126 |
| | Female | 25 | 4.04 | .935 | .187 |

**Interpretation:**

An above mentioned table contains that Mean Value of an gender, knowledge of English provides a competitive advantages in digital trade are mostly liked by an male (4.13), Businesses should include local languages alongside English on websites are mostly liked by females (4.40), lack of English proficiency limits success in online business likely agreed by females (4.20), Businesses that adopt English have higher chances of global growth likely agreed by females (4.04).and then standard deviation contains an values of an gender, English creates challenges for non-native speakers in the online Business has males are most consistent in agreeing (0.606), English helps businesses expand their reach to international Customers has females are Consistent

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In agreeing (0.523), Business should include local languages alongside English on websites has an both of them shows an lightly Similar Interest, Business that adopt English have higher chances of global growth has an highly agreed by male (0.875).

**Findings:**

- Most global e-commerce platforms, digital marketing campaigns, and business websites predominantly use English as their main language.

- English serves as a common medium for cross-border communication, reducing misunderstandings between international buyers and sellers.

- Businesses using English are often perceived as more professional, credible, and globally competitive.

- While English promotes international trade, it can also create difficulties for non-English speakers, limiting inclusivity in digital markets.

- Proficiency in English significantly enhances job prospects, online collaborations, and global market expansion.

**Suggestions**

- Along with English, businesses should integrate local languages on websites and apps to ensure inclusivity.

- Organizations should provide English language training for employees to improve global communication skills.

- Businesses should use clear and simple English in online content to make it accessible for non-native speakers.

- Companies must combine English with cultural sensitivity to build stronger international customer relations.

- Educational systems and business organizations should emphasize English for digital literacy while also promoting local language preservation.

**Conclusion:**

English has firmly established itself as the universal language of online business, enabling smooth communication, trust, and global reach. Its dominance in e-commerce, digital marketing, and online platforms highlights its essential role in connecting businesses and customers worldwide. However, relying solely on English may exclude non-English speakers, creating barriers to inclusivity. While English remains the key to international business success, a balanced approach that combines English with multilingual strategies will ensure both global competitiveness and cultural inclusivity in the digital marketplace.

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# Self-Efficacy and Positive Emotions in Indian English Literature: A Qualitative Study of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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## Abstract

This study explores the representation of self-efficacy and positive emotions in Indian English literature, with a focused analysis of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008). While existing scholarship primarily emphasizes the novel's critique of social inequality, corruption, and moral ambiguity, this research foregrounds the psychological dimensions of the protagonist, Balram Halwai, highlighting how belief in his abilities drives his agency and decision-making. Drawing upon Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, the study examines how positive emotions—such as hope, ambition, pride, and humor—reinforce Balram's sense of empowerment, enabling him to navigate structural constraints and redefine his identity. Using a qualitative, thematic approach to textual analysis, key passages are analyzed to identify the interaction between self-efficacy, emotional resilience, and socio-cultural factors. The findings suggest that *The White Tiger* portrays self-efficacy not merely as a response to adversity but as a transformative force that motivates proactive engagement with challenges, reflecting broader patterns of aspiration and agency in Indian English literature. This interdisciplinary study contributes to literary criticism and positive psychology by illuminating the subtle ways in which Indian English narratives depict psychological empowerment and the cultivation of agency in contexts marked by social and economic inequality.

*Keywords:* *Self-efficacy, positive emotions, psychological empowerment, identity reconstruction, emancipation*

## Introduction

Indian English literature has consistently offered a lens through which the complexities of social, cultural, and psychological realities in contemporary India are explored. From the works of R.K. Narayan to Arundhati Roy, authors have depicted struggles arising from poverty, caste, gender inequalities, and identity crises. Within

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this literary landscape, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) stands out for its vivid portrayal of socio-economic disparities and the moral dilemmas faced by individuals seeking agency and self-determination. While much critical attention has focused on the novel's social critique—highlighting corruption, inequality, and ethical ambiguity—less research has examined its psychological dimensions, particularly the interplay of self-efficacy and positive emotions in shaping the protagonist's actions and identity.

Albert Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to achieve specific goals, provides a suitable framework to analyze the psychological empowerment of Balram Halwai, the novel's protagonist. Balram's transformation from a subservient villager into a self-directed entrepreneur illustrates how hope, ambition, pride, and humor reinforce his belief in his abilities, enabling him to navigate structural and socio-economic constraints.

This study aims to investigate how *The White Tiger* represents self-efficacy as a psychological force and how positive emotions support the protagonist's pursuit of agency and identity reconstruction. The research addresses the following questions:

1. How is self-efficacy depicted as a psychological construct in *The White Tiger*?

2. What role do positive emotions play in reinforcing Balram's self-efficacy?

3. How do socio-cultural and economic contexts interact with self-efficacy to shape agency and decision-making in the narrative?

By examining these questions, the study seeks to bridge literary criticism and positive psychology, providing an interdisciplinary perspective that illuminates the ways Indian English literature portrays aspiration, agency, and psychological empowerment in the face of social and economic inequality.

**Literature Review**

Indian English literature often explores themes of identity, aspiration, and resilience within the constraints of social inequality. Writers such as R.K. Narayan, Arundhati Roy, and Shashi Deshpande have emphasized the negotiation between individual agency and societal pressures. Scholars like Meenakshi Mukherjee (2002) argue that this body of literature captures the tension between tradition and modernity, while Ramanujan (1991) stresses the psychological depth embedded in character portrayals. Despite this, much of the scholarship remains focused on socio-political contexts, leaving psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and positive emotions relatively underexplored.

Albert Bandura (1977, 1997) conceptualized self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to achieve goals, emphasizing its influence on persistence, motivation, and performance. In psychology, self-efficacy is well-researched (Schunk & DiBenedetto,

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2020), but its use in literary analysis is comparatively rare. Existing literary applications often analyze characters' struggles for self-assertion and empowerment, but there is little scholarship applying Bandura's framework to Indian English novels. This study therefore seeks to bring self-efficacy into dialogue with Adiga's narrative strategies in *The White Tiger*.

Positive emotions such as hope, ambition, humor, and pride have been shown to contribute to resilience and agency. Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory (2001) highlights how such emotions broaden thought–action repertoires and foster psychological growth. In literature, positive emotions often appear as coping mechanisms that empower characters to resist adversity. Within *The White Tiger*, Balram Halwai's sense of humor, ambition, and pride can be read as emotional strategies that sustain his self-belief and fuel his eventual transformation. Yet, critical work on the novel rarely foregrounds this perspective.

Most critical studies of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* focus on its social critique, exposing corruption, class struggle, and globalization (Bhattacharya, 2011; Sinha, 2013). Scholars emphasize its portrayal of moral ambiguity and systemic exploitation but pay little attention to Balram's internal psychological development. Few analyses examine his self-efficacy or the role of positive emotions in shaping his decisions and agency. This research therefore addresses a significant gap by adopting an interdisciplinary lens that integrates literary criticism and positive psychology to highlight psychological empowerment in the narrative.

**Methodology**

This research adopts a qualitative approach, as it seeks to interpret the psychological dimensions of literary texts rather than quantify them. The focus is on Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008), which is analyzed as a representative text of contemporary Indian English literature that engages with themes of identity, aspiration, and empowerment. A qualitative design is particularly appropriate because the study aims to uncover patterns of meaning, psychological processes, and emotional dynamics embedded within the narrative.

The method of analysis employed is thematic textual analysis, which allows for the identification and interpretation of recurring motifs, ideas, and psychological constructs in the novel. Key passages where the protagonist Balram Halwai reflects on his self-belief, ambitions, and emotional responses were closely read to identify evidence of self-efficacy and positive emotions such as hope, humor, pride, and ambition. These themes were then examined through the lens of Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, as well as psychological research on the role of positive emotions in resilience and empowerment.

The novel itself is treated as the primary source of data. Secondary sources include scholarly articles, books, and critical essays on *The White Tiger*, Indian English literature, and relevant psychological theories. These materials were consulted to situate the analysis within both literary and psychological scholarship, ensuring an interdisciplinary perspective.

The process of analysis was iterative, moving back and forth between the text and theoretical frameworks to refine interpretations. Rather than imposing predetermined categories, themes were allowed to emerge from the text through repeated close reading, after which they were aligned with relevant psychological concepts. This approach ensures that the analysis remains grounded in the literary material while also engaging with broader theoretical insights.

By employing a qualitative, thematic strategy, the study aims to highlight how *The White Tiger* portrays the interaction of self-efficacy, positive emotions, and socio-cultural forces in shaping individual agency. This methodology not only deepens the understanding of Adiga's narrative strategies but also demonstrates how literary studies can benefit from psychological frameworks in uncovering dimensions of empowerment and identity construction.

## Results

The thematic analysis of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* revealed that the protagonist Balram Halwai demonstrates a consistent interplay between **self-efficacy** and **positive emotions**, which enable him to negotiate structural inequalities and pursue personal transformation. Four key themes emerged from the analysis:

The first theme is hope as a motivating force. Despite growing up in poverty and oppression, Balram exhibits a persistent hope that life can be different. His frequent reflections on escaping "the Darkness" suggest that hope functions as more than mere wishful thinking; it reinforces his belief in his own ability to transcend circumstances. This aligns with Bandura's notion that self-efficacy strengthens perseverance in the face of challenges, as Balram continuously envisions himself as capable of achieving more than his predetermined social role.

The second theme concerns humor as a coping mechanism. Balram's witty observations and satirical commentary on Indian society allow him to confront humiliation and systemic injustice without succumbing to despair. His humor, often directed at the hypocrisy of the rich, not only provides psychological relief but also affirms his intellectual superiority and independence of thought. This playful outlook reflects positive emotions that expand his coping repertoire, in line with Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory.

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The third theme is ambition as self-efficacy in action. Balram's ambition to become an entrepreneur reflects his conviction that he has the capacity to break free from servitude. His determination to "be a man of action" signals the transition from passive acceptance to proactive self-definition. This ambition becomes the most powerful expression of his self-efficacy, pushing him to make radical decisions, including morally ambiguous ones, in order to secure his new identity. The fourth theme highlights pride and identity reconstruction. After establishing himself as a successful businessman, Balram expresses pride not only in his economic success but also in the psychological journey that enabled him to achieve it. He frames his story as a testimony of self-made empowerment, reconstructing his identity from servant to entrepreneur. This pride is not depicted as arrogance but rather as a validation of his belief in his own agency and resilience.

Together, these themes suggest that *The White Tiger* portrays self-efficacy and positive emotions as deeply interconnected. Hope, humor, ambition, and pride all reinforce Balram's sense of efficacy, enabling him to challenge oppressive socio-economic structures. The findings indicate that Adiga's novel goes beyond social critique to reveal the psychological processes by which individuals cultivate empowerment and redefine identity in contexts of inequality.

**Discussion**

The results of this study show that *The White Tiger* is not only a novel about social inequality and corruption, as most critics argue, but also a story about how self-belief and emotions can shape a person's journey. Much of the existing research focuses on Adiga's critique of India's class system, the corruption of the elite, and the moral compromises that survival demands (Bhattacharya, 2011; Sinha, 2013). While these themes are undeniably important, they often reduce Balram Halwai to a symbol of protest or resistance rather than acknowledging him as a psychologically complex individual. Looking at the novel through the lens of self-efficacy and positive emotions changes this view. It shows how Balram's personal belief in his abilities is just as powerful a driving force as the social conditions he faces.

This perspective resonates with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which highlights how belief in one's ability to act is crucial for achieving goals (Bandura, 1997). Balram's refusal to accept his role in "the Darkness" illustrates this idea perfectly. His ambition to become an entrepreneur is not blind dreaming—it is supported by his confidence in his ability to act, no matter how difficult or morally complicated those actions might be.

Equally important are the positive emotions that reinforce this self-belief. Drawing on Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory (2001), we can see how humor, hope, and pride help Balram maintain resilience in a hostile world. His sharp wit allows him to

laugh at the hypocrisy of his masters, turning humiliation into a source of strength. Hope keeps him moving forward, even when escape seems impossible. Pride, once he has achieved his transformation, validates his belief that he has not only changed his circumstances but also remade his identity. In this way, emotions are not background details in the novel; they are central to Balram's empowerment.

By examining these psychological dimensions, this study broadens the understanding of *The White Tiger*. It is both a novel of social protest and a narrative of personal empowerment. Balram's story reflects the struggles of many individuals in contemporary India, who must navigate inequality with not only strategies of survival but also inner resources of belief and resilience.

This approach creates a bridge between literary studies and psychology. While psychology has long studied self-efficacy and positive emotions, these concepts are rarely applied to literature. Likewise, literary criticism has focused heavily on social and political themes, often overlooking the internal processes of characters. Bringing these fields together enriches both—psychology provides tools to better understand character development, while literature offers vivid illustrations of how psychological processes play out in lived (and imagined) experiences. *The White Tiger* should be seen not only as a biting critique of modern India but also as an exploration of how belief in oneself, combined with sustaining emotions, can help individuals imagine and create new lives, even in the most constrained circumstances.

**Conclusion**

This study set out to examine how self-efficacy and positive emotions are represented in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. While much of the existing criticism reads the novel as a social and political commentary on inequality, corruption, and class struggle, this research highlights another important dimension: the psychological strength of the protagonist, Balram Halwai. By applying Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and insights from positive psychology, the analysis shows how Balram's belief in his own ability, supported by emotions such as hope, ambition, pride, and humor, plays a central role in his transformation from a servant in "the Darkness" to a successful entrepreneur.

What emerges is a portrait of empowerment that is not solely external or structural but also deeply internal. Balram's journey demonstrates that even in a world marked by oppression, personal agency and self-belief can reshape one's destiny. His humor allows him to endure humiliation, his hope fuels his ambitions, and his pride validates his new identity. These psychological dimensions give the novel a richness that goes beyond social critique, making it also a story about human resilience and aspiration.

The significance of this study lies in bridging literature and psychology. By looking at *The White Tiger* through the lens of self-efficacy and positive emotions, the research

contributes to a more holistic understanding of Indian English literature—one that values not only themes of injustice but also the inner resources individuals draw upon to confront and transcend their realities. Adiga's novel reminds us that stories of struggle are also stories of strength. Balram Halwai may be a controversial figure, but he embodies the belief that transformation begins with the conviction that change is possible. In this sense, *The White Tiger* offers readers not just a critique of society but also an affirmation of the power of self-belief and the sustaining role of positive emotions in the pursuit of freedom and self-definition.

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# The Psychology of Subtle Harms: Microaggressions in Dattani's *Thirty Days in September*

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## Abstract

The paper examines the role of microaggressions in shaping and sustaining trauma using Derald Wing Sue's theoretical framework to analyse Mahesh Dattani's play, Thirty Days in September, which portrays the journey of Mala, a survivor of child sexual abuse. While physical violence has been recognized as a source of trauma, subtle acts of everyday harm such as invalidation, blaming the victim, and silences cause lasting psychological wounds. In the Indian socio-cultural context, where child sexual abuses are suppressed in the name of family honour and patriarchal norms, the need to interrogate these subtle aggressions become highly urgent. The paper attempts to address the problem that the play not only dramatizes the trauma of abuse but also reveals how microaggressions, embedded in relationships and cultural practices, perpetuate silence and hinder healing. The aim of the study is to show the accumulation of microaggressions and prevention of healing in the selected play. Furthermore, objectives of the research is to apply Sue's ideas of microaggressions to the characters and actions in the play. Additionally, to highlight intergenerational passing of microaggressions, keeping trauma alive. Moreover, the research seeks to answer how does Thirty Days in September portray the harm caused by microaggressions in addition to abuse? And how these aggressions transcend generations and affect the psyche of the character? Overall, by using the framework of Microaggressions, the paper argues that subtle discriminations and invalidations contribute to the survivor's trauma.

*Keywords: Microaggressions, Intergenerational trauma, microasault, microinvalidations*

## Introduction

To begin with, the social issue of child sexual abuse and its never-ending consequences has increasingly drawn the attention of literary scholars, psychologists, and social activists. Trauma, as a psychological condition, is not only created by physical, overt violence. It is also deeply reinforced by subtle everyday aggressions that go unnoticed

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within social interactions. After an abuse, in cultures, especially where silence is prioritized over confrontation, and family honour overpowers individual suffering, the victim of the abuse often becomes victimised by the abuser and the community through denial and neglect. Mahesh Dattani's play "Thirty Days in September" exposes the harsh reality by dramatizing the life of Mala, a survivor of child sexual abuse, whose life is marked by the invalidation that surrounds her. Within this social background, the framework of Microaggressions, developed by Derald Wing Sue becomes highly relevant in understanding the prevalence of trauma through subtle harms. So, the paper examines the toll that subtle harms take on the psychology of the survivor in "Thirty Days in September" through Sue's lens of Microaggressions. Overall, "Thirty Days in September", through Sue's framework of Microaggressions reveals how silences, denials, subtle dismissals, and intergenerational concerns, reinforce the trauma of child sexual abuse.

The scope and the relevance of the study lies in its interdisciplinary approach, making it significant both in the field of literature and social sciences. The research is not only confined to literary criticism, but expands to apply psychological theory, explaining that survivors of trauma experience continued harm. By applying Sue's framework to Dattani's play, the paper highlights that theatre becomes a space to articulate silenced pain. The research is particularly relevant in the Indian context where child sexual abuse remains under-discussed and underrepresented. So, it is high-time to articulate those social issues rather than seeing them as tabooed topics to discuss. The study also contributes to the discourse on intergenerational trauma, revealing that trauma transcends generations.

Moreover, the paper aims to explore the accumulation of Microaggressions and prevention of survivors from healing in Mahesh Dattani's play, "Thirty Days in September", reflecting that trauma is also caused by the cultural silence that surround survivors. The objectives of the study are to apply Sue's Tripartite model of micro assaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations to the actions and dialogues in the play, demonstrating the role of subtle harms in the play. Also, it seeks to highlight the transmutation of microaggressions across generations, especially through family relationships, keeping trauma alive. Correspondingly, the research seeks to answer, how does Dattani's "Thirty Days in September" represent the harm caused by microaggressions in addition to abuse? This allows us to explore the moments where subtle harm is as destructive as direct violence through Sue's Tripartite model of Microaggressions. As a continuation, how these aggressions transcend generations and affect the psyche of the character? This leads us to analyse the behaviour of characters across generations in familial relationships.

In continuation, the methodology of the study is deeply rooted in qualitative literary analysis, supported by theoretical application. Derald Wing Sue's theory of

Microaggressions, clearly drafted in his work, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation* serves as a perfect lens to examine the interactions and silences in the play using close reading techniques.

To explain the theoretical framework, Derald Wing Sue's theory of Microaggressions as discussed in *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race Gender, and Sexual Orientation* highlights subtle and unconscious behaviours, comments, or attitudes that communicate offensive messages to individuals based on their race, gender, or sexual orientation. Microaggressions are usually indirect and delivered in casual interactions. Sue categorizes them into different types including micro assaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Sue argues that the cumulative impact of these microaggressions can be profoundly damaging, leading to an extent of lower psychological well-being of the victims. Finally, he highlights the intergenerational impact of microaggressions, affecting multiple generations in familial relationships.

To brief about the author, Mahesh Dattani was born in 1958 in Bangalore and educated there. He initially worked as a copywriter in an advertising firm. His theatre group Playpen was formed in 1984. In 1998, he opened his theatre studio for training, directing, and stage writing. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998 for "Final Solutions".

"Thirty Days in September" was first performed at the Prithvi Theatre on 31 May, 2001. It tells the story of Mala, a young girl affected by years of sexual abuse by her maternal uncle Vinay. Mother Shanta, despite knowing, ignored this after having been abused by the same man when she was young. This causes a break in the mother daughter relationship, and Mala, affected by the trauma and guilt struggles to build relationships, ignoring even Deepak who really cared for him. A turn comes when the mother reveals her abuse, leading to the confrontation and healing of both the characters. The paper outlined the framework of the study while situating "Thirty Days in September" within the discourse of microaggressions. Now, having established the problem, the next chapter reviews existing scholarship to contextualise the study within the discourse .

### Review of Literature

The chapter explores the existing works on the theory of Microaggressions and research on the play, "Thirty Days in September" to situate the current study among the existing discourse. It traces the meaning and origin of the term Microaggressions and study its evolution into a theory that includes everyday harms of marginalized groups in different contexts. Also, it provides an overview of the existing research on the play to identify the research gap.

Microaggressions are defined as comments or actions that subtly and unconsciously express a prejudiced attitude toward marginalized groups such as racial minorities.

The term was coined in 1970 by Harvard Psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce, who studied subtle insults against African Americans. He emphasized that "These subtle, cumulative mini-assaults are as harmful as blatant acts of discrimination", highlighting the psychological impact over time (Pierce 281).

In his seminal 2007 article, Derald Wing Sue elaborates on Pierce's ideas by positioning microaggressions in everyday interactions. He defines them as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities (Sue et al. 271). The article broadened the scope by connecting microaggressions to the lived experience of marginalized groups.

The idea is further expanded in his book, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*, introducing the tripartite model of micro assaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Sue argues that "the power of microaggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator and the cumulative burden on the recipient" (Sue 33).

Mahesh Dattani's "Thirty Days in September" presents the complex journey of Mala, a woman grappling with the lifelong effects of child sexual abuse. The play delves into her strange relationship with her mother, Shanta, and the silence surrounding the abuse. By portraying suppressed memories, intergenerational pain, and the burden of secrecy, Dattani highlights the deep impact of concealed trauma within Indian families and challenges societal reluctance to confront such realities.

The article "Psycho-Dramatic Analysis of Mahesh Dattani's Thirty Days in September" views the play through the lens of Psycho-Dramatic theory, emphasizing how supportive relationships and psychodrama aid recovery from sexual trauma. It highlights how "psychodrama helps the victim to reframe his or her thoughts. Success comes in the form of the client's adolescence, most likely because psycho-dramatic techniques are used for an individual's treatment" (Kayani et al. 207). The argument is that healing from childhood abuse is possible through social support and structured therapeutic intervention.

"Gestic Language in Mahesh Dattani's play Thirty Days in September" explores the play's Brechtian dimensions and theatrical strategies. It argues that Dattani employs gestures, halting, and Verfremdung to "recreate the trauma of intergenerational childhood sexual abuse and offer a searing criticism of the social structures that create and mute it" (Nair and Thomas 36). It highlights that the dramatic performance strategies disrupt conventional realism, provoke audience to confront hidden abuse, and challenge the silence surrounding taboo issues.

The article "Mahesh Dattani's Thirty Days in September: Dealing with Incest" examines the confrontation of the taboo of child sexual abuse within Indian families. It argues that Mala's silence and Shanta's complicity reveals the impact of the abuse and a lifelong trauma caused by it. The article also emphasizes the psychological

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effects of abuse, and underlines Dattani's role in exposing hidden traumas through theatre.

The article "Best Kept Secret: The Conspiracy of Silence in Mahesh Dattani's Thirty Days in September" highlights the idea that silence enables the cycle of abuse. The study argues that "silence is more destructive than the crime itself because it normalises the trauma" (Somkar 42). By analysing Mala's and Shanta's muted suffering and the family's refusal to acknowledge abuse, the paper emphasizes that secrecy, complicity, and denial perpetuate violence across generations and silence victims in oppressive social structures.

The article "Mahesh Dattani's Thirty Days in September: A Study in the Treatment in the Treatment of Incest" examines the mother daughter conflict in the play. It highlights that incest causes both physical and psychological wounds and "the victim does not only suffer the physical anguish but also the mental distortion" (Sonkar 17). It underscores Dattani's critique of social customs that normalise women's pain and perpetuate silence around abuse.

The existing scholarship focuses on the abuse, memory, trauma, and the dramatization, focusing on the immediate and long-term impacts of physical violence. The study on silence is also on the surface level, looking at it as a lead to similar abuses in the future. So, there is a lack of focus on the behaviours and actions of the characters in the play, where abuse happens covertly through hurting comments, actions, and silences which are intergenerational. Considering this, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the play through the lens of Microaggressions. By applying Sue's tripartite model, the research would uncover the moments of covert violence and their impact on the psyche of the victims in the play, leading to an intergenerational observation of the process of trauma and healing. The exploration of the existing literature has helped to identify the research gap, leading the study to examine the methodology in the following chapter.

**Methodology**

The chapter explores the methodology adopted for the study. The study uses a qualitative method of analysis, examining literature through the lens of theory. It uses close reading techniques to uncover moments of subtle harm as shaped in the theory of Microaggressions. So, by applying the theory of Microaggressions, as explored in the book, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* by Derald Wing Sue to the play, "Thirty Days in September" by Mahesh Dattani, the paper bridges literary studies and psychology, offering an interdisciplinary approach.

**Hidden Wounds: Study of Microaggressions**

Mahesh Dattani's "Thirty Days in September" dramatizes the trauma of child sexual abuse, while expressing subtle harms that reinforce it. Using Derald Wing Sue's tripartite model, the chapter analyses how everyday words, silences, and actions deepens Mala's pain and perpetuate intergenerational cycles of trauma.

In the tripartite model, first and foremost, Sue defines micro assaults as explicit verbal or nonverbal attacks meant to hurt the intended victim through "name-calling, avoidant behaviour, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (Sue 32). Unlike unintentional microaggressions micro assaults are deliberate, though often disguised within social settings. They mirror traditional forms of discrimination or hostility but are delivered in subtle, socially acceptable ways. Within Dattani's play, micro assaults appears in the abusive uncle's predatory actions, masked under the guise of familial intimacy, and in the hostile remarks that Mala encounters. Along with personal violations, these micro assaults represent social mechanisms that normalise abuse within patriarchal families. For example, the uncle's manipulation is framed as affection. Mala utters "He told me it was our little secret, something special between us" (Dattani 14). This statement illustrates a deliberate micro assault, an explicit act of abuse disguised as intimacy to control Mala's silence. The assault is purposeful, wrapped in secrecy, and leaves lasting damage. Another example would be when Mala's frustration is seen as her mother dismisses her as promiscuous saying that, "You were always looking for men, Mala!" (Dattani 38). This verbal attack is an intentional one, designed to blame the victim and shift the responsibility away from the perpetrator. It demonstrates how family members become aggressors themselves by projecting shame and hostility on to the survivor rather than confronting the abuse. All these actions, as a result, deepen Mala's psychological fragmentation by reinforcing shame and guilt. As Sue notes, "micro assaults remind marginalized individuals of their vulnerability and powerlessness in society" (Sue 32). For Mala, each assault, from her uncle's disguised abuse to her mother's accusing remarks, cements her internalised sense of blame. These explicit aggressions, though covered, strip Mala of agency and perpetuate silence. The deliberate attacks remind her that her suffering is invisible, leaving her trapped between her abuser's control and her mother's hostility, ultimately prolonging her inability to heal herself.

Secondly, according to Sue, microinsults are communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity, and demean a person's heritage or identity (Sue 33). Microinsults are less direct but equally harmful, as they suggest that the survivor's experiences or behaviours are defective. These subtle acts may not be overtly hostile but they carry implications that wound the victim's self-worth. In "Thirty Days in September", microinsults manifest through mala's encounters with others who dismiss her trauma by ridiculing her coping mechanisms, criticising her relationships, or trivialising her pain. These indirect remarks damage her self-esteem and reinforce cycles of shame.

This is revealed in dialogues where Mala is belittled for her choices or mocked for her suffering. They come from family members or society, disguised as concern but loaded with insensitivity. By embedding microinsults in intimate exchanges, Dattani highlights the way that survivors are denied validation, making their pain appear exaggerated or illegitimate  for others. For instance, Mala recalls how her mother once ridiculed her by saying "You think all men will give you love? You are fooling yourself" (Dattani 27). This remark trivialises Mala's search for affection, reducing it to folly rather than acknowledging her longing for healing. It demeans her ability to form relationships and implies defectiveness. In another instance, during a confrontation, Mala is told "You have brought disgrace to this family!" (Dattani 40). Though framed as a concern for reputation, this insult undermines Mala's identity by equating her survival with disgrace. Instead of recognising the abuse, the focus shifts to her supposed shameful behaviour, showing that she, but not the abuser embodies dishonour. As a result, it corrodes Mala's self-esteem, convincing her that she is unworthy of love or respect. Sue observes, "microinsults demean the lived reality of marginalized individuals, making them feel incompetent or defective" (Sue 33). In the play, these subtle acts fuel Mala's confusion and self-hatred, as she internalises blame for circumstances beyond her control. They fracture her sense of identity portraying her not as a survivor but as a source as shame. The repeated insults, delivered in in intimate familial contexts, reinforce her silence and compound the trauma of her original abuse.

Sue describes microinvalidations as communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a marginalized person (Sue 34). These acts are especially damaging because they deny the legitimacy of the survivor's experiences. In "Thirty Days in September", microaggressions occur when Mala's suffering is minimised or silenced by others. The refusal to acknowledge trauma effectively erases the abuse, suggesting that it never occurred or is irrelevant. Such negation is devastating because it deprives survivors of validation, reinforcing cycles of denial and silencing that perpetuate intergenerational trauma. This is seen clearly through Shanta's silence and denial. Rather than affirming Mala's truth, Shanta repeatedly deflects or suppresses discussion of abuse. This erasure of Mala's experience exemplifies microinvalidation, nullifying her suffering and rendering her invisible. Dattani emphasises how survivors face violence along with the negation of their lived realities by others. For example, Mala pleads, "Why didn't you stop him, ma? You knew!" Shanta responds with silence (Dattani 42). Her refusal to speak negates Mala's reality, effectively invalidating her pain. This silence communicates complicity, reinforcing the idea that Mala's suffering is unworthy of recognission. Additionally, when Mala confronts her mother again, Shanta replies, "I have nothing to say about the past" (Dattani 45). This deliberate refusal invalidates Mala's memory

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as well as her ongoing trauma, suggesting her feelings are irrelevant. Instead of acknowledgement, Mala receives dismissal, which nullifies her identity as a survivor and amplifies her despair. All these invalidations, strip Mala of the validation necessary for healing. Sue emphasises, "microinvalidations strike at the heart of identity, denying the experiential reality of marginalized individuals" (Sue 34). By silencing Mala, Shanta not only perpetuates her daughter's trauma but also transmits her own unacknowledged suffering, exemplifying intergenerational denial. The negation of Mala's reality intensifies her alienation, leaving her with unresolved pain. In dramatizing this dynamic, Dattani underscores how invalidation is not passive but actively destructive, sustaining cycles of silence that keep abuse hidden and unchallenged within families and cultural structures.

On the whole, the play illustrates that micro assaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations intensify trauma beyond the original abuse. By dramatizing deliberate attacks, subtle slights, and silences, the play reveals the hidden wounds inflicted by family and society. Sue's framework exposes the way that these microaggressions perpetuate cycles of shame, silence, and intergenerational suffering. Ultimately, the analysis demonstrates that the play's power lies not only in portraying abuse but in uncovering its concealed reinforcements.

**Conclusion**

The study examined Mahesh Dattani's "Thirty Days in September" through Sue's theory of microaggressions to reveal how trauma is sustained beyond the original act of abuse. By identifying micro assaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations in the play, the research demonstrated that subtle harms deepen Mala's suffering and perpetuate intergenerational cycles of silence and silence and pain.

In addressing the research questions, the research found that Mala's trauma is compounded not only by her uncle's abuse but also by her mother's silence, accusations, and denial. Moreover, Shanta's refusal to acknowledge abuse are central to sustaining trauma. This reveals the deep impact of trauma in Mala, questioning her self-worth and struggling with shame and guilt. Shanta's silence also reveals that trauma transcends through generations. Shanta, being herself a victim, has become silent because of her trauma, now transcends the same silence and comments she received and attempts to silence the feelings of Mala like her.

Recommendations for future research would be to analyse the role of space in sustaining the trauma. This integrates trauma studies with postcolonial studies, reading the impact of trauma and space on identity. More similar research could be done on real-life narratives like memoires to address the issue effectively. Solving the problem in the nonfiction would be more relevant to the society attached to it. Child sexual abuse is not only a private wound but more than a social crime, and silence

makes us complicit. Dattani's play tears open the carefully guarded secrecy of Indian families, forcing the audience to confront shameful truths. We must learn that articulating the pain is the first step to heal the wound, and silence is no longer an option.

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**22**

# The Role of Storytelling in Language Learning for Students

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**Abstract**

The paper discusses the role of storytelling in language acquisition, highlighting how stories, movies, and online media are powerful vocabulary learners, grammatical understanding, and cultural knowledge acquisition agents. In contrast to rote learning, storytelling invokes emotion, imagination, and memory, enabling students to absorb language organically. Grounded in cognitive psychology, second language acquisition theory, and classroom-based research, this paper contends that storytelling encourages motivation, improves retention, and closes the gap between formal education and authentic communication. The discussion shows that when learners are presented with language through stories—oral, literary, cinematic, or electronic—they do not only acquire linguistic proficiency but also gain cultural understanding and critical thinking abilities. Storytelling thus presents itself as a potent and integral way of teaching languages in the 21st century.

*Keywords*: *storytelling, language learning, students, stories, films, online media, vocabulary*

**Introduction**

Language learning is commonly regarded as a mechanical activity of memorizing lists of vocabulary, doing grammar exercises, and copying correct sentences. Though such techniques are useful, they may also make language learning mechanically and dull. For learners, particularly those who are studying English as a second or foreign language, motivation and interest are important for continuous progress. Storytelling, in all its varieties—oral narratives, literature, cinema, and computer narratives—provides a natural and integrated method of learning language. Stories involve memory, imagination, and emotion, so they are effective means for learning vocabulary, grammar, and culture. It is an argument of this paper that storytelling, rather than an ancillary activity, needs to be considered an overarching pedagogical technique in language teaching since it allows learners to acquire language as it is experienced, sensed, and related

## Literature Review

Language education scholars have long recognized the significance of context and narrative in language acquisition. Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) highlights that students learn when they are subjected to "comprehensible input" that is a little in excess of their existing level of proficiency. Fiction offers precisely such input, placing vocabulary and structures in contextual contexts. Bruner (1990) contends that human beings are "storytelling animals," and narratives are essential to the way we think, remember, and perceive the world. Within language learning, stories make abstract rules of grammar into experiential encounters, thus improving recall. Literature confirms that storytelling is not an entertaining add-on but a scientifically validated approach to successful language learning.

## Storytelling and Learning Vocabulary

Stories surround learners with rich language environments in which words naturally emerge. Rather than memorizing lists, learners engage with vocabulary in contextualized sequences. For instance, reading a brief narrative such as O. Henry's The Gift of the Magi presents words in emotional and cultural contexts, which promotes recall. In the same way, movies and online media offer visual support that assists in students' making inferences about word meaning from context. Studies have demonstrated that students are more likely to recall words when associated with a narrative than isolated exercises.

## Grammar in Context

Perhaps the biggest problem with learning a language is grammar. Grammar rules taught in the abstract tend to confuse students. Storytelling solves this by context grammar in real communication. A learner who is regularly exposed to repeated narrative patterns—past tense verbs in narratives of "what happened yesterday" has internalized grammatical patterns without memorization. Movies and online services continue to contextualize grammar within natural, conversational dialogue and provide examples of natural speech that exceed textbook sentences.

## Cultural Insight through Narratives

Language is not separable from culture, and narration makes the community's customs, values, and conventions accessible. The study of folk tales, for example, enables learners to practice language in addition to gaining insight into cultural metaphors and societal values. Movies such as The Pursuit of Happiness or Slumdog Millionaire introduce learners to everyday expressions, idioms, and cultural settings, enhancing their communicative ability. This cultural immersion keeps students from perceiving language as an abstract system and locates it in human relationships.

## Digital Media and the New Storytelling

In the age of the internet, storytelling goes far beyond literary or oral traditions. YouTube, podcasting, and language-learning apps (e.g., Duolingo Stories) tap into narrative-based modules that inspire learners. Interactive, multimodal digital stories can be accessed with ease, making them highly suited to students who are used to online contexts. Evidence indicates that students who use digital storytelling tools have greater levels of motivation and recall than those who work in more traditional ways.

## Emotional Engagement and Motivation

It is the emotional aspect that makes storytelling so powerfully effective. Stories engage, build suspense, and elicit empathy. Research in neuroscience has confirmed that emotion strengthens memory retention. If students are emotionally engaged with a narrative, they are more likely to remember vocabulary and grammar. For instance, viewing a poignant movie scene or hearing a personal anecdote in class leaves a deeper linguistic mark than mechanical exercises.

## Storytelling as Student-Centered Learning

Storytelling also makes students producers, rather than consumers, of language. When students are directed to retell narratives, craft their own stories, or produce short digital videos, they participate in active production of language. This stimulates creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork skills. In student-created digital story classrooms, learning turns from teacher-centered to student-centered, conforming with contemporary pedagogical concepts.

## Conclusion

Storytelling isn't an add-on to language acquisition, it is a critical teaching tool that enables students to learn vocabulary, absorb grammar, and cultivate cultural understanding in natural and authentic ways. Students learn language not as a collection of discrete rules, but as a living, breathing entity, through stories, movies, and new media. For teachers, incorporating storytelling into lesson plans can close the distance between classroom instruction and authentic language use. For learners, storytelling creates the learning environment as a room of imagination, compassion, and self-expression. In the 21st century, with online platforms remapping education, storytelling is both evergreen and contemporary. It makes language learning not only successful but also enjoyable, relevant, and liberating.

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**23**

# Tradition, Western, and Third Space in "Clothes" by Chithra Banerjee Divakaruni

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### Abstract

This paper explores the concept of Third Space through the lens of post-colonial theory by Homi k. Bhabha. The story focuses on the themes of in-betweenness, shaped by colonialism, migration, hybridity, and the difference between tradition and modernity. It shows how people find liberation and happiness in clothing, and cultural negotiation. It also highlights the exploration of the Western cultural views and the experiences of new space. Clothing in *Clothes* symbolizes both modernity, and tradition. It plays a major role to highlight the situations the protagonist goes through in her life like marriage, and death. This paper also looks into how colonial mindset influences the choice of the Indian families and at last drives towards the middle grounding space. Moreover, Sumita's experiences leads her explore all the phases of life- Traditional, Western, and Third Space.

*Keywords*: Tradition, Western, and Third Space

### Introduction

*"Clothes"* is a short story from the collection *Arranged Marriage (1995)* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. This story is about a girl, Sumita, from Calcutta, India, who always dreams of marrying someone from abroad, and her parents- especially her father- works hard to get her married to the person who lives in the Western society. Her dream comes true, and after marriage, she moves to California, United States, as her husband Somesh is an Indian- American. Once moving there, everything seems different and wonderful to her. She always wears 'saris', and those 'saris' represent the situations and emotions she goes through. She also wears Western outfits like jeans and a nightie, which represent modernity. While everything goes well, a sudden unexpected heartbreak occurs: her husband has been killed in front of her by robbers who come to rob the store. Now, she struggles between two cultures, that is, Indian and American (Western).

Generally, this short story is seen through the lens of gender roles, migration, alienation and assimilation, marriage, cultural identity, family, love, and adoptability.

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But the colonial history of why Indians think that Westerners are superior, and Indians are backwards is not deeply discussed. Even in the post-colonial period, Indians think the same way and feel inferior of themselves. This paper examines the concept of *Third Space* by Homi K. Bhabha to focus on the in-between culture that the character experiences.

### Exploration, identity crisis, and liberation

These are the narratives that are most commonly seen. "It can be argued that this is an Americanization of Sumita, but it is much more truthful to suggest that Sumita is experiencing a 'Sumita-ization' as opposed to an Americanization, because she is calling the shots, and that is a universal theme that is not proprietary to any one culture." (Jaswal, 22). This reflects how Sumita fits not to American culture (Americanization) rather to herself (Sumita-ization), that is, she explores more about herself. "I'm wearing a pair of jeans now, marvelling at the curves of my hips and thighs, which have always been hidden under the flowing lines of my saris."(Divakaruni,4). Being an Indian, she finds everything has been hidden and locked where she cannot see her true self. The identity crisis is seen as a crucial thematic element in this story. "The central theme of the story Clothes is the incessant urge of Sumita to seek independence in the form of marriage and to romanticize that marriage would bring immigration'' (Chaturvedi 172).

Sumita longs for independence and that's the reason she wants to get married to a person who lives in a Western country. But, why only the Western men? The reason is especially in the 20ᵗʰ century Indian parents follow strict norms for women in the house for instance- how to behave, speak, dress up, sit, walk, respect, eat after the men in the family, not to stand in front of elders especially men, wake up early in the morning, must do household chores, and so on. After her marriage, Sumita for the first time wears a nightie and her husband Somesh says, "You're beautiful.". This is the first time she hears someone calling her beautiful and his voice starts fluttering low in her belly. She's very desperate to listen to it again and then he draws her close. "'Very beautiful,' he whispers. 'The most beautiful woman in the whole world.'" (Divakaruni,5). Suddenly something strikes her mind that her father will think this as inappropriate and her mother will make her vein.

### Background of Colonial mindset

Colonization made Indians think that they're backwards and Westerners are superiors. The reason is that the Westerners introduced western education, improved transportation, built structured buildings, and controlled politics. Indians by that time lacked everything and were not yet developed. Still there were some negative impacts like taxation and access of the spices in India by the Westerners. So, colonization made a big impact on every individual. That's the reason why Sumita's father worked hard,

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as she says, "Father had worked so hard to find this match for me", which affect the dreams of the Indians because these perceptions shaped a different influence on people of India and started to work hard to gain the name 'superior' in the same society. As a parent, he wants his daughter to be of a higher standard and it is also a symbol of status. She also mentions that she always dreams of it. Colonialization made changes not only outward aspects but also inner thoughts and psychological states. According to Stephen Bantu Biko, "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed".(Kaindl, 52). This highlights how strongly the colonizers target the minds of the colonized.

**Third Space**

Homi K. Bhabha introduces a concept called 'Third Space'. "Bhabha (1994) conceptualizes the third space of enunciation in coloniality and postcoloniality in a political discourse of in-betweenness and hybridity." (Bhandari, 172). Bhabha says that the identity is not the same but belongs to both sides. They practice both the culture and live in-between space or culture. Basically, he talks about colonial and post-colonial contexts, that is, the power struggle between colonizers and colonized people. Later, scholars used this concept in broader views like class struggle, where cultures collaborate and struggle with it.

"It is 'creative, malleable indeterminacy involving feelings of simultaneously repulsion and desire that exist at the interface between self and other, or between the polarities of unequal world that we still inhabit, of what Bhabha calls the 'ongoing colonial present'" (qtd. in Boehmer 355). Yes, people do feel different emotions and feelings in the in-between space where to belong and what their identity is. Some have superior power and others don't. So, it is unique and new that they create their own identity and live with it by belonging to a new space. It has both negative and positive ways of taking in. But it enables a space for questioning and switching of identity and culture.

**Third Space in Clothing**

After the marriage, Sumita moves to America and that's where Homi k. Bhabha's Third Space concept comes under post-colonial literature. She enjoys as well as struggles the in-betweenness of the culture and location. First, she relishes in the clothes she wears. Before marriage, she wears saris because she finds it as a tradition and roots of her culture. Being in a post-colonial era, she still finds it authentic and feels happiness in wearing it. When Somesh visits Sumita for the first time for bride viewing, her father gives a sari that is heavy but she thinks that it's going to change her life. But after marriage, she desires to wear western clothes which symbolizes modernity, dreams of superiority, cultural change, and adaptability. As she wears western clothes, it makes her feel exposed and embarrassed a bit as it is her first time

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wearing jeans and loose fit T-shirts which were bought by her husband. But after the death of her husband, she could only wear the cotton white saree which symbolizes widowhood. "Widows in white saris, their heads covered, serve tea to their in-laws if you return to India. Doves with their wings lopped off" (qtd. in Fatima and Arif 33). Clothes have become a part of her Third Space, that is in-betweenness where it creates an identity and not fixed.

## Third Space in Immigration

The emigration plays a major role because the shift from one place to another to reside gives a sense of in-betweenness. Sumita after her marriage moves to America with her husband and wonders by the timings of the shops. Basically, in India, shops run in a specific timings and it is shopping owner decision to close and open. Particularly the name of the shops will be "Ganesh Sweet House, Lakshmi Vastralaya for Fine Saris—to bring the owners luck" but the store name in America is called "7-Eleven"(Divakaruni,2). It conveys the accessibility and how the westerners have a fast-moving life which is a contrast to the Indian tradition. Especially, Somesh says, "A lot of Americans drink, you know. It's a part of their culture, not considered immoral, like it is here."(Divakaruni,2). It shows how the westerners normalize alcohol. Sumita wonders by standing in the middle ground where she finds alcohol is a taboo in Indian nature, while Somesh embraces the western lifestyle. This brings a stress on what to consider 'normal', as Sumita comes from a traditional background and is still confused.

Here, Third Space highlights how cultures constantly switch and allows the traditions to reinterpret in shifting ways. "Divakaruni resists depicting them as mere symbols of suffering. Rather, her storytelling privileges ambiguity and complexity, allowing these women to inhabit in-between spaces where cultural hybridity thrives" (Vasumathi 380). After the death of her husband, she experiences freedom within the in-betweenness, amidst personal suffering and loss. She doesn't feel low or weak after the loss but still has the courage to survive in the third space. It highlights how Divakurani carries the idea of a woman even in the midst of destruction.

## Conclusion

This article explores the struggle to fit in one culture, either Indian or Western. The character shows a mixture of emotions and change in culture by applying the concept of Homi k. Bhabha's *Third space.* The colonial period has changed Indians' psychological state and shaped their intention unconsciously. Sumita's movement from India to America places her in a space where modernity and traditional views, culture, and values clash. Through her experiences, Divakurani highlights the impact of migration and experience of hybridity where Sumita embraces both cultural

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practices and a diasporic identity. Despite her loss, third space allows to find liberation in the middle ground.

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# Comparison of Selected Job – Related Variables Between Male and Female Travel Writers

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to compare selected job-related variables between male and female travel writers in Chennai. To achieve this objective, 20 male and 20 female travel writers were randomly selected. Their ages ranged from 21 to 30 years, with a work experience of one to three years. The job-related variables included writing satisfaction, writing involvement, writing productivity, quality of writing, in-time submission, and writing absenteeism. Writing satisfaction and involvement among travel writers were assessed by adapting scales such as the Writer Satisfaction Scale (Bentley and Kyvik), Kanungo's Job Involvement Scale (1982), and procrastination measures (Lay; Tuckman) for absenteeism in writing tasks. Productivity and quality were evaluated through publication counts, peer review assessments, and reader feedback rubrics. The collected data were statistically analyzed using an independent t-test. The results indicated a significant difference between male and female travel writers in the selected job-related variables. Specifically, male travel writers demonstrated higher writing satisfaction and productivity, whereas female travel writers performed better in writing involvement, quality of writing, in-time submission, and regularity of writing.

*Keywords*: *Job-Related Variables, Male and Female Travel Writers.*

## Introduction to Travel Writers

Travel writers are more than storytellers of journeys; they are interpreters of cultures, landscapes, and human experiences. Their narratives go beyond mapping routes or describing monuments—they capture the spirit of places and the emotions of encounters, turning travel into literature. Through a blend of observation, reflection, and imagination, travel writers invite readers to experience distant lands, diverse traditions, and unique ways of life as if they were part of the journey themselves.

Throughout history, travel writers have played a vital role in shaping cross-cultural understanding. Accounts by Fa-Hien, Hiuen Tsang, and Ibn Battuta opened windows

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into India's spiritual traditions, social practices, and vibrant cultural exchanges. Colonial-era travelogues, despite their biases, documented landscapes, communities, and heritage that still form part of India's historical record. In the modern era, writers such as Pico Iyer, William Dalrymple, and V.S. Naipaul have offered layered narratives that explore India's diversity, contradictions, and global identity. Today, the scope of travel writing has expanded further through blogs, digital essays, and visual storytelling, allowing countless new voices to share authentic perspectives with global audiences.

Travel writers serve as cultural mediators and preservers of memory. By chronicling traditions, environments, and human interactions, they create texts that are not only literary but also historical, cultural, and ecological records. Their work reminds us that travel is not only about moving across physical spaces but also about connecting across cultures, identities, and generations.

Writing Satisfaction: The contentment (or lack of it) that arises from a travel writer's positive or negative feelings toward the process of documenting journeys, describing experiences, and sharing narratives with readers.

Writing Involvement: Represents the degree of identification a travel writer has with their craft. The more central writing is to the writer's life, the deeper their involvement, reflected in the time, effort, and passion invested in travel narratives. Research suggests that diversity of experiences, creative challenges, and a sense of achievement enhance writing involvement.

Writing Productivity: A measure of the efficiency with which a travel writer converts travel experiences, observations, and research into meaningful literary outputs such as articles, blogs, books, or digital posts.

Quality of Writing: Refers to the ability of a travel writer to craft narratives with clarity, accuracy, and creativity—capturing not only the physical description of places but also the cultural, historical, and emotional depth of the journey.

In-time Submission: Refers to the travel writer's ability to meet deadlines by producing travel accounts, reports, or manuscripts within the scheduled timeframe, ensuring relevance and timeliness.

Writing Absenteeism: Refers to a writer's tendency to delay or neglect travel documentation, either by postponing note-taking, skipping publication schedules, or failing to capture essential experiences during or after a journey.

**Purpose Of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to compare the selected job-related variables between male and female Travel Writers.

## Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the selected job-related variables namely Writing Satisfaction, writing involvement, writing productivity, quality of writing, in-time submission, and Writing absenteeism between male and female Travel Writers.

## Methodology

To achieve the purpose of the study, 20 male and 20 female travel writers were randomly selected. Their ages ranged from 21 to 30 years, and their work experience was between one and three years. The job-related variables considered were writing satisfaction, writing involvement, writing productivity, quality of writing, in-time submission, and writing absenteeism. Writing satisfaction and involvement among travel writers were assessed by adapting the Writer Satisfaction Scale (Bentley and Kyvik 2011), Kanungo's Job Involvement Scale (1982) applied in creative contexts, and procrastination scales (Lay 1986; Tuckman 1991) for absenteeism in writing tasks. Productivity and quality were measured through publication counts, peer reviews, and reader feedback. The scores for writing productivity, quality of writing, in-time submission, and writing absenteeism were collected from the writers' official logs, blogs, articles, and publication records. Percentages were then calculated using the following formulas.

**Writing Productivity** = (Number of Completed Writing Tasks / Number of Assigned Writing Tasks) × 100

**Quality of Writing** = (Number of Writing Tasks without Errors / Number of Assigned Writing Tasks) × 100

**In-time Submission** = (Number of Tasks Submitted On Time / Number of Assigned Tasks) × 100

**Writing Absenteeism** = (Number of Tasks Delayed or Skipped / Number of Assigned Tasks) × 100

The collected data were statistically analyzed with independent t-tests. The level of significance was fixed at 0.05.

## Results And Discussion

**Table 1**: Shows the Mean, Standard Deviation, Mean Differences, and "t" value of Selected Job-related Variables between Male and Female Travel Writers.

| Variables | Groups | Mean | SD | MD | T |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Writing Satisfaction | Male | 37.5 | 19.07 | 13.4 | 2.46* |
| | Female | 51.0 | 13.68 | | |

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| Writing involvement | Male | 88.65 | 14.72 | 12.65 | 3.13* |
| | Female | 101.4 | 9.53 | | |
| Writing productivity | Male | 91.10 | 4.73 | 3.6 | 2.21* |
| | Female | 87.6 | 5.91 | | |
| Quality of Writing | Male | 87.35 | 6.99 | 6.10 | 2.76* |
| | Female | 93.35 | 7.39 | | |
| in-time submission | Male | 79.15 | 15.01 | 9.65 | 2.42* |
| | Female | 88.99 | 8.36 | | |
| Writing absenteeism | Male | 21.15 | 15.06 | 9.4 | 2.48* |
| | Female | 11.65 | 6.28 | | |

*Significant at 0.05 level of confidence, the Table value required for df 38 is 2.024*

.The results presented in Table I show the mean values of writing satisfaction of males (37.5) and females (51.0) Travel Writers and that there was a significant difference between the male and female Travel Writers in the writing satisfaction as the obtained t value 2.46 was greater than the required t value of 2.024. The result of the study also shows that the male Travel writers were better at writing satisfaction than the female Travel Writers. (The writing satisfaction scale indicates lower the score higher the level of writing satisfaction)

The mean values of writing involvement of males (88.65) and female (101.4) Travel writers that there was a significant difference between the male and female travel writers in the writing involvement as the obtained t value of 3.13 was greater than the required t value of 2.024. The result of the study also shows that the female travel writers were better in writing involvement than the male travel writers.

The mean values of writing productivity of male (91.10) and female (87.6) travel writers and that there was a significant difference between the male and female travel writers, in the writing productivity as the obtained t value 2.21 was greater than the required t value of 2.024. The result of the study also shows that the male travel writers were better in productivity than the female travel writers.

The mean values of quality of writing of male (87.35) and female (93.35) travel writers and that there was a significant difference between the male and female travel writers in the quality of writing as the obtained t value 2.76 was greater than the required t value of 2.024. The result of the study also shows that the female travel writers were better in quality of work than the male travel writers.

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The mean values of in-time submission of male (79.15) and female (88.99) travel writers and that there was a significant difference between the male and female travel writers in the in-time submission for work as the obtained t value 2.42 was greater than the required t value of 2.024. The result of the study also shows that the female travel writers were better in time submission for work than the male travel writers

The mean values of writing absenteeism of male (21.15) and female (11.65) travel writers and that there was a significant difference between the male and female travel writers in the writing absenteeism to work as the obtained t value 2.48 was greater than the required t value of 2.024. The result of the study also shows that the female travel writers had less writing absenteeism than the male travel writers (Lower Absenteeism percentages indicate higher regularity in the work.)

The above results indicate that the research hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Bar Diagram - 1** Showing the Mean values of Selected Job-related Variables between Male and Female Travel writers
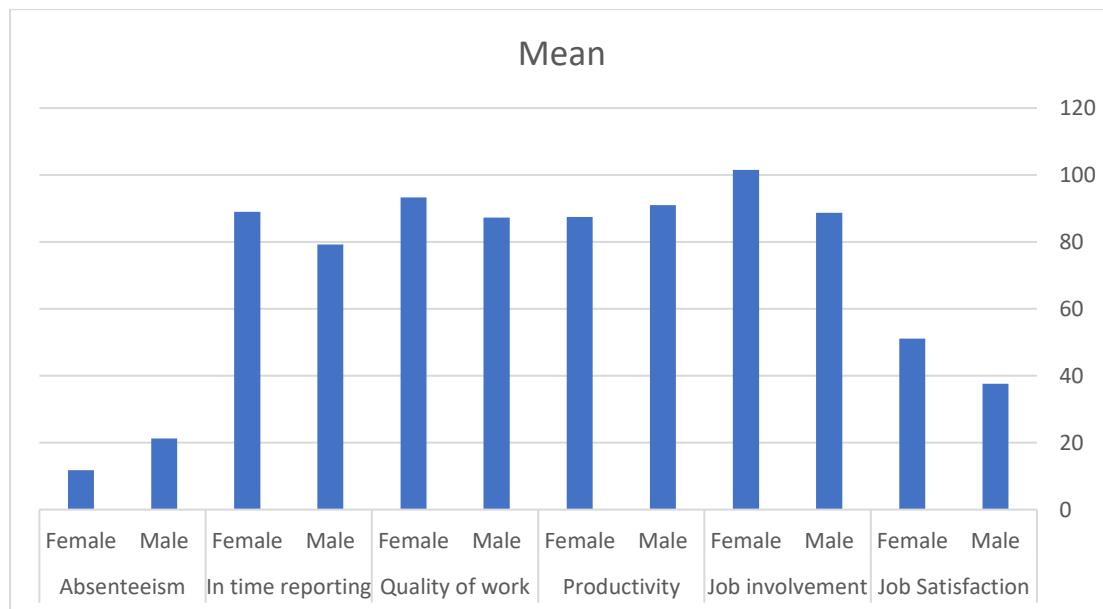


**Conclusions**

Within the limitations of the study, the following conclusions were drawn

1. It was concluded that the male and female travel writers differ significantly in the selected job-related variables.

2. It was concluded that the male travel writers were better in the selected job-related variables namely writing satisfaction and writing productivity than the result of female travel writers.

3. It was concluded that the female travel writers were better in the selected job-related variables namely writing involvement, quality of writing, and in-time submission of work than the male travel writers.

4. It was also concluded that the female travel writers were more regular to the work than the male travel writers as their writing absenteeism percentage was lesser than the male travel writers.

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# Unheard Voices: Exploring the Struggles of Indian Women through Literature

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the struggles of Indian women as represented and interpreted through literature. By analyzing gendered narratives, societal expectations, and women's lived experiences across regions and generations, this work attempts to "reimagine Indian literature" as a space where unheard voices can finally speak. The perspectives of women—as daughters, sisters, mothers, and survivors—illustrate both the costs of systemic patriarchy and the possibilities of resistance.

*Keywords*: narratives, societal expectations, and lived experiences, generations

## Introduction

In the diverse and evolving realm of Indian literature, women's voices have historically been marginalized, silenced, or overshadowed by patriarchal narratives. The stories of women have often remained confined within the private sphere, rarely acknowledged in the broader discourses of history, politics, and culture. One of the most significant contributions toward reclaiming these silenced narratives comes from feminist scholars and writers such as Urvashi Butalia. Her landmark work, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (1998), highlights how women bore untold burdens during one of the most traumatic moments in South Asian history—the Partition of 1947. Butalia re-centers women's experiences, emphasizing that their struggles are not only markers of victimhood but also of resilience, strength, and survival.

## The Struggle is Real

In reality, the daily life of Indian women is riddled with struggles that manifest both in visible and invisible ways. Issues such as domestic responsibilities, systemic discrimination, and gender-based violence are not merely personal but deeply rooted in social structures. Compared to men, women face multiple intersecting challenges that include financial inequality, lack of autonomy, and continuous scrutiny within

family and society. As Urvashi Butalia highlights in *The Other Side of Silence*, the Partition not only tore apart communities but also left women to shoulder unspoken suffering—rape, abduction, forced conversions, and displacement. Yet, even amid immense trauma, women demonstrated remarkable resilience. Their survival stories complicate the simplistic narrative of women as passive victims, instead presenting them as agents of endurance and adaptation. Thus, the struggle of Indian women is both real and layered—marked by pain but also underscored by resilience and strength.

## Societal Expectations

Indian women's identities are often shaped and limited by societal expectations. Society dictates roles for women—as obedient daughters, submissive wives, and self-sacrificing mothers. Their autonomy is curtailed not only within the family but also in the public sphere. From career choices to marriage decisions, women continue to feel the weight of cultural prescriptions that prioritize male dominance and family honor.

Butalia points out that women's experiences are not merely personal but political. Their everyday negotiations with patriarchal structures shed light on how deeply politics and societal rules intrude into private life. For example, a woman's choice of dress or mobility often becomes a matter of social debate, illustrating how her individuality is publicly monitored. Literature, therefore, becomes a powerful site where women grapple with and challenge such expectations. Novels, memoirs, and oral testimonies expose how these societal roles marginalize women yet also show how women subtly resist, circumvent, and reclaim agency within these boundaries.

## Regional Differences

India's vast geography and cultural diversity mean that women's experiences are not homogenous. The struggles of women in North India may differ significantly from those in South India, while those in rural regions contrast with their urban counterparts. For instance, while women in metropolitan cities increasingly access education and employment, many rural women continue to grapple with child marriage, dowry-related violence, and caste-based discrimination. Butalia emphasizes the importance of understanding these regional and cultural variations when discussing the "Indian woman." During Partition, for example, accounts from Punjab are distinct from those in Bengal, yet both reveal specific kinds of violence directed against women. Feminist literature, by foregrounding these differences, challenges the stereotype of an "ideal Indian woman" and instead presents a mosaic of diverse realities. By acknowledging regional differences, literature ensures that local struggles receive visibility, making the marginal truly central in the narrative.

## The Burden of Being a Girl Child

The unequal treatment of the girl child has long existed in Indian society. From the moment of birth—sometimes even before—girls are seen as a burden rather than a blessing. Female infanticide, foeticide, malnutrition, and denial of education are enduring problems tied to the preference for male heirs. The cultural perception of the female child as an economic liability reflects deeply ingrained patriarchal values. She is considered someone who will eventually "belong" to her husband's family, depriving her natal home of long-term benefit. Butalia, while examining Partition narratives, reveals how the girl child was doubly vulnerable—being female in a patriarchal culture and at the mercy of larger national conflicts. Literature continues to reflect this bias but also critiques it, offering stories of women who challenge gender norms and succeed despite systemic disfavor.

### Inequality in the Family

Indian families often normalize inequality by positioning male members as natural heirs to privileges, property, and authority. Brothers are prioritized over sisters in matters of education, inheritance, and freedom. Women's identities are framed in relation to male relatives—first as daughters under their father, later as wives under their husbands, and ultimately as mothers under their sons' patronage. Butalia reminds us that these familial hierarchies mirror the nation itself, where citizenship and belonging are often marked by patriarchy. Literature like hers, and that of other feminist writers, exposes these intimate inequalities. By documenting personal experiences, novels and memoirs reveal how private spaces—including households—become the ground for systemic oppression. Yet, literature also showcases how individual women resist these limitations by demanding education, asserting their legal rights, and forming women's collectives.

### Oppression in Adolescence

Adolescence is often a critical stage in shaping women's identities, yet it is also where oppression becomes acute. Adolescent girls are subjected to stricter social control, overbearing restrictions on mobility, and judgments about modesty and behavior. Their bodies become sites of surveillance, and their choices stand constantly scrutinized. Literary works illustrate how adolescence is often punctuated by harassment, child marriage, and even honor-based violence. Butalia's works call attention to the silences surrounding the sexual abuse of young girls, especially during Partition, when many adolescents disappeared into histories that were neither recorded nor mourned. Literature recovers these voices, challenging the taboos surrounding the acknowledgment of adolescent struggles.

### The Struggle for Peace

The feminist discourse in literature underscores that Indian women rarely lead lives free of turmoil. Struggles for dignity, safety, and equality dominate their narratives.

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From dowry deaths to gender-based violence, from restricted mobility to political exclusion, peace is often elusive. However, as Butalia emphasizes, women are not defined only by suffering. They embody resilience, resourcefulness, and resistance. Stories of survivors illustrate how women not only bear violence but also rebuild their lives with remarkable strength. Thus, literature reframes the image of women—not as perpetual victims but as active agents shaping family, community, and nation.

### The Caged Peacock

A common metaphor for women in Indian literature is that of the "caged bird," symbolizing suppressed potential. Women, like the caged peacock, are adorned and celebrated for beauty yet denied true freedom. Social restrictions on their dress, speech, movement, and aspirations create invisible cages, preventing them from soaring. Feminist writings and autobiographies argue that breaking free from these cages requires education, empowerment, and collective solidarity. Literature functions as both mirror and hammer—it reflects existing oppression while breaking through narratives of female confinement. Butalia's emphasis on storytelling shows that giving space to women's voices can dismantle these cages, restoring dignity and freedom.

### Personal Experiences

Women's struggles cannot be understood in abstraction alone—they are deeply personal. A married woman may narrate experiences of emotional labor, domestic pressure, and unequal partnerships. A working woman may describe the challenges of balancing professional responsibilities with gendered expectations at home. By situating personal narratives within broader feminist discourse, literature bridges the gap between the private and the political. Butalia asserts that every account matters because individual testimonies collectively reframe historical and social memory. As such, amplifying women's lived experiences remains essential to both literature and society at large.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the struggles of Indian women are complex, layered, and deeply intertwined with the cultural, social, and political fabric of the nation. Indian literature—especially feminist writing—has played an indispensable role in recovering women's silenced voices, reinterpreting histories, and challenging systemic inequality. Writers like Urvashi Butalia remind us that women's stories are not marginal footnotes but central to understanding the past, present, and future of Indian society. By reimagining literature as a space inclusive of unheard voices, we move closer to a more just and equitable world—one where women are no longer invisible, silent, or confined but recognized as vital agents of change and resilience.

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# English Language Teaching and Learning Using Social Media Platforms

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**Abstract**

Social media is emerging in various forms to bring all the people around the world interlinked each other. It plays an important role in creating interest in learning English as a foreign language by providing a broad range of authentic materials. Both Internet and social media have a strong impact on the preferred learning styles of young learners from non-native English speaking countries who are eager to learn the language. In the present global scenario of pandemic outbreak, when all the lives are stuck inside the domicile, social media can influence the language learners in an enormous standard since millions of people breathe on it. This article illustrates how social media has influenced teaching and learning English at the present scenario. There is no controversy in using social media as a learning platform since it has already been integrated into an informal education system for decades. Language teachers have changed their roles into 'facilitators' by adhering to such innovative practices in the teaching learning process. The role of a facilitator is to create a stress-free learning environment and to promote more group activities. The social media helps the language instructor to stay connected with their students around the world and to stay updated in the teaching field. This research study proves that social interaction through social media is a stimulus for the language learners to develop their communication skills.

*Keywords:* *Social Media, English Language Teaching*

## 1. Introduction

Face-to-face traditional language learning methods, relying heavily on lectures, result in mechanical memorization and boredom for students. English is widely used in numerous nations; therefore, it's crucial that this language should be imparted in such a manner as to facilitate our ability to converse and express ourselves accurately. Traditional classroom-based English teaching turns the learning experience into a dull routine for students who become inactive listeners. Diverging from conventional approaches and employing novel strategies for imparting the English language effectively is crucial in this context.

Language Skills are crucial for building relationships where individuals can express themselves freely and interact socially. The internet is the best way to improve language abilities by using social media. Receptive and productive language skills exist in two forms; listening and reading belong to receptive skills, while writing and speaking fall under productive skills. Both your listening abilities and speaking skills can be improved through the use of social media. Learners who study English as a second language enhance their interpersonal abilities through various social media platforms that help them develop an interest in learning English. Popular social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp provide learners with an abundance of valuable data that they can access whenever necessary.

People can connect with anyone anywhere via the internet; they can stay in constant contact with loved ones at all times. Language and culture depend on each other; understanding the second language's culture enhances comprehension of the language (Chen & Yang, 2007). Social media's learning resources facilitate collaborative document creation and optimize language proficiency development methods.
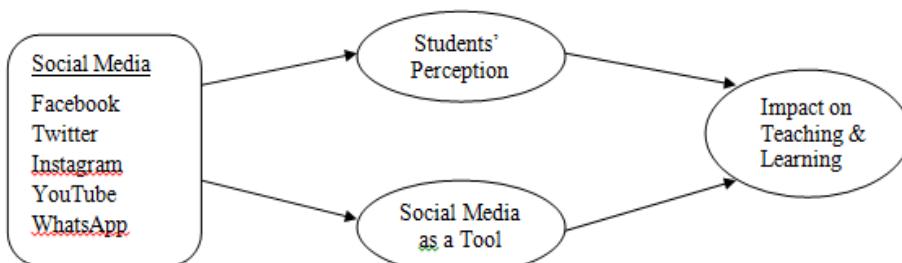


**Fig. 1 Social Media in English Teaching and Learning**

While interacting on social media platforms, students have the chance to converse with classmates from various parts of the globe beyond the confines of their isolated classroom setting. Achieving greater confidence is the key accomplishment for learners when they interact with individuals from diverse parts of the world. Computer and internet serve as universal tools that draw language learners into

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utilizing their linguistic abilities globally. The media provides access to the global community, allowing students and teachers to communicate anytime and anywhere.

## 2. Literature Review

Literature reviews consistently show that social media positively affects English Language Teaching (ELT) with the aid of enhancing communicative skills, fostering collaboration, and providing get entry to true mastering resources and cultural immersion structures like Facebook Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp are extensively used, providing diverse equipment for vocabulary development, actual-time interplay, and publicity to actual-world language. Whilst social media offers numerous blessings, demanding situations consist of integrating it efficaciously into curricula and addressing issues like educational integrity and ability distractions. At the same time as exploring the views of researches approximately the position of social media in language studying, it is clear that it increases the interaction between teachers and students. Depew says that "Social Media increase strength of speech thru online communication approximately various issues with native and non-native audio system" (Depew, 2011). Kendle and Northcote in their opinion say that rookies get chance to analyze the competencies implicitly when they discuss the techniques on-line and trying to find the information (Kendle, 2001). They earn high confidence because of the greater remarks they get whilst discussing in the on-line scenario (Davis & Thiede, as noted in Chen & Yang, 2007, p.863). A synchronized e-chat which has undertaking based totally training became executed by means of Lee to increase learner relation and verbal exchange talents (Lee, 2002). An equal danger is supplied by the next generation to the novices of English as second language (Goodfellow & Lamy, 1999).

Many researchers have been done approximately Facebook that is appearing as a very good device for getting to know English as a worldwide language. Facebook has been used as a beneficial device for enhancing interplay among instructors and their college students (Godwin-Jones, 2008). It has a superb effect on the educational settings for the lecturers in addition to the students (Villano, 2007). The function of the cultural differences in growing, more members of the family via social networks has been proved by means of several researches (Cho, 2010) and the folks who are associated with various cultured oldsters are located to be extra adaptable to the new lifestyle (Ryan, Margo & Sharp, 2011).

Researches on e-mails and language studying are also another manner to show the significance of social media inside the coaching of English as a foreign language. The researchers explored that e-mails help the language inexperienced persons to have a long term interaction with their instructors with the aid of receiving the proper feedback at proper time (Wang, as cited in Li, 2000, p.31). Instructors from special

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international locations were the use of electronic mail as a success device for giving diverse tasks for the scholars of various cultures and languages. It's also high-quality that the native audio systems have given informative email feedbacks on the inexperienced persons of 2d language (Sotillo, 1997). Goodwin furnished a preface in language development and tradition arrangement through e- mail for a collection of Latin America's researchers before their stepping into America (Goodwin as mentioned in Liaw, 1998, p.337). Different researches have been about the usage of computer systems in language mastering. Researchers examined the role of computer systems inside the language getting to know and found its miles one of the nice equipment to growing language talents. Language teaching-learning process became operated by means of microcomputer and additionally use for the idea of communicative competence, the notional and purposeful syllabi and language teaching methodologies based on the Communicative technique (Tell & Kelm, as stated in Liaw, 1998, p.336). Despite the fact that the social media and the PC network device cannot resolve all of the problems in a short time, this literature review shows that the social media like Facebook, e-mail and other sources can assist the language newbies to a certain volume to eliminate the limitations of improving their conversation talents.

## 3. Methodology

### A. Social Media Platforms Used In English Language Teaching

### i) Facebook

Facebook is the most widely used social networking service, and it plays a big role in the daily lives of many young learners. It helps people connect with each other, even if they are in different parts of the world, by allowing them to share knowledge and information. Teachers often use Facebook to share educational content, start discussions, and encourage collaboration among students. The platform provides various learning tools such as videos, images, and chat features, which can be combined with other social media platforms to enhance the learning experience. With millions of users globally, it's not surprising that many online teaching websites rely on Facebook as a primary platform for sharing resources.

The benefits of Facebook include:

- Teachers can ask students for feedback or collect data through polls.

- Questionnaires can be made to better understand student interests and encourage active participation in learning.

- Learning materials uploaded on Facebook are easily accessible anytime and anywhere, helping to reduce the need for classroom time and allowing for updates or corrections as needed.

- Notifications from Facebook help students stay informed about changes on the page, such as new group creations, comments, or uploaded content.

- Instructors can assign group work, and evaluations can be conducted to support collaboration between students and between teachers and students.

### ii)      Twitter

Twitter is commonly used in the teaching of English to help Students and Teachers communicate better, work together, and share information. This is done through various activities such as making posts or sharing content, taking part in discussions, linking up with people from around the world, and using different teaching resources. These activities help improve students' and teachers' motivation, their vocabulary, and their ability to think critically.

There are several advantages to using Twitter in English Language Teaching, including:

- Better Communication and Teamwork

- Stronger Vocabulary and Reading Abilities

- Improved Critical Thinking Skills

- Access to a Wide Range of Teaching Materials

- Building Connections with People Globally

- Opportunities for Teacher Growth and Learning

- Higher Levels of Motivation and Involvement

### iii)      Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform that was created in 2010 with the main purpose of sharing photos. Over time, it has grown significantly within the social media landscape by introducing new features such as video sharing, image posting, and messaging (Ellison, 2017). When it comes to using Instagram for learning English, various studies have shown that it can be a very effective tool for students. It allows them to communicate with their classmates and also interact with teachers, which helps in building a sense of teamwork. Instagram can be used in a wide range of educational activities, such as digital storytelling, role-playing, speaking and recording exercises, and grammar activities based on pictures. As a result, it can help students improve all four key language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

### iv) YouTube

YouTube is the most widely used social networking platform that offers a huge collection of educational content. On this platform, there are countless educational

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videos available, making it possible for learners to access these materials anytime and anywhere, regardless of their location. By setting up a YouTube account, educators can easily record their lessons and upload them onto the platform for others to watch. These videos can be accessed by students, downloaded, and used for practicing the target language either online or offline. Incorporating appropriate videos can significantly enhance language lessons. Teachers can also make their classroom sessions more enjoyable and interactive by using YouTube videos, which helps in keeping students more involved and interested in their studies. A YouTube playlist functions as a well-organized space where all the educational videos are stored and students can easily reach them by clicking on the provided link. Many students find it easier to learn by watching videos rather than reading text. One of the key benefits of YouTube is that it allows teachers to record their classes and save them for future reference, making it a valuable repository for educational resources. If a link to a recorded class is created, it can be shared with students for later viewing, which is especially helpful for those who were unable to attend the live session.

### v) WhatsApp

As technology continues to develop at a faster pace, computers and laptops are no longer seen as advanced technology. Instead, smart mobile phones have taken over the role of connecting people around the world quickly and efficiently. The wide range of applications available on app stores has inspired language learners to improve their language skills more easily. WhatsApp messenger is a secure, cross-platform, and encrypted messaging service for smartphones. It allows users to send and receive text messages, documents, images, audio files, and videos using just a regular mobile number. WhatsApp has become one of the most widely used social network applications due to its simple and user-friendly interface. Communication through WhatsApp is simpler than many other social media apps, which often require multiple steps to get started. Students can share learning materials on WhatsApp, helping them practice their English with enthusiasm and interest. Moreover, it's exciting and beneficial that they can not only share academic content but also interesting facts and information, making the learning process more engaging.

### B. Benefits Of Social Media in English Language Teaching and Learning

Using social media in English Language Teaching provides various advantages, such as access to real-life content, interaction with native speakers, better digital literacy, and opportunities for collaborative learning. It also helps increase motivation, provides real-world contexts for language use, and makes the learning environment more interactive and enjoyable by connecting learners with a global community and diverse materials such as videos and articles.

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## I. Benefits of Social Media for the Teachers:

### i) Diverse and Engaging Resources:

Teachers can discover and adapt a wide variety of educational resources from social media platforms to support and enhance classroom learning.

### ii) Facilitated Communication:

Social media offers a new and exciting way for teachers and students to interact and communicate, creating a more connected and supportive learning environment.

### iii) Interactive and Modernized Teaching:

Social media enables more dynamic and engaging teaching methods, keeping instructional approaches fresh, professional, and effective.

### iv) Student-Centered Learning:

By encouraging interaction and the exchange of information among students, social media supports a learner-focused environment in language learning.

## II. Benefits of Social Media for the Learners:

### i) Access to Authentic Language:

Social media provides real-world authentic English content like videos, articles, and conversations, as well as exposure to native speakers, which is essential for improving comprehension and fluency.

### ii) Increased Motivation & Engagement:

The interactive and engaging nature of social media, including the use of multimedia and interactive features, makes learning more enjoyable and keeps learners motivated.

### iii) Improved Digital Literacy:

Using social media platforms helps students develop essential digital skills that are necessary for their academic and future professional lives.

### iv) Collaborative Learning:

Platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp allow students to work together on assignments, share ideas, and support each other, creating a collaborative learning environment.

### v) Flexible & Convenient Learning:

Learners can access learning materials and participate in discussions at their own pace and according to their own schedule, making the learning experience more flexible.

### vi) Enhanced Confidence for Shy Learners:

Students who are hesitant to speak in traditional classroom settings may find it easier to express themselves and participate through written communication on social media.

## 4. Result And Discussion

The result and discussion from this study revealed that social media plays a significant role in enhancing students' interest in learning English. It helps English learners acquire new vocabulary and language skills that are relevant to their level of proficiency, making the learning process more accessible compared to traditional text-based materials like books. Social media also helps to arouse interest in English language learning, and learners often use these tools for extended periods without feeling bored or hesitant. The findings showed that using social media is easier for learners compared to reading books or searching for materials in a library. Learners often turn to social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other similar tools to improve their interest in English learning, not only through text but also through visual content like pictures and videos shared online.

**Graph 1: The Role of Social Media in English Language Development**

### Table 1
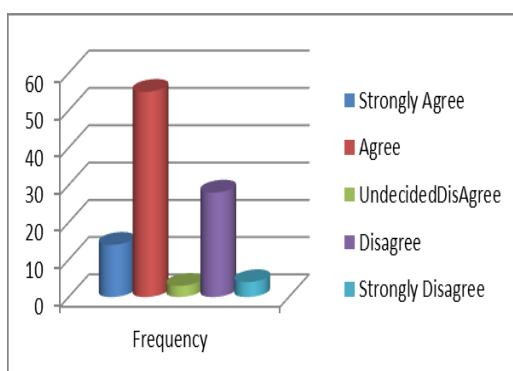


| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| V a l i d | Strongly disagree | 4 | 3.84 |
| | Disagree | 28 | 26.92 |
| | Undecided | 3 | 2.89 |
| | Agree | 55 | 52.8 |
| | Strongly agree | 14 | 13.5 |
| | **Total** | **104** | **100.0** |

The data presented in Table 1 shows how the social media is important in the development of English language vocabulary. It is evident from the responses that a significant majority of participants believe social media plays a major role in expanding their vocabulary. Specifically, 69 respondents, which is 66.3% of the total, either agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that using social media is a dominant factor in vocabulary growth. On the other hand, 32 respondents, or 30.8% of the total,

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disagreed with this statement, while only 3 respondents, which is 2.9%, remained undecided about the role of social media in vocabulary development.

**Graph 2: The Use of Social Media is More Interesting than Books Reading**

**Table 2**
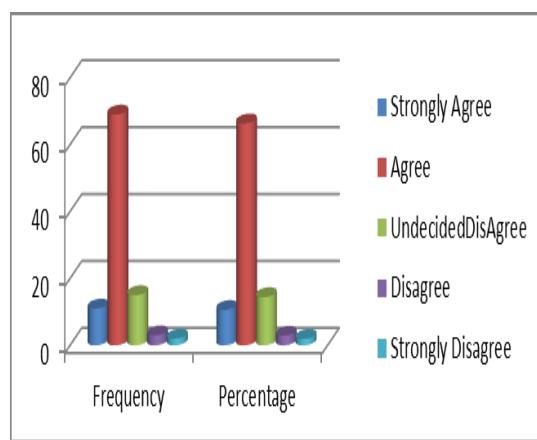
| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **V a l i d** | Strongly disagree | 2 | 1.92 |
| | Disagree | 3 | 2.88 |
| | Undecided | 15 | 14.42 |
| | Agree | 69 | 66.34 |
| | Strongly agree | 11 | 10.57 |
| | **Total** | **104** | **100.0** |

The data presented in Table 2 shows that among the 104 respondents, only 2 individuals, which is about 1.9%, strongly agreed that using social media is more interesting than reading books for vocabulary development at the university level. On the other hand, 3 respondents, or approximately 2.88%, disagreed with this statement. A further 15 people, making up around 14.42%, were undecided. However, the majority of the respondents, which is 69 individuals or 66.34%, agreed with the statement, while 11 respondents, or about 10.57%, strongly agreed with it.

**Graph 3: Learners do not feel Boredom while Social Media for Language Learning Purposes**

**Table 3**
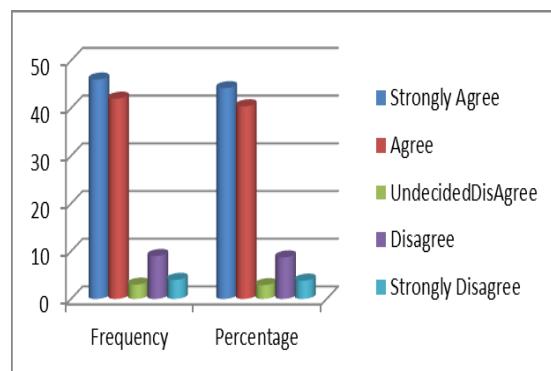
| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **V a l i d** | Strongly disagree | 4 | 3.8 |
| | Disagree | 9 | 8.7 |
| | Undecided | 3 | 2.9 |
| | Agree | 42 | 40.4 |
| | Strongly agree | 46 | 44.2 |
| | **Total** | **104** | **100.0** |

The information presented in Table 3 reveals that among the 104 participants surveyed, the majority, which is 88 individuals or 84.6%, either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that students do not experience any boredom when using various social media platforms for English language learning at the university level. A very small

number, specifically 3 participants or 2.9%, were undecided about the statement. On the other hand, 13 participants, making up 12.5% of the total respondents, disagreed with the statement.

## 5. Conclusion

The widespread use of social media platforms and their ability to spread information quickly show that they have become some of the most effective tools in the teaching and learning process. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become increasingly popular in recent times as tools for language learning. Since social media is a big part of students' daily lives, these platforms are especially useful for helping learners in their educational journey. The traditional method of face-to-face classroom teaching, which has been the main way of learning for a long time, is now seen as less effective, especially during the pandemic. To fill this gap, social media has become a key part of how students learn and study on a daily basis. Today, teachers are not the only source of learning materials, and with their guidance, students can use the right social media tools to create their own learning experiences. Research shows that the use of social media for language learning has become widespread around the world. Many second language learners have found that learning English through social media channels is not only common but also has a positive impact on their learning outcomes.

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# Literature is an Armament to bring Social and Political Change in India

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## Abstract

Indian literature is a mosaic of myriad voices, languages, and experiences. Its landscape, shaped over centuries, reflects the country's diverse social fabric and complex political history. From the ancient texts composed in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Tamil to contemporary works in English and vernacular languages, Indian writing engages deeply with social realities and political currents. This paper, analyses the pivotal social and political issues reflected in Indian literature across eras, investigating how literary works both mirror and shape the evolving character of Indian society.

*Keywords*: *Literature, Armament, Social and Political Change*

## Literature as a Mirror of Society

Indian literature has always served as a social text, chronicling the journey of communities, classes, and castes. The Vedic period depicted the philosophical and ritualistic aspects of society, while epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana provided insights into hierarchical structures, gender roles, and moral anxieties. In the medieval age, Bhakti and Sufi poetry voiced dissent against orthodoxy, promoting the ideals of social justice, religious tolerance, and egalitarianism. The colonial period saw the emergence of new genres and themes: novels and short stories exposed the contradictions of colonial rule, the rise of nationalism, and the desire for social reform as well. And Modern Indian literature, which began in earnest in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was shaped by the interplay of colonial experiences, the nationalist movement, and the social reform agenda. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, and Premchand highlighted pressing concerns and poverty, caste discrimination, and the subjugation of women. Their works not only documented social conditions but also called for change.

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## Caste and Social Hierarchies

Caste remains one of the most persistent themes in Indian literature. Premchand's stories in Urdu and Hindi interrogated the pain and indignities faced by the untouchables, as in his famous story "Sadgati." Dalit literature, which was gained momentum in the post-independence era, foregrounds the lived experiences of marginalized castes. Bama's Karukku, Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan, and Sharan Kumar Limbale's Akkarmashi served as powerful narratives of resistance, assertion, and identity politics as well. These writings challenged the hegemony of the upper castes and expose the entrenched social inequalities.

## Gender and Patriarchy

The question of gender and patriarchy permeates much of Indian literature. Early reformist novels by writers like Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (Sultana's Dream) and Ismat Chughtai (Lihaaf) confronted the confinements of domesticity and female sexuality. Mahasweta Devi's stories exposed sexual exploitation and violence faced by tribal women. The postcolonial era has seen an outpouring of feminist literature addressing intersectional issues like dowry, female infanticide, gender-based violence, and the politics of representation were rooted in Indian society. The Contemporary writers such as Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Meena Kandasamy interrogate patriarchy through nuanced accounts of everyday oppression and resistance.

## Religion, Secularism, and Communalism

Here, India's religious diversity, as well as its process of discord, find expression across genres. The Partition of India in 1947 remains a central motif, with writers like Khushwant Singh (Train to Pakistan) and Saadat Hasan Manto (Toba Tek Singh) depicting harrowing tales of violence, displacement, and trauma. Post-independence novels examine other communal conflicts and the tensions between secular and sectarian discourses. Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children and Shashi Tharoor's Riot probe the politics of memory and communalism, balancing the ideal of secularism against the reality of violence and exclusion.

## Language, Identity, and the Politics of Representation

Language was a contested terrain in India, symbolizing both division and unity. The dominance of English as a literary medium has sparked debates on authenticity and representation. Writers in regional languages like Malayalam (O.V. Vijayan), Bengali (Mahasweta Devi), and Tamil (Perumal Murugan) challenge the homogenization of literary identities and assert linguistic pluralism. The publication of Dalit, tribal, and LGBTQ+ narratives in diverse tongues have further democratized the literary sphere.

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## Political Issues in Indian Literature

### Nationalism and the Freedom Struggle

Nationalism, as both ideology and the emotion, runs through Indian literature. Early nationalist poetry and prose envisioned an egalitarian nation, critiqued imperial power, and inspired collective resistance. The works of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (Vande Mataram), Sarojini Naidu, and Kazi Nazrul Islam were rallying pointed for anti-colonial mobilization. Post-independence literature often critiques the limits of nationalism, exploring the contradictions between the ideals of freedom and the realities of social injustice.

### Democracy and State Power

Indian literature post-1947 has consistently questioned the efficacy and ethics of the democratic state. Novels like Nayantara Sahgal's Rich Like Us and Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things scrutinize the politics of power, corruption, and bureaucratic apathy. The Emergency (1975-77) produced a rich corpus of protest literature, with writers such as Salman Rushdie, Kamala Das, and Jayanta Mahapatra highlighting systemic suppression and censorship.

### Marginalized Communities: Indigenous, Dalit, LGBTQ+

The post-liberalization era has foregrounded the issues of indigenous peoples (Adivasi), Dalit's, and other marginalized communities. Literature by and about Adivasi, such as the stories of G.N. Devy and Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar were critiques the ecological and social impact of development, displacement and cultural erasure. LGBTQ+ literature, such as Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy, R. Raj Rao's The Boyfriend, and the poems of Hoshang Merchant and Priya Sarukkai Chabria, challenges heteronormativity and celebrates queer identities.

### Migration, Diaspora, and Globalization

Migration and diaspora were significant themes, with writers of Indian origin exploring questions of belonging, identity, and transnationalism. Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, and Salman Rushdie scrutinize the complexities of cultural negotiation and rootlessness. The impact of globalization and urbanization, technological change, and cultural hybridity were finds articulation in contemporary fiction, drama, and poetry.

## Literary Movements Catalyzing Social and Political Change

### Progressive Writers' Movement

The Progressive Writers' Association, established in the 1930s, unified writers across languages in advocating for literature that served the cause of social justice and political awakening. Influenced by Marxism and anti-fascism, members like Mulk Raj

Anand, Ismat Chughtai, and Sajjad Zaheer wrote against feudalism, colonialism, and communal hatred. Their legacy persists in modern Indian writing, emphasizing the relationship between art and social responsibility.

## Movements Dalit and Tribal Literary

The Dalit literary movement, catalyzed by Ambedkarite thought, revolutionized representation in Indian literature. Dalit poetry, autobiography, and fiction, rooted in lived experience and social protest, have altered the terms of literary engagement. Similarly, tribal writers focus on cultural autonomy, ecological sustainability, and the historical violence of assimilation and marginalization.

## Feminist and LGBTQ+ Movements

Feminist and queer literary movements have expanded the boundaries of personal and political discourse. Feminist writing, from Kamala Das to Anita Desai and Temsula investigates the intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity. Queer voices challenge the silence in mainstream literature, advancing a politics of visibility, acceptance, and rights.

## Challenges and Controversies

## Censorship and Freedom of Expression

Censorship remains a recurring obstacle. Books, films, and plays have faced bans and moral policing, whether for questioning national myths or discussing taboo topics. The legal battles surrounding The Satanic Verses, the famous writer like Perumal Murugan's Madhorubhagan, and Wendy Doniger's told that The Hindus underscore the tensions between creative freedom and the state's impulse to censor in the name of public order.

## Market Forces and Literary Production

The publishing industry has witnessed that rise of commercial fiction at the expense of nuanced literary writing. The Market driven priorities often overshadow voices from the margins. Yet, digital platforms and self-publishing have democratized access, while literary festivals and translation projects amplify previously ignored narratives. Debates on representation and who gets to write what, whose voices are amplified or marginalized the dominate literary circles. The appropriation of Dalit, tribal, and queer experiences by upper-caste or privileged writers raises ethical questions about authenticity, justice, and literary value.

## The Ongoing Impact of Literature on Social and Political Discourse

Indian literature continues to engage with the social and political life of the nation. Its role is not merely to reflect reality but to intervene, critique, and envision alternatives. Literary awards, debates, and activism around contentious books highlight the

continual interplay of literature and public discourse. Through protest poetry, novels of resistance, and memoirs of survival, Indian literature mobilizes opinion and inspires change. Literary spaces are sites of dialogue on justice, equality, and rights. Writers serve as conscience keepers, challenging dominant narratives and advocating minority perspectives.

## Contemporary Trends: Digital, Visual, and Hybrid Forms

The literature of the 21st century embraces hybrid forms—graphic novels, blogs, spoken word and digital platforms. Young writers use social media to amplify issues of caste, gender, sexuality, and environment, expanding the reach and impact of literary activism.

## Conclusion

Indian literature, with its plurality and dynamism, bears witness to the country's evolving social and political landscape. Its engagement with caste, gender, religion, politics, and marginalization is both timeless and urgent. As writers continue to document, critique, and imagine, literature serves as both a mirror and a map and guide through the complexities of India's past, present, and future. Indian literary culture's commitment to inclusivity, justice, and dialogue ensures its ongoing contribution to national consciousness. By foregrounding social and political issues, writers historicize struggle and hope, making literature a powerful agent for social transformation.

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# Identity and Marginalisation in Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*

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## Abstract

Girish Karnad's Hayavadana (1971) is one of the most compelling Indian plays that interrogate the complexities of human identity and the conditions of marginalisation within both personal and cultural contexts. Drawing from the mythological tale of Kathasaritsagara and Thomas Mann's novella The Transposed Heads, Karnad reimagines the narrative through the lens of postcolonial India. The play highlights the fragmented nature of identity, revealing how individuals who do not conform to normative structures are often excluded from social belonging. The titular character, Hayavadana, with his horse's head and human body, embodies the anxiety of incompleteness and the stigma of difference. His physical deformity metaphorically represents the marginalised subject whose existence unsettles rigid definitions of humanity. Likewise, Padmini's desires and struggles reflect the marginalisation of women's voices in a patriarchal society that denies them autonomy over their bodies and choices. Through the characters of Devadatta and Kapila, Karnad further critiques how intellectual and physical attributes are valued differently, generating a conflict of identity between mind and body. Employing traditional folk theatre elements such as Yakshagana and masks, Karnad transcends linear storytelling to foreground cultural hybridity and the performance of identity. The play suggests that marginalisation operates at multiple levels—physical, gendered, psychological, and cultural—thereby questioning the binaries of completeness/incompleteness, self/other, and centre/margin. This paper analyses Hayavadana through the thematic lens of identity and marginalisation, arguing that Karnad portrays incompleteness not as a deficiency but as a universal human condition. Ultimately, the play subverts the notion of perfection and proposes accepting fragmented selves as a way to overcome marginalisation in a postcolonial cultural landscape.

*Keywords: Identity, Marginalisation, Postcolonialism, Gender, Hybridity*

## Introduction

The question of identity has remained central to postcolonial literature, particularly in societies grappling with cultural hybridity, social hierarchies, and inherited traditions.

In India, playwright Girish Karnad emerged as one of the most significant voices to engage with this discourse, using myth and folklore not merely as aesthetic devices but as powerful tools to interrogate contemporary issues. His play Hayavadana (1971) represents a bold theatrical experiment where the quest for identity intersects with experiences of marginalisation. Rooted in the traditional narrative from Kathasaritsagara and inspired by Thomas Mann's The Transposed Heads, Karnad reworks the story to explore the fragmented nature of human existence. The play's central figure, Hayavadana, who possesses a horse's head and a human body, becomes a symbol of the incomplete self, marginalised by society for his difference. Through him, Karnad dramatizes the struggles of individuals who cannot conform to prescribed social norms. At the same time, the female protagonist Padmini embodies another form of marginalisation that of gender. Her conflicting desires between Devadatta's intellectual charm and Kapila's physical vigour highlight how women's emotions and autonomy are often suppressed under patriarchal structures. Karnad thus redefines identity as a complex negotiation between body, mind, desire, and societal expectation. Furthermore, the play's use of folk performance techniques such as Yakshagana, masks, and non-linear narration underscores the cultural hybridity of Indian theatre. By blending traditional and modern forms, Karnad questions not only personal identity but also the identity of Indian theatre itself within the global context. This paper, therefore, seeks to explore Hayavadana through the lens of identity and marginalisation. It examines how Karnad portrays fragmented selves, suppressed desires, and cultural exclusions, ultimately suggesting that marginalisation is not merely an exception but a pervasive condition that defines the human experience.

### The Fragmented Self and the Symbol of Hayavadana

The central metaphor in Girish Karnad's Hayavadana is embodied in the character of Hayavadana himself—a man with the head of a horse and the body of a human. From the very beginning of the play, he appears on stage as a living paradox, a reminder of the incompleteness that defines human existence. His hybrid form is both comic and tragic, yet it reflects a deeper philosophical inquiry into the nature of identity. The audience is immediately confronted with questions: What makes a person whole? Is identity located in physical form, social acceptance, or inner consciousness? Hayavadana's struggle illustrates the anxiety of being "in-between" worlds, belonging fully to neither, and therefore being marginalised by society. Hayavadana's sense of alienation mirrors the plight of individuals whose identities fall outside societal norms. His horse's head, which marks him as different, becomes a symbol of stigma. People perceive him not for his humanity but for his deformity, reducing his identity to what is visibly "abnormal." Karnad uses this motif to critique how societies construct rigid categories of belonging, casting out those who do not conform. In this way, Hayavadana becomes a metaphor for the marginalised subject—those who are

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silenced, ignored, or labelled as "other." Interestingly, his journey toward wholeness takes him to the temple of Goddess Kali, where he asks for release from incompleteness. However, instead of giving him a human head, the goddess transforms him into a complete horse. This ironic twist is profoundly significant. Karnad suggests that wholeness is not achieved by aligning oneself with societal ideals of normalcy but by accepting one's difference. By embracing his identity as a horse, Hayavadana transcends his earlier marginalisation and finds freedom. The fragmented self is not limited to Hayavadana alone. The subplot of Devadatta and Kapila reinforces the same theme. When Padmini, Devadatta's wife, longs for both her husband's intellect and his friend Kapila's physical strength, the heads of the two men are transposed. This results in a disturbing question: who is the "real" husband — Devadatta's head on Kapila's body, or Kapila's head on Devadatta's body? This confusion symbolises the impossibility of defining identity through fixed binaries of mind and body. Both men, despite their hybrid selves, are incomplete, revealing the universal nature of fragmentation. Hayavadana's comic songs and his constant lament that he cannot laugh like a human highlight the tension between appearance and essence. His marginalisation is not merely external but internalised, as he begins to doubt his own worth. Yet in the end, it is the laughter of Padmini's child that redeems him, symbolising the possibility of a future where fragmented identities are accepted without prejudice. Thus, Hayavadana becomes a universal emblem of the human condition. Karnad redefines incompleteness as the essence of identity, not its failure. In showing how society marginalises the incomplete or hybrid, the play ultimately critiques rigid notions of identity and celebrates diversity in its most fragmented forms.

**Gender, Desire, and the Marginalisation of Women**

While Hayavadana's half-animal identity represents physical marginalisation, the play also foregrounds gendered marginalisation through the character of Padmini. She is caught in the tension between her desires and the social expectations imposed upon her as a wife and mother. In patriarchal Indian society, women are often denied autonomy over their choices and desires, and Padmini becomes a striking example of this condition. Padmini's attraction to both Devadatta and Kapila places her in an impossible position. Devadatta represents intellectual refinement, poetry, and cultural sophistication, while Kapila embodies physical strength, passion, and vitality. Torn between the two, Padmini becomes a victim of her own desires. Instead of being celebrated for her individuality, she is marginalised for not conforming to the societal ideal of a faithful wife. Her longing is portrayed as dangerous and destructive, leading to tragedy. Karnad, however, refuses to moralise; instead, he exposes the oppressive structures that deny women the freedom to define their identities. The head-transposition episode symbolises this conflict. By desiring Devadatta's mind in

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Kapila's body, Padmini reveals her wish for a complete partner, one who unites intellect with sensuality. Yet, this desire exposes the impossibility of achieving wholeness within human relationships. More importantly, it highlights the marginalisation of women's needs: while male desires are often socially legitimised, female longing is depicted as transgressive and destructive. Padmini is judged harshly not only by society but also by the play's narrative, which forces her toward an inevitable tragic end. Moreover, Padmini's eventual suicide at the pyre of her husband and his friend underscores the limited space available for women in patriarchal narratives. Her act reflects both despair and resistance despair at being trapped in roles defined by men, and resistance in choosing her own end rather than passively accepting her fate. Even in death, however, her agency is circumscribed by patriarchal expectations of female loyalty and sacrifice. Karnad's portrayal of Padmini reveals the double marginalisation women face: first, as individuals restricted by cultural norms, and second, as subjects silenced within literary tradition. Yet, her voice remains one of the most powerful in the play. By openly expressing her desires, Padmini challenges the sanctity of patriarchal morality. Her character raises fundamental questions: Why must women's identities be defined solely by their husbands or roles as mothers? Why is female desire seen as threatening, while male desire is normalised? The child born from Padmini's union represents hope for the future. The boy, raised in the world of conflicting identities, eventually becomes whole through laughter, suggesting that the marginalisation faced by his mother may not persist for future generations. This ending symbolises the possibility of reconciliation and acceptance of multiple identities, including those of women. Through Padmini, Karnad critiques the patriarchal structures that marginalise women's identities, exposing how gender operates as a powerful force of exclusion. Her story aligns with the broader theme of incompleteness, as her desires and agency are fractured by societal norms. By giving her voice space on stage, Karnad challenges the silencing of women and foregrounds the politics of gender within the discourse of identity and marginalisation.

**Conclusion**

In Hayavadana, Girish Karnad redefines identity not as a fixed essence but as a fragmented, constantly negotiated construct. By presenting characters who embody incompleteness—whether through physical deformity, psychological conflict, or gendered oppression— Karnad challenges the idea of a unified self. Instead, he demonstrates that marginalisation occurs whenever individuals fail to align with the rigid frameworks imposed by society. Hayavadana's condition reveals how difference is stigmatised, yet his final transformation into a complete horse suggests that acceptance of one's fragmented self is more liberating than striving for imposed wholeness. Similarly, Padmini's desires and tragic fate underscore the marginalisation of women, whose identities are often defined by societal roles rather than personal

choice. Devadatta and Kapila, too, symbolise the dualities of intellect and body, revealing the impossibility of achieving a perfect, undivided identity. By incorporating folk theatre traditions, masks, and songs, Karnad situates these struggles within a postcolonial framework, questioning not only personal identities but also the cultural identity of Indian drama itself. The play thus speaks to larger issues of social marginalisation, cultural hybridity, and the politics of representation. Ultimately, Hayavadana asserts that incompleteness is the universal human condition. Rather than seeing marginalisation as a mark of deficiency, Karnad suggests it is a shared reality that unites human experience. The acceptance of fragmented identities offers a path towards liberation, making Hayavadana a timeless exploration of identity in its most profound sense.

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# Sounds that Matter:
# Addressing Consonant Errors for Better Intelligibility

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## Abstract

India, as a multilingual country, witnesses the use of multiple languages in classrooms. Yet students often get confused with sounds, and consonants—though structurally simple—frequently feel complicated and confusing both for learners and sometimes even for teachers. This study focuses on consonant confusions and errors, particularly substitutions such as /v/ and /w/, confusions between /s/ and /ʃ/, and the omission of final consonants, all of which affect listener comprehension. By observing student speeches, the analysis highlights how mother tongue influence (MTI) contributes to recurring mispronunciations. Importantly, the paper argues that addressing consonant errors is not merely a matter of accent, but of communication and pronunciation clarity. English adds further complexity with silent consonants, letters representing multiple sounds (e.g., /k/ in *cat* and /s/ in *city*), and consonant digraphs such as *sh* /ʃ/ and *ch* /tʃ/, which introduce new sound values. These challenges are compounded by phonological awareness difficulties, which hinder accurate sound recognition and production. The study emphasizes the need to address these consonant-level issues systematically, as they are central to improving intelligibility and fostering effective communication.

*Keywords: Pronunciation, Consonant Errors, Intelligibility, Mother Tongue Influence*

## Introduction

Though pronunciation plays a vital role in language learning, it is often neglected in classrooms, where grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills are given priority. Ironically, this focus does not always result in mastery of those areas either, leaving learners with incomplete communicative competence. In India, a multilingual country, challenges in learning pronunciation are common due to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students. Within pronunciation, the English sound system consists of forty-four phonetic sounds, of which consonants are generally considered easier to learn than vowels. However, consonant sounds are crucial for ensuring intelligibility,

and even minor errors in their production can alter meaning and impede effective communication.

As all forty-four sounds of English are important for better pronunciation, consonants hold a special role as carriers of clarity. While vowels provide the nucleus of syllables, it is consonants that often mark crucial distinctions between words, such as *fan* versus *van* or *sip* versus *ship*. A mispronounced consonant can therefore lead to complete misunderstanding, which becomes a major problem as English functions as a link language across India's diverse linguistic communities. Yet, consonant sounds frequently prove confusing not only to learners but sometimes even to teachers. For example, substitutions of /v/ and /w/, or of /s/ and /ʃ/, are common and often arise due to mother tongue influence (MTI), where patterns from first languages are transferred onto English.

Another level of complexity arises from the nature of English orthography itself. Unlike many other languages, English spelling and pronunciation are not always aligned. Silent consonants (*knight*, *debt*), digraphs (*sh* → /ʃ/, *ch* → /tʃ/ or /k/), and letters that represent multiple sounds (such as *c* in *cat* versus *city*) often create confusion for learners unfamiliar with these irregular spelling–sound correspondences. This makes it difficult for students to recognize, process, and reproduce consonant sounds accurately. At times, even teachers may find it challenging to address such issues, particularly in classrooms where English is taught as a second or third language with very limited resources.

Given these challenges, it is important not to see consonant errors as small accent issues. They are at the core of clear communication. When pronunciation, especially consonant sounds, is ignored in teaching, it directly affects how well students are understood. This also impacts their confidence and their ability to take part in academic and workplace communication. This paper looks at common consonant errors in Indian classrooms, focusing on substitutions, omissions, and mispronunciations. By observing student speeches, it shows how mother tongue influence shapes these errors and how simple teaching strategies can help improve clarity. The aim is to highlight that "sounds matter" not just for sounding correct, but for making communication meaningful.

**Literature Review**

Pronunciation has been studied widely in English Language Teaching (ELT) around the world. Researchers agree that pronunciation is not just about producing correct sounds, but about being understood clearly. Jenkins (2000), in her *Lingua Franca Core* model, points out that teaching should focus on features that affect understanding rather than aiming for native-like accents. In the same way, Derwing and Munro (2005) stress that intelligibility and ease of understanding matter more than accent. Studies

from other countries, such as those in East Asia and Europe, also show that learners face problems with both segmental features like consonants and vowels, and suprasegmental features like stress and intonation. These works suggest that pronunciation needs to be included in classroom teaching, but in many places, it still does not get enough attention.

In the Indian context, research on Indian English pronunciation has shown both its unique character and its challenges. Scholars like Pingali Sailaja (2009) and Balasubramanian (2009) describe the sound system of Indian English and note that, while it can be understood in many situations, certain errors reduce clarity. Consonant problems are especially common. Learners often substitute /v/ and /w/, confuse /s/ and /ʃ/, or drop final consonants, especially in clusters. These errors usually come from mother tongue influence, where features of the first language are carried into English. For example, speakers of Hindi, Telugu, or Bengali may pronounce English consonants differently because of the patterns in their own languages. Most studies describe these errors, but they do not go much further into practical classroom methods to correct them.

Much of the literature on Indian English pronunciation has focused either on segmental versus suprasegmental features or on comparing Indian English with native varieties. While this has value, there is still a clear gap when it comes to practical classroom solutions for teaching consonants. Teachers and learners often do not have simple, low-resource methods to deal with consonant confusion in day-to-day learning. This paper aims to address that gap by looking at real examples of student speech, analyzing common consonant errors, and suggesting strategies that can work even in classrooms with limited resources.

**Methodology**

**Study setting and participants**

This study focuses on undergraduate students of General English in an urban aided college in Hyderabad. Thirty to forty students with intermediate English proficiency were selected based on teacher judgment and class performance records. The group included learners from different mother tongue backgrounds such as Telugu, Hindi, Marwadi, Rajasthani, and Tamil. This diversity reflects the multilingual classroom context that the study aims to discuss.

**Research Design**

A mixed-methods approach was used, combining both qualitative and quantitative observations. The focus was on students' speech during controlled pronunciation tasks as well as more natural spoken activities. This design helped capture both real communication problems and specific segmental contrasts.

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**Data Collection Tasks**

**1. Reading passage** – Each student read aloud a short passage or poem from the syllabus. The text was chosen to include consonants, clusters, and words relevant for suprasegmental observation (stress and intonation).

**2. Minimal pair drills** – A short set of minimal pairs was used to test specific consonant contrasts. Examples included *vine/wine*, *vest/west*, *ship/sheep*, *pull/pool*, *thin/tin*, and *thing/ting.*

**3. Spontaneous speech** – Students were asked to speak for 1–2 minutes on familiar topics (e.g., describing a college day or discussing a recent film) to observe natural rhythm, stress, and intonation.

**4. Role play and dialogues** – Pairs of students performed short role plays (about two minutes) to create interactive speech. These tasks allowed observation of hesitation, weak forms, and peer correction.

**Recording and Documentation**

All sessions were recorded using a mobile phone, since no specialized lab equipment was available. Field notes were also taken to capture contextual observations such as hesitation, self-correction, and teacher prompts.

**Transcription and Coding**

Student speech was transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to capture precise segmental realizations. Errors were coded into the following categories:

**Substitution** (e.g., /v/ → /w/)

**Omission** (e.g., final consonant cluster dropped)

**Insertion** (epenthesis)

**Distortion** (non-native realization)

**Suprasegmental errors** (stress placement, flat intonation, or over-pronunciation of weak forms)

**Analysis**

**Quantitative**: Frequency counts were used to measure how often particular error types occurred.

**Qualitative**: Short examples were examined where consonant errors led to misunderstanding. Patterns of hesitation, self-correction, and teacher responses were also analyzed.

**Analysis**

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a) Error Examples with IPA

Students often get confused with sounds that may appear simple but become complicated in real communication. For example, many were unsure whether to use /v/ or /w/ in words like *vine*, *wine*, or *west*. Similarly, the use of c/k according to sound patterns was unfamiliar to them, as such details were never taught at an earlier stage.

Due to MTI, substitutions like **/s/ → /ʃ/** were frequent. Silent consonants were either ignored or pronounced unnecessarily, and final consonant omission was a common feature that many students did not even notice.

Examples include:

**/v/ → /w/**
   vine /vaɪn/ → [waɪn]
   vest /vest/ → [west]

**/s/ → /ʃ/**
   sip /sɪp/ → [ʃɪp]
   see /siː/ → [ʃiː]

**Silent consonants ignored or added**
   debt /det/ → [debt]
   knight /naɪt/ → [knaɪt]

**Final consonant omission**
   cold /koʊld/ → [koʊl]
   test /test/ → [tes]

**C vs K confusion**
   city /sɪti/ → [kɪti]
   cat /kæt/ → [sæt]

**b) Error Patterns**

**1.Substitution** – replacing one consonant with another, e.g., /v/ → /w/.

**2.Omission** – dropping final consonants or clusters, e.g., *test* → [tes].

**3.Addition** – inserting extra sounds, e.g., *school* /skuːl/ → [iskuːl]. (This was especially common among North Indian students due to MTI and phonological adaptation to avoid initial clusters.)

**4.Misinterpretation of Orthography** – pronouncing silent letters or confusing spelling rules, e.g., *knight* → [knaɪt].

**c) Reasons for Errors**

**Mother Tongue Influence (MTI):**

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Students' first languages (Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Marwadi, etc.) do not always contain contrasts like /v/ vs /w/, or allow final consonant clusters. This transfer directly explains substitutions and omissions.

**Spelling Influence:**

English orthography is often misleading. Silent letters (*debt, knight*), digraphs (*sh, ch*), and multiple values of letters (like *c* in *cat* vs *city*) confuse learners. Since one letter may represent different sounds, one sound may have different spellings, and some letters remain silent, students find it difficult to rely on rules consistently.

**Lack of Phonological Awareness:**

Students often recognize the written form of words but cannot process sound contrasts quickly. Instead of focusing on auditory cues, they fall back on spelling.

**Psychological Factors:**

Not all errors came from a lack of knowledge. In controlled tasks such as minimal pair drills, many students showed clear awareness of correct sounds. However, during spontaneous speech, excitement or anxiety affected their delivery. Their voices often became louder and faster, which led to errors they normally avoided.

For instance, a student who differentiated /v/ and /w/ during drills still said *wine* instead of *vine* when answering quickly. Similarly, nervousness sometimes led to exaggerated articulation or misplaced stress, which reduced overall intelligibility. This shows that pronunciation errors are not purely linguistic but also psychological. Confidence, emotional control, and self-monitoring play a crucial role in transferring classroom knowledge of sounds into real-life communication.

**d) Connection to Intelligibility Loss**

Even small errors caused noticeable breakdowns in communication:

*vine* /vaɪn/ → [waɪn] confused peers who thought the student said *wine*.

*sip* /sɪp/ → [ʃɪp] changed the meaning completely.

*test* /test/ → [tes] sounded incomplete, or like the name *Tess*.

These errors reduced clarity in both academic and social contexts. Students often had to repeat themselves, and being misunderstood lowered their confidence. This hesitation further discouraged participation, creating a cycle where errors and anxiety reinforced each other.

**Pedagogical Strategies / Solutions**

Focusing on pronunciation challenges requires simple and practical methods that can be applied in everyday classroom teaching. Since many colleges have limited

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resources and lack dedicated English labs, the strategies suggested here are low-cost, teacher-friendly, and adaptable to multilingual learners.

a) **Minimal Pair Drills**

b) Minimal pairs are effective in raising awareness of sound contrasts. Practicing pairs like *vine/wine, vest/west, ship/sheep, pull/pool, thin/tin* helps students differentiate sounds that often cause confusion due to MTI. This practice strengthens both listening and mouth-muscle memory. To make the activity engaging, students can be asked to identify the correct word based on the sound or play games like "minimal pair bingo."

c) **Listening Activities**

d) Students are not usually trained to notice rhythm or intonation in English. Simple listening tasks, such as clapping or tapping for stressed syllables in words (*pho-to-graph*), make stress patterns more visible. Teachers can also record students' voices and let them self-assess the natural rise and fall of their intonation. This not only improves awareness but also develops self-monitoring skills.

c) **Spelling–Sound Mapping**

Since many errors come from confusion with English orthography, spelling–sound mapping should be explicitly taught. Some useful rules include:

If a short vowel is followed by the /k/ sound at the end of a one-syllable word, write **ck** at the end (*back, pack, lick, neck*).

If a word has a long vowel, vowel team, or consonant before /k/, use **k** (*milk, week, mask*).

In multisyllabic words, the ending /k/ sound is often spelled as **c** (*panic, music, picnic, logic*).

"c" before *a, o, u* → /k/ (*cat, coat, cup*).

"c" before *e, i, y* → /s/ (*city, cent, cycle*).

"kn" → /n/ (*knight*), "mb" → /m/ (*comb*).

Digraphs: "sh" → /ʃ/, "ch" → /ʧ/.

These rules can be reinforced through charts, dictations, and spelling games. Even if exceptions exist, partial awareness reduces guesswork and helps learners approach spelling–sound relationships more confidently.

d) **Classroom-Friendly Practices**

To make pronunciation practice less intimidating, interactive methods can be used:

**Games:** Tongue twisters, "odd one out," or team quizzes with minimal pairs.

**Rhymes and Songs:** Short chants or rhymes help students internalize stress and rhythm naturally.

**Peer Correction:** Pair or group work allows learners to notice and correct each other's pronunciation in a supportive way.

**Role Play:** Dialogues such as buying a ticket, ordering food, or talking about a film create real-life contexts where students naturally apply pronunciation skills.

**Conclusion**

Pronunciation is one of the most important aspects of speaking English, yet it remains a neglected area in many classrooms. This study showed that errors occur at both the segmental level (such as vowel length confusions, /v/–/w/ substitutions, and omission of final consonants) and the suprasegmental level (flat intonation, misplaced stress, and over-pronunciation of weak forms). Many of these difficulties arise from mother tongue influence (MTI), while factors like anxiety, excitement, or lack of confidence also interfere with accurate pronunciation even when learners know the correct sounds.

The findings suggest that pronunciation teaching must go beyond simple practice and correction. It should integrate listening practice, spelling–sound awareness, and interactive activities within everyday classroom lessons. Low-resource techniques such as clapping for stress, minimal pair games, role plays, and peer correction can make a significant difference.

Consonant intelligibility is central to effective communication, yet it is often overlooked in English teaching. Teaching consonants should not be seen as accent policing but as a way of enabling clarity and confidence in learners. For this reason, pronunciation needs to be systematically integrated into the ELT curriculum through practical, low-resource strategies that make it a natural part of everyday classroom practice. The goal is not accenting imitation but intelligible pronunciation—helping students communicate clearly and confidently in both academic and social situations. Teachers can create meaningful opportunities for learners to transfer classroom knowledge into real-life communication.

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# Hardships Can Defeat but Not Destroy in Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali*

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**Abstract**

Down and out, the marginalized ones look out for an outstretched arm and a caring eye. Bruised and battered by the unflinching arms of the forces that conspire to keep them in a bind, they seek someone to bail them out or at least to empathize with them. The above narrative seeks to put in a nutshell the plight of the characters in "Rudali", a play by Mahasweta Devi. Mahasweta Devi is a reputed Bengali writer and activist who was honoured with various awards for her works including Padma Vibhushan, Padma Shri and Sahitya Akademi Award. "Rudali," a renowned play by Mahasweta Devi revolves around the life of the protagonist, Sanichari, a poor low caste woman. Struggle and survival are the bedrock of the play. "Rudali" is the mélange of identity crisis, marginalization, social conflict, gender and voice, struggle and survival. Being a widow, Sanichari is the breadwinner of her family, which includes her old mother-in-law, sick son, reckless daughter-in-law and a nonchalant grandson. By carrying heavy burdens as a downtrodden, Sanichari breaks the back of the beast and sets herself as a hard-grained bulwark against the down-trodden. This paper titled "'Hardships can Defeat but not Destroy' in Mahasweta Devi's "Rudali"" clearly depicts the sufferings of low caste women, widows and destitutes along with the efforts taken by the protagonist to purge the impure.

*Keywords*: *Identity Crisis, Marginalization, Social Conflict, Gender and Voice,*

THIRD PRIEST: … … …

> King rules or barons rule:
>
> The strong man strongly and the weak man by caprice.
> They have but one law, to seize the power and keep it,
> And the steadfast can manipulate the greed and lust of others,
> The feeble is devoured by his own. (Eliot, 14)

Power makes the life of the brave and mars the life of the feeble and the choice of living is bestowed as per one's wish. The saturnine demeanour of the protagonist, Sanichari, puts forth her downtrodden life in society. Being born on 'Saturday' or 'Sanichar' the protagonist is named Sanichari and her mother-in-law is named Somri as she was born on 'Monday' or 'Somvar.'  Sanichari used to be on a warpath when her mother-in -law calls her 'daain,' 'bitch,' 'unlucky' and with several illtreating words. Sanichari lost her husband at a young age and worries about her only son, Budhua, who is on the ice with his dying disease. Into the bargain, her mother-in-law quells her verbally: "Somri: You'll kill off everyone else, but you'll stay alive, you daain. As it is, you've finished off your father-in-law, your brother-in-law, and your husband. Now you'll devour your son." (Devi, 96) The agony of Sanichari is crystal clear in the above-given statement.

Life is a struggle for survival for Sanichari amidst identity crisis, marginalization, social conflict and gender bias. Budhua fights against his disease in an uphill fight which unfortunately ends in fiasco. When Sanichari brought a doctor to treat her son, her daughter-in-law absconded from the house on seeing his death. The materialistic and unkind nature of Budhua's wife, Parbatia, is well picturized when she leaves her only son, Haroa, along with the dead body of her husband. The death of Budhua destroys the hope and makes Sanichari hard, as she does not even shed a tear on his loss: "WOMAN 2: Sanichari's luck is really bad/ WOMAN 1: She has a heart like a stone, the daain. Not a single tear has she shed…"(104) The doctor treating her son and hell-bent on his fees after Budhua's death highlights the inhumane nature of the doctor, prompting the following quote: "….living is tough for us poor people, but dying is even worse." (105) Thus, the dominance of the rich over the poor is well portrayed. Alike this incident, the dominance of the upper caste is clearly exhibited in the rituals of the dead.

Sanichari invites comparison with the Biblical character Naomi who loses her husband and two sons and whose plight is not far better: "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty:" (Ruth, 284) But she was comforted in the company of her second daughter-in-law, Ruth whereas Sanichari's daughter-in-law has escaped from her house forcing Sanichari to take care of her son. Now Sanichari puts her hope in Haroa, her grandson, and lives for him. But Haroa drops a bombshell by informing about the hardships in his job and expressing his unwillingness to continue his job:

HAROA: He makes me slave all day and pays me a measly twenty rupees a month …

SANICHARI: Plus a daily meal.

HAROA: Does that mean he can hit me when he likes, abuse me as he likes…?

SANICHARI: That's a poor man's fate, beta – the kicks of his master. Go on, beta, go

to work …(107)

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Thus, the physical and psychological scars of the downtrodden are well displayed in the above - given lines.

Even Haroa abandons Sanichari as she advises him to work and beats him when he uses abusive words to scold her with. Being tyrannized over by his master, Haroa is unable to continue his work but fails to realize the hardship of his grandmother. Parbatia loses her hope and ruins her life by transforming into a whore. Whereas Sanichari toils in her dotage and overcomes her fate. The void in the life of Sanichari is replaced with her old friend Bikhni, whom she has met accidently in the market. Both share their life stories and comfort each other as both sailed in the same boat. The entry of Bikhni opens a new chapter in the life of Sanichari. Their lives seem to prosper in their own company, and they receive a call to act as rudali. As a rudali, they have to mourn and weep over the death of wealthy people.

At first, Sanichari is like a fish out of water while doing the role of a rudali. Later, she adopts it and wants to light up the lives of the whores. When she approaches her daughter-in-law, she refuses and insults Sanichari. Even in a pickle, Sanichari bites the bullet and convinces the whores by listing out the benefits received by rudalis. Several whores hesitate as the job of a rudali is uncertain. Still, Sanichari insists on the disrespectful lives of whores and puts forth the recognition and identity they own as rudalis. Sanichari has faced several deaths in her own house but has not shed a tear:

Spivak points out that, by such a practice, the oppressed are being more silenced in that s/he cannot / does not speak, but is spoken for. The subaltern consciousness is a construction of the elite discourse and it is due to this discourse that their marginality is sustained. (Vallath, 139) Though Sanichari suffers from poverty and is considered unlucky, she is honest and loyal in her duty. Even the death of her friend Bikhni is a great shock, but she still manages it and continues her duty. Sanichari easily assimilates the situation and survives.

Sanichari epitomizes a life where death is wished for but keeps moving, tantalizingly out of reach in a cruel game of hide-and-seek:

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me. (Philippians , 1093)

The forces at work against her lose steam, the moment she turns the table on them. She hardens herself against the invading waves of misfortune. She looks with disdain and turns them back. What begins as an invasion against her and her family fortunes is

totally colour-washed in her favour. True, she stumbles, but does not fall. Killed but not defeated.

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# Casteism And Gender Conflict in Perumal Murugan's Pyre : A Study

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## Abstract

This research paper critically examines the entrenched social evil of casteism as represented in Indian English literature, with a primary focus on Pyre by Perumal Murugan. The novel portrays the tragic consequences of an inter-caste marriage in rural Tamil Nadu, highlighting the psychological trauma, societal ostracism, and eventual violence faced by the protagonists. Through literary analysis, the paper explores Murugan's storytelling techniques, including his subtle yet piercing psychological insight and minimalistic style. It also discusses the modern relevance of caste narratives and their role in reflecting and critiquing India's socio-political realities. Caste, though constitutionally outlawed, remains a deeply entrenched social reality in India. Pyre offers a piercing portrayal of caste-based violence through the lens of an inter-caste marriage between a lower-caste man, Kumaresan, and his upper-caste wife, Saroja. This narrative is not merely a love story. It is a documentation of brutal social exclusion, emotional trauma, and institutionalized oppression. The research traces the impact of caste on personal relationships and examines how literature like Pyre plays a vital role in resisting dominant social hierarchies and fostering reform. Using a mix of postcolonial, feminist, and Dalit theoretical frameworks, the paper argues that Murugan's work is a necessary and bold literary intervention that exposes the everyday cruelty of caste discrimination in rural India. The paper evaluates the narrative not only as a fictional tragedy but also as a call to challenge systemic injustice in 21st-century India.

*Keywords: Casteism, Inter-caste Marriage, Social Discrimination, Psychological*

## Introduction

Pyre (originally titled "Pookkuzhi" in Tamil) by Perumal Murugan is a searing narrative about love, caste, and violence. It presents the fragile union between Kumaresan, a man from a lower caste, and Saroja, a woman from an unknown but evidently higher caste, as they elope to his native village hoping for acceptance. However, the story unfolds into a tense tale of surveillance, community control, and

eventual destruction. This paper aims to investigate the psychological dimensions of casteism as portrayed in the novel. The trauma of being ostracized, the fear of honor-based violence, and the suffocating social structures are examined in relation to the mental states of the characters, offering a literary lens into lived realities in rural India Indian literature has long served as a mirror reflecting the complex cultural, social, and political landscape of the nation. This paper investigates the intersection of literature and caste discrimination, with a special focus on how literary texts serve as tools for social commentary and resistance. It introduces Pyre as a modern Indian novel that encapsulates deep-rooted caste prejudices through personal narratives. Caste, in Pyre, is not just a label, it is a weapon, a boundary, and a death sentence. Murugan illustrates how caste becomes the axis around which rural life revolves. The villagers' obsession with lineage and blood purity directly impacts the couple's sense of security and identity. Saroja, unfamiliar with rural caste codes, finds herself alienated, surveilled, and judged. Kumaresan's silence about caste at the beginning of the marriage reflects both hope and denial, which only deepens their vulnerability later.

Kumaresan is psychologically torn between love and loyalty to his community, while Saroja suffers a deeper trauma: from being a bride to being a burden. Her identity, stripped of dignity by the villagers, transforms into that of a transgressor, "polluted" and unwelcome. Murugan uses silence as a recurring motif. The impact of casteism is higher in rural areas. People in urban areas accept people of all religions. In rural areas, there are still some cases of casteism, untouchability, and many more, and the sense of caste is converted into other castes only when consideration of superiority between caste.

**Psychological Trauma and Social Anxiety**

The novel does not present caste violence as merely physical but also emotional and mental. The couple's isolation leads to growing anxiety, fear, and helplessness. Saroja's psychological condition deteriorates under the unspoken threats and harsh glances. Her pregnancy, instead of being a source of joy, becomes another trigger for societal wrath. The collective silence and inaction from Kumaresan's family, and particularly his mother, drive a wedge of loneliness between the couple.

The persistent dread of violence, the community's murmurs, and Saroja's inability to respond freely or move safely through the village reveal the subtle yet intense psychological warfare castes inflict on individuals. In addition to fear, Saroja begins to experience signs of emotional disintegration. Her trust in Kumaresan is eroded each time he downplays the hostility of the villagers or fails to offer emotional support. Her sense of displacement—being far from her hometown, among unfamiliar faces—is heightened by the constant gaze of suspicion and rejection. This alienation transforms

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her from a hopeful bride into a silent sufferer, trapped within invisible walls of prejudice.

## Gender and Caste in Conflict

Saroja bears the double burden of being a woman and being from a different caste. Her resistance is passive, as she is not equipped to fight the patriarchy and caste hegemony alone. The novel sharply contrasts male privilege, even among lower-caste men like Kumaresan, who still exercises decisions for her, with the helplessness of women. Her voice is minimized, and though she endures with resilience, it is clear that caste violence intersects with gender oppression.

Kumaresan, despite being the 'freer' figure, gradually breaks down under pressure, revealing how systemic caste violence crushes even those who initially believe they can escape it. Saroja and Kumaresan, a couple in love who marry each other. They belong to different castes and it eventually becomes a curse to their life. The couple bears the wrath of Kumaresan's village in the hope that things will get better. It highlights the struggle of inter-caste couples and how it is difficult to survive such marriages. It revolves around the love story of the couple, how they met, how they fell in love and why they choose to elope. From a gendered lens, this covers the struggle of protagonist Saroja since the beginning of her marriage. She had been called names, slapped and taunted every day, yet she chooses to stay silent in order to stay safe. The women characters talk about her husband in one form or another and their lives are written around Kumaresan. Till now caste speaks a lot. One of the famous Indian writers Perumal Murugan perfectly explained casteism in the village and how people treat different caste people.

## Symbolism and Silence

Silence is one of the most powerful motifs in Pyre. It is not a peaceful silence but one filled with menace and judgment. The mother's refusal to speak to Saroja, the villagers' quiet hostility, and Kumaresan's reluctance to openly defy them all contribute to the psychological tension. Even the natural setting reflects this theme of the stillness of the village landscape mirrors the couple's internal fear. The title Pyre itself is symbolic: it foreshadows the couple's fate, suggesting that their love will be consumed by the fire of caste hatred. The title Pyre not only foreshadows death but also symbolizes the community's desire to "purify" itself from perceived defilement caused by an inter-caste marriage. Fire becomes a metaphor for violent cleansing. The inner silence of both characters represents suppression of emotions Kumaresan swallows his anger to avoid conflict, while Saroja is forced into silence out of fear this silence becomes its own form of violence.

## Literary Techniques

Murugan's minimalistic style, coupled with recurring motifs of silence, heightens the novel's psychological impact. The villagers' quiet hostility and the mother's refusal to engage in dialogue become as violent as physical attacks. The novel draws from oral storytelling traditions, making its realism deeply rooted and emotionally haunting .Murugan's frequently dips into Saroja's mental state, capturing her paranoia and fear through fragmented thoughts, which intensifies the reader's empathy. Conversations are short, clipped, and loaded with subtext, reinforcing the sense of isolation. Murugan deliberately leaves space between words, allowing silence to "speak." The narrative follows a classical tragic arc, with rising tension leading to an inevitable climax.

**Conclusion**

Pyre presents a chilling narrative where love is destroyed by the forces of caste-based hatred. The story highlights how caste remains a destructive force in contemporary India. Murugan's sparse, lyrical style amplifies the emotional weight of the narrative. Perumal Murugan's Pyre reveals the deeply entrenched and irrational caste-based prejudices that continue to shape social behavior in rural India. Through the tragic love story of Kumaresan and Saroja, the novel exposes the dangerous consequences of caste rigidity and communal intolerance. The characters are crafted with psychological depth. The novel underscores how women, particularly in rural settings, internalize and enforce patriarchal and casteist norms, making them active participants in systemic violence. Despite their love and loyalty to each other, the couple is ultimately overwhelmed by the oppressive structures of caste, silence, and community judgment. Murugan's narrative acts as a stark reminder that technological or economic progress alone cannot dissolve deeply ingrained social evils. The novel's themes of love, resistance, identity, and societal cruelty continue to echo in contemporary discussions on social justice, gender roles, and caste discrimination.

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# A Study on the Role of English Proficiency in Spreading Financial Literacy in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu

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## Abstract

Effectiveness in reaching rural and semi-urban communities remains debatable. The research investigates how English-language materials, campaigns, and training programs influence the awareness and adoption of financial services, and whether limited proficiency in English creates barriers to access. Through field surveys, interviews, and analysis of financial education initiatives, the study explores both the enabling role of English as a bridge to modern finance and the challenges posed by linguistic exclusion. The findings aim to provide insights for policymakers, educators, and financial institutions on balancing the use of English with regional languages to promote inclusive financial literacy in Thiruvallur District.

*Keywords:* *Financial Literacy, Financial Inclusion, English Language, Digital Banking*

## Introduction:

Financial literacy is the process of gathering knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to make financial decisions. In a country like India the need for financial literacy has gained its importance. The current financial environment demands knowledge on credit options, insurance products, and investments. Therefore individuals should be updated on financial information's to make appropriate financial decisions. Financial literacy is therefore a driving force in making the financial environment in the country to grow better.

Thiruvallur District is in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. The district is a semi urban district having combination of urban and rural areas. The primary language spoken in Tamil and English is widely thought in schools and colleges. A large number of people in the district can speak and write in English. Therefore this district will be an ideal geographical area for the study.

The study aims at finding the impact of English in spreading financial literacy in Thiruvallur District. The relationship between the level of English knowledge and

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understanding financial information is established by the study. The multi lingual aspect of banking products is studied.

**Literature Review and Research Gap**

**Literature Review**

Financial literacy may be explained as the knowledge, behavior and attitude required to take financial decision Lusardi and Mitchell (2007, 2014). This provides the basic understanding that financial literacy is not only about gaining knowledge on financial aspects but also understanding the risk involved in taking such decisions. The framework created by OECD/INFE includes competencies, financial reliance and inclusion. This framework is the reference point for survey design.

Studies conducted by OECD/INFE and World Bank's Global Findex shows that financial knowledge is low-to-moderate across many countries, with strong heterogeneity by gender, education, age and income. The number of people entering formal financial system through banks has increased across globe but active use and understanding of financial products (credit, insurance, digital payment safety) lag behind.

The national surveys and policy reports (NCFE's Financial Literacy and Inclusion Survey, RBI outreach materials, and the Government's national strategy documents) have shown that there is a substantial gaps in knowledge (interest, inflation, insurance) and in practical behaviours (budgeting, formal saving, safe digital practices), especially among rural residents, women, and informal workers. The government has taken steps to increase the number of account holders and thereby improving financial inclusion but the level of financial literacy still needs more scope for improvement.

In a multi lingual country like India use of English, Hindi and regional languages for banking correspondence is commonly found. Mid-term evaluation of India's national financial education strategy 2020-2025 conducted by NCFE's (National Center for Financial Education) emphasis issue related to language and interface barriers in digital tools and recommends stronger multilingual content and vernacular outreach. The impact of language barrier was evident form the study Haridh, I. (2022). Stating the need to bring vernacular localization (text + voice), multilingual UX, IVR/voice banking,

**Research Gap**

Many studies have brought the relationship between financial literacy and language but only some of them have discussed on the effect of English and regional languages on outcomes. This gap is of much important in a multilingual country like India where English is used quit prominently in formal banking correspondence and digital interfaces. Studies related to financial literacy at district level in a district like

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Thiruvallur where both rural and urban environment exist will bring out more qualitative outcomes to policy makers. This study will help to derive conclusion and suggestions that will help government and policy makes on financial literacy in a district like Thriuvallur.

**Statement of Research Problem**

Financial literacy is an integral part of financial inclusion. In a district like Thiruvallur, Tamil Nadu the regional language is Tamil. English is used as the primary mode of communication in banking and other formal financial institutions. From the preliminary observation it is observed that level of English proficiency is much lower in rural parts of the district. The problem lies in determining whether English facilitates or hinders the spread of financial literacy in Thiruvallur District and how language choices affect participation, understanding, and trust in financial systems. This study will find out Role of English in spreading Financial Literacy in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu.

**Research Objectives**

**Primary Objective:**

- To study the impact of Proficiency in English on the effectiveness of financial literacy initiatives in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu.

**Secondary Objectives:**

1. To examine the influence of English proficiency in accessing and understanding financial services

2. To explore the need for using regional languages in formal financial system.

3. To provide suggestions on increasing financial service accessibility including regional languages.

**Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

Financial literacy depends on three pillars: *knowledge, behaviour, and attitude*. Language barriers may obstruct one or more of these pillars (e.g., knowledge acquisition through English materials, confidence in financial decisions, and actual behaviour) Financial Literacy Theory (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014).

Financial literacy has been defined as *"a combination of financial awareness, knowledge, skills, attitude, and behaviors necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve financial well-being"* (OECD, 2013).

Thiruvallur district is a semi urban district both rural and urban environment coexist in the district. According to the census 2011 the level of literacy in the district is was 61.12 % Male literacy stands at 69.28 % while female literacy rate was 53.11 %. In terms

of financial inclusion Thiruvallur district stands at 16th rank. In terms of accessibility to formal financial service the district stands at 24th rank. This study examines the impact of English proficiency on financial awareness, usage of financial services, financial behaviour, and digital access in Thiruvallur District,

## Research Methodology

The study adopts explanatory research focused on primary data collection to examine the role of English in Spreading Financial Literacy in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu. Data collection was done using a structured questionnaire administered to 180 residents aged 18+ who use or have access to formal financial services (bank account, mobile payment, microfinance, etc.). Include subgroups: men/women, different education levels, occupations (farmers, daily-wage, small business, salaried) in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu, India, after screening, 174 valid responses were finalised for analysis.

The sampling technique used is convenient sampling technique targeting local residence of Thiruvallur district both in rural and urban area. Data analysis employed a mix of descriptive and inferential statistical tools, selected in alignment with the study's objectives and hypotheses to ensure a systematic examination of the research problem. This methodology enables a detailed exploration of **role of** English proficiency on financial awareness, financial behaviour, and digital access

## Analysis of Data and Results

## Proficiency in English of residence in Thiruvallur District

Table 1 presents the results of the mean analysis pertaining to level of English proficiency of residence in Thiruvallur District. The study employed 5 point Likert scale statements, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, with four statements for English proficiency.

## Table – 1

## Proficiency in English of residence in Thiruvallur District

## Descriptive Statistics

| VARIABLES | N | MEAN | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Proficiency in English | 174 | 34.4 | 5.4 |

The mean score for English Proficiency is 14.4, which represents 72.00% of the maximum possible score (14.4 ÷ 20 × 100). This percentage is marginally lower than the benchmark average of 75%, suggesting that, on the whole, the English proficiency in the district is good but there is scope for improvement.

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**Level of Financial Literacy in Thiruvallur District**

Table 2 presents the results of the mean analysis pertaining to Level of Financial Literacy amount the residence of Tiruvallur District, India. The study employed Likert scale statements, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, with three statements allocated to each of the four identified components of financial literacy.

The mean score analysis indicates that among the four components of financial literacy the respondents show inclination towards Financial Access & Barriers (M = 13.20) and the lowest inclination towards Financial Attitudes (M = 10.8) when evaluating level of financial literacy.

**Table 2**

**Level of Financial Literacy in Thiruvallur District**

**Descriptive Statistics**

| VARIABLES | N | MEAN | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial Knowledge | 174 | 12.2 | 2.5 |
| Financial Behavior | 174 | 11.3 | 3.5 |
| Financial Attitudes | 174 | 10.8 | 3.8 |
| Financial Access & Barriers | 174 | 13.2 | 1.9 |
| **Level of Financial Literacy** | 174 | 47.4 | 10.1 |

**Source: Primary Data**

The overall mean score for level of financial literacy across all components of financial literacy is 47.4, which represents 79.00% of the maximum possible score (47.4 ÷ 60 × 100). This percentage is above the benchmark average of 75%, suggesting that, on the whole, the level of financial literacy is on the higher side with particular emphasis on Financial Access & Barriers.

**Relationship between English Proficiency and Financial Literacy – Correlation Analysis**

**H₀: There is no significant relationship between the English Proficiency and Financial Literacy.**

A Pearson correlation analysis was undertaken to examine the association between relationship between the English Proficiency and Financial Literacy in Thiruvallur district, India.

**Table 3**

**Relationship Between English Proficiency and Financial Literacy**

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## Correlation Analysis

| VARIABLE | N | 'r' VALUE | P - VALUE | RELATIONSHIP | REMARKS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | SIGNIFICANT | RESULT |
| English Proficiency and Financial Literacy | 174 | 0.880** | 0.000 | Positive | Significant | Rejected |

*Source: Primary Data    **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The correlation analysis reveals a strong positive association (r = 0.880) between English proficiency and financial literacy. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the significance threshold (0.01), the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is rejected. This finding suggests that English proficiency is strongly associated with the level of financial literacy in Thiruvallur District, India.

## Summary of Findings

The findings of the study indicate that financial accessibility and financial knowledge are two most important component of financial literacy. Residence of Thiruvallur district have given more importance to financial accessibility than other factors of financial literacy. The analysis further reveals a strong relationship between the English proficiency and financial literacy. The multi dimension of the district makes it essential to empathizes more on including local language Tamil in formal banking correspondence and other formal financial activities.

## Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, local language Tamil can be included in all written correspondence of the formal financial systems. Use of multi lingual communication should be encouraged. New financial products should be introduced to suit the need of the local people and at the same time the language barrier should be removed to enhance the use of new products. The use of Tamil in digital banking should be made so that the banking services reaches the rural people and at the same time the rural people are well educated about the financial services available its uses, options, and its suitability to their needs. Most of the resonance do not have the financial attitude of  saving therefore the financial literacy initiatives should give more importance in creating the awareness on savings and various options available for investments.

## Conclusion

This study explores the level of financial literacy in Thiruvallur district, India. Findings reveal that the residence of Thiruvallur district have a healthy financial literacy level, with overall level of financial literacy exceeding the average benchmark. The analysis

confirms a strong and significant positive correlation between English Proficiency and level of Financial Literacy. Showing the fact that English pay a key role in spreading financial literacy.

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# Reimagining the Epics: Gender, Voice, and Feminist Resistance in Indian Myth

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## Abstract

Reinterpretations of Indian myths have become a powerful literary strategy to recover silenced voices and question patriarchal narratives. This paper examines three such works: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), Volga's The *Liberation of Sita* (2016), and Poile Sengupta's *Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni* (2001). Each text reimagines epic characters—Draupadi, Sita, Shoorpanakha, and Shakuni—who are marginalised or demonised in traditional telling of the Mahabharata and Ramayana. By allowing these figures to speak, the authors highlight issues of gender, identity, and resistance. Draupadi's narration challenges her objectification, Sita's journey becomes a path to self-liberation, and Shoorpanakha transforms into a symbol of suppressed female desire, while Shakuni represents subaltern strategy. Taken together, these works expose the silencing of voices in myth while also reclaiming them as tools of feminist resistance. Situating these texts under the thrust areas "Gender and Voice" and "Myth, History, and Reimagination," this paper argues that reinterpreting epics is not merely a literary act but a political one, enabling the recovery of marginalised identities in Indian literature.

*Key Words*: *Myth, Gender, Voice, Resistance*

## Introduction

Myths are not only sacred stories but also cultural frameworks that shape the way societies imagine gender, identity, and power. In India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have remained central to cultural consciousness for centuries, often reinforcing traditional roles of women as dutiful wives, mothers, and silent sufferers. Yet modern writers have reimagined these epics to question such stereotypes and to give voice to those characters who were silenced or demonised in the original narratives. This paper focuses on three contemporary reimaginings of Indian myth that centre on silenced or marginal figures: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Palace of Illusions, which retells the Mahabharata through Draupadi's perspective; Volga's The Liberation of Sita, which reconstructs Sita's story after her exile in the Ramayana; and

Poile Sengupta's Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni, which uses mythological figures as symbols of feminist and subaltern resistance. All three works challenge patriarchal traditions by granting agency and voice to characters who were historically denied them. By analysing these texts, this paper explores how gender and voice operate in reimagined Indian myth. It examines how Shoorpanakha and Shakuni represent resistance from the margins, how Draupadi reclaims her agency through narration, and how Sita transforms into a figure of liberation. Finally, it shows how these voices together represent a feminist reclaiming of myth in Indian writing.

## Shoorpanakha and Shakuni in Poile Sengupta's Play

In Poile Sengupta's play Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni, mythological figures who were traditionally portrayed as villains or marginalised characters are given a platform to speak for themselves. Shoorpanakha in the Ramayana is remembered only as a grotesque; lustful woman whose rejection and mutilation triggered the great war. Sengupta reimagines her as a woman punished for expressing desire, thereby exposing how patriarchy demonises female sexuality. By reclaiming her voice, the play highlights the suppression of women who do not conform to idealised standards of beauty, chastity, or obedience. Shakuni, on the other hand, is often described in the Mahabharata as the cunning instigator of the Kurukshetra war. Sengupta reinterprets him not only as a schemer but also as a figure of subaltern resistance, someone who uses wit and strategy in a world where the weak cannot survive through straightforward justice. Together, Shoorpanakha and Shakuni embody voices from the margins, figures silenced in epic narratives but powerful when reimagined in literature. Sengupta's play demonstrates how myth can be reinterpreted to critique gendered silencing and political oppression, making the act of reimagination itself a form of resistance. What Sengupta achieves through these characters is a reorientation of myth from the perspective of those who were traditionally denied sympathy. Shoorpanakha's voice, instead of being reduced to a grotesque caricature, becomes a mirror reflecting how women who transgress social expectations are demonised and excluded from the cultural memory of the epics. Shakuni, similarly, embodies the anger of the oppressed who are forced to use cunning because justice is inaccessible to them. By positioning these two characters at the centre of her play, Sengupta highlights the ways in which myths have historically served the interests of the powerful while silencing those at the margins. The act of letting them speak is therefore not merely artistic but political, as it transforms "villains" into truthtellers whose narratives challenge the authority of dominant versions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. In this way, the play insists that listening to suppressed voices is essential to a fuller understanding of both myth and history.

## Draupadi in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Palace of Illusions

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Palace of Illusions offers one of the most compelling feminist retellings of the Mahabharata by presenting the story entirely through Draupadi's voice. Traditionally remembered for her humiliation in the dice hall and for being the wife of five Pandavas, Draupadi is rarely given psychological depth or the ability to narrate her own story. Divakaruni's novel transforms her into a central narrator, allowing readers to understand her frustrations, desires, and struggles with identity. Draupadi questions her polyandrous marriage, challenges her treatment as property, and reflects critically on her role in the great war. Through this narrative, she resists the silencing imposed upon women in epic traditions. Her palace itself, an imaginative creation that reflects her pride and vision, becomes a metaphor for female agency that is later destroyed, symbolising how patriarchal structures often dismantle women's achievements. By allowing Draupadi to narrate her own experiences, Divakaruni turns myth into a feminist narrative that restores individuality and complexity to a character who had been reduced to symbolic roles in earlier tellings. Another significant aspect of Divakaruni's portrayal is the way Draupadi constantly negotiates between destiny and desire. In the epic tradition she is remembered as a pawn in political alliances, yet in The Palace of Illusions she emerges as a woman acutely aware of her role in shaping history. Her unspoken love for Karna, her resentment at being shared among five husbands, and her outrage at the dice game are not just personal struggles but symbolic of a deeper conflict between individual will and collective duty. By articulating these contradictions, Divakaruni highlights how women in patriarchal societies are often forced to suppress their inner worlds in order to maintain external harmony. Draupadi's voice, however, refuses to remain confined; it interrogates the moral codes of her time and exposes the injustices hidden beneath the grandeur of dharma. In granting her such self-awareness, the novel not only restores dignity to Draupadi but also reminds readers that myths can be retold to centre women's emotions, choices, and resistance rather than their silence.

**Sita in Volga's The Liberation of Sita**

Volga's The Liberation of Sita reimagines the life of Sita after her exile, turning a story of suffering into one of empowerment and growth. In Valmiki's Ramayana, Sita is the epitome of loyalty, sacrifice, and endurance, qualities that make her an ideal wife but also leave her voiceless in the face of patriarchal demands. Volga challenges this image by presenting Sita as a woman who gains strength through encounters with other mythological women such as Ahalya, Renuka, Urmila, and Shoorpanakha. Each of these figures, punished or silenced in traditional narratives, becomes a source of wisdom, teaching Sita lessons about independence and resilience. Instead of defining herself only in relation to Rama, Sita learns to embrace her own identity and selfhood. Liberation, in this retelling, is not about proving chastity or loyalty but about asserting autonomy and finding solidarity with other women. By rewriting Sita's journey as one

of self-realisation, Volga transforms her from a silent sufferer into a voice of resistance, offering a powerful feminist reimagining of the epic. What makes Volga's reimagining particularly powerful is that it does not simply rehabilitate Sita as an individual heroine but situates her liberation in the broader context of women's shared struggles across the epic. By allowing Sita to learn from figures such as Ahalya, who redefines herself after being cursed, or Urmila, who embraces solitude as strength rather than absence, Volga highlights a network of female wisdom that has long been ignored in traditional versions of the Ramayana. This collective retelling transforms Sita from a solitary sufferer into part of a lineage of women who survive silencing, punishment, and exile, and yet continue to carve out meaning in their lives. By foregrounding this solidarity, Volga disrupts the patriarchal focus on Rama as the centre of the narrative and instead creates a world where women define themselves through their own choices and voices. In doing so, The Liberation of Sita goes beyond a feminist reclamation of one character to propose an alternative mythic tradition—one in which women guide, teach, and liberate each other.

### Comparative Insights: Gender and Voice in Reimagined Myth

When read together, Sengupta's play, Divakaruni's novel, and Volga's short stories demonstrate the ways in which reimagined myths can recover voices silenced in classical traditions. Sengupta foregrounds Shoorpanakha and Shakuni as representatives of marginalised figures, Divakaruni restores Draupadi's agency by allowing her to narrate her story, and Volga transforms Sita from an idealised wife into a liberated individual. While their approaches differ, each writer uses myth to expose the mechanisms of silencing and to provide space for female or marginal voices to be heard. These reimaginings show that myths are not fixed or timeless but dynamic and open to reinterpretation. By questioning patriarchal representations, they turn epics into sites of feminist resistance and subaltern assertion. Together, they illustrate how literature can intervene in cultural memory, ensuring that suppressed voices are not erased but amplified for contemporary readers. While these three works differ in form—Sengupta's play, Divakaruni's novel, and Volga's short stories—they share a common strategy of reworking myth from a perspective of resistance. By juxtaposing them, one can see how each writer addresses a different facet of silencing: Sengupta takes characters who were demonised or vilified and reframes them as articulate voices of critique, Divakaruni shifts narrative control to Draupadi thereby transforming the structure of storytelling itself, while Volga uses a dialogic framework where women share experiences to create a collective voice of empowerment. This comparative approach shows that reimagined myths do not only give voice to one marginalised figure but also destabilise the larger narrative frameworks of the epics themselves. Together they reveal how the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, often invoked to justify patriarchal ideals, can also be reinterpreted as sources of feminist

questioning. By highlighting the tension between silence and speech, centre and margin, conformity and rebellion, these reimaginings demonstrate that myths are cultural battlegrounds where the struggle for gendered voices continues to unfold.

## Conclusion

The Palace of Illusions, The Liberation of Sita, and Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni exemplify how reimagined myths reclaim silenced voices and challenge patriarchal frameworks in Indian literature. By allowing Draupadi, Sita, Shoorpanakha, and Shakuni to speak, these texts highlight the power of voice as a form of resistance. Situated under the thrust areas "Gender and Voice" and "Myth, History, and Reimagination," this study has shown that myth can serve not only as a repository of tradition but also as a space of contestation and transformation. Reinterpreting epics is both a literary and political act that affirms the importance of recovering marginalised identities and reimagining cultural narratives in more inclusive ways. In doing so, these texts remind us that myth continues to shape society but can also be reshaped to reflect feminist and subaltern perspectives.

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# Myth and Ecology: Interdisciplinary insights into Modern Indian Storytelling

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## Abstract

This article investigates how globalization reshapes the study and production of Indian literature through interdisciplinary perspectives that bring together the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Moving beyond frameworks that privilege language or nation as primary markers, the discussion highlights hybridity, translation, and cross-cultural flows as central to twenty-first-century literary studies. By drawing on both diasporic authors and regional voices, this paper argues that Indian literature should be seen simultaneously as an archive of cultural memory and as an active participant in global debates on justice, identity, and ecological change.

*Keywords:* *Myth, Ecology, Insights Modern Indian Storytelling*

## Introduction

Indian literature has long flourished through cultural exchanges, linguistic plurality, and diverse philosophical traditions. In today's globalized environment, these characteristics gain new significance as digital platforms, diasporic communities, and interdisciplinary scholarship transform how texts are created, circulated, and studied. To understand Indian literature in this context requires approaches that move past national frameworks and engage with disciplines such as history, sociology, gender studies, environmental science, and cultural theory.

## Globalization and Indian Literary Frameworks

Earlier literary scholarship often privileged canonical works, linguistic hierarchies, and national identity. Contemporary conditions, however, demand that literature be viewed in relation to migration, digital circulation, and shifting global power relations. Diasporic writers including Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Amitav Ghosh have contributed to hybrid forms that challenge rigid cultural boundaries. Meanwhile, regional voices such as Mahasweta Devi, Perumal Murugan, and Bama gain international attention through translation, confronting global readers with themes of caste, gender, and marginalization.

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## Interdisciplinary Approaches: Broadening the Literary Lens

Environmental Humanities: Literature can serve as a record of ecological change. Texts like Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide exemplify how narrative and environmental science converge, echoing interdisciplinary studies such as research on phytoremediation. Digital and Medical Humanities: Digital archives and computational methods have redefined literary circulation. At the same time, the medical humanities foreground how storytelling enhances understandings of illness, recovery, and social justice. Comparative Mythology and Astronomy: Indian texts have historically drawn on mythological and cosmological traditions. Comparative approaches reveal how global myths and astronomical motifs influence narratives of identity and belonging. Causal Inference and Social Narratives: The depiction of disease, epidemics, and social inequalities in literature can be studied alongside epidemiological and climate research, underscoring the role of narrative in shaping public understanding and ethical debates.

## Challenges of Representation

The increasing global recognition of Indian literature often favors works in English or by diasporic authors, sometimes at the expense of vernacular traditions. This imbalance highlights the tension between visibility and authenticity, raising questions about whose voices are amplified in global markets. Addressing this requires inclusive frameworks that recognize both local particularities and global resonances.

## Toward a Global and Plural Vision

To reimagine Indian literature in a globalized era means to treat it not only as an artistic form but also as a cultural archive, sociological record, and participant in broader conversations about justice, identity, and environment. Interdisciplinary perspectives encourage a dynamic approach that values India's multilingual heritage while situating it within transnational dialogues.

## Conclusion

The richness of Indian literary traditions, combined with the challenges posed by globalization, calls for new frameworks of study. By drawing on environmental science, digital technologies, medical humanities, and cultural theory, Indian literature can continue to evolve as a critical site of dialogue and transformation. Reimagining literature through interdisciplinarity ensures that it remains relevant, socially engaged, and globally connected.

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# Reinterpreting the Art of Self-realisation:
# Interplay of Body & Soul Represented in the Graphic Novel
## *Aranyaka: Book of the Forest*

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## Abstract

Traditional Indian Philosophy emphasises the concept of self-realisation as the most significant part of a human's life. It is a common belief that one can attain self-realisation only through the soul. In various ancient Vedic texts, the body is perceived merely as a vehicle for the soul's journey. In contrast to this popular notion, the graphic novel "Aranyaka" delves into a revolutionary perspective of realising one's self through an integrated approach involving both body and soul. This paper focuses on the aspect of self-realisation by examining the lives and spiritual journeys of the sage Yagnavalkya and his wives Katyayani and Maitreyi. "Aranyaka: Book of the Forest" was conceptualised by Devdutt Patnaik, written and illustrated by Amruta Patil. In this graphic novel, Katyayani is portrayed as a strong woman who suggests an alternative path to enlightenment. She emphasises on the values of physical body alongside the spiritual essence of the mind. This paper also highlights the narrative aspects of the graphic novel "Aranyaka" with special reference to the symbols, codes and illustrations.

*Keywords*: *Body, Soul, Self-realisation, Fire, Vedic texts*

## Introduction

In the Indian philosophical scenario, the ultimate goal of a human being's life is to escape the cycle of birth and death. When a human being escapes this cycle, s/he attain Moksha. The term Moksha refers to union with God or oneness with the Supreme Being. Numerous Indian Philosophers and sages have attained this stage of oneness with God, by renouncing their body. The body, the vehicle with which a human being travels across the ocean of life is considered inferior. In contrast, the soul that travels through this body holds a superior position in Indian context. "The soul is called dehī,

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or one who possesses the body, and the material body is called deha, or the embodiment of the soul. The body is changing at every moment, but the soul is fixed."(Prabhupada). Almost every ancient Indian text talks about the significant role played by the soul in attaining Moksha. The soul tries to connect with the Supreme Being only if it gets a complete knowledge of the self. Through acquiring a complete knowledge of the self, one can emancipate from the self.  This is called the art of self-realisation.

Against the popular notion that self-realization is achieved exclusively through the soul, one remarkable figure, Katyayani, the wife of a great Rishi, presents a profound alternative. She attains the stage of self-realization by harmoniously integrating both body and soul. Her perspective challenges the traditional view and emphasizes the inseparable connection between the physical and spiritual realms. By acknowledging the significance of the body in the journey towards enlightenment, Katyayani's philosophy offers a holistic approach to self-realisation which was portrayed in the graphic novel "Aranyaka – Book of the forest". This research paper focuses on her journey and perceptions towards self-realisation with immense illustrations that transcends the readers to a different world of words and visuals.

**Aranyaka – Book of the Forest:**

Graphic novels are considered a visual treat, offering readers an immersive experience that blends stunning art with profound themes. These literary works captivate the mind and leave a lasting impression. In India, the popularity of graphic novels has soared recently, receiving widespread acclaim for their versatility in covering genres from mythology to modern themes. One exemplary graphic novel that recreates the theme of mythology in modern light is "Aranyaka – Book of the Forest." This masterpiece retells a 3,000-year-old story with breath-taking illustrations and compelling narrative. The novel is a collaborative work by two of India's most celebrated authors, Amruta Patil and Devdutt Pattanaik. It was published in the year 2019. (Fig – 1 & 1a)
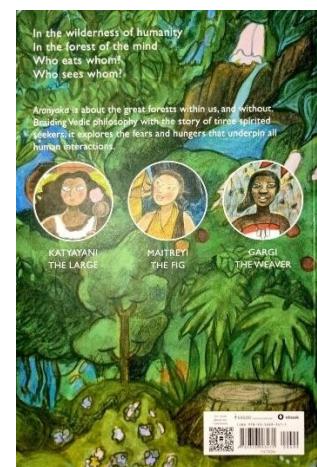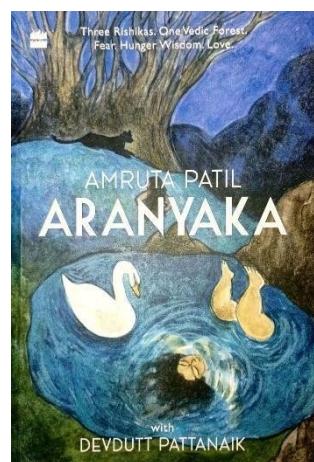
*(Figures 1 & 1a - front and back cover of the graphic novel)*

**Realising one's self:**

In our ever-evolving, fast-paced world, the quest for self-realization stands out as one of the most arduous and rewarding challenges. "The development of the knowledge of the Self to its fullest extent means acquiring knowledge of the fundamental nature of the Self, which leads to the emancipation of the Self."(Dasji, p.5) Emancipation of the self is not synonymous with death; death pertains to the human body, while emancipation of the self, aligns with the soul's transcendence.

In the rich tradition of ancient India, great rishis, or sages, attained Moksha— liberation or emancipation — by achieving a complete understanding of the "I," the self. "I" transcends beyond mere names, identities, or even the body through which actions are performed. It represents the ATMA or Supreme Self. As the body is regarded as a mere vehicle, philosophers and rishis emphasize the significance of the soul and its journey towards Moksha. The acceptance of this notion and commitment to its path came naturally to many rishis and rishikas (female sages) in ancient traditions. One notable example is the venerable sage Yagnavalkya, who composed the "Shukla Yajur Veda". "His life and teachings constitute the corner stone of the basic philosophy and tenets of Hinduism." For instance, he was the one who propounded this great statement "AHAM BRAHMASMI" (I am Brahmam). It is said that he has learnt his lessons directly from SURYA (the Sun God) traveling with him at his speed. Yagnavalkya attained divine power through intense penance and the disciplined practice of yoga, following the path of self-realization. Unlike Yagnavalkya, without enduring any arduous experiments and challenges, Katyayani, one of his wives had realised herself by amalgamating both her body and soul in the journey. She stands as a testament to attain self-realisation through body.

**Beyond the soul:**

"Aranyaka – book of the Forest" aids the readers to transcend their thoughts on selfrealisation to a higher level. Though it deals with the story of the celebrated sage Yagnavalkya, the book's protagonist is his wife, Katyayani. In the initial sections of the book, both Katyayani and Yagnavalkya are depicted as outcasts from their respective groups. Both are thrown out of their tribes for the same reason – 'appetite'. (Figure – 2)

*Figure 2 - Depicting the initial conversations between Yagnavalkya & Katyayani (Patil & Pattanaik, 2023, p.37)*

Katyayani's hunger dwells in fulfilling the needs of her body and Yagnavalkya's craving lies in attaining intellectual supremacy. They both fell in love, marry each other and had 3 children. As the time progresses, to follow the path of enlightenment, Yagnavalkya started deviating from his duties as a husband and father. He has built his own reputation as a teacher/guru in his classroom whereas Katyayani learn/unlearn insightful life lessons from the kitchen by nourishing herself, her family and the students of Yagnavalkya. In contrast to his intellectual growth, Yagnavalkya underestimates Katyayani by considering her physical appetite as inferior. The enlightening journey of the couple in their unique paths and the attainment of self-realisation through different planes shape the book into an artistic masterpiece.

The usage of colours, symbols of the forest, animals and birds works as stunning visual repositories for the readers to imbibe themselves in the story. Depiction of the major characters Yagnavalkya as 'Y' & Katyayani as 'The Large' portrays the genius of the authors. It is clearly represented that towards the end of the novel, Katyayani has attained self-realisation without leaving her duties as a homemaker whereas Y wants to move away from his wife to proceed in the path.

**Symbols and Codes:**

A significant component in analysing "Aranyaka", the graphic novel lies in decoding the symbols used by Amruta Patil & Devdutt Patnaik. "The title of the graphic novel Aranyaka refers to a forest. In a metaphorical sense, Aranyaka also refers to the dense "forest" of philosophical inquiry and denotes the problem of knowledge in its essence." Since this novel is set against the backdrop of a forest, it has various beautiful Figures and depictions of animals, birds and insects. For instance, a Black Panther is visualised whenever Katyayani contemplates about her life. This Black Panther serves as an alter-ego of Katyayani and throws numerous questions to her for which Katyayani has witty answers.

(Figures 3 & 4)

*Figures 3 & 4: Conversations between Black Panther & Katyayani – Swan and Katyayani (Patil & Pattanaik, 2023, pp.76-77)*

The significant symbol to be considered in the novel is Fire. More than just a symbol, fire is portrayed as a character in itself throughout the novel. In the first few chapters, while living in the forest, Fire is compared to one's appetite. As the story progressed from forest to the field and eventually to a house where they lead their life, fire becomes a part of their daily routine. For Katyayani, fire is synonymous in making food and sating one's hunger whereas Y views fire as his intellectual search for the truth. In the mid of the novel, while Katyayani realises her position as the wife of Y, Patil has clearly portrayed the differences between the couple with the symbol of fire. (Figure 5)
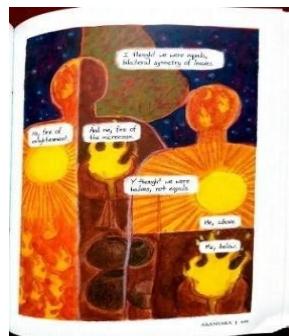


*Figure 5 - Depicting the stark differences between him & her using the symbol Fire (Patil & Pattanaik, 2023, p.93)*

Towards the end of the novel, Maitreyi, the other wife and intellectual companion of Yagnavalkya utters this beautiful statement that elevates the position of Katyayani using fire as symbol. Maitreyi says "She lights a fire at dawn that feeds us until dusk…Without the Large's smoky wood fire indeed no inner fires could be lit".(Maitreyi, 136) (Fig 6).

*Figure 6 - Explaining the clear comparison of Katyayani's Kitchen fire and intellectual fire (Patil & Pattanaik, 2023, p.136)*

Maitreyi is portrayed as the fig which is a symbol of wisdom and fertility. She rightly points out that Katyayani's path to enlightenment and her belief in acknowledging the body is the key to align the mind in the journey to self-realisation. Even though she prefers to walk along with Y, she says "…I know so much more than before – from her field, her grove and her kitchen. (Maitreyi, p.156)

Gargi, who is symbolically linked to the act of weaving, weaves a beautiful life around Katyayani while she started her journey as the student of Y. Like the act of weaving, Gargi's part was also thoughtful and inquisitive. "The Weaver's doggedness was the warp around which complex ideas knotted themselves."(Aranyaka, p.102). She is regarded both as a respected student and an intellectual rival to Y. Gargi was engaged in a powerful and memorable debate with Yagnavalkya. It is a testament to her profound intellect and deep understanding of Vedic philosophy. Although Yagnavalkya ultimately triumphed in their debate, Gargi's intellectual prowess and contributions have been highly acclaimed and respected in the Upanishads. After losing in the debate, she chose to continue her journey alone in the path of enlightenment. "No human teacher can raise me to where I need to be. I must go the rest of the distance on my own." (Gargi, p.151). Her acknowledgment of Katyayani's way of life highlight the importance of diverse perspectives in the quest for knowledge and self-realisation.

**Couple goals:**

In modern terms, couple goals refer to 'shared objectives' and 'dreams' that two people in love strive to achieve together. Despite their distinct paths and goals, mutual respect serves as the key to achieve their aspirations. From this modern perspective, both Yagnavalkaya and Katyayani tries to attain the state of enlightenment in their own paths. Katyayani, light years ahead of her time, has desired for mutual respect and love from Yagnavalkya. Her foresight and desire for equality and affection in a partnership are a testament to her progressive mind-set which was beautifully depicted by the authors.

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Patil who has wittingly sketched the character of Katyayani has enriched the conversations between the couple with quirky maxims of Katyayani from where Yagnavalkya learns valuable lessons. In spite of appreciating the intellectual prowess of Katyayani, Yagnavalkya's pride discards to see her as his equal. (Figures 7 & 8)
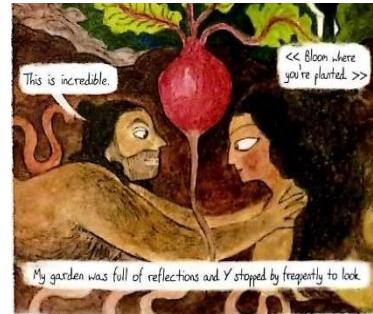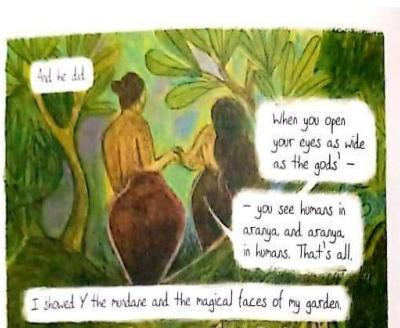


*Figures 7 & 8 - Depicting the learnings and knowledge of Katyayani  (Patil & Pattanaik, 2023, p.90-91)*

Towards the end of the novel, Yagnavalkya chooses to leave Katyayani, admitting his failure in fulfilling his duties as a husband.  "I've failed you. You fed me for years, but I gave you no comforts. I will find a way to repay your debt and set you free…" (Yagnavalkya, p.135)   Even at that moment, Katyayani has understood that Yagnavalkya wishes to depart due to his quest for enlightenment. She didn't attempt to fight with him or stop him. "You have never needed my permission to go, to grow". (Katyayani, p.152). It is fulfilling to note that Katyayani's wisdom relies in detached attachment. While Yagnavalkya perceives himself as a great teacher, he abandons Katyayani to embark on a quest for self-discovery. In contrast, Katyayani achieves her enlightenment through living a life that she loves, all while embracing her roles as a wife and a mother. Once Yagnavalkya started his journey to the forest along with Maitreyi, she says, "I lit the fire again. There was much to teach in aranyani's kitchen. (Katyayani, p.154).

**Conclusion**:

Yagnavalkya, possessing supreme knowledge, believed that detaching from familial bonds would help him attain Moksha but Katyayani has achieved self-realization without severing those bonds. This contrast highlights the magnanimity of Katyayani's character. While talking about the making of the book Aranyaka, Patnaik says, "…It bothered me that Katyayani was always seen as inferior because she chose material wealth over knowledge. Could the story be retold…"(Patnaik, p.165). To do justice to the aforementioned statement, the authors have not only portrayed Katyayani's character with beauty and depth but have also enhanced her presence through the use of vibrant colours and meaningful symbols, adding layers to her portrayal.

The authors agree that food fundamentalism and hunger plays a pivotal role in shaping this graphic novel. Patnaik says, "Food is central in the Vedas: the yagna is

essentially an act of feeding the devas with ladles; fire in the altar is the mouth of the gods". (Patnaik, p.166). The essence of self-realization is understanding that nothing truly belongs to someone except their own body. Thus, nourishing one's body with proper food and attending to the needs of the body is indispensable in attaining self-realisation. Katyayani, as a phenomenal woman serves as a prototype to incorporate both soul and body in the journey to enlightenment.

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# Social Discrimination

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## Abstract

Social discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on characteristics such as caste, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity. Social discrimination occurs in many forms. For example, Dalit people are often not allowed to enter temples, clean them, or pray to God. They are discouraged from speaking the name of Lord Ram, whereas members of the upper class, such as Brahmins, freely worship and recite prayers. If a Dalit person speaks the name of God, the upper society may even cut their tongue as punishment. The novel Untouchable, written by Mulk Raj Anand, portrays the life of Bakha, a Dalit character who faces numerous problems due to social discrimination. Dalit people are forced to work under harsh conditions, often for meagre payments, and are subject to abusive language by the upper class. The "roti problem" represents how Dalits are compelled to work under exploitative conditions. Similarly, upper-class women are thrown aside in cases of discord or conflict. Transgender individuals also face severe social discrimination. Many are subjected to abusive language and are seen as evil or impure by society. A transgender child is often rejected, ridiculed, and denied equal rights. They are not allowed to attend colleges and are treated as outcasts. Even though the constitution grants equal rights to transgender people, societal acceptance remains lacking.

Transgender in society trance of using behaviour toward people. Society does not give equal rights in marriage. People look at transgender individuals with unable eyes. People do not like to sit near eunuchs. Transgender individuals do not have equal rights in education. Many girls and boys abuse them with language and misbehave toward them. In the novel Seven Steps Around the Fire written by Mahesh Dattani, the character Anarkali faces torture, abuse, and many problems. Society does not respect transgender individuals and always accuses them. A trans person in society never receives equal rights. The government does not allow by sexual marriage. Presentation to gender identity in contemporary India in English fiction has involved significantly over the past decades, reflecting social, legal, and cultural transformations in India. Child married in India women not educated child marriage women not right in society love marriage child marriage benefit not give to dowry father does not have to teach her daughter the money for teaching is settled daughter married take place with less

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money both family are happy girls life torture not mature in people work in all day home many diseases in women child marriage torture frustration kill desire girls not knowledge in the world women not experience in people behaviour not experience in work women all time weapon remembering your childhood happiness but married women stay confined to your home see can never leave her house again many women child not educated in do not now about sex education child marriage in women body and mind and physically not strong but after married women family member demand give a child it has to be done even if the women does not want to child sometime women pregnant not proper food and rest all time work and torture strike and born child Lo minded . Sometime pregnant women check-up then doctor told me it was a girl family decided awesome family need a boy not girl women not desire in abortion if you have doing any work under pressure from your man awesome has to be done even if the women does not want it women after awesome pain with family or happy a poem " Voice of the unwanted girl " written by Sujata Bhatt" society not equal right in women social discrimination sati pratha in India operation after husband and wife and children become orphans society is the operating women were never give equal right in society but Raja Ram Mohan Roy abolished the practice Shakti and women live after their husband or gone-caste marriages are discouraged or forbidden in many communities. When couples from different castes marry, they face resistance, mental harassment, and abuse from their families and society. Families often prioritize having a male child over a female one. Women's desires are suppressed, and they are discouraged from pursuing education or working outside the home. The belief that only boys should be given opportunities persists, whereas girls are denied equal chances to succeed. This mindset creates an environment where girls are mentally oppressed and lack freedom. Child marriage in India affects women who are not educated. Child marriage does not give women rights in society. Love marriage and child marriage do not benefit women. Dowry is not required, and the father does not have to spend money to educate his daughter because the expenses are considered settled when the daughter is married with less money. Both families feel happy. However, girls' lives are full of torture because they are not mature. They have to work all day at home and suffer from many diseases.

Child marriage causes torture and frustration, which kill the desires of girls. They have no knowledge about the world or experience dealing with people. They are not experienced in work and are always burdened, remembering childhood happiness but being confined in their homes. Married women cannot leave their house again. Many women are not educated and do not know about sex education. Child marriage makes their body and mind physically weak. Even if the woman does not want to have a child, family members demand that she must give birth after marriage. Sometimes, when pregnant women go for checkups, the doctor says it is a girl, but the family wants

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a boy instead. Women do not want to undergo abortion, but if they are forced by their husbands or family, they have to do it even if they do not desire it. After abortion, women suffer in pain and feel unhappy.

A poem titled "Voice of the Unwanted Girl" written by Sujata Bhatt shows that society does not give equal rights to women. Social discrimination, practices like sati pratha, and other issues in India show how women were never given equal rights. After the death of a husband, the wife and children would become orphans, but society did not support them. However, Raja Ram Mohan Roy abolished the practice, and Shakti and women now live after their husband is gone. Gender violence in social discrimination.

You know society, but it is much more prevailing in rural areas. Because of this patriarchy, girls are not comfortable. They are bound by many rules and always face not only general discrimination but also serious kinds of gender-based violence. I would say that in rural areas, most girls face severe gender violence. Their minds are controlled by rules ruled by patriarchy. Gender violence breaks girls' time with relatives and leads to domestic violence. Fathers and mothers fight all the time, and they don't give permission to their daughters. General violence and social discrimination are everywhere in society. Gender-based violence is common in India. Boys are given importance first, and they get jobs easily. Boys can come and go without questions, but when girls go outside, family members question them. This is social discrimination.

In contemporary India, identity and resistance movements among marginalized communities, including Dalits, lower-caste women, and transgender people, are reclaiming their cultural and civilizational voices. Literature reflects the struggles of these communities, showcasing how male dominance and orthodoxy prevent equal opportunities for women. The demand for boys over girls, social rejection, and mental harassment are common experiences. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar fought against casteism and advocated equal rights for all people in India. Dalits were once denied access to education in Gurukuls, but today, subaltern voices demand equality and educational opportunities. Women, through cultural experiences and resistance, assert their personal choices beyond political acts.

However, societal restrictions remain. Women are often prevented from stepping outside to pursue education or employment. In many households, the idea that only boys deserve opportunities persists, reinforcing social discrimination. Even in government hospitals and offices, upper-class individuals receive better services while the poor are neglected. Social discrimination is not limited to India. In America, racial discrimination exists between Black and white people, where Black people face torture and exclusion in workplaces. President Joseph Biden called for urgent action to

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advance equity and power, emphasizing that systemic racism is corrosive and destructive to the nation's soul.

In India, both casteism and religious divisions—between Hindus and Muslims—have been manipulated by political interests. Educational institutions like pathshalas and madrasas once taught separately, reinforcing divisions. Missionary interventions created further classes, leading to disputes between communities. Today, Hindu nationalism and communal politics continue to fuel discrimination, and interfaith marriages face strong opposition. The economic system also contributes to unequal rights. Government facilities and services are more accessible to the upper class, while poor communities face neglect and insufficient medical advice. These inequalities affect daily life and social well-being. Casteism in Indian society leads to discrimination against people belonging to lower castes. They are treated unfairly and are denied basic rights. Upper-class people do not allow lower-caste individuals to buy new clothes, and they are forced to wear used or discarded clothes. Lower-caste people work day and night in the fields and homes of the upper class, often under harsh conditions. The poem Jhuthan by Omprakash Valmiki reflects the condition of Dalit people and the caste-based oppression they face in India. Arjun Dangle, a writer and leader of the Dalit Panther movement, also highlighted how casteism destroys lives. Many people have been driven to suicide due to constant mental and physical torture by the upper castes.

Social discrimination continues to oppress lower-caste communities in the name of caste. The technical term in postcolonial theory for a marginalized person is someone trapped within the oppressor-oppressed dynamic, without even a voice to speak out. Symbolically, the colonizer becomes the colonized, and all marginalized communities, including Dalits, transgender individuals, and women, fall under this category. Though movements like feminism and social justice exist, societies often fail to genuinely support the oppressed. Women's voices are suppressed in male-dominant structures, where their struggles are ignored. Their writing goes unpublished or unnoticed, and their mental anguish, strikes, and protest remain unaddressed.

Nevertheless, the subaltern continues to speak of equal rights, demanding justice and recognition. In South India, linguistic and political issues related to identity and opportunity remain deeply rooted. Dr. Ambedkar's work for equality, education, and rights continues to inspire movements for justice. Today's literature and activism seek to amplify subaltern voices, advocate for gender equality, and break the chains of orthodoxy and prejudice. Social discrimination remains a persistent issue across countries, but resistance movements highlight the power of voice, education, and unity in striving for a just society.

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# Generative AI in English Language Teaching: Enhancing or Hindering Academic Writing?

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on how the recent development of AI influences the students in their English language teaching . Nowadays students rely more on the AI tools such as Grammarly, Quill Bot and ChatGPT for their academic writing and hinders their higher order thinking and it make the students to lack originality in their work at the same time it helps the students in gaining knowledge about the grammar rules, sentence structure and proficiency in vocabulary. This paper analyses whether AI enhances the academic writing or it hinders the original and higher order thinking of the students. It studies this research gap in the qualitative method and using the conceptual research design and also in the lens of blooms taxonomy , Vygotsky's sociocultural theory  and the critical pedagogy of Friere. Students were supposed to use AI in ELT only to develop the lower order skills and the overdependence on it is not advised as it hinders their critical thinking and their analytical skill. It helps the students to gain confidence in their academic writing but also it has a risk factors as it hinders their original thinking. The paper concludes by saying the AI should be cautiously implemented in  ELT as it is a teaching aid for the teachers and also the usage of AI in academic writing should be taught wisely so that student's originality in their works remains and also the warnings should also be given as it results in plagiarism. The paper recommends the teachers to come up with the task it improves the higher order thinking of the students.

*Keywords: AI, ELT, Academic Writing, higher order thinking, lower order thinking, originality*

## Introduction :

English is a worldwide used common language for communication.  English language serves for many purpose. In so many countries it serves as a second language, it is widely used in business, in education, in trade and  it forms a common ground for communication. It bridges the diversities among countries all over the world. And to be sound in the English language, one has to master the four skills that is reading,

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writing, speaking and listening. One of the main skill is Writing. To be proficient in the skill of writing one has to master the grammar skills ,sentence structure and also efficiency in vocabulary is needed. In our country, not all the students are efficient in the skill of writing. As we know , a classroom is a heterogenous setting , where students from different background comes to the class. In reality, a teacher can't stand by every student's side and help them out with their writing skill. So, the imbibe of technology in the English Language Teaching is needed  and the help of technology inside the classroom becomes a necessity . The technology in which students rely more on today is that AI which was raised in the year 2022. Students mostly rely on tools like Grammarly, Paperpal, ChatGPT, Quill Bot and so on. Though AI helps students in improving their writing skill, it also make them more dependent on these tools and it reduces their critical thinking. When students start to depend on these tools more ,the originality of work lacks. In this paper, three research questions are going to be answered :

1. Whether these AI tools enhances the writing skill of students or it hinders their academic writing ?

2. What are the strategies can be used in AI to help it in the English language teaching Pedagogy.

3. According to blooms taxonomy, how it helps in the lower order ( understanding, remembering), but it reduces the higher order thinking ( analyzing, creating).

**Literature Review:**

**AI  in English language teaching**

AI technologies have been increasingly used by the students for the second language acquisition and to attain writing proficiency. Dwivedi et al.(2023) argue that generative AI can offer personalized learning opportunities, enabling students to receive instant feedback on grammar, vocabulary and stylistic choices. Similarly, Aljanabi(2023)suggests that AI tools reduce teacher workload by automating corrective feedback, thus allowing instructors to focus on higher level pedagogical goals. These studies supports and accepts AI as a helping aid in ELT Classroom.

**AI and Academic Writing Support**

A number of studies has already been taken under how AI helps the students in the academic writing. Pham(2023) observes that  AI- based tools enhance student's surface-level writing accuracy, which are traditionally challenging for non-native speakers. Sahlane (2024)extends this view, noting that generative AI not only corrects, errors but also suggests vocabulary and organizational patterns that helps students produce more polished academic texts. However, researchers such as Kern (2022)

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caution that this reliance may encourage formulaic writing, reducing opportunities for creativity and authentic self – expression.

## Challenges to Higher Order Thinking Skills

Despite these benefits, there is also risks that scholars always used to warn us, for completely relying on AI. According to Pham(2023), students may bypass critical engagement with sources when AI generates paraphrases or summarises for them. This concern aligns with Bloom's taxonomy, which differentiates between lower order skills(remembering, understanding, applying) and higher order skills(analyzing, evaluating, creating).while AI tools support lower order skills by addressing grammatical errors, helps in sentence making but it hinders the higher order skills such as critical thinking, analyzing of the students. Sahlane(2024) similarly argues that AI cannot replicate the reflective judgement required in academic writing, thus raising pedagogical concerns.

## Theoretical Perspectives on AI in ELT

The academic writing with the help of AI can be analyzed through various theoretical lenses. According to the Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the AI can be seen as a scaffolding in the zone of proximal development which assist the students to complete the given task, in case when they can't do it on their own. Similarly, the critical pedagogy inspired by Freire, emphasies that the learner should be an active participant in the process of learning and not should be a passive receiver of content like a machine learner. Still, in this studies, no scholars have come up with the strategies of pedagogy where AI can be used effectively in ELT classrooms as a teaching aid at the same time, it should improve the critical thinking among the learners and should ensure the originality in their works.

Many studies and scholars has worked on how AI helps the students in the Academic writing and also what are the drawbacks and risks behind using AI in academic writing. Studies has also warned the students that too much relying on AI would result in the Plagiarism. But no studies and scholars has come up with the effective strategies where students can use AI, not only to gain their lower order skills but also to improve in their higher order skills. And also, teachers should come up with the tasks which improve the higher order thinking among the students.

## Methodology: Research Design

The research design is qualitative and conceptual , focusing on the review that exists from the year 2022-2025 rather than collecting a new data. It's going to examine the existing scholarship on the role of generative AI (Grammarly, Quill Bot, ChatGPT) how it shapes the academic writing of the students. This approach would be better because the AI in the ELT field , is emerging field and also, it's a debate topic whether

it is beneficial for the students or it's a hindrance to the students critical thinking. The scholars who have already worked on this field, have also adopted the theoretical framework rather than the experimental framework. So, this paper will also focus on the topic using the conceptual review by other scholars and theories that are applicable rather than collecting the experimental data.

**Data sources**

For this study, I have used the peer reviewed journals that are available in the online sources that is Google Scholar, JSTOR, Research Gate, and Scopus, using the keywords like AI in ELT, AI and academic writing , ChatGPT in education, and Blooms taxonomy with AI. The sources for this paper were taken from journals, article and academic reports that was published between the year 2022 and 2024. This particular framework because the emerging of AI and the usage of the AI in the field of writing and also for the academic purposes was between 2022-2024. **Analytical Framework**

 To analyse the materials, three main theoretical approaches were applied ,they are:

1. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory , which look at AI as a scaffolding tool that are used by the students in the zone of Proximal development that can help the students to complete the task with the help of assistant.

2. Through the lens of Bloom's Taxonomy which examines whether AI supports only the lower order skills like remembering and understanding or it also helps in the acquiring the higher order skills such as analyzing, evaluating and creating.

3. Critical pedagogy (Freire) was used to analyze in this process of learning whether students becoming the active learners or they're becoming the passive learners.

**Procedure**:

Once the review is done, the selected studies was grouped into three categories, whereas the first one was how AI improves the learners lower-level skill such as understanding the sentence structure, gaining proficiency in the vocabulary. The second category was that how the dependence on AI more would result in plagiarism. The third category was that how AI has a destructive nature in decreasing the level originality among the students work and also how it hinders the development of higher order thinking among the learners.

**How AI helps the learners in the skill of writing :**

Students are more used to using AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly for their assignments and also to check the grammar in their writing. At one point, or the other it helps the students to learn the sentence structure and also, they will learn the writing style at their own pace of space and time as because teachers can't be there for their students all the time . according to the theoretical perceptive of sociocultural theory,

AI is a scaffolding in their zone of proximal development stage , where they can complete the task with the assistant AI.

### Relying more on AI

When learners rely more on AI and complete their Academic writing with the help of AI .It results in the lack of originality in the works and also the risk of plagiarism, their original idea is not seen in their work and also it hinders the development of the higher order thinking such as analyzing, creating , synthesis of ideas as already discussed in the Bloom's Taxonomy.  And also, the Freire's Critical Pedagogy, says when students completely rely on the AI it results in the lacking their skill to think on their own ,thereby they become the passive listeners.

### Finding the Middle Ground

From the studies so far as reviewed, the usage of AI is not too good or it is too bad for the academic writing and in the ELT teaching. It solely depends on how students use it and how teachers teach their students the correct way of using AI. Teachers should teach the students to use AI in a way that improves their higher order thinking and in the way their originality remains the same. Students should also use AI to ask ideas and should not solely depend on it for the full essay to be written, their comes the problem.

### Implications for teaching

Rather than completely avoiding AI in the ELT classrooms, teachers can teach the students how to use it wisely, and also a teacher should teach them to use it only for corrections and suggestions and not for a complete idea.AI actually will help both the learner and the teacher in teaching and the learning process.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

From the overall studies , I would like to conclude saying AI is not a complete negative tool or a positive tool, it depends on the way it's been used. The teachers should wisely teach the students both the advantage and the disadvantage of using AI in academic writing. Students should practice writing on their own can use AI to narrow down their points and also for the grammar correction, to get suggestions for their ideas. AI helps students to learn the techniques of academic writing, the correct sentence structure, proficiency in vocabulary in their own pace and time which bring confidence to the learners. Teachers should also teach their students the importance of critical and analytical skill in the higher education, which AI  hinders. Students should be taught what AI can do and cannot do. Students should understand the originality in the work brings credit to them.

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**38**

# Cultural Erasure as Portrayed in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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## Abstract

Chinua Achebe's *Thing Fall Apart* discloses the cultural erasure by British colonialism. The rich traditions and beliefs of Igbo Community are wiped out by the European Missionaries. The introduction of colonial law and political system demolishes the age-old customs and practices of the Umuofia clan. The colonizers dismiss not only the judicial system but the very basic foundation, the culture of the tribe. The building of Church, conversion and humiliating the traditional systems leads to the cultural erosion of the community. The new economic policies undermine the agricultural practices. Hegemony and eurocentrism uproot the existing system of the clan as primitive and uncultured.

*Keywords: Culture, Igbo, Traditions, Missionaries, Colonialism.*

Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* presents the colonial power dismantling the culture and traditions of Igbo community. European colonialism has disrupted the social and political systems of the Igbo tribe. The British Missionaries has undermined the traditional life and in the process of replacing the new system, they have humiliated and made the natives powerless and defenseless. Achebe presents a pre-colonial society depicting the deep rooted culture embedded in the Igbo tribe. The customs, beliefs and the social systems of the Umuofia reflects their oral traditions. The story serves as a counter narrative to justify the rich heritage of the native to the so called imperialist view by European civilization.

Achebe has portrayed the authentic cultural practices of the clan in Umuofia to counter the representations made by certain European writers as primitive and uncivilized. The oral culture, the proverbs and the daily rituals are deeply connected with the Igbo community. The belief of the people and the social structure underscores the age-old customs of the village. Almost every sphere of life starting with marriage, agriculture to religious practices and the judicial system stand testimony to strong and deep rooted values embedded in the tribes.

The initial chapters depict the rich culture of the Igbo people. It is a patriarchal society where men rule and feed the family. Men are born and groomed to be strong, masculine and protective. The tribe believes in personal achievement and men exhibit their bravery through competitions like wrestling match. Okonkwo embodies his physical prowess by wining Amalinze the Cat in the wrestling match. In Umuofia, he is recognized and praised for his gallantry. He rules "his household with heavy hand"(14). Okonkwo's temper is showcased through these lines, "He had no patience with unsuccessful men. He had no patience with his father". (8) On the other hand women are relegated to domestic chores and child bearing. Though Ekwefi and Ezinma, Okonkwo's wives show resilience and exhibit their strength, they are confined to the stereo type feminine roles.

The colonial rule in the village transforms the family dynamics and the cultural roots. The people of Umuofia have maintained a well-structured social and political system. They have a standard decision making system in the community. They believed their ancestors and their spirits as guidance to the administration. The egwugwu were the ancestral spirits who guarded the wisdom of the clan. It is said, "The egwugwu were not to be trifled with, and they knew it. They were the most powerful men in the clan…" they followed polytheistic religious faith. The Igbo tribe had cultural practices that were an integral part of their life. They had many deities, and celebrated major festivals like The Week of Peace and the Feast of New Yam. These festivals show their respect to their neighbours, women submitting to their male counterparts and taking care of the family. Chukwu, the creator, was a powerful god. Ani, and Amadioha ruled the earth, thunder and justice.

The oracles were believed to be the supreme power and they were approached for any issue or crisis in the village. People believed the pronouncements as god's order. The social and political systems were governed by these divine intermediaries. The cultural wisdom of the community is demonstrated by the proverbs the people use in their conversation. Rituals like Kola nut and bride price reveal how the tribe values their traditions and bring the community together. The arrivals of the European missionaries dismantle the vibrant cultural system leading to the tragedy of not only Okonkwo but the entire community. Achebe in his The African Writer and the English Language expresses this theme--put quite simply--is that African peoples did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans, that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African peoples all but lost in the colonial period, and it is this dignity that they must now regain.

The culture of the Umuofia disintegrates and relinquishes its power at the advent of British missionaries. The Missionaries undermine the very foundation of the institutions and religious principles of the clan. The internal strife and rigid rules in

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the community and absolute trust in the oracle weakens the organized group in the society.

The conversions and new beliefs divide the community. There is a discord between the new converts and the traditionalists. Colonial intrusion into the everyday life of the people erodes the political and social systems of the Igbo tribes. The following lines reflect the domain of the missionaries and how quick are their actions to transform the community "The missionaries had arrived in Umuofia, built a church, gained a few converts, and were already sending evangelists to nearby towns and villages." Achebe illustrates the community's daily life, celebrations, beliefs and folktales that foreground the "cultural density". Missionaries, establishing new systems in legal and social structures, crumble down the cultural backbone of the Igbo tribe. The new regime of the Colonizers overrides the native administration and demoralizes the livelihood of the community. Achebe through this story has explicated the deep rooted customs and traditions.

New religion and conversions destabilize the existing religious beliefs and cause rifts in the family and society. The missionaries overthrew the polytheistic belief by insisting on monotheism. They undermined almost every system that existed in the community . The festivals and celebrations of the people demeaned and subdued by the colonizers. The weakening of the social hierarchy, encouraging and supporting the new converts who were from the marginalized section had severed the cultural bonds of the community.

The wrestling match that determined the masculinity and the prowess of the protagonist, Okonkwo, symbolized the cultural identity, championing the male status in the village. Okonkwo cleared his throat and moved his feet to the beat of the drums. It filled him with fire as it had always done from his youth. He trembled with the desire to conquer and subdue. It was like the desire for woman.

 "We shall be late for the wrestling," said Ezinma to her mother.

 "They will not begin until the sun goes down."

"But they are beating the drums."

 "Yes. The drums begin at noon but the wrestling waits until the sun begins to sink. Go and see if your father has brought out yams for the afternoon."(35)

The above lines signify the cultural practice and rituals of the clan. The drum beat symbolizes Okonkwo's warrior spirit. Wrestling match proves not just a sport or game, but an event that determines the bravery and identity of a man to rule his clan. The village celebrates the victory of the man and respects him as their leader. The drum beat, the yams and the sun signify the time and atmosphere of the ritual in the village.

The people's practice and their farming as the major work reflect their close connection between their culture and the life that exists around them.

"Unless you shave off the mark of your heathen belief, I will not admit you into the church," said Mr. Kiaga. "You fear that you will die. Why should that be? How are you different from other men who shave their hair? The same God created you and them. But they have cast you out like lepers. It is against the will of God, who has promised everlasting life to all who believe in His holy name. (115). Mr. Kiaga, an African convert and mediator has influenced the locals to leave their religion. The novel powerfully illustrates the cultural demise of the Igbo society that existed in the pre-colonial period. It is not just the tragic death of Okonkwo, but the erasure of the whole culture of the clan. Religious conversion, destabilizing of cultural practices and colonizers superiority divides the clan, wiping out the remnants of the customs and age old beliefs of the Igbo community.

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# Impact of Debt and Mortgage in Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie*

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## Abstract

Mulk Raj Anand is the writer who portrayed the pathetic condition of peasants before and after independence. Poverty and the innate desire to exist in the society forced the peasants to borrow money from the moneylenders. They could not repay the loan they borrowed due to the failure of monsoon and exploitation of traders and merchants. Even in the twenty-first century, after the advent of science and technology the condition of farmers has not yet improved. In this context, debt is the first cause of migration of Munoo in Anand's *Coolie*. It disrupts family bonds, uproots individuals from their communities, and forces them into the uncertain and often brutal world of wage labour.

*Keywords: Debt, Interest, Mortgage, Exploitation, Poverty, Migration*

## Introduction

The aim of the creative artists is to reform the society. Anand, a committed artist, firmly believes that 'Art is for life's sake,' for the sake of man, for ennobling and enriching the quality of his life. He opines that literature ought to lead to action aimed at the creation of the one world with whole men and women enjoying social and economic equality. Poverty of an Indian farmer forced him to borrow money for his existence. Later on, it affected the entire family.

Brief survey of Anand's novels reveals that Anand's characters are downtrodden sweepers, coolies, the unemployed coppersmiths, the debt-ridden farmers, poor simple suffering mothers, wives and daughters. He had known, seen and felt the rural life of the Punjab. He had seen the village life sucked dry by parasites like British officers, the village money lenders, the businessmen and religious priests. Anand analysed the poverty of the farmers in many of his novels. *Coolie* is one of the novels that depict the impact of the interest on the peasants.

*Coolie* helps us to understand how industrialization, colonial rule, and class structure disrupted village life and traditional social orders. Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie* is a powerful narrative that chronicles the journey of Munoo, a young orphaned boy from a poor village in colonial India. While the novel primarily engages with themes of class

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oppression, colonial exploitation, and identity, a foundational but often underexplored theme is the impact of debt and mortgage on the lives of the rural poor.

The story begins in a small hill village in Kangra, where Munoo lives with his uncle and aunt. His uncle, Dayaram, is deeply indebted to local moneylenders. The weight of debt forces the family to treat Munoo as a burden, ultimately compelling them to send him away in search of work. This moment sets in motion Munoo's long and tragic journey through a series of exploitative jobs across colonial India.

Commercialisation of agriculture led to the growth and increasing dominance of the moneylenders over the village economy. Majority of the peasants lived in debt to the moneylenders who charged exorbitant interest and exploited the poor peasants. Munoo, in the novel *Coolie*, "had heard of how the landlord had seized his father's five acres of land because the interest on the mortgage covering the unpaid rent had not been forthcoming when the rains had been scanty and the harvest bad. And knew how his father had died a slow death of bitterness and disappointment and left his mother a penniless beggar, to support a young brother-in-law and a child in arms."(Coolie,pp.2-3) The condition of small land owners is pathetic in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand. Munoo's family had land but could not earn sufficiently. His family once had land and it was seized by the cunning moneylenders. Hence the farmers, who produced with pride, suffered a lot to get food.

Tiruvalluvar, the great universal poet, pays tribute to the farmers. "They alone live who live by agriculture; all others lead a cringing, dependant life" (Pope 214). Through the help of agriculturalist only, the people get food. On the contrary, the agriculturists depended on others for food due to hunger and poverty. Debt, in *Coolie*, functions not merely as a financial liability but as a mechanism of systemic control, initiating Munoo's migration and shaping the socio-economic landscape in which he, and countless others like him, are trapped.

Farmers consider agriculture not only as a business but also as their duty. Lokanathan while analyzing the economic development of farmers says, "Agriculture in our country is not always in a good shape. The standard of living of people in the countryside, mainly the marginal farmers and the landless agricultural labourers is much lower than those living in towns and cities" ( 28-29). The British colonial structure and the rise of factory industrialization in cities like Bombay intensified the class divide. Munoo becomes a cog in the machine of capitalism, which prioritizes profit over the well-being of the workers, making his suffering a product of this larger, uncaring economic system. Traders "earn money by buying wheat which the peasants grow and by selling it as flour to the Angrezi Sarkar, or by buying cotton and making cloth and selling it at a profit" (Coolie 7). British economic system affected the life of Indians. The rich exploited the poor by foul methods. The poor could not protest

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against the rich in the fear of losing the meagre source of income. Though they knew they were being exploited they did not protest against their economic exploitation. So, in fear of economic insecurity, they continued their status. Without money it is too difficult to lead a life with self-respect and dignity.

They completely destroyed the isolationist and self-sufficing character of the village; they brought money to the villages and substituted it for barter; they contributed to the growth of new urban centres by opening up opportunities for trade and evolving credit instruments; they also contributed to the large establishment of large-scale industries, destruction of handicrafts, concentration of clerks in certain areas thus, contributing to the growth of slums, etc. (Jayabalan 110)

The impact of hunger and poverty in the society is revealed through Munoo, an orphan in the novel *Coolie*. "He wondered whether all those poor people would die like his parents and leave a gap in his belly as the death of his father and mother had done" (Coolie 55). Similarly, on seeing Munoo Seth Prabh Dayal "recalled the images of his own father and mother, who had died at Hamirpur during his absence in the city of Daulatpur: his earnings as a coolie had not been to procure them all rice twice a day" (Coolie 64). When he was young, he was unable to feed and take care of his parents.

Just for food he moved to many places. His  desire to return to their native village and his childhood happiness remained as the unfulfilled dream. Debt in *Coolie* operates as a metaphor for colonial capitalism. It binds the rural poor into cycles of economic servitude, forcing them to sell their labour for survival. Even as Munoo moves from one place to another—working as a servant, a factory hand, a rickshaw-puller, and a domestic help—he is never free from the conditions of economic bondage that originated with his family's debt.

Due to hunger and poverty, the farmers sold the produce to the traders at low price. There were no cooperatives. Merchants fixed the rate for the produce. "The preponderance of intermediaries and the malpractices of commission agents deny remunerative prices to the farmers."(Prasad 15-16) Economic isolation of the village was changed. In a self-sufficient village, people exchanged the grains for the work at the time of cultivation. Each of his jobs is precarious. He earns little, saves nothing, and is always vulnerable to illness, accident, or dismissal. Debt is replaced by hunger, and hunger is its own kind of debt—forcing constant labour without security. In colonial India, mortgage was often a trap laid by moneylenders and landlords, exploiting poor farmers during bad harvests or tax demands. Anand subtly critiques this system through Munoo's background: he is landless, without roots, and therefore easily absorbed into the exploitative labour system of urban India. As Munoo becomes part of the industrial and service economies in cities like Daulatpur, Bombay, and Simla, he mortgages his body instead of land. His physical strength is his only capital, and

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he is forced to trade it in brutal working conditions. Whether in the textile mill or pulling a rickshaw, his labour is consumed until he is discarded—ultimately dying of tuberculosis.

This process mirrors how rural mortgage leads to landlessness, while urban poverty leads to bodily exploitation. In both cases, the poor are stripped of autonomy, dignity, and security. Though Munoo himself does not owe money, his life is shaped by the psychological legacy of indebtedness:

- He constantly feels like a burden.

- He lives with shame, fear, and low self-worth.

- He never forms stable relationships or finds belonging.

Diseases due to lack of nutrition, lack of health attention, lack of protection against heat and cold, overwork and scanty medical care on falling ill are the results of economic exploitation. For good health, wealth is a must. Anand suggests in his novel *Coolie*, "that health was nourished by the food which money brought" (Coolie 36).As they were forced to live in unhygienic condition people became the victims of epidemics.

Due to poverty displacement occurs in his life. Ultimately, Munoo's economic crisis is not a personal failure but the tragic result of a society built on greed, class exploitation, and systemic indifference to the poor. The strain of hard labor, particularly the physically demanding rickshaw pulling in Simla for Mrs. Mainwaring, combined with constant poverty and malnutrition, eventually leads to his death from tuberculosis, a final, fatal consequence of his economic plight. In Anand's narrative, debt is not just economic—it is emotional and existential, inherited and internalized.

In *Coolie*, Mulk Raj Anand presents debt and mortgage not as peripheral issues but as foundational forces in the machinery of colonial and capitalist oppression. Munoo's displacement, suffering, and death are all linked—directly or indirectly—to the chain of indebtedness that begins in his village and continues in every form of labour he undertakes. By highlighting this reality, Anand exposes how colonial modernity and rural feudalism worked together to dispossess the poor, turning landholders into labourers and individuals into "coolies"—nameless, voiceless, and expendable. Debt, in *Coolie*, is not just about owing money—it is about owing one's life to a system that never intended to let the poor be free. Even, after independence also, farmers could not get profit from mere agriculture. Prasad highlights this idea while tracing the development of farmers in his book *Agriculture and Rural Development in India Since1947*. "Poverty of Indian farmer forces him to borrow money for his existence. The institution of money lending is the greatest curse for the poor and illiterate rural folk of India. Although the importance of moneylenders had declined over the last 55

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years, they are still very dominant in providing credit to the farmers" (Prasad 15). To pay the debt farmers worked along with their children. Anand, in every novel, explains how his characters, common men and women, were persecuted by the economic inequalities. Anand satirises the evil desire of men in saving money by squeezing the poor by imposing interest on them though it is inevitable. He vehemently attacks this kind of evil practice. Though the government has taken many steps to improve agriculture it does not reach the needy community.

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# Filial Kinship: A Study of a Cross-Cultural and Ethical Perspective

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## Abstract

Filial kinship defines the relationship between parents and their children, a remarkable social bond across human societies. This paper project filial kinship from anthropological, sociological, and ethical perspectives, inquisitive its role in family structure, familial bond, social obligations, and moral frameworks across different cultures in the world. In order to compare traditional and modern interpretations of filial duty, it investigates the changing social norms, aging populations, and globalization affects intergenerational relationships. It includes the ethical obligations and relationships between children and their parents, demonstrates significant diversity and complexity across cultures. The ethical significance, ingrained in concepts such as filial piety and kin ship, often shapes moral, social and legal frameworks in societies global wide. It also considers the legal and ethical debates surrounding filial kinship in laws and elder care.

*Keywords*: *Filial Kinship, Inter relationship, Responsibility, Parental duties*

## Introduction

Parent children relationship is one of the most enduring and universally recognized forms of human connection. It describes the bond of relationship between parents and their progeny; this relationship forms the core of familial and societal frame work. Around all cultures, the expectations surrounds the filial roles particularly, the responsibilities of children towards their aging parents, framed by historical, religious, economic, and cultural forces. As societies modernize, the obligations of filial kinship are increasingly contested and evolving.

Filial kinship often includes the proposal that children should respect, care for, and support their parents, chiefly as they grow older. This kind of relationship is vital in almost every culture and is a major part of family life. In some cultures, taking care of parents is not a simple personal choice; it is also a strong tradition or even a legal duty.

In others, it is further about love and emotional bonds. As the world changes, with more people living in cities, moving far from their home, and focusing on individual goals, the meaning of filial kinship is also changing accordingly. This paper will look at how the different cultures view filial kinship in their idea and how it has changed over time, and why it still matters in today's society.

**Filial Kinship in Contemporary Society**

**Global Aging and Elder Care**

As global populations' age, the strain on traditional filial systems has increased. Countries like China and India face a demographic crisis where fewer children are expected to support more elders. Global aging refers to the increasing proportion of older individuals in the world's population due to rising life anticipation and declining birth rates. This kind of demographic shift is particularly prominent in countries like Japan, Germany, Italy, and China.

As populations age, the demand for elder care services, challenges include such as:

- **Healthcare issues**: Older adults often face chronic diseases requiring long-term care.

- **Shortages in Workplace**: There's a growing lack of trained caregivers and medical professionals.

- **Impact of Economic condition:** More retirees mean increased pressure on pension systems and public resources.

- **Social implications**: Families, especially in urban areas, struggle to balance care responsibilities with work.

In response, many countries are investing in age-friendly policies, promoting healthy aging, and leveraging technology to improve the status of elder care. Addressing global aging requires coordinated efforts across healthcare, social systems, and economic planning.

**Filial Responsibility Laws**

Several other countries and U.S. states have filial responsibility laws mandating that adult children provide financial support for aging parents. While rarely enforced, these laws reflect societal tensions between legal obligation and moral duty.

Filial Responsibility Laws are legal statutes that require adult children to support their aging or impoverished parents. These laws exist in many countries and it aiming to shift part of the financial burden of elder care from the government to families.

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**Key points:**

- **Scope**: Laws may require financial support for food, housing, medical care, or nursing home costs.

- **Enforcement**: In some regions, these laws are rarely enforced, but in others (e.g., parts of Asia or Pennsylvania in the U.S.), legal action has been taken against adult children.

- **Disagreement**: These laws raise ethical debates about fairness, especially in cases of past neglect or abuse by parents, or when children face financial hardship themselves.

Filial responsibility laws reflect cultural values about family care but also highlight the challenges of aging populations and underfunded elder care systems.

**Challenges and Ethical Debates**

**Autonomy and Obligation**

The central ethical debate concerns the balance between individual freedom and filial responsibility. Should children be morally or legally bound to care for parents, and what happens when parents have been abusive?

The tension between autonomy and obligation reflects a dynamic in human relationships and societies. Autonomy emphasizes individual freedom, personal choice, and self-determination, often prioritized in Western cultures and liberal democratic ideals. In contrast, obligation centers on duties to others like community, family, tradition, or society generally emphasized in collectivist cultures.

This kind of tension plays out in many areas such as whether a young adult should pursue personal dreams or fulfill family expectations; whether an elder should live independently or else rely on family care. Balancing autonomy and obligation involves navigating respect for individual rights while honoring responsibilities to others, a challenge that varies across cultures, generations, and social systems.

**Gendered Expectations**

Daughters are often disproportionately expected to provide care, even in societies where gender equality is valued. Feminist critiques highlight the unpaid labor burden that filial kinship places on women. Gendered expectations commonly refer to the socially constructed ideas about how individuals should behave based on their gender. In the workplace, these expectations shape not only how men and women are perceived but also the roles they are encouraged or discouraged to pursue, the behaviors they exhibit, and the opportunities what they receive.

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## Traditional Gender Roles in the Workplace

Historically, men have been viewed as the primary breadwinners and head of the family, expected to be assertive, competitive, and decisive. Women, on the other hand, have often been expected to be nurturing, supportive, and focused on communal tasks. These stereotypes have translated into occupational segregation, with men dominating leadership, while women have been clustered in care giving, administrative, and service-oriented roles.

## Impact on Career Progression and Pay

Gendered expectations contribute mainly to persistent wage gaps and underrepresentation of women in senior roles. Women who assert themselves in ways traditionally associated with male leadership may be labeled as "bossy" or "aggressive," while men showing empathy or collaboration might be viewed as weak. Such biases influence hiring decisions, promotions, and workplace evaluations, limiting diversity and perpetuating inequality.

## Migration and Family Dispersion

Global labor migration has basically fractured traditional family structures. Migration and family dispersion refer to the physical separation of family members due to the movement of individuals often for work, education, and better living conditions across regions or countries.

## Key impacts:

- **Elder Care Challenges**: Aging parents may be left behind without nearby family support, increasing reliance on formal care systems or community help.

- **Emotional Strain**: Distance can weaken intergenerational bonds and cause feelings of isolation for both migrants and those left behind.

- **Remittances**: Migrants often send money home, providing financial support but not direct care giving.

- **Cultural Shifts**: Traditional family structures may be disrupted, affecting care giving roles, especially in societies where elder care is typically provided by children.

Overall, migration and family dispersion highlight the need for adaptive elder care solutions, including policy support, community-based care, and the use of technology to preserve family connections.

## Literature Review: Filial Kinship

Filial kinship has been a central area in anthropology, sociology, and philosophy, with scholars exploring over how parent-child relationships are shed light by culture,

tradition, and social change. Much of the early research on kinship focused mainly on how families are organized and the roles people play within themselves. Anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Claude Levi – Strauss viewed kinship as the foundation of society, where filial relationships were essential for maintaining family structure and passing on to the cultural values.

In many East Asian cultures, Confucian philosophy has played a chief role in influence the meaning of filial kinship. The concept of filial piety emphasizes deep respect and care for one's parents and ancestors. Scholars have revealed how this idea goes beyond physical care and includes moral obedience and loyalty. Filial piety has long been an essential value in countries like China, Korea, and Japan, where honoring one's parents is seen as a moral duty.

In contrast, Western scholars often discuss filial kinship in the context of individualism and personal choice**.** In many Western societies, adults are not always expected to provide direct care for aging parents. Instead, filial responsibility is often shaped by emotional closeness, rather than strict cultural or legal expectations. More recent studies focus on the modern changes such as urbanization, migration, and smaller family sizes are affecting filial kinship. For example, Charlotte Ikels and Deborah Davis have written about how young people in China struggle to balance traditional filial expectations with the pressures of modern life. Similarly, in many parts of the world, governments are creating the responsibility of filial kinship laws that require adult to care for aging parents, raising questions about the role of the state versus the family. The literature shows that while filial kinship is a universal concept, its meaning and practice vary across cultures and are continuously focused by social and economic forces.

**Classical Theories of Kinship**

Anthropological foundations analyzed kinship as a system of social organization. Filial kinship was typically understood in structural and functional terms, where roles and duties were clearly demarcated.

**Filial Piety**

Confucian thought has profoundly created filial expectations in East Asian cultures. The concept of filial piety is a central ideology, requiring children to respect, obey, and care for their parents and ancestors. Furthermore many scholars have emphasized the moral and spiritual dimensions of this obligation.

**Western Individualism**

In contrast, Western societies, influenced by Enlightenment individualism, emphasize sovereignty and independence. Filial duties in these societies tend to be more intentional, focused by emotional bonds rather than formal expectations.

## Cross – Cultural Perspectives

Filial kinship differs along the dimension of lineage, inheritance, and role expectations. In many Asian cultures, particularly those influenced by Confucianism like China and Singapore, filial piety is nothing but respect, care, and obedience toward one's parents. It is a core ethical value. Research gives both "reciprocal" affection-based and "authoritarian" duty and obedience based forms, with cultural context moderating their expression for instance, authoritarian filial piety is more pronounced in Singapore than Australia, focusing different societal values regarding the order and autonomy. In fact, the reciprocal aspect of filial piety, involving genuine care and emotional bonds, used to be consistent across cultures.

In India, kinship is ordered by regional, religious, and lineage patterns, with both patrilineal father's side aspects and matrilineal mother's side aspects systems will be observed. The specific structure influences inheritance, marriage rules, and kinship obligations, filial roles are entrenched in broader social norms and not universally enacted. Conflicts between parent and child duties are navigated using several ethical frameworks. These approaches help in resolving disputes thoughtfully by balancing both children's welfare and parents' autonomy, while aiming for consent, collaboration, and respect.

## Principal Ethical Frameworks

- **Best Standard**: The framework prioritizes the welfare and interests of the child, particularly in medical and legal disputes. Decisions must goodwill it will mostly benefit or protect the child, even if this means overriding parental preferences in extreme cases.

- **Harm Principle**: State intervention, professional override is justified only when parental choices pose clear and significant harm to the child, as opposed to merely being suboptimal.

- **Constrained Parental Autonomy**: Parents are granted broad latitude so long as their decisions fall within a range of medically and ethically reasonable alternatives. This avoids excessive paternalism but sets limits when core rights are endangered.

- **Framework of Conflicting Interests**: Rooted in classical bioethics autonomy, justice, beneficence, non-male faïence, approach weighs the child's and parent's interests separately, attempting to resolve it should prevail based on ethical reasoning.

- **Ethics of Care**: It emphasizes the relational and context-dependent nature of parent-child duties. Rather than focusing on competing interests, it acknowledges

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the interwoven vulnerabilities and mutual dependencies of families. It fosters trust, empathy, and ongoing collaborative solutions, especially in long-term care.

## Procedural and Collaborative Solution

- **Procedural Justice**: Employing formal mechanisms like ethics committees, mediation, and family courts ensures that conflicts are handled transparently, allowing all parties to express concerns.

- **Ongoing Reflection**: Frameworks recommend steps such as identifying relevant ethical principles, evaluating tensions between them, brainstorming possible solutions, and selecting actions that best uphold the family's ethical commitments and the wellbeing of children.

## Application in Practice

- Adolescents' views are all the time more valued by professionals, especially as their capacity for autonomy grows.

- Combining frameworks using both principle-based reasoning and care ethics can produce more nuanced decisions that support shared family interests and strengthen association among caregivers and professionals.

These frameworks collectively steer the resolution of parent-child duty clashes, endorsing protection of children's rights without disregarding the importance of parental autonomy and the value of familial relationships.

## Addressing the Issue

To conflict mental health challenges effectively, workplaces must recognize the gendered expectations contour experiences and barriers to care. Strategies include:

- Creating safe spaces for the employees to thrash out mental health without judgment.

- Promoting mental health resources their use for all.

- Implementing policies that reduce work overload and support the work and life balance.

- Training managers to distinguish signs of burnout in diverse employees and respond compassionately.

## Conclusion

Gendered expectations remain a significant barrier to equality, shaping not only individual experiences but also organizational culture and economic outcomes. These norms require ongoing awareness, policy changes, and cultural shifts to cultivate workplaces where everyone can succeed free from limiting stereotypes. Mental health and burnout cannot be fully understood or addressed without considering the role of

gendered expectations. Challenging stereotypes and nurturing inclusive, supportive workplace cultures are essential steps toward improving mental well-being for all employees, regardless of gender. Filial kinship underscores the deep sense of duty and responsibility that children hold toward their parents within their family systems. It is an initial element in many cultures, shaping intergenerational relationships, care giving practices, and social cohesion. While expressions of filial duty vary across societies, the core values of respect, support, and reciprocity remain central in all. As families evolve in modern contexts, balancing traditional filial obligations with individual autonomy continues to be an important challenge, highlighting the enduring significance of filial kinship in maintaining family bonds and social stability.

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# Indian Mythology in Hindi Literature: A Character Analysis of The Ramayana and Mahabharata

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**Abstract**

This qualitative study explores the representation of mythological characters in Hindi literature, focusing on the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The research analyzes key figures—Rama, Sita, Ravana, Karna, and Krishna—to understand how Hindi literary texts portray their moral, ethical, and psychological dimensions. Using content and thematic analysis of classical texts and modern interpretations, the study identifies recurring themes of duty, devotion, pride, tragedy, and divine guidance. Literary devices such as simile, metaphor, symbolism, and pathos are examined to show how authors convey character traits and archetypal qualities. The findings reveal that these characters function as timeless archetypes, reflecting human virtues, dilemmas, and social values. Hindi literature not only preserves mythological narratives but also reinterprets them to address evolving cultural, ethical, and philosophical concerns, offering enduring lessons for contemporary readers.

*Keywords:* *Indian mythology, character analysis, moral values, qualitative study*

## Introduction

Indian mythology, particularly the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, has been a foundational element of Hindi literature and cultural consciousness. These epics are not merely stories of gods and heroes; they reflect complex human experiences, moral dilemmas, and societal values. Characters such as Rama, Sita, Ravana, Karna, and Krishna serve as archetypes, each embodying specific ethical principles, virtues, and flaws. Through their actions, decisions, and relationships, these figures offer insights into human behavior, morality, and the interplay between fate and free will.

Hindi literature has continually reinterpreted these mythological narratives, from classical texts like Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas* to modern adaptations, making them relevant for successive generations. Literary techniques—such as metaphor, simile, symbolism, and pathos—are used to portray the psychological depth and moral

significance of these characters, creating a rich tapestry of narrative and didactic meaning.

This study aims to analyze the portrayal of mythological characters in Hindi literature, focusing on their moral, ethical, and psychological dimensions. By examining Rama's adherence to dharma, Sita's resilience, Ravana's intellect and hubris, Karna's tragic heroism, and Krishna's divine-human duality, the research seeks to understand how Hindi literature interprets and conveys timeless lessons about human nature, virtue, and ethical conduct.

**Literature Review**

Indian mythology, as presented in the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, has significantly influenced Hindi literature, offering rich narratives that explore moral, ethical, and psychological dimensions of human life. Scholars have long examined these texts to understand the portrayal of characters and their impact on cultural and literary traditions.

**Rama: The Ideal of Dharma**

Rama is widely recognized as the embodiment of dharma (righteous duty). Valmiki's *Ramayana* portrays him as a prince who consistently upholds moral principles, even when faced with personal hardship, such as exile and the trials of war (Valmiki, n.d.). Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas* further emphasizes Rama's ethical and spiritual qualities, presenting him as an archetype of virtue, integrity, and ideal leadership (Tulsidas, n.d.). Scholars note that Rama's adherence to dharma provides a moral framework that continues to influence Hindi literary narratives (Sharma, 2015).

**Sita: Devotion, Resilience, And Feminine Strength**

Sita is often studied as a symbol of unwavering devotion, purity, and resilience. Research highlights her ability to maintain dignity and moral integrity in the face of adversity, including abduction and public scrutiny during the Agni Pariksha (Sharma, 2015; Singh, 2018). Literary analyses emphasize her role as both a moral exemplar and a complex character whose inner strength and ethical fortitude contribute to the narrative's depth.

**Ravana: Intellectual Brilliance And Hubris**

Ravana, the antagonist in the *Ramayana*, is recognized as a complex figure who blends intellectual brilliance, scholarly achievement, and devotion to Shiva with pride and desire. Literary critiques note that Hindi texts often portray him as a tragic figure whose downfall is a result of unchecked ego, despite his knowledge and spiritual accomplishments (Dutt, 2012). Modern interpretations explore Ravana as a symbol of human flaws and moral failure, highlighting the consequences of arrogance and obsession.

## Karna: Tragic Heroism and Social Marginalization

Karna's portrayal in the *Mahabharata* exemplifies the tension between personal virtue and societal constraints. Scholars have highlighted his unwavering generosity, loyalty to Duryodhana, and moral courage, which contrast with his marginalized social position and the

fate that governs his life (Rao, 2017). Literary analyses often focus on Karna's paradoxical nature, combining nobility with tragedy, making him an enduring figure of empathy and moral complexity.

## Krishna: Divine Guidance and Human Relatability

Krishna is analyzed both as a divine incarnation and a relatable human figure. In the *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavatam*, his role as a guide, protector, and philosopher emphasizes the integration of spiritual wisdom with practical human guidance. Scholars note that Hindi literature uses literary devices such as allegory, symbolism, and metaphor to depict Krishna's multidimensional character, balancing playfulness, divine authority, and moral instruction (Patel, 2019; Verma, 2020).

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to analyze the portrayal of mythological characters in Hindi literature. Qualitative research is suitable because it allows an in-depth exploration of textual meanings, character traits, and the moral, ethical, and psychological dimensions of the narratives in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

### Data Sources

Primary Sources for this study would be *Ramayana* by Valmiki, *Ramcharitmanas* by Tulsidas, *Mahabharata* by Vyasa and Secondary Sources include Scholarly critiques, Hindi literary analyses, and modern adaptations of these epics.

### Data Collection

Relevant passages that highlight character traits, ethical dilemmas, moral values, and relationships were systematically collected. Particular attention was given to descriptions of:

- Actions and decisions demonstrating virtue or vice
- Trials and challenges faced by the characters
- Interpersonal relationships that reveal loyalty, devotion, or conflict

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the following qualitative techniques:

**Thematic Analysis:** Identified recurring themes such as dharma (duty), devotion, pride, generosity, heroism, and divine guidance.

**Literary Device Analysis:** Examined the use of simile (Upamā), metaphor (Rūpaka), symbolism (Pratīka), pathos (Karun Rasa), paradox (Virodhābhāsa), and heroic sentiment (Veer Rasa) to understand how Hindi literature conveys character traits and archetypal qualities.

**Comparative Analysis:** Compared classical portrayals with modern literary interpretations to explore continuity, transformation, and reinterpretation of the characters over time.

### Rationale

This methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of how Hindi literature interprets mythological narratives. By combining thematic and literary device analysis, the study highlights both explicit and implicit aspects of character portrayal, providing insights into ethical reasoning, cultural values, and the timeless relevance of these archetypes.

### Results

The qualitative analysis of Hindi literary texts reveals rich portrayals of mythological characters from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, highlighting their moral, ethical, and psychological dimensions. Rama consistently demonstrates adherence to dharma, prioritizing duty over personal desires, as seen in his acceptance of exile and his actions during battles against demons and Ravana. Literary devices such as similes, metaphors, and heroic sentiment reinforce his status as an ethical and divine ideal.

Sita embodies unwavering devotion, purity, and resilience. Despite facing adversity during abduction and exile, she maintains dignity and asserts her truth in the Agni Pariksha, portraying ideal womanhood. Literary elements like pathos, symbolism, and allegory emphasize both her human strength and divine qualities. Ravana emerges as a complex antagonist, blending intellectual brilliance, devotion, and arrogance. His ten heads symbolize the vices of humanity, and his downfall reflects the triumph of righteousness. Paradox, similes, and metaphors highlight his dual nature as both learned and morally flawed.

Karna's life illustrates tragic heroism constrained by fate and social marginalization. His generosity, courage, and loyalty to Duryodhana contrast with the societal barriers and destiny that limit him, culminating in his death. Literary devices such as pathos, paradox, and metaphor convey the tension between his greatness and misfortune,

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emphasizing themes of justice and human suffering. Krishna, combining divine authority with human relatability, acts as protector, guide, philosopher, and playful child. His guidance to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* exemplifies ethical reasoning, dharma, and spiritual insight. Symbolism, metaphor, and grandeur accentuate his multifaceted character.

Hindi literature portrays these mythological characters as enduring archetypes of human values and moral dilemmas. The use of literary devices enhances emotional and ethical engagement, making Rama, Sita, Ravana, Karna, and Krishna relatable and instructive for readers across generations. Rama embodies righteousness, Sita represents devotion and resilience, Ravana illustrates the dangers of ego, Karna epitomizes tragic heroism, and Krishna balances divinity with human qualities, offering timeless lessons in virtue, morality, and human nature.

**Discussion**

The analysis of mythological characters in Hindi literature demonstrates the enduring relevance of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in reflecting human values, ethical dilemmas, and societal ideals. The portrayals of Rama, Sita, Ravana, Karna, and Krishna reveal how literature functions not merely as storytelling but as a medium for moral and philosophical instruction. Rama's unwavering commitment to dharma highlights the importance of duty, integrity, and selflessness, offering a model for ethical conduct in both personal and social contexts. Sita's resilience and devotion emphasize the strength of character, illustrating that morality and courage are intertwined with patience, loyalty, and inner fortitude.

Ravana's characterization underscores the complexities of human ambition and the consequences of unchecked pride. His intellect and devotion juxtaposed with arrogance serve as a cautionary example, reflecting the idea that knowledge and power without humility and ethical grounding can lead to downfall. Similarly, Karna embodies the tension between virtue and fate, illustrating how societal structures and personal circumstances can impact moral choices. His loyalty and generosity, despite adversity, evoke empathy and highlight themes of justice, social inequality, and the tragic dimensions of heroism.

Krishna's depiction integrates divine authority with human relatability, offering both spiritual guidance and practical wisdom. Through his actions and counsel, particularly in the *Bhagavad Gita*, he demonstrates the balance between moral duty, strategic thinking, and compassion. Literary devices across these narratives—metaphor, simile, symbolism, paradox, and pathos—enhance the emotional and philosophical resonance of the characters, allowing readers to engage with the stories on multiple levels.

The findings suggest that Hindi literature preserves and reinterprets Indian mythology not only as a historical or religious artifact but as a living tradition that continues to inform ethical reasoning, cultural values, and literary creativity. These characters serve as enduring archetypes, guiding readers in navigating the complexities of virtue, vice, loyalty, duty, and human relationships. By examining these portrayals, the study underscores the timeless significance of mythological narratives in shaping moral consciousness and literary expression in Hindi literature.

**Conclusion**

This study highlights the profound role of Indian mythology in Hindi literature through the analysis of key characters from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The findings demonstrate that Rama, Sita, Ravana, Karna, and Krishna are not merely mythological figures but timeless archetypes representing universal human values, moral dilemmas, and ethical principles. Rama embodies duty, integrity, and righteousness; Sita exemplifies devotion, resilience, and inner strength; Ravana illustrates the dangers of pride and ego; Karna represents tragic heroism constrained by fate and social injustice; and Krishna blends divine authority with human relatability, offering guidance and moral insight.

Hindi literature, through classical texts like Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas*, as well as modern interpretations, uses literary devices such as metaphor, simile, symbolism, paradox, and pathos to enhance the depth and relatability of these characters. These portrayals engage readers both emotionally and intellectually, allowing the narratives to transcend time and cultural boundaries. The study reveals that Indian mythology in Hindi literature serves not only as a repository of cultural and spiritual heritage but also as a dynamic medium for exploring human nature, ethical reasoning, and societal values. The characters analyzed in this research continue to inspire, instruct, and resonate with readers, affirming their enduring significance in literature and moral discourse.

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# Contested Geographies and Fractured Self: Reading Space and Identity in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Desertion*

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## Abstract

This paper explores the dynamic interrelation between space and identity in Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *Desertion* (2005). While analysing the East African context, this analysis contends that the dynamic power relations and spatial reconfiguration are central to the negotiation and formation of identity for a colonial subject. Through the theoretical perspective of Geocriticism, the paper also demonstrates how the identity crises experienced by the central characters in the novel are the consequences of the dynamic power relations and the spatial reconfiguration at varied levels. The paper also looks at how the crises that emerge in both familiar social and geographical order, like domestic spaces to urban and coastal spaces, may impact the development of identity, potentially resulting in identity crises. Through emphasizing the postcolonial theme of identity crises of colonised subjects, the paper demonstrates how space becomes an indispensable aspect for the characters in the production of self.

*Keywords: Space, Identity, Power, Geocriticism, East Africa*

## Introduction

Abdulrazak Gurnah is a popular Tanzanian-born British novelist and a Nobel Prize winner of Literature in 2021, widely acclaimed for his compassionate portrayal of the crises and the themes of colonialism. Through his 2005 novel *Desertion*, Gurnah brings the lives and struggles of the colonial subjects against the backdrop of the spatial and political transformations of the East African coastal landscape. Spanning from the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the novel explores the narratives of familial love and loss and how the central characters shape their identities through

their socio-spatial interactions. This paper offers an analysis of how spaces, ranging from domestic interiors of houses to urban areas, the coast, are reconfigured and how these spatial configurations reconstitute the identity of the central characters in the novel.

Gurnah's narrative most prioritizes the themes of alienation, displacement, memory, refugee crisis of colonial subjects, mostly set in the East African context. Looking into postcolonial literature, especially in the context of African narratives, the themes of identity crises and displacement also recur as a prominent concern. Gurnah's novel *Desertion* can be considered a sensitive representation of the fate of the colonial subjects and the question of identity by directly looking into the spaces of the characters' everyday interaction in the context of East African history.  We see in the novel, though, all the prominent characters, such as Hassanali, Rehana, Martin Pearce, Amin, Rashid, etc, have varied levels of interaction with the space; their negotiations of identities remain complex. However, the novel demonstrates that their trajectories of longing and belonging are space-bound. They are mediated through the geographies of domestic interiors of the houses, the colonial contact zone, the migratory spaces of exile, and the liminal coastal landscape symbolizing the perpetual colonial transformation of East Africa.

Spanning across generations, the novel traces the story of Rehana's brother Hassanali's rescue of Martin Pearce, a British orientalist, after his collapse in a small East African coastal town. Rehana's endearing love with Pearce creates a scandal, leaving silence and estrangement until Rashid recounts the story decades later when he goes to Britain for higher studies. While the novel dramatizes these episodes, it significantly underscores the instability of identity of an individual under spatial transformations. While there are studies raising the analysis of memory, migration, alienation, etc, in *Desertion*, there are no studies that bring attention to how the spatial transformation itself constitutes identity crises for the people who inhabit those spaces. By bringing a geocritical insight through the postcolonial aspects of hybridity, alienation, and displacement, this paper looks into how these spatial transformations constitute identity crises in the people who inhabit those spaces and demonstrate how space becomes a crucial factor in developing one's own self-conception.

## Space and Identity

The postcolonial theory has consistently acknowledged the theme of identity and identity crises. Homi Bhabha's extended argument on the 'Third Space' and Edward Said's theory on Orientalism and culture, as well as imperialism, have foregrounded the discourses on spatial hierarchies, existential crises, and the otherness experienced by a colonial subject. Examining a space like Africa, we observe that each region has been subject to remapping and disruption by colonial interventions, rendering each

space a contested terrain of identity. Looking through Gurnah's *Desertion*, we see that the spaces of the East African landscape have been significantly subject to these identity crises, with the long history of the Indian Ocean trade and the colonial interventions.

A closer look at Hassanali's house reveals that even the domestic space represented appears not as a neutral space but is subject to destabilization and becomes a space where identity is contested. Rather than offering a sense of self, safety, and security, the interiors of the home also reflect the pressures of colonial intrusions, mirroring the wider spatial transformation of East Africa, where spaces are continuously destabilized and identities become fractured. It was only the drama of the groaning man that permitted their presence in the privacy of his home in the first place, so Hassanali only had to spread his arms and wave them gently for everyone to turn towards the yard door. (Gurnah 6) Through this, Gurnah shows how the domestic space becomes a space of power dynamics and hierarchies. The sudden presence of Martin Pearce, the British democrat in the house, suddenly destabilizes the space, transforming the space into more of a contact zone of the colonizer and the colonised, collapsing the spatial dynamics of privacy that a domestic space is supposed to offer its inhabitants. The house ceases to function as a space of familial intimacy and soon reshapes the spatial and social dynamics of the house. A true sense of belonging can be felt only when people feel connected to their space, culture, and emotion. "Belonging implies belonging- to, and geographical, cultural, as well as mental connections are therefore spatially defined" (Le Juez and Richardson 7). Pearce's status as a British democrat naturally asserts dominance over the members of the house, transforming the intimacy of the house into social hierarchies when we see characters like Hassanali, Rehana, and Hassanali's wife, Malika, express fear between hospitality, subordination, and uncertainty all of a sudden in the presence of an outsider in a space where they freely interacted.

From the domestic interiors of the house, the colonial presence in the public spaces is also subject to the destabilization of the space, transforming the space into a space of asymmetries of power. In a moment they had plunged into the narrow crooked lanes of the dilapidated native town whose roofs almost met above his head…People sitting outside their houses stood up in surprise and perhaps anxiety. (Gurnah 30-31) The above line demonstrates how the colonial presence in the town reshapes the socio-spatial relations of the town and extends the power dynamics in space. With the sudden presence of a colonial agent, the local inhabitants are suddenly seen negotiating strange regulations and subordination in the everyday interaction in the community spaces. Therefore, a community space that was structured based on the traditional hierarchies, kinship, and community norms suddenly transforms into a space of colonial control and power dynamics. When the narrator stresses people's

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response as they stood up in surprise and anxiety, it shows how an external intrusion in space can immediately turn the space into a landscape of power. It resulted in changing the whole dynamics of the space to a coloniser or the superior power determining and influencing the social standing in the place. These two incidents from the novel explicitly demonstrate how power can operate in spaces of both public and private spaces, thereby transforming the whole identity of the space into an interconnected site for negotiation of power. When looking at the urban reconfiguration of the coastal town of East Africa, *Desertion* again highlights the shifting power relations in the geographies.

As Frederick followed behind the wakil he saw a small shop ahead, a duka, the crowded merchandise store which proliferated in Indian cities, and which Indian traders had brought to this part of the world…In these parts, wherever Indians went, there prosperity followed, although of course it depended on the class of Indians. (Gurnah 34)

Visible in the above passage is how the East African space was historically reconstituted through colonial development and urbanisation. The East African spaces, which are supposed to be a repository of the indigenous and the communal memory, become an implication of the colonial transformation. The passage's reference to 'duka' and the Indian prosperity also highlight how the commercial forces can also reshape the landscape based on hierarchies of power. This tension in the landscape highlights the larger reconfiguration of the East African landscape in which the traditional rural and the urban locale become spaces of negotiation and the existing structures become a sign of power.

Important in this encroachment of space, how the characters demonstrate the sudden conflict of experience when commerce and trade introduce new hierarchies of expectations, compelling them to continuously renegotiate their perceptions. When the author gives an introduction to Hassanali's father, Zakariya, he says, "He had a gift for languages" (Gurnah 55). Whereas Hassanali's inability to communicate in other languages, Hassanali didn't know a word of these languages. Why should he? He was only a shop seller in a crumbling town on the edge of civilised life" (Gurnah 19) highlights how a character like Hassanali naturally experiences a subordinate position in his native place with the mere presence of the urban and colonial power. Though for the characters like Hassanali, this can also be read as a space for opportunity, the vulnerability that he experiences as a shopkeeper in the commercial space is not a natural choice of change but a compulsion in the process of the spatial transformation to destabilize the established identities to the new forces of power. Since space is dynamic (Lefebvre), these power relations can also alter with time. However, through this, Gurnah demonstrates that identity formation is inseparable

from the spatial reconfiguration and transformation and is exercised continuously through power dynamics.

The coastal topography of East Africa is also a symbolic space of uncertainty and vulnerability. Historically, being subject to the colonial forces and shaped by the interaction of Arab, European, African, and Indian, the landscape has become a symbolic geography of hybridity where there is a distinct fusion of cultures and languages (Bhabha). The East African coast, being a threshold of the Indian Ocean trade, has been historically shaped by trade, colonialism, cultural exchange, and slavery. Acting as a palimpsest of colonial imposition and cultural crossing, the liminality of the coast is also reflected in the unsettling identities of the subject. "Anyway, by the time the Portuguese finished with this town, it was not much more than a decaying coastal settlement" (Gurnah 83). Martin Pearce's mere presence on the East African coast itself highlights how the coast has become a space of negotiation between the coloniser and the colonised, inflecting the space with hierarchies of power. For the inhabitants coast becomes a space of colonial visibility. The geography of the coast itself is open to external influences, becoming a zone for contact for the colonial hierarchies to penetrate the intimate spaces. In a way, Gurnah portrays the East African coast as a frontier where identities are fractured, precisely exposing the inhabitants to the external intrusion, creating crises of belonging and identity.

## Conclusion

The exploration of the spatial dynamics of East Africa in Gurnah's Desertion shows space as an active force rather than just a static element, which can shape various conditions of identity for people who live in and interact with these spaces. Through the characters' interactions with their environments, the novel illustrates how colonial interventions, power relations, trade, and urban changes can create complex identities. It demonstrates how power dynamics can destabilize coastal and urban areas, shifting them toward rural and domestic, intimate spaces. Any level of spatial change can cause alienation among residents, ultimately leading to identity crises. Therefore, the novel presents East African geography as a landscape prone to rupture and redefinition, where home, towns, and coast become contested areas, making identity a spatial condition shaped by political and historical shifts.

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# Manu Joseph's India: Unpacking Social Inequalities

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## Abstract

India's rapid growth as a developing nation coexists paradoxically with persistent inequalities and social discrimination. Manu Joseph's writings provide a rich, critical perspective to understand these complexities, especially their roots and manifestations in contemporary India. As Joseph insightfully points out in *Why the Poor Don't Kill Us: The Psychology of Indians*, "The poor are not a problem, they are a symptom of a larger problem" (Joseph, 2021, p. 45). This quote encapsulates the underlying argument that poverty in India is not merely an economic issue but a reflection of entrenched systemic failures such as social hierarchies, historical injustices, and cultural biases. This journal aims to elucidate how Joseph's literary and sociological works interrogate dominant narratives about Indian identity and social structures, offering new pathways to reimagine Indian literature through an interdisciplinary lens.

*Keywords: Cultural and Social Identity, Political Contexts, Social Discrimination*

## Cultural and Identity

Manu Joseph's novels explore the formation of cultural identity in India in regard to caste and class divisions. In *Serious Men*, the protagonist's attempt to navigate a world defined by caste boundaries powerfully illustrates this dynamic. Joseph's assertion that "Caste is not just a matter of birth, it is a matter of opportunity" (Joseph, 2010, p. 78) challenges conventional understandings of caste strictly as a hereditary social label. Instead, he underlines how caste influence social mobility, education, and access to resources, acting as a social barricade that shapes personal identity and opportunities. Through his characters, Joseph interrogates the fragile social fabric where cultural identity is both imposed and negotiated. This nuanced outlook encourages a reevaluation of identity not as static but as fluid and contested, shaped by power relations and economic realities. For instance, *in Serious Men*, the protagonist who masquerades himself as Brahmin reveals the fact that that identity is constructed within a stratified society. This theme resonates with broader debates in postcolonial

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studies about how marginalized subjects appropriate or resist dominant identities to carve out space for agency.

## Social Discrimination

Joseph's works vividly portray the persistence of social discrimination in India, manifesting in classism, casteism, and gender oppression. His analysis extends beyond visible socio-economic disparities to uncover psychological and cultural dimensions of inequality. Reflecting on middle-class identity, Joseph contends that "The Indian middle class is not just an economic category, it is a cultural category" (Joseph, 2021, p. 113), highlighting the cultural values, aspirations, and anxieties that define this group beyond income or occupation.

This observation is crucial because it demonstrates that social stratification in India operates on cultural lines, creating distinct worldviews and self-perceptions. The Indian middle class, as depicted in Joseph's narratives, often seeks to differentiate itself from lower classes, not only economically but also through lifestyle, education, and cultural capital. This cultural dimension of class consciousness propagates social hierarchies and complicates efforts toward social unity. Moreover, Joseph's critique extends to gender discrimination, revealing how patriarchal values combined with caste and class oppression produce layered forms of marginalization—particularly for women from lower castes. Thus, his literature invites an interdisciplinary approach, blending literary analysis with sociological insight to unpack the intertwined nature of social discrimination.

## Inequality in India

Although India's Constitution provides legal safeguards against discrimination and strives for equality, the lived reality remains fraught with persistent disparities. The reservation system was instituted as a corrective measure but, as Joseph asserts, "The reservation system is not a solution to the problem of inequality, it is just a Band-Aid on a deeper wound" (Joseph, 2021, p. 142). This metaphor elegantly conveys the inadequacy of reservations to address the systemic and structural roots of inequality. Joseph's critique advocates for a deeper interrogation of economic redistribution, political representation, and cultural recognition to achieve substantive equality. For example, the underrepresentation of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) individuals in influential positions continues to reinforce social exclusion despite legal provisions. His work calls for a more holistic approach that goes beyond legislative measures to transform prevailing social attitudes and structures.

## Constitutional Rights and Reality

The Indian Constitution, particularly Articles 14 to 17, enshrines principles of equality and non-discrimination. However, B.R. Ambedkar's observation remains pertinent:

"The Constitution of India is a magnificent document, but it is not enough to make India a democratic country" (Ambedkar, 1950, p. 251). This highlights the gap between constitutional ideals and socio-political realities. Joseph's narratives align with this critique by demonstrating how social prejudices and political power dynamics undermine constitutional mandates. The invisibilization of marginalized groups in governance and public life perpetuates social inequalities, which laws alone cannot dismantle. This dissonance between law and practice forms a central concern in Joseph's depiction of Indian society, reinforcing the need for social transformation beyond formal equality.

### Interdisciplinary Approaches

Examining Manu Joseph's oeuvre through interdisciplinary frameworks—combining literary critique, sociology, and psychology—enriches our understanding of his social commentary. He himself emphasizes literature's transformative potential, stating, "Literature is not just a reflection of reality, it is also a way of shaping reality" (Joseph, 2021, p. 178). This perspective underscores the power of narrative to challenge dominant discourses and influence social consciousness. By integrating sociological insights about caste and class with psychological analyses of identity and aspiration, Joseph's works enable readers to engage with Indian society's complexities more deeply. Such interdisciplinary study reveals how literature can serve as both a mirror and a blueprint, reflecting social conditions while envisioning alternative futures.

### Conclusion

Manu Joseph's writings offer a compelling framework to critically engage with Indian literature and society, especially amid globalization. His nuanced portrayal of cultural identity, social discrimination, and inequality exposes systemic challenges that persist despite legal and economic progress. Employing interdisciplinary approaches not only deepens our comprehension of these issues but also positions literature as a dynamic force in shaping social realities. Ultimately, reimagining Indian literature through this multi-faceted lens enables a more complex and inclusive understanding of the nation's socio-cultural fabric.

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# Brahmaputra's kin: Ecofeminism threads in Jahnavi Barua's "Undertow"

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**Abstract**

*Undertow* by Jahnavi Barua, the Assam writer, adroitly interconnects the dynamic complexities of an intergenerational Assamese family with the impactful lively essence of the Brahmaputra River and its natural milieu. This paper states that the nature being as a repository of cultural transmission, identity formation and shared information implies the terrain carries the importance beyond physical space, blending traditions, cultural heritage and Genealogy. It also exploring the estranged connection between Torun (grandfather) and Loya, (Torun's granddaughter). In the novel, Brahmaputra River betoken as "Undertow" reflects the unspoken emotions of compunction, stillness and displacement and it set up an intense connection of Ecofeminism, depicting the characters not just as dwellers of the land, but as "Brahmaputra's kin," whose identities are basically shaped by their interconnection to the environment. Eventually, the paper concludes that a genuine understanding of home and belonging is found not only through consanguineous rapprochement but also in the characters' reclamation and cherish their indestructible bond with the Assamese landscape, where personal and collective memory are ineffaceable into the soil and the flowing river.

*Keywords: Repository, Ecofeminism, Displacement, consanguineous rapprochement*

**Introduction**

Ecofeminism is an influential and impactful movement that links feminist and ecological concerns to confront the interconnected suppressions of women and nature. Embedded in diverse approaches, theories, and ideologies, ecofeminism signifies how the exploitation of the environment mirrors and bolsters male dominance, exemplifies the need for a synergistic view to social equity that respects both women's entitlement and sustainable ecology. The domination of women and nature in this patriarchal society is critically examined by ecofeminism. This perception accentuates that many of the environmental disasters we encounter today are not exclusively the solution of

human actions but base from a system that prerogatives male supremacy and capitalist ethos over the fostering and interdependent bonds found in nature. In this manner, ecofeminism discusses that the destruction of the habitat is deeply connected to the subjugation of women and socially excluded communities. The rise of environmental consciousness and the origin of ecofeminism simultaneously stemmed from the feminist movements in 1960s and 1970s. The historical bond between suppression of women and the exploitation of nature caused by capitalist industrialization was illustrated by early ecofeminists such as Vandana Shiva and Carolyn Merchant. Today, ecofeminism has progressed into a multifaceted and intellectual exchange, encompassing interwoven parts including cultural ecofeminism, radical ecofeminism, and social ecofeminism. The three parts of eco feminism explores the intrinsic connection between women and nature, examines the deep-seated connections between masculine hegemony, environmental degradation and colonial structures. The ecofeminists dealt with the most prominent daunting task is climatic variation. Feminine voices and stewardship are crucial in environmental advocacy, as they are disproportionately affected by fluctuations in climate patterns due to existing social and economic disparities. It focuses on breaking down androcentric mentality and systems that create ranking system, elevating women's upliftment, acknowledging nature's inherent worth, nurturing care and peace, and spotlighting the need for collaborative endeavor to accomplish a just and long term relationship between humans and the environment.

The most prominent and contemporary Indian author from Assam is Jahnavi Barua. In her collection of short stories Next Door is set against the background of rebellion in Assam, this was critically analyzed and appreciated by many. Her second novel, Rebirth, has been lauded as an exquisite and evocative work that has situated Jahnavi among the exceptional contemporary Indian authors writing in English. Apart from her charming truthfulness and her use of direct and explicit language, Jahnavi's zeal for her own country, which she tries to transmit through the lives of her characters, is what genuinely makes her distinctive. She is a doctor who resides in Bangalore.

Jahnavi Barua's Undertow is an insightful investigation of human connections set against the striking background of the Assamese landscape. In this novel, the author narrates the dynamics of a shattered family—Torun, his daughter Rukmini and his granddaughter Loya. The Brahmaputra River is the anchor of the story, it is nuanced, yet ubiquitous. This paper notices that Jahnavi Barua's work is not only depicting the simple family but she also talks about the captivating eco centrism perspectives, where the ecosphere, specifically the Brahmaputra. The river plays a vital role in the lives of the characters and it travels throughout the story and it also turns into a storehouse of cultural heritage, a root of personal identity, and a quiet contemplation of the characters' inmost upheaval, illustrating a mystical and intensity of the emotions

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"undertow" that hauls them back to their origin. Via this prism, the paper investigates how the novel re-conceptualized ideas of home and belonging, postulating that an actual essence of self inter twined to one's nature affinity with the land.

**The Brahmaputra River as a preserver of cultural inheritance and self-identity.**

In *Undertow*, Barua portrays the Assamese landscape as an archive of wisdom and collective experiences, where the land itself grasp the legacy of customs. The characters in the novel, especially Torun, holds the memory that are not abstract but are embedded into the surroundings they live. Their stories, customs, and even their internalized sadness are carried not just through vocabularies, but through their bond with the environment. In this context, the eternal cultural bridge is the Brahmaputra River. Its uninterrupted flow symbolizes the persistence of age cohort and the inflexible grit of a community molded by its recurrence. The river shores are where tales are told, where cultural heritage are safeguarded, and where a connectedness of community affiliation is formed. This notion of the terrain as existing, being alive with respiratory and repository and conveying cultural complexities. The traditional human – centered perspective recommending that selfhood is a collaborative creation of both first – person narrative and history of the environment.

**Unexpressed feelings of Undertow: Torun and Loya**

The grandfather Torun and his granddaughter Loya have an estranged connection that is the emotional core of the novel. It is not a substance of a single intense clashes but instead a step-by-step amassing of implicit sorrow, remorse and wrong perception. Jahnavi Barua skillfully uses the "undertow" of the Brahmaputra as a metaphor for this encompassing emotions. The river, with its great strength, quiet movements underneath an ostensibly tranquil facade, mirrors the characters' inner world. Loya's feelings of deportation and her yearning for a sense of belonging are as powerful and unspoken as the river's flow. Analogously, Torun's guilt and pining for harmonization are forces that perform underlying the silence exterior he displays to the universe. The novel indicates that several of the most potent emotions are the ones that are not ever completely expressed, present in a condition of "tranquility" similar to the Brahmaputra River's strong flows. This "undertow" is a unified exposure, mirroring the penetrate feeling of dislodgement and stillness that can be present within families, making it not just an private but a human emotional continuum.

**Brahmaputra's Kin: An Ecofeminism Perspective**

In *Undertow*, the Brahmaputra is not only a background but an essential, quasi-kin presence that connects people's existences to the iterative motifs and recurrence perceived in nature. Through the eco feminist perspective, this novel narrates the reflection of multifaceted role of women and the river is seen as dynamic power-at the same time, nourishing and devastating, maternal and unable to be controlled. Women

and river both are having similar characteristics, such as endure silence, perseverance and flexibility within male-dominated system that strives to govern and hold them, much like human efforts to control the Brahmaputra's flow. Still, both the river and the women fight against complete supremacy, affirming their capability in calmness yet incontestable paths. Thus, the Brahmaputra surpasses its metaphorical position and becomes a kinsfolk that personifies women's power, persistence and withstanding, connecting environmental health and survival of mankind. In Barua's novel, this relationship emphasizes the interlinked of gender and environment, disclosing how both are state of vulnerability but also of sustained strength and revitalizing.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, *Undertow* presents that a true feeling of home and belonging is not simply discovered in resolving the family related disputes. While blood relatives are important, the novel indicates that an intense, more long lasting bond is formed through the restoration of one's connection with the terrain. The characters' utmost journey towards recovering is coming back to their Assamese origin, not as a geographic mobility, but as a sense of connection to a higher power and emotional homecoming. By encompassing their everlasting connection with the Assamese environment, they can have the skill to recognize a sense of serenity and the state of being whole. Jahnavi Barua illustrates that intimate and group reminiscences are endurable into the land and the stream flow of the river, fortifying and steadfast base for self-identity. Therefore, the Brahmaputra River and its proximate environment become the ultimate repositories of consolation and belonging, demonstrating that for the characters of *Undertow*, to be at home is to be in concord with the natural world that configured them.

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# Teaching with AI Chatbots: Building AI Literacy in ESL Contexts

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## Abstract

Improving the AI skills of higher education students is of paramount importance and will become indispensable in the future as artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly becomes a part of our lives. Adults in higher education need to possess at least some knowledge of artificial intelligence (AI) to enable the effective and ethical use of the technology. However, with research in AI literacy still in its initial stages, the development of AI literacy among college students, especially through language education, remains underexplored and warrants further investigation. The purpose of this study is to examine how AI-based writing affects the AI literacy of ESL students in an attempt to make a meaningful contribution to the discourse surrounding AI skills development. The experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) consisted of 30 students enrolled in a higher education institution. The EG students took AI-assisted writing lessons, whereas the CG students practiced academic writing through teacher-led instruction. The results showed that in terms of AI literacy, the EG students performed better than those in the CG.

*Keywords: AI literacy, AI-assisted writing, ChatGPT, Language learning*

## Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) based language learning is increasingly gaining popularity among educators and researchers in recent times, owing to its positive impact on language learning outcomes and on affective aspects of learners. In language education, AI-driven technologies have been effective in developing language skills across all domains, including writing. Easy availability and accessibility of AI technologies have paved the way for unrestricted language learning beyond the classroom. From providing diverse learning resources and writing samples, giving

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personalized feedback on grammatical and lexical aspects, and providing suggestions on improving sentence structure, AI technologies are effective tools that can support learners in their writing process. Additionally, the impact of these technologies on students' psychological factors such as motivation, willingness to communicate, foreign language speaking anxiety, etc, has also been widely researched. However, the impact of AI-assisted language learning on learners' AI literacy remains underexplored.

Given the increasing importance of artificial intelligence technologies in all areas of life, there is a need to educate and train students to be proficient in AI skills. Besides gaining an understanding of how the technology works and how it can be used, there is also a necessity to develop a holistic understanding of the innovation, which includes being aware of its social, ethical, and security concerns. However, a review study by Southworth et al. reported that AI literacy research is still in its early stages, and there is still much to learn about the best ways to teach AI literacy. Therefore, investigating whether AI-assisted writing instruction can improve learners' AI literacy can significantly contribute to the existing body of work and suggest practical ways in which AI literacy can be enhanced in AI-assisted language learning classrooms.

The objectives guiding the investigation are:

- To understand the existing level of AI literacy among ESL learners.
- To analyze the impact of the GenAI-based speaking instruction on the AI literacy of ESL learners.

**Literature Review**

**AI-assisted Writing in ESL Contexts**

For English language learners, developing academic writing skills is critical for overall language development, which entails the honing of diverse skills, including writing in a structured, organized, and coherent manner with grammatical and lexical accuracy while making relevant contributions (Campbell). Strong writing abilities enable students to express themselves clearly, share their thoughts and ideas with clarity, which contributes to being successful academically. To address the challenges of time constraints (Kessler)and limited individualized teacher assistance in the language classroom, AI technologies such as ChatGPT available ubiquitously and accessible 24/7 have been leveraged to tackle limitations of traditional classroom instruction to foster language practice unhindered by time and place (Jia et al.) By assisting in recognizing and correcting grammatical mistakes, proposing alternative sentences that can be used to improve flow, naturalness, and coherence, providing timely and individualized feedback, and giving insights into the organisational structure of discourses with various communicative purposes, these technologies aid in improving the overall

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quality and structure of learners' writing outcomes. Numerous studies have explored the impact and effectiveness of AI tools on language learners' writing skills (e.g Liu et al.; Wu et al.). For instance, Yan reported improved writing skills among language learners as a result of AI-assisted language learning.

## AI Literacy

With the advent of an era powered by Artificial Intelligence technologies, the term AI literacy has also gained attention among educators and researchers in recent times. Many have sought to lend a proper definition to the term since the inception of the concept. According to Ng, Luo, et al. it refers to a set of abilities or competencies that allow the effective and ethical use of artificial intelligence technologies. In recent times, AI literacy has been deemed necessary for school students, college students, teachers, and even the general public. A fundamental knowledge of the working mechanisms and the capacity to recognize and utilize AI-driven technologies are competencies necessary for every citizen of the 21st century.

Many AI literacy frameworks and models have been proposed, specifying the key competencies essential to facilitate effective evaluation, communication, and collaboration with the technology (Long and Magerko; Alexandre et al.). AI literacy, often conceptualized based on the domains of Bloom's taxonomy, identifies four fundamental areas of AI learning inquiry (Ng, Leung, et al.; Ng, Wu, et al.). The first, most basic construct is to know and understand AI, which focuses on the foundational concepts and skills related to AI that do not require prior knowledge. After gaining a basic understanding and knowledge of AI technologies, the next stage of cognitive attainment is applying the knowledge and concepts in different contexts for varied purposes. Following this, being able to critically evaluate and create AI artefacts is considered the highest level of literacy. These constructs have been recognized in many AI literacy frameworks as key competencies. In addition, AI ethics and human accountability have been emphasized widely as an important aspect of AI literacy because it could be dangerous and destructive to get entwined with the technology, neglecting ethical and safety concerns (Ng, Leung, et al.)

Given the importance of fostering AI literacy among students, many researchers and practitioners have sought to design instructional methods and implementation strategies to this end. Particularly in language classrooms, for instance, Bhusal demonstrated that a decolonial approach to learning with AI tools can support the development of critical AI literacy among learners. Critical AI literacy can also be developed through AI-assisted writing practices and digital story writing (Ng, Luo, et al.; Wang and Wang). However, the impact of AI-based writing practices on AI literacy is yet to be examined in depth.

## Theoretical Framework

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The study is grounded in experiential learning theory, proposed by Kolb (1984), who described learning as a four-stage cycle. In practice, Learners actively engage in an activity or task to gain concrete experience, and then they make reflective observations on what happened by observing patterns, relationships, issues, etc. They then form ideas, theories, and insights about what they experienced. They apply what they've learned in new situations, testing and refining their ideas. In the context of AI-assisted writing practices, ESL learners, while engaging in language practice, also actively engage with the technology itself, experiencing, reflecting, making observations, and conceptualizing about it, thereby enhancing their understanding of artificial intelligence technologies.

### Methodology

The participants for the study were students enrolled in different undergraduate courses, including English, computer science, and sociology at the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Sriperumbudur. Students were randomly picked from a group of students whose language proficiency levels fell in A1, A2, and B1 on the CEFR proficiency scale. The selected students were randomly assigned to the experimental group (EG) (n = 16) and the control group (CG) (n = 17). One student from the EG and two students from the CG dropped out due to personal reasons.

### Materials and Instruments

ChatGPT and Google's Gemini were the AI chatbots used in the study. A 12-item self-rated AI literacy scale with a good reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha - 0.83) was adapted from Wang et al (2022). This scale was chosen due to its high reliability and appropriateness for the higher education context.

### Procedure

Before starting the intervention, permission was sought from the head of the institution to carry out the study. Following this, informed consent was obtained from the participants after being briefed about the experiment's purpose and potential benefits. The participants were assured that their identities and test scores would be kept confidential. The intervention was conducted for three weeks, during which students took lessons focused on improving their writing skills. Although the medium and method of instruction varied, the topics covered in each lesson were the same for the EG and CG.

Before starting the intervention, the participants signed an informed consent form and took the pre-AI-literacy questionnaire. Students in the experimental group were given writing activities such as writing an essay, a review, formal and informal mails, etc, and were asked to utilize the AI tools to build and expand on their ideas. The students were also required to ask questions, clarify doubts, and get feedback during the

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activities to facilitate enquiry-based learning. Students in the CG engaged in the same writing activities alongside teacher-led instruction. To address privacy and security concerns while engaging with the AI tool, participants were encouraged not to share their personal information. Moreover, to ensure participants used the AI tools only to assist them in their writing process, they were informed that their writing outcomes would be checked for AI content and plagiarism. In case the content was found to be plagiarized or AI-generated, they were asked to rework and submit again.

The lessons focused on developing the learners' grammatical & lexical accuracy, cohesion & coherence as well as punctuation & spelling through writing short descriptions, interactive and integrated writing activities. The instructor acted as a facilitator, helping the students with prompts and providing assistance in navigating the AI tool. At the end of the third week, feedbacks were collected from the students and the AI literacy questionnaire was administered once again.

**Results**

Descriptive statistics was run in SPSS to check the pre- and post-mean scores obtained for AI literacy by both the EG and CG. The pre-test averages (M) of the two groups (EG = 3.37, CG = 3.31) indicate a moderate level of AI proficiency among the students before the intervention. Further, the impact of the intervention was determined by conducting paired sample t-tests (see Table 1). The mean scores for AI literacy of the EG were 3.37 and 3.77, respectively, in the pre- and post-tests. The differences in the mean were found to be statistically significant [.40 (t = 2.93, $p$ = .01)]. As for the CG, the pre-test mean score was 3.31, and that of the post-test was 3.40. Paired sample t-tests showed that the mean scores did not differ significantly [.08 (t = 0.63, $p$ = .53)].

Table 1. Results of paired-sample t-tests for AI Literacy.

| | Group | Mean (Pre-test) | Mean (Post-test) | Mean Difference | Std. Deviation | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AI Literacy** | Experimental | 3.37 | 3.77 | .40 | .52 | 2.93 | .01 |
| | Control | 3.31 | 3.40 | .08 | 0.54 | .63 | .53 |

To further analyse if the effect of the intervention was significant across groups based on the two groups' post-test averages while controlling for pre-test marks, one-way ANCOVA was run. As evident in Table 2, there was a substantial difference between

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the two groups' post-test averages ($F(1, 27) = 6.28$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$), indicating that the EG students performed better than the CG students in AI literacy.

Table 2. Results of one-way ANCOVA for AI Literacy.

| Source | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | p | Partial eta squared |
|--------|------------------------|----|-----|---|---|---------------------|
| **Pre-AI literacy (covariate)** | 0.45 | 1 | 0.45 | 3.04 | .09 | .10 |
| **Group** | 0.93 | 1 | 0.93 | 6.28 | .01 | .18 |

**Discussion**

The study initially sought to examine the existing level of AI literacy among ESL learners. At the pre-test stage, both the EG (M = 3.37) and the CG (M = 3.31) demonstrated a moderate level of AI literacy, which suggests that learners were quite familiar with the technology but did not have complete awareness of its capabilities, limitations, applications, and responsible use.

However, AI-assisted writing practices significantly improved the AI literacy of students in the EG. These findings are in line with those of Bhusal & Wang and Wang, who suggested that AI-based instruction can effectively enhance learners' AI literacy. Experiential learning theory provides a lens to understand the findings. While engaging with AI technologies for the purpose of language learning, learners not only got an opportunity to improve their writing skills but also got first-hand experience of the technology while actively engaging in AI-based activities and tasks. Based on this experience, learners make observations about the tool's capabilities, limitations, potential biases, inaccuracies, etc. This reflective observation helps them conceptualize the system's functioning, thereby building knowledge and awareness of the technology, which ultimately enhances AI literacy. The study highlights the dual outcomes of language practice and improved AI literacy through enquiry-driven interaction with AI.

**Conclusion and Implications**

To sum up, the study demonstrated that AI-assisted writing instruction can effectively improve learners' AI literacy. The findings advance our knowledge of how to cultivate AI literacy in language learning environments. The study has important implications for ESL learners and educators. ESL learners can utilize AI technologies for enhancing their writing skills while developing AI competencies in the process. The study

recommends that aspects of literacy should be incorporated into regular learning goals in language classrooms rather than seeing it as a skill that must be taught separately.

Although the study demonstrated the effectiveness of teaching AI skills through AI-supported writing practices, the small sample size adopted limits generalizability. Therefore, replicating the current study by adopting a larger sample and by extending the duration of the intervention can be taken up in future studies. Since the study was carried out in formal educational settings, its findings cannot be generalized to other contexts. Future studies can focus on examining the impact of AI-assisted writing on AI literacy in informal and self-directed learning contexts. Moreover, fostering AI literacy through AI-based instruction intended for developing other language skills, including speaking, listening, and reading, might also provide new insights.

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# Engaging Beyond Classroom: The Role of Popular Culture in L2 Learning Spaces

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**Abstract**

This study explores the role of popular culture integrated extramural English (EE) language learning environments on student engagement. The study compares the student engagement scores of EE intervention with that of formal L2 English classroom engagement scores to understand the difference. The questionnaires collected data on four major subscales of engagement, behavioural, social, emotional-cognitive and agentic engagement. The results showed a significant positive impact of student engagement on overall student engagement and its subscales except for the behavioural engagement. This suggests that the popular culture motivated students to engage emotionally, connect socially and take control over their language learning. This study contributes to the growing body of EE, by highlighting the role of popular culture on major learner variables of engagement, motivation and willingness to communicate.

*Keywords*: *Extramural English, Popular Culture, Student Engagement.*

## Introduction

The growth of popular culture has shaped society from multiple, if not all, corners. It has shaped the way we learn, perceive, use and consider different languages, especially English. English as a global lingua franca has influenced the popular media and entertainment, including movies, books, TV series, music, etc, into important

materials for engagement, interaction and language learning. Researchers have widely acknowledged the influence of media and technology in language learning. The importance of extending language learning beyond textbooks and formal instructional materials to include authentic, interactive and culturally rich content is also increasingly discussed among educators. A simpler, convenient and popular method to ensure this is engaging in out-of-class informal English language activities or extramural English (EE) activities (Sundqvist, *Extramural English Matters*). These activities typically include watching English movies and TV series, engaging with English content on Instagram and YouTube, reading English books and novels, and browsing the internet (Sundqvist, *Extramural English Matters*).

The role of popular culture is not merely entertainment, but it extends to include community building, social engagement and self-expression. Cultural artefacts such as films and music enhance motivation and engagement, ensuring voluntary participation while serving as informal and authentic language practice for language learners (Han; Liu et al.). These EE activities help to extend the language learning outside of the walls of classrooms and bridge the gap between learning and entertainment (Sundqvist and Sylvén). When language learning environments encourage and discuss student' interests and their favourite entertainment media or shows, they are more attracted and motivated to engage in discussions and related activities (Han).

Student engagement is an important factor that determines L2 acquisition. It is a multidimensional construct that includes behavioural, social, emotional, cognitive and agentic factors. Increased levels of engagement are often connected with motivation, persistence, longer retention and entertainment (Wang et al.). Yet it is still a major challenge in many L2 classrooms where language learning and the methodologies used are further from learners' personal interests. Incorporating popular cultural content into language classrooms is one way to address this issue (Liu et al.). Teachers can transform this disconnect in students by understanding learner interests and integrating them into the classroom activities, producing meaningful language practices. For instance, discussing students' favourite video games, popular movies, their favourite bands, etc., in classrooms attracts students' attention and ensures better engagement (Han; Sundqvist and Sylvén).

EE interventions emphasise the organisation of voluntary, out-of-classroom engagements in English to maximise engagement along with learning (Sundqvist, *Extramural English Matters*). While students already engage in unstructured EE activities in their free time, monitoring these engagements and conducting teacher-assisted discussions can maximise the educational benefits of these fun activities (Han). These interventions recognise the pedagogical values of reflective activities like movie character discussions or gaming progress by connecting them with curriculum

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goals of language learning, engagement and motivational factors. This transforms the everyday leisure activities with rich and authentic English content into meaningful educational experiences(Han). This article aims to understand the role of popular culture as an EE activity on students' engagement in an L2 learning EE intervention. It explores how integrating culturally rich, authentic language contents in L2 classrooms can contribute to behavioural, social, emotional-cognitive and agentic engagement as a result of increased motivation and better classroom dynamics and learning experience. But addressing these, it aims to answer the question 'How did the student engagement in L2 learning differ between EE intervention and traditional language classrooms?'.

**Literature Review**

The past decades have witnessed the influence of popular culture and its integration into second language learning. This has garnered significant academic attention and made a major contribution to the development of the field of extramural English (EE) (Sundqvist, *Extramural English Matters*). Though most of these influence is practised and projected in out-of-school environments, recent research highlights an initiative to bridge EE into the formal classrooms (Sundqvist and Sylvén). Studies in the area suggest that popular culture, as a combination of digital societies, mass media and entertainment industries, supports authentic and rich exposure to the target language. The research on EE conducted on the Scandinavian population shows that students who engage more in popular cultural activities, such as gaming, watching TV, and listening to music, exhibit higher English proficiency than their peers (Sundqvist, *Extramural English Matters*). Unlike traditional learning inputs, these EE inputs are learner-selected and primarily serve as leisure activities for learners. Hence, they assure learner interest and keep the learner motivated through the activities and help them engage more with targeted language contents (Sundqvist and Sylvén).

Moreover, multiple studies have also addressed the strong correlation between EE engagement and learners' vocabulary development, communication skills, written and listening skills, as well as reading skills (Thi and Thinh; Verkerk; Schurz et al.; Sylvén and Sundqvist; Sundqvist, *Extramural English Matters*; Olsson). Several studies highlighted the strong positive correlation between EE engagement and overall proficiency in L2 English. This can be connected with the concept of self-directed language learning, where learners design their own personalised path for learning, prioritising personal language needs (Bonyadi). It also demands greater engagement from the learners, as it is self-regulated and is steered by the individual themselves (Lai et al.). For example, in an online conversation with peers in English, learners often ask doubts, offer feedback, and exchange ideas and thoughts, offering authentic and practical learning opportunities which is scarce in formal classroom environments. Another significant contribution of popular media in language learning lies in its

multimodal inputs, that offer engaging and complex experiences than traditional language learning methods. The auditory, visual and narrative dimensions of TV series, music, films, etc, often promote receptive and productive skills by exposing learners to colloquial expressions, humours, collocations, cultural norms and even accents, which is rarely taught in formal institutions. Similarly, the repeated and useful encounters offered by television and social media provide useful expressions and colloquial language, improving communicative competence (Sundqvist and Sylvén). These activities encourage educators and researchers to view popular culture as not merely an entertainment source, but as a potentially pedagogical medium for language learning.

Motivation is a critical factor in second language acquisition as it determines the willingness, intensity and persistence of student engagement (Ushioda and Dörnyei). EE interventions with learner-selected materials and activities trigger learner motivation as they are directly connected with their passions and interests. This popular culture influenced learning materials ignite the situated and context-dependent motivation in learners, ensuring deeper and prolonged engagement (Han). This can be understood using several language and motivational theories. For example, Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis states that language learning occurs when a learner receives language input that is slightly more advanced than their current level (Krashen). Popular culture offers learners comprehensible, advanced and authentic language input in enjoyable formats, leaving room for learning. In a more recent concept of L2 motivational self-system, (Dörnyei) identifies the idealised versions of learners as their own competent language users. Imagining themselves among the global communities, popular media offer them platforms to rehearse and train their ideal selves. Engaging in EE activities like gaming and social media promotes communication with global cultural communities, ensuring a sustainable and long-term motivation that extends beyond the classroom. This is supported by empirical research conducted by (Sylvén and Sundqvist) where students expressed higher motivation and language proficiency due to their increased exposure to English through gaming. Similarly, the study conducted by (Lai and Gu) reported that participants explored variety of technologies to fulfil their different learning needs at different points. This means of utilising language learning websites and online fan communities encouraged novelty and creativity in language learning.

The existing literature highlights the role of popular culture in influencing learners' EE language learning along with promoting learner autonomy, motivation and better engagement. With it multimodal and authentic input, it provides novelty and creative content that can attract participant interest, developing emotional attachment with the language and related activities. This study aims to address the difference of student

engagement in EE intervention and traditional classroom teaching by conducting an intervention.

Methodology

*EE Intervention*

An semi-structured five-week EE course was designed using a triangulation method following the study conducted by (Han), considering subject potential, student interest, and teacher's knowledge. The preliminary survey conducted to understand students' EE interest helped finalizing the input materials. The five-week course promoted students to engage more in EE activities by conducting discussions, role plays, debates and conversations during the community sessions. The community sessions were met twice a week, where participants gather together on a prior informed time to engage in activities informed earlier by the facilitator.

*Participants*

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method to include first year English literature students from a central government institute in Chennai, India. There were 17 participants in total with 3 boys and 14 girls.

*Data Collection and Analysis*

A preliminary survey was conducted before designing the course materials to identify students' EE interests. This was conducted by sharing an online questionnaire modelled by (Han). Further, two Student Engagement questionnaires were distributed to collect the students' engagement data in their normal English classes and in their EE course after the intervention. The data were collected using the questionnaire developed by (Heilporn et al.). The questionnaire is divided into four sub scales to analyse the behavioural, social, emotional-cognitive and agentic engagement factors.

The preliminary survey was analysed manually by listing the EE interests mentioned by the students and tallying each additional response. The student engagement data was analysed using SPSS software. Multiple t-tests were conducted to calculate the differences between traditional classroom engagement and EE course engagement in each sub sections of student engagement (behavioural, social, emotional-cognitive and agentic). The difference was analysed using mean value, mean difference, p value and effect size. The effect size was calculated using Cohen's d. Additionally, a Holm Bonferroni test was conducted to avoid the multiple comparison problem and the chance of making Type II error.

**Results**

The paired sample t-tests showed a difference in the student engagement scores between EE course and formal English classes, with EE course showing greater

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engagement. The results highlighted a significant improvement of engagement in EE course in both social engagement, $t(16) = 2.69$, Holm–Bonferroni $p = .048$ and emotional-cognitive engagement, $t(16) = 2.69$, Holm–Bonferroni $p = .048$, with a medium effect size of 0.65. Agentic engagement showed the highest improvement, $t(16) = 5.63$, with a significance of Holm–Bonferroni $p = <.001$. Cohen's $d$ showed a very large effect size of 1.37, indicating that the EE course had a greater impact on agentic engagement of the participants. Similarly overall student engagement also increased significantly, $t(16) = 3.77$, with a large effect size of 0.91 in Cohen's $d$. Hower ever, there was no significant improvement in behavioural engagement, $t(16) = 1.94$, Holm–Bonferroni $p = 0.28$, even though there is a positive mean difference and the Cohen's $d$ indicated a small effect size of 0.47.

**Table 1: Paired sample t-tests**

| Dimension | Traditional Classroom Mean | EE Course Mean | Mean Diff | t | Raw p | Holm–Bonferroni p | Cohen's d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Behavioural | 3.98 | 4.29 | +0.31 | 1.94 | 0.070 | 0.28 | 0.47 |
| Social | 3.75 | 4.39 | +0.64 | 2.69 | 0.016 | 0.048 | 0.65 |
| Emotional-Cognitive | 3.86 | 4.32 | +0.46 | 2.69 | 0.016 | 0.048 | 0.65 |
| Agentic | 3.46 | 4.36 | +0.90 | 5.63 | <.001 | <.001 | 1.37 |
| Overall | 3.78 | 4.33 | +0.55 | 3.77 | 0.002 | 0.010 | 0.91 |

**Discussion**

The study aimed to understand the differences in student engagement in formal English classroom and popular culture infused EE intervention. Significant improvement was seen in the EE intervention across social, emotional-cognitive, agentic, and overall student engagement, whereas, behavioural engagement showed a positive, but non-significant improvement. These finding primarily suggests that popular culture integrated EE language learning environments can improve student engagement, motivation and willingness to communicate in English. Notably, the engagement scores showed a greater improvement in agentic engagement (Cohen's $d$ = 1.37), suggesting that the EE course equipped students to take control of their learning and express their interests and opinions on the direction and activities of the course. This aligns with the concept of autonomous and self-directed language learning; were students take the primary role of framing their curriculum. The study reveals that popular culture integrated EE program encourages and empowers

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students in agentic behaviours. The course created an alignment between course content and instructional element to reduce the agentic barriers of fear, anxiety, etc, fostering agentic engagement.

The EE intervention witnessed a significant improvement in the social engagement of the students, highlighting the importance of peer interaction, social bonding and community development in language learning. This is associated with the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), that views learning as a socially mediated process. Popular culture is rooted in society and when used in EE platforms, students often share fandoms, discuss TV shows or develop conversations on gaming. This acts as a fertile ground for community building and social bonding. This aligns with previous research on media-rich EE engagement by Han (2022), as it promotes conversations and deeper discussions between participants. This study provided learners with an affinity space (Gee, 2005), where learners can discuss their favourite movies, series, music bands and online games, which opens an opportunity for affinity building.

Similarly, the emotional-cognitive engagement of the students also observed a significant improvement in EE intervention (Cohen's $d$ = 0.65) pointing out the role of popular culture in transforming L2 classes into more affectively appealing and cognitively stimulating spaces. The popular culture activities like watching movies, listening to music and playing online video games enhance student interests and enthusiasm as they keep them entertained to improve their emotional engagement. Similarly, the effort, strategic thinking and deeper processing and analysing involved while playing video games or conducting movie reviews or discussions make them aware of their environment keeping the students cognitively alive. This is connected to the concept of identity investment where the materials used in the intervention are of personal importance to the individuals, like their hobbies or favourite past-time activities. The intervention acknowledges these interests which creates an emotional resonance with the course resulting in increased engagement.

On the contrary, behavioural engagement showed a non-significant improvement in EE intervention as compared to the traditional classroom learning. This is because the behavioural engagement is more connected to the external effort put by the students into the L2 learning. This proves that the EE engagement does not demand more of a conscious effort from the participants. Rather, the engagement is natural, stress-free and voluntary, with a voluntary participation. Moreover, the behavioural engagement showed a comparatively higher engagement in formal classrooms, leaving less opportunity for any noticeable gains. Additionally, the overall student engagement scores also showed a higher improvement in EE intervention underscoring the influence of popular culture on L2 learning.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the influence of popular culture integrated EE intervention on student engagement in L2 English language learning environments. The study found that the EE intervention has a significant positive influence in determining the overall student engagement, social engagement, emotional-cognitive engagement and agentic engagement. This highlights that the EE intervention that utilises popular culture to improve English proficiency empowers the participants to take responsibility of their learning, to ask questions, and to engage in social interactions and community building. However, the study is not without its limitations of lacking a control group. Future studies can be conducted with an increased number of population and for a prolonged period of time, to analyse the impact in depth.

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# Ecological concerns in Sa. Kandasamy's Novel *The Defiant Jungle*

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**Abstract**

The earths ecosystem, with its infinite source of natural resources is substantial for human sustenance and progress. A symbiotic relationship between man and the environment is essential to maintain the ecological balance. There has been a gradual deterioration and depletion of the natural resources as a result of exploitation by human beings. Man has been exploiting nature for the sake of his own interests. Human activities have caused irreparable destruction to the environment, which has now become hazardous to the planet earth. Humanity has arrived at the juncture of seeking a better possibility for a sustainable earth. Ecocriticism plays a vital role in creating an awareness of this ecological crisis. Nature has always been a preferred subject of writers throughout the ages. Indian regional writers have made a major contribution to Eco literature. This paper is a study of the ecological concerns in Sa. Kandasamy's novel 'The Defiant Jungle'. The novel deals with the destruction of a south Indian forest called Saayavanam, rich in honey and tamarind for commercial purpose. The restructuring of the natural environment leads to the disruption of an entire community, their traditions and their culture.

*Keywords: ecocriticism, environment, nature vs man, exploitation, sustainability*

Men think that it is essential that the Nation have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether they do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. (95) Thoreau 'Walden Pond -Where I lived.' Thoreau's statement on the impact of modernization, industrialization and globalization presents an accurate picture of the state of modern man.

The emergence of Eco literature has brought about a profound transformation in raising global consciousness regarding the environment. These writings celebrate the natural world and play a pivotal role in creating awareness on the persistent environmental issues and challenges of the time. One of the major environmental issues which is frightening the earth and leading to various natural disasters is global warming. Global warming is induced by greenhouse effect. Human activities like

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deforestation, burning coal, oil and gas, use of chemical fertilizers, increased livestock farming and emission of fluorinated gases are the main causes of the greenhouse effect. Drastic changes in the climate and weather conditions, alarming rise in the sea levels and altering ecosystems and loss of biodiversity have adverse effects on human lives. The growth of a country is measured by the progress it makes in all fields, but sustainable development is essential to create a balanced ecosystem for humans to survive.

The term 'ecocriticism' was coined by William Reuckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". Ecocriticism provides insights into the interconnectedness between literature and nature, highlighting the consequences of human actions on ecosystems.

> "… most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequence of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems. We are there. Either we change our ways or we face global catastrophe, destroying much beauty and exterminating countless fellow species in our headlong race to apocalypse."(xx) - Cheryll Glotfelty

Ecological writings viewed nature from a moral perspective, treating it with respect and nurturing a greater universal approach to nature conservation. Eco literature explores themes of Human–Nature Relationship, Anthropocentrism vs. Ecocentrism, Environmental Justice, Industrialization and Development, Climate Change and the Anthropocene, Place, Landscape, and Sense of Belonging, Myth, Folklore, and Eco-spirituality, Ecofeminism, Displacement and Eco-migration, Sustainability and Hope.

Indian writers in English like Raja Rao, Kamala Markandeya, R.K. Narayan to the modern era writers like Kiran Desai, Arundhathi Roy, Indra Sinha, Amitav Ghosh and many others have written on the impact of the destruction of nature and its effects in their works. They have captured the local habitat and lifestyle through the elements of nature like the rivers, trees the animals and birds. Indian English writers have played a crucial role in bringing ecological issues to international attention. Indian English Literature has transformed into a global literary force transcending geographical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. In the age of globalization, it has emerged as a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and hybrid field that engages with a multiplicity of experiences and contemporary perspectives, while still carrying the nuances of Indian identity.

This paper analyses Sa. Kandasamy's novel 'The Defiant Jungle' from an environmental lens. Sa. Kandasamy was a Tamil novelist and documentary film-maker. He has written seven novels and several short stories. His novel 'Visaranai Commission' won him the Sahitya Akademy award for Tamil fiction in the year 1998.

'The Defiant Jungle' is a translation of his first published Tamil novel 'Saaya Vanam' by the notable writer and translator Vasantha Surya. In the introduction to the novel Vasantha Surya hints on the 'prescient theme of development versus environment'. She refers to the authors views on the introduction of 'the agro-industry of sugarcane, and how along with wage labour and the cash economy it transformed livelihood and lifestyles.' Ecological concerns are intricately woven into the narrative of the novel 'The Defiant Jungle,' reflecting the crucial environmental issues faced by the contemporary society. The novel is set in the backdrop of the dense jungle of Saaya Vanam which means the forest that cannot be felled. It is named after the forest Saaya Vanam, near the author's hometown Mayiladuthurai where he spent his childhood days.

"Forests have always been central to Indian civilization. They have been worshipped as Aranyani, the Goddess of the Forest, the primary source of life and fertility, and the forest as a community has been viewed as a model for societal and civilizational evolution. The diversity, harmony and self-sustaining nature of the forest formed the organizational principles guiding Indian civilization;" 54-Women in the Forest-Staying Alive-Women, Ecology and survival in India – Vandana Shiva.

The writings of environmentalists like Vandana Shiva, who focused on the impacts of globalization on local ecosystems, highlighted the complex interactions between global policies and local environmental outcomes. Such works underscored the importance of integrating ecological considerations into global discourse and policy-making. The balance of our village eco systems are threatened due to deforestation. Deforestation and afforestation have become common for the sake of economic benefits. Cultivating cash crops disrupts the harmonious ecosystem and has far reaching effects. Saaya Vanam is destroyed to cultivate sugarcane, a cash crop.

Saaya Vanam, in the beginning of the novel is described as rich in honey and tamarind. It teemed in wilderness and beauty, brimming with life, enriched by the presence of various flora and fauna. The forest was so very dense that no person who entered it came back alive. The forest seemed to have drawn a boundary line. The forest protected itself from external dangers. Karuppanna Thevar who tried to venture into the forest died spurting blood from his mouth. "Nobody really knows very much about the trees, bushes and creepers that girdled and bound this untamed wilderness on all sides. Not one person had ever gone in there and come back whole." (14) It was a pristine heaven untouched and unventured by humans.

There are two main protagonists in the novel, Chidambaram and the forest. Most part of the novel is an extensive description of the beautiful forest and its fight against Chidambaram. Chidambaram is a young man who returns to his native place Saaya Vanam to pursue his goal of achieving big in his homeland. He desires to buy the forest land and build a sugarcane factory. He recollects his difficult childhood days spent in

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the tea estates of Colombo, Srilanka along with his mother Kavery. Kavery was born in Thittakudi on the bank of the river Vettaru. He is unable to forget her words on her deathbed "Must I die here, out of sight, in this foreign country. This life of mine doesn't even deserve to end in that river where all my people's lives ended." (35) Chidambaram was unable to understand his mother's longing for her homeland. She missed the culture, beliefs and customs of her homeland. Later in the novel, while attending the funeral of a relative he ruminates of how his mother had no visitors when she died and she was just sent away to the cemetery without any rituals. He feels isolated in an alien land and wanted to return home. After his mother's death, he moves to Singapore. With the hard-earned money, he returns to attain his ambition.

After coming to Saaya Vanam, he buys the forest land from Sambamurthi Iyer. Iyer was extremely proud of his ancestral property. He enters the forest with Chidambaram and feels the welcome rouse of the pleasant breeze. "Looping together earth and sky in skeins of green was a prodigious expanse of bush and tree and wine. Bamboos towered over the fruit-bearing tamarinds, the illuppais and the jack trees with gigantic-knobbly-skinned fruit hanging from their trunks and branches." (17) He narrates the story behind the forest that was passed through generations. One of his ancestors named Appanna had a son Sambamurthi born after many years of penance and God's grace. But he could not speak. Appanna did all kinds of charity and appealed to the God's to cure him, but in vain. This boy disappears on the eighth day of his mother's death. He was not found anywhere. Appanna dies of a broken heart, leaving his house in ruins. After sixteen years, the boy returns. He sang sweet musical devotional songs, spent his life in the Shivan temple. Once the Maharani, the queen who was passing on the way, heard his songs and she had forcibly rewarded the forest to Sambamurthi.

Iyer then goes on to give a detailed description of the tamarind harvest from the tamarind trees that stood on the fringes of the forest. The harvest was done in an orderly manner and the tamarind was distributed to all the houses in the village. Each tree had a unique flavour. When the time for the tamarind harvest arrived Sivanandi Thevar with a group of labourers would come and harvest. The order was not even slightly deviated. From the south they went to the northern part as done by their ancestors. Every house got their share every year. The trees were separately shaken down and in a categorized and orderly manner the pods were distributed. The entire process took seven or eight days after which the calm and silence engulfed the place again. Iyer describes that the same order was followed for the distribution of pandanus and mangoes. This orderliness reflects on the customs followed in the village.

Chidambaram could not connect with Iyer's views, anxieties or his happiness when he thinks about the forest and the tamarind harvest. Sivanandi Thevar, the man who looked after the land was angry with Iyer for having sold the land. He angrily retorts,

"That is our earth! Our forefather's property." (24) Thevar notices that Chidambaram, the young man from the city with a smart shirt and attitude should not be encouraged. Moreover, he should comply with the customs of the village, show his respect to the elders by being bare chest and with a towel around his waist. Ironically, Thevar who was against Chidambaram buying the forest, helps him in the process of the destruction of the forest. When he confronts Chidambaram, he finds out that Chidambaram is his nephew. His anger softens and he helps him in destroying the forest.

The entire novel is replete with the presence of the abundant flora and fauna of Saaya Vanam. The author describes the forest's beauty with its dark dense pulianthope, meaning the tamarind grove, honey thorn shrubs, banyan tree, sleepy face raintree, illuppai, guava, the dense mochi, thorny kaarai, punnai, pandanus screw pine, tiny white blossomed thumbai shrubs, yellow- blossomed poovarasu, drooping tresses of the fantail palms, the tall nettilingam, kurinja vine, palmyra, jujube trees, Parrot-beak mango trees, kovai creepers, wild ridge gourd, pirandai cactus vines, dangling liana, honeythorn, bellyache castor, purple blossomed erukku milkweed, laburnum, date palms, lizard creeper, ipeca vine and the noni-berry trees. The forest was replete with wild life and birds like pond herons, cranes, crows, pheasants, green parakeets, babblers, storks, monkeys, crows, foxes, squirrels, cattle and the snakes in the taazham flowers.

Chidambaram starts to 'penetrate and encompass the wilderness' with two sickles. He enters the forest and notices "Looking up, he could not see the sky at all. The lush green canopy had taken its place. Green above and green below, it was a vista of sky-turned forest. Slowly, very-slowly, he was penetrating the beautiful unspoilt sylvan realm." (48) Chidambaram gets the help of two young boys, Kaliyaperumal and Pazhaniyandi. He strikes hard with his sickles and axe, pulled, thrashed, dragged and hauled at the creepers, vines and the trees. With all his strength, he fought mightily for many days. The forest fought back. The thorns pierced and bruised him. "… tree and shrub and vine have carried a war against man. Every blow they take from him is a decisive defeat. Yet they proudly and cruelly weaken their enemy and enervate him, even if only temporarily. Then, when he sits down dejectedly under some tree, some bush, it gently fans him, and showers down a leaf, a blossom…" (50)

Chidambaram and the boys toil hard. He reflects in great astonishment that the scene looked like massacre. "He and the jungle were now engaged in a fight to the death. He would need all his energy to survive, and triumph over Nature." (52) Once Chidambaram gets hurt with the sickle. The boys had ground aadathodai with garlic and applied the paste on the wound, which healed in two days. As they kept felling the trees, they also realized the vast mighty exuberance of the loveliness of mother earth.

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The author reflects that the vast expanse of the earth had been created for man's life and wellbeing. With the development and progress of culture and intelligence, he started to control the invincible nature. The transformation of the beautiful blossoming earth increased day by day. The struggle was intense. It was a war between man and the earth.

The heaps of foliage increased day by day. The boys explain to Chidambaram that the foliage would be used as manure and fodder for the livestock of the village. Chidambaram was desperate as after many days of work very little of the forest could only be cleared. He enquired for more workers. He was surprised to learn that none of them in the village were woodcutters. The lone woodcutter of the village died when a tree he chopped fell on him. Thereafter woodcutters were hired from the neighbouring villages. The villagers revered and feared nature. Chidambaram's plan of planting sugarcane was not encouraged by the villagers. He is told that the land is not suitable for growing sugarcane. If he goes ahead with his plan of the sugarcane factory, he had to buy sugarcane from the neighbouring villages. Again, there was the hurdle of crossing the mighty currents of the river Cauvery. But Chidambaram was unfazed.

The work of clearing the forest seemed impossible. The tiger bamboos looked magnifying. Thevar opines that they can be used to build houses and even for the factory. The honey thorn was so strong that "Even when it lost ground and lay rootless and supine, it stuck out in all directions, defying his touch. It was a dying warrior too proud to admit defeat." (95) The toil began to wear them. They could sense the mighty strength of their enemy, the forest. They plan to burn down the forest. They wait till the black clouds dispersed. "For untold ages beasts and birds had lived in the forest without human interference. Today, one meddlesome individual, a human being had brought pandemonium down upon it. Tree and creeper, beast and bird, beetle and beast-all were going towards their extinction. A tranquil way of life had succumbed to the inevitable." (99)

The fire starts spreading and destroying the entire forest. It raged for twelve days, bringing down the entire ecosystem. The raging fire reminded of holocaust and doomsday. A wrenching sense of loss oppressed them both. But Chidambaram could never admit the loss or feel the guilt. The villagers had lost their forest which cannot be brought back to life again. Only the memory of the Saaya Vanam remained. An old woman complains that the tamarind they had brought from the shop was not fit for consumption. The village was gradually moving towards urbanization. Chidambaram had started his work on the sugarcane factory. He built a bridge across the river to transport his goods.

The process of urbanization intended to improve the life of human beings often cause irreversible environmental destruction. There is always a conflict between economic growth and, ecological balance. Writers of Eco Literature discuss how progress masks displacement, exploitation, and environmental degradation. This novel reveals the gap between the promises of development, the impact of globalization and its real outcomes such as ecological destruction and imbalance**.** Our rich and invaluable natural resources are exploited in the name of growth and development. Kandasamy's novel raises significant questions about true progress and economic sustainability.

'The Defiant Jungle' is a realistic portrayal of the destruction of nature. The ecocritical concepts of landscape, wilderness and environmental crisis helps in creating awareness on the need of the hour. The application of ecocritical theories to literature can promote a deeper understanding of nature and thereby create a sustainable future. The efforts to make the earth a safer place to live in could be achieved only if humans coexist with nature harmoniously. Humans gain from nature and it is the duty of the human beings to protect and nurture the life-giving nature. Sustainability is significant and thus destruction of nature should be avoided for the progress of civilization. The novel advocates for a harmonious coexistence with nature, urging readers to reconsider their relationship with the environment. In 'The Defiant Jungle,' ecological concerns are not merely a backdrop but a central theme that challenges readers to engage with the pressing environmental issues of our time.

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# Social Discrimination in Indian Literature: Voices from the Margins in the Age of Globalization

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**Abstract**

Indian literature has long been a site of resistance, documenting and challenging the realities of social inequality. Among its many themes, social discrimination whether based on caste, class, gender, or community remains one of the most significant. This paper examines the portrayal of social discrimination in Indian literature and the ways in which writers have attempted to break the silence surrounding marginalized voices. Beginning with Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable, which exposed the dehumanizing realities of untouchability, the study further highlights the contributions of Dalit writers such as Omprakash Valmiki (Joothan) and Bama (Karukku). Their works not only narrate lived experiences of oppression but also assert dignity and resistance. Similarly, Mahasweta Devi used literature as a weapon to represent tribal struggles and the plight of women. In the age of globalization, these narratives have transcended linguistic and geographical boundaries through translations and academic attention, thereby reaching a global audience. By adopting an interdisciplinary perspective drawing from literature, sociology, and cultural studies this paper argues that Indian literature not only represents social discrimination but also provides a platform for social reform, justice, and empowerment.

***Keywords:*** *Social Discrimination; Dalit Writing; Gender and Caste; Resistance and Empowerment*

## Introduction

Literature has always functioned as more than a work of imagination; it is a cultural archive, a mirror, and at times, a weapon. It not only entertains but also reflects the social, cultural, and political realities of a community. In the Indian context, where centuries-old traditions coexist with modern aspirations, literature becomes a space to address pressing issues such as inequality, oppression, and social injustice. One of the most persistent and painful realities of Indian society is **social discrimination**, particularly caste-based exclusion and gender-based marginalization.

Indian literature, both in regional languages and in English, has consistently engaged with these injustices. Writers from upper-caste reformers to marginalized communities themselves have used literature to expose the mechanisms of discrimination and to critique entrenched hierarchies. Importantly, Dalit and women writers have shifted the discourse by narrating their lived experiences, ensuring that the subaltern does not remain voiceless.

The study of social discrimination in literature is not merely a literary exercise; it is a socio-political necessity. It provides insights into how marginalized communities have historically been silenced and how literature functions as a platform for resistance and reclamation of dignity. With the advent of globalization, these voices have gained wider recognition. Translations and academic discussions have carried their struggles beyond national borders, ensuring international acknowledgement of issues once confined within India.

**Caste Discrimination in Indian Literature**

Caste, one of the most rigid forms of social stratification in India, has shaped the lives of millions. Literature has often been the first space to question and challenge the inhumanity of caste practices.

- **Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable (1935):** This novel stands as a pioneering work in Indian English literature. Through the protagonist Bakha, a young sweeper boy, Anand vividly portrays the humiliation and exclusion faced by Dalits. Anand's realistic style does not merely describe Bakha's daily life but highlights the psychological scars left by systemic caste oppression. By humanizing Bakha, Anand confronts the indifference of upper-caste society and compels readers to empathize with the marginalized.

- **Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan (1997):** Unlike Anand, Valmiki wrote from the perspective of lived experience. His autobiography captures the pain, stigma, and violence associated with being an "untouchable" in independent India. The title itself Joothan (leftover scraps of food) symbolizes the degrading treatment meted out to Dalits. Valmiki not only narrates his personal trauma but also exposes the collective suffering of Dalits, making his work a cornerstone in Dalit literature.

- **Bama's Karukku (1992):** Written by a Dalit Christian woman, Karukku is revolutionary because it reveals discrimination not only in Hindu society but also within Christianity and its institutions. Bama's work blends the struggles of caste with the struggles of gender, thereby offering a unique Dalit feminist perspective. Her narrative style sharp, personal, and unapologetic gave new energy to marginalized writing.

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Together, these works demonstrate how literature can transform into an act of resistance. Instead of silent suffering, the Dalit writer's pen becomes a powerful instrument to question hierarchies and demand justice.

**Gender and Class Discrimination**

Social discrimination in India cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the intersection of caste, gender, and class. Women from marginalized communities often face "double oppression": first as women in a patriarchal society, and second as members of disadvantaged castes or classes.

- **Mahasweta Devi's Works:** A remarkable activist and writer, Mahasweta Devi dedicated her life to voicing the struggles of tribal communities and women. In Draupadi, she portrays Dopdi Mejhen, a tribal woman who is brutalized by state forces. Yet, Dopdi resists with an unbreakable spirit, refusing to be silenced even after violence. In Hajar Churashir Maa, Devi highlights the socio-political struggles of the marginalized, showing how women often bear the brunt of systemic injustice. Her works show that gender and class discrimination are inseparable from broader political and cultural structures.

- **Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (1997):** This Booker Prize-winning novel intertwines caste and gender discrimination. The character Velutha, an "untouchable" carpenter, becomes the victim of casteist violence when his love affair with Ammu, a divorced woman, transgresses social boundaries. The novel not only exposes caste oppression but also critiques the patriarchal restrictions imposed on women, highlighting how both caste and gender become tools of subjugation.

These literary works reveal that discrimination is not a single-layered issue. It is deeply interconnected, shaping individual lives and social structures in complex ways.

**Globalization and Social Discrimination**

Globalization has radically transformed the literary landscape. What was once confined to local communities now finds space on global platforms. This has had a profound impact on the representation of marginalized voices in Indian literature.

- **Translation and Accessibility:** Works like Karukku and Joothan have been translated into English, ensuring international readership. This accessibility has helped spread awareness of caste discrimination to audiences unfamiliar with Indian social realities.

- **Academic Inclusion:** Dalit and marginalized writings are now part of global curricula in universities across the world. For instance, texts like Untouchable and Karukku are taught in courses on postcolonial studies, gender studies, and world literature.

- **Global Solidarity:** Globalization has enabled marginalized voices to resonate beyond India, connecting with similar struggles against racism, colonialism, and oppression worldwide. The voices of Indian Dalits, tribal women, and marginalized groups now form part of a global narrative of resistance.

Thus, globalization has not erased discrimination but has amplified the reach of those who resist it. Literature has become a bridge connecting the local with the global.

### Interdisciplinary Analysis

The study of social discrimination in Indian literature cannot be limited to literary criticism alone. It requires an **interdisciplinary framework:**

- **Sociology:** Provides an understanding of caste hierarchies, class struggles, and systemic discrimination. Literature such as Joothan becomes a sociological document of lived oppression.

- **Gender Studies:** Helps us understand how patriarchy intersects with caste to create double or triple layers of oppression, particularly for Dalit and tribal women.

- **Cultural Studies:** Explains how literature functions both as representation of reality and as a means of cultural resistance. For example, Bama's Karukku is as much a cultural protest as it is a literary text.

By combining these disciplines, we understand that literature is not isolated from society. Instead, it is a mirror that reflects social conditions and a catalyst that inspires social transformation.

### Conclusion

Social discrimination remains one of the most pressing issues in Indian society, and literature has always confronted it head-on. From Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable to Bama's Karukku and Valmiki's Joothan, writers have challenged the injustices of caste and gender, giving voice to communities that had been denied expression for centuries. The age of globalization has further amplified these voices, enabling them to cross linguistic and geographical boundaries. Today, the stories of marginalized communities in India are part of global discussions on justice, equality, and human rights. Thus, Indian literature does not merely describe discrimination—it transforms it into a call for resistance and reform. It empowers the oppressed, questions entrenched hierarchies, and demands that society reimagine itself on the principles of dignity, equality, and justice.

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# Futurism in Indian English Literature: A Study on Select Texts

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## Abstract

What if someone had told you, two centuries ago, that humans could fly using flying machines? Such a claim would have been strange, and that person might have been judged as insane. Yet, such bizarre ideas paved the way for the invention of airplanes. In fact, many scientific inventions are the byproducts of such imaginative thoughts found in literature. In a sense, these writers are prophets because they predicted future inventions.

*Keywords*: *Futurism, Science & Technology, Turbulence, Distances, Harvest*

## Futuristic ideas in Indian English Literature

Indian English literature often revolves around themes such as cultural identity, racial discrimination, colonialism, and isolation. While these subjects remain pivotal, my research focuses on the less-explored theme 'futurism'. This paper aims to examine how Indian English writers engage with futuristic ideas, forging a path to a new genre of writing in Indian English Literature. I have selected four Indian works to explore how Indian authors reimagine the future, technology, and superhuman capabilities: *Turbulence* by Samit Basu, *Distances* by Vandana Singh, *Harvest* by Manjula Padmanabhan, and *Sultana's Dream* by Rokeya Hussain. Before delving into futuristic ideas in IEL, one should understand what futurism is and how it influenced literature.

## Understanding Futurism in Literature

Futurism is an artistic movement that was popularized between 1920 and 1930 in western countries, which celebrated science and technology in paintings and literature. It rejected the old, traditional narratives in literature and glorified imagination, machines, automobiles, airplanes, and urban life. In a sense, futurism in literature is an attempt to predict what the future may hold for us—threats, challenges, fortune, etc.

- ### T*urbulence* by Samit Basu.

This novel offers a critical examination of how human desires intertwine with superhuman abilities, providing readers a different perspective to analyse futurism.

The story of a group of airline passengers, who gain supernatural powers during a flight - a narrative frequently seen in Western narratives but relatively rare in Indian writing - places the novel in the genre of speculative fiction, grabbing the attention of the global Sci-fi readers.

From the perspective of a futurist, the novel analyses the psychology of power and its impact on societal evolution. The characters newly found abilities are not random but symbolic, reflecting on our inner desires in a slightly elevated form.

Aman Sen's power to manipulate minds, critiques the influential people and the media who shape public opinion, hinting at the future that such manipulation would cross ethical limits. Uzma Aslam Khan's power to charm anyone satirizes the fast-growing celebrity culture. People, nowadays, are found with smartphones taking pictures, shooting videos, and posting it on social media - foreshadowing the future that charismatic behaviour would become a part of everyone's life. Tia's power to create clones symbolizes women's roles and responsibilities within a family and how technology could help them tackle those in future. Ravi's ability to hack into electronic devices foreshadows a future dominated by technological threats.

The book is not a mere description of individuals who obtain superpowers but a prediction of the future. Despite its humor and comic portrayal of characters, the novel serves as a warning to humanity because the future of this world may resemble the one described by Samit Basu. Undoubtedly, the futuristic ideas of Samit Basu set him on par with the Western writers; though criticized by some, the novel is considered as one of the best Sci-fi novels in English. Many critics have hailed it as a groundbreaking work in its genre, capable of inspiring SF writers globally. Here are some:

> "the best fantasy writer you've never heard of…looks set to redefine the superhero genre for the twenty-first century." **-** Reader Dad

> "An entertaining, well-written read. In the genre's history it will be seen as an important work, a reflection of the subcontinent's growing self-confidence." - World SF

> "A new breed of superhero novel likely to appeal to both classic hero fans as well as fans of contemporary fiction" - Geek Native

- *Distances* **by Vandhana Singh**

*Distances* - yet another work that captures the attention of science fiction enthusiasts around the world with its futuristic narrative and unusual settings. It compels the readers to envision two different worlds and relate them to the one we live in. Anasuya, a young and talented mathematician living in a desert city on the planet Sura, foreshadows a future in which individuals may appear knowledgeable yet remain lonely. The aliens from the planet Tirana who approach Anasuya suggest the

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possibility of communication across worlds in the future. Undoubtedly, this is a masterpiece in IEL- a new style of writing emerging from the subcontinent, defining its place in world literature.

"Fascinating far-future humans and human cultures! Mathematics as a sort-of-magic-like gift!" **-** Alex Dally MacFarlane, Goodreads.

- *Harvest* **by Manjula Padmanaban**

The play, written in 1997 but set in a futuristic Bombay in the year 2010, is an accurate prediction of the technology-driven realities of the 21st century. Through Om Prakash - a poor, jobless man who sells his organs to a rich American- the author criticizes how human bodies are treated like products for profit in an unfair global system, foreshadowing the harsh realities of the poor in the present time and in future.

Ginni is a computer-generated image of Virgil—the real organ recipient, who interacts with and monitors Om Prakash's family through a videophone - what are now called smartphones, symbolizes the technological deception of the 21st century.

"Always I listened to you, Jaya. I heard every word said in the room—even when the module was off, it recorded." **-** Virgil, p.94

The above statement of Virgil underscores the negative impact of the technological world, where everyone suffers from the loss of privacy. This novel was well received by the readers for its foresight into the future India, exposing poverty, lack of privacy, apathy, selfishness, dehumanization, and immorality.

> " a dark, bitter, savagely funny vision of the cannibalistic future that awaits the human race... a parable of what will happen when the rich denizens of the First World… begin to devour bits and pieces of the Third World..." Sunil Sethi, Outlook

- *Sultana's Dream* by Rokeya Hussain

Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's *Sultana's Dream* (1905) can be read as an early work of Futurism in Indian writing. While the text is framed as a utopian fantasy, its emphasis on technological advancement—flying cars, automated agriculture, solar energy, and weather control—foreshadows many of the innovations that have become part of our modern life.

The novel's prophetic quality lies not only in its anticipation of specific technologies but also in its vision of women's empowerment to invent and reorganize the world. By linking technological futurity with gender justice, Hossain critiques the present while projecting a world where marginalized groups can shape the future.

"They mean that you are shy and timid like men." **-** Sister Sara, p. 8

Flipping the traits, Rokeya not only criticizes the preconceived ideas imposed on women but also highlights that qualities are socially constructed rather than inherent, which is, now, evident as women grow to remarkable heights.

"While the women were engaged in scientific researches, the men of this country were busy increasing their military power." Sister Sara, p. 12

**Conclusion**

In Indian English literature, futurism is still a relatively new but a powerful school of thought. From Padmanabhan's dystopian work to Rokeya's feminist utopia, from Basu's superhero reimagining to Singh's mathematical universes, these works demonstrate how Indian writers have not only reflected international sci-fi traditions but also made their own mark by incorporating regional cultures, histories, and social concerns into futuristic visions. Undoubtedly, the foretelling voices of Indian English futurists will continue to inspire the world as technology continues to change our lives.

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